

# Young Audiences of Massachusetts *Educational Materials*

Please forward to teachers

4/14/10

## **ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE**

### **Odaiko New England**

**Grade levels: K-5**

Odaiko New England demonstrates the ancient art form of taiko (Japanese drumming) and its importance in Japanese culture. This energetic and engaging program highlights kumidaiko (ensemble drumming) and combines traditional taiko rhythms with dynamic movement and rhythms from other musical traditions. Students explore kata (a drumming technique) and the concept of kiai (vocalizing energy) and join the performers on stage to play the taiko drums.

## **LEARNING GOALS:**

1. To experience and learn techniques of Japanese taiko drumming.
2. To explore the history of Japanese taiko drumming and its historical and contemporary role in Japanese culture and traditions.

## **PRE-ACTIVITY SUMMARY: *Understanding Musical Rhythms***

Discuss the concept of rhythm. Ask students to identify everyday rhythms they can see, hear, and replicate through movement. Have students create different percussive sounds with their bodies (snapping fingers, clapping hands, stomping feet, etc.). Create a rhythm for the rest of the class to echo. Repeat the pattern until everyone can do it. Encourage each student to demonstrate his/her own rhythm for the rest of the class.

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## **POST-ACTIVITY SUMMARY: *Family Symbols***

Discuss the origin of the Japanese family crest (information enclosed). Discuss how symbols represent ideas and stories. Discuss students' surnames and the possible origins of the names. Have students select a symbol to represent their family name. Ask students to create Japanese family crests. Have them present their family crest to the class and discuss their specific design choice.

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## **CURRICULUM LINKS:**

History and Social Science, Multicultural Studies, Asian Pacific Studies, Foreign Language, Health/Physical Education, Music, and Dance

# PRE-ACTIVITY: UNDERSTANDING MUSICAL RHYTHMS

## LEARNING GOAL:

To understand the concept of rhythm

## TIME:

45 minutes

## TIPS FOR THE TEACHER:

\* Brainstorm words associated with rhythm (i.e. steady beat, rhythm, tempo, quarter note, rest).

\* Discuss how making rhythms are different from keeping a beat.

## STEP 1:

Discuss the concept of rhythm. Ask students to identify everyday rhythms they can see and replicate through movement.

## STEP 2:

Ask the students to suggest different percussive sounds they can make with their bodies (i.e. clapping, slapping knees, patting desks with hands, snapping fingers, stomping feet, etc.). Have students make some of these sounds.

## STEP 3:

Create a clapping rhythm for the class to echo. Repeat the pattern until everyone can clap the rhythm.

## STEP 4:

Have students create their own rhythms. Ask a student to lead the class in his/her rhythm.

## STEP 5:

Divide students into groups and have each group create a rhythm. Make sure each student contributes to the rhythm. Have the groups present their rhythms to the rest of the class.

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## EXTENSIONS:

1) Locate Japan on a map. Discuss the country and some of its cultural and geographic features.

2) Listen to music from different countries. What is the same? Different? Are there similar rhythms and instruments in different countries? Could you identify a specific style of music to a geographic location?



## POST-ACTIVITY: *FAMILY SYMBOLS*

### LEARNING GOAL:

- \* To understand the Japanese *mon*, or family crest
- \* To design symbols for students' families

### MATERIALS/PREPARATION:

Paper, crayons, markers, art supplies, scissors

### TIME:

One hour

### TIPS FOR THE TEACHER:

- \* Japanese *Mon*: Japanese family crest; design exhibits the Japanese economic use of space; every shape and line has a purpose
- \* Additional vocabulary: taiko, happi/hanten, hachimaki, obi, tabi, samurai (definitions enclosed)

### STEP 1:

Discuss Japanese crests. Distribute copies of the enclosure with examples of *mon* and discuss the designs in each. Discuss the use of symbols to represent ideas and stories.

### STEP 2:

Discuss the possible meanings of surnames (Carpenter, Lake, Rose, Goldman, etc.). Have students think about how they would design family crests for the above-mentioned names.

### STEP 3:

Discuss other possible ideas for a family crest (i.e., hobby, business, interest, attribute, etc.).

### STEP 4:

Distribute paper to each student and ask them to create a family crest. Have them use the circle as a format at least 8" in diameter.

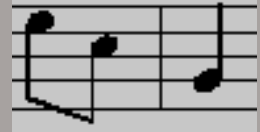
### STEP 5:

Have students present their family crests to the class and discuss their specific design choices.

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### EXTENSIONS:

- 1) Have students describe and discuss the clothing / costume that the *taiko* players wore (i.e., jacket [*happi/hanten*], headband [*hachimaki*], belt [*obi*], and socks [*tabi*]). See enclosure for more specific information.
- 2) Discuss other types of drums students have played, seen, or heard. How are the drums different from one another? Would you see a taiko drum played in a country other than Japan?



**ENCLOSURE:**

**JAPANESE MON**

The origin of the *mon* (mohn), the Japanese family crest, goes back to the 11th century. The ruling families of the Imperial Court designed family symbols to put on their formal clothing. The design of flowers and birds represent the elegant images of court life. In the 12th century, the *samurai* class took over the government and used emblems on their banners, flags, and weapons. They chose designs to represent warriors, such as arrows, dragons, and bats. By the 17th century, the common people used family crests as well. The symbols they chose include more familiar objects, such as rabbits, mountains, and tools.

A great deal can be learned by examining the visual art of another culture. The *mon* design tells something about the Japanese economic use of space. Japan is a small island, where many people have learned to live together without wasting space. It makes sense that Japanese design is very simple.

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**ENCLOSURE:**

**COSTUME/CLOTHING**

***Happi/Hanten***

A *happi* or *hanten* is a simple jacket-like garment invented by the fire brigade of Edo (Tokyo) during the Edo period. *Happi* comes from the Chinese word for a chair covering, which it is said to resemble. Usually on the back of the *happi* is a symbol called a *mon*, the family crest possessed by every Japanese family.

***Hachimaki***

A *hachimaki* is a headband that is said to be derived from a strip of cloth used by warriors to secure their hats to their heads. This developed into a strip of cloth tied around the forehead before engaging in any kind of strenuous work or activity.

***Obi***

An *Obi* is a belt or a sash. The type of *obi* used to hold a man's *happi* in place is made of thick, stiff fabric three to four inches wide. It is tightly wrapped twice around the body and tied in a decorative bow.

***Tabi***

*Tabi* are Japanese cotton socks with a separate space for the big toe. The carpenter style of *tabi* has a rubber sole and can be worn as a shoe.

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## Odaiko New England

Grade Levels: K-5

### RESOURCES:

Coutts-Smith, Mark. Children of the Drum: The Life of Japan's Kodo Drummers.  
(available for purchase from **San Jose Taiko** (403) 293-9344)

Nakanishi, Don & Tina Nishida. The Asian American Educational Experience.: A Sourcebook for Teachers and Students. New York: Routledge, 1995.

### The Rolling Thunder Taiko Video Series.

(available for purchase from **Rolling Thunder** (408) 247-5662)

### Web Sites:

**Odaiko New England** - <http://onetaiko.org/>

### ABOUT THE PERFORMERS:

**Odaiko New England (ONE)** began drumming in 1994 and are quickly establishing themselves as a premier East Coast taiko group. Their aim is to make taiko a familiar art form to American audiences, thereby encouraging a greater appreciation and curiosity of the positive aspects of Asian/Pacific American cultures. Their members reflect the rich ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity of Massachusetts. Inspired by the spirit of kumidaiko (ensemble drumming), Odaiko strives to drum as "one" voice. They believe the taiko speaks across boundaries of race, class, culture, and religion, bringing people together in harmony and community. Odaiko New England takes traditional Japanese taiko rhythms and infuses them with other musical and performing traditions as they create our own electrifying, powerful, dynamic, and distinct "American taiko" style.

### ABOUT YOUNG AUDIENCES:

Young Audiences/ Arts for Learning (YA), America's largest arts in education nonprofit, transforms the lives and education of our youth through the arts. The organization connects professional artists with schools, libraries, community organizations, and hospitals to provide artistically excellent assembly programs that further develop Creative Learning and Life Skills.

All YA artists are professional artists who have completed a rigorous interview and audition process and are evaluated annually on their work. Through in-school assembly performances, workshops, master classes and artist-in-residence programs, teachers and coordinators integrate the arts in their academic and enrichment programs while directly addressing national and state content standards.

Healing Arts for Kids expands YA's mission to make the arts a part of EVERY child's education. A group of professional artists provide assembly programs, small presentations, and residencies to acutely and chronically ill children, physically and emotionally challenged children, and other special education populations in K-12 schools, hospital schools, hospitals, and homeless shelters.



# Young Audiences of Massachusetts

89 South Street, Suite 601, Boston, MA 02111  
(617) 629-YAMA (9262) [scheduling@yamass.org](mailto:scheduling@yamass.org)  
[yamass.org](http://yamass.org)

## MASSACHUSETTS CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS CONNECTIONS

### Odaiko New England

- Language Arts 8* ...identify the basic facts and main ideas in a text and use them as the basis for interpretation.
- Foreign Languages 2* ...understand and interpret ideas and information written or spoken in a language.
- Foreign Languages 3* ...demonstrate an understanding of the traditions, perspectives, practices, and products of the culture studied, including human commonalities as reflected in history, literature, and the visual and performing arts.
- Foreign Languages 6* ...demonstrate an understanding of the concept of culture through comparison of the target culture with their own.
- Foreign Language 7* ...use the target language to reinforce and expand their knowledge of other disciplines and to acquire new information and knowledge.
- Arts-Music 3* Playing Instruments...play instruments, alone and with others, to perform a varied repertoire of music.
- Arts-Music 4* Improvisation and Composition...improvise, compose, and arrange music.
- Arts-Music 5* Critical Response...describe and analyze their own music and the music of others using appropriate music vocabulary.
- Arts-Music 6* Purpose and Meaning in the Arts...describe the purpose for which works of dance, music, theatre, visual arts, and architecture were and are created.
- Arts-Music 7* Roles of Artists in Communities...describe the roles of artists, patrons, cultural organizations, and art institutions in societies of the past and present.
- Arts-Music 8* Concepts of Style, Stylistic Influence, and Stylistic Change...demonstrate understanding of styles, influence, change.
- Arts-Music 9* Inventions, Technologies, and the Arts...describe and analyze how performing and visual artists use and have used materials, inventions, and technologies in their work.
- Arts-Music 10* Interdisciplinary Connections...apply knowledge of the arts to the study of English language arts, foreign languages, health, history, and social science, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering.