

Presented by
Bay Chamber Concerts



Wadaiko Yamato

Study Guide

Monday, December 10, 2007, 9:30 a.m.
Strom Auditorium , Camden Hills Regional High School

Underwritten by
Camden National Bank

With support from
CedarWorks Playsets
New England Foundation for the Arts



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Fact Sheet for Wadaiko Yamato,

- You will be attending a performance by Wadaiko Yamato, a drumming ensemble based in Japan.
- Yamato is an ensemble that is made up of six men and five women who give performances that incorporate acting and musicianship. It is unusual that there are women in the group because women are traditionally banned from being in Japanese percussion ensembles.
- Yamato was founded by Masa Ogawa in Nara, Japan, also known as “The Land of Yamato.” Nara is said to be the birthplace of Japanese culture, and is the ancient capital of Japan. The name Yamato is significant because this is said to be the name of Japan and Nara itself in the eighth century.
- The drums that will be played are called wadaiko, or more commonly, *taiko*. These drums are used for religious ceremonies, festivals, and daily life. There are several different types of *taiko* drums. They are identified by the way that they are made, their shapes, sizes, and the sounds that they create.
- The rhythms that the drums make are designed to create different emotions – some are happy, some are sad, and some can even be funny. Be sure to take note of the different emotions that you recognize.
- Some major elements of music that you will experience when watching Yamato are:
 - Beat – The basic rhythmic unit in a piece of music.
 - Tempo – This is the timing or pace of the music, and can be fast or slow.
 - Pitch – This refers to the quality of the sound in relation to other sounds, and is often described as “high” and “low.”
 - Dynamics – The loudness or softness of a piece of music.

Keep these elements in mind as you watch the performance, and see if you can identify examples of the drummers’ use of these elements in the music.



Note from YAMATO

“We put our very souls into these unusual instruments, whose sound stir the hearts of people everywhere, and our performances are infused with the idea that the drumbeat, like the heartbeat, is the very pulse of life. We continue to travel with several dozen large and small drums (including an odaiko made from a huge tree over 400 years old), displaying the instruments' versatility and instinctive appeal.”

A typical day for a performing Taiko group

8:00 a.m.	Come to the teacher's house	Run 10 miles in the mountains
9:00 a.m.	Eat breakfast together	
10:00 a.m.	Training	Weight Training <i>Suburi</i> : swinging <i>bachi</i> as if playing a large drum – 1000 repetitions
12:00 p.m.	Eat lunch together	
1:00 p.m.	Go to dojo and set up <i>taiko</i> for practice	
3:00 – 9:00 p.m.	Practice	
9:00 p.m.	Meeting and dinner at teacher's house	
12:00 a.m.	Go home	

SHIN-ON: Heartbeat

My heartbeat was forged in ancient times
From one beat to the next, slowly it links together
(A thought set within each sound)
Carrying forth lives
I feel
This energy which flows from past to future
And today
I beat
With all my might
A beat connecting past with future
One beat, one sound.

Yamato's Program "SHIN-ON: HEARTBEAT :"

Since the day we formed *Yamato*, we have been thinking about the importance of "one beat, one sound." As *taiko* (Japanese drum) players, we put our energy and thought into getting a resonating sound each time we beat the drum. The link between each of these beats is very important as well. It is as if our lives were made up of each of these moments every day. History, too, can be viewed as composed of links between each person, numerous links between people existing on the Earth. When we see ourselves as simple members of this Earth, we are surprised and moved to discover that, in fact, we have inherited our heartbeat from the past and will give it on to the future. With this in mind, we beat the drums to meditate on the significance of "one beat, one sound," "one piece of music, one performance," and "one chance in our lives" to perform with *Yamato*.

For 15 years the rigorous training of the 10 men and women of this troupe has allowed us to give all our energy to every beat of music that we play. Each beat of the drum is meant to synchronize with your heartbeats, and, through this, all of our thoughts will be united. Today is the one chance for this we will have in our lives.

One beat, one sound.

We play, hoping that the heartbeat we make will become energy for tomorrow.

The Musical Compositions

The first piece is called *Yakara*. In the Kansai Area, from which the group originates, *Yakara* means "youngsters full of vigor" (and also includes the notion of "violent"). We'd like to express the high spirit and energy of young people who are all the more vigorous for their ignorance of the world, and their unconsciousness of the feelings of others.

The second piece is *Hayate*. *Hayate* means “a wind which swiftly blows through.” According to the Beaufort Wind Scale, *Hayate* is ranked as “Wind Force 5.” Here, we play the *syamisen*, a kind of Japanese stringed instrument that evokes the moment this invigorating blast shakes the trees and ripples the water.

The third piece is *Rekka* (or “Fierce Fire”). In our last two tours, two men performed this piece, but this time, a man and a woman will play it. As quick as lightning, and with thorough care, the two will compete with each other through the beat of the *taiko*.

Kizashi (or “Sign”) is the fourth piece. Originally composed in 1995, the hallmark of this piece is its speed and synchronicity. The sticks move like choreographed lightning. To perform this piece to perfection, we practice working together with beauty and harmony, even in our daily lives. We hope you will see the uniformity we’ve attained by living together in this way.

The fifth piece is *Lion*. It means “Thunder”. In Japanese, its pronunciation is similar to the English word “Lion.” So in this piece we express the strong image of these two words “Thunder” and “Lion” through a typical Japanese drumming style called *Kumi-taiko*. In *Kumi taiko*, players combine to beat many kinds of *taikos*. This form of *taiko* playing developed soon after the Second World War, and is now the most popular style of *taiko* performance. For us, playing in the *Kumi-taiko* style is the most enjoyable!

The sixth piece is *Rakuda*. This is also a well-known musical style. This piece is one of our most important works and playing it never fails to make us happy. *Rakuda* is a coined word whose Chinese characters literally mean “merrily” and “to beat.” The Japanese word *rakuda* also means “camel” in English. So let’s conjure up the image of a happy-go-lucky camel, and enjoy ourselves!

The seventh piece is *Garakuta*. This was performed for the first time on our previous tour. In this piece, we put down our drums in favor of the *chappa*, small cymbal-like instruments. The highlight of this piece is a comical scene in which big burly men perform with these small instruments in their hands. In Japan we have a word, *Oto-dama* (or “the soul of sound”). Since ancient times, we have thought of sound as having a soul. For this piece, we have created a little performance where *Oto-dama*, or sound balls (another meaning of *Oto-dama*), fly back and forth. If one of these balls reaches you, we’d be very happy.

The final piece is called *Shin-on*. The sound of the Japanese drums is *Shin-on* (or “Heart beat”) itself. It’s full of strength and vitality. For this piece, we bring *Yamato*’s big *taiko* to the front of the stage. With everyone present, we feel the heavy, low sound of the big drum shaking the Earth in the center of the stage. The sound of this drum becomes the sound of the heartbeats of the players, jumping around the stage. Your heartbeat too,

will synchronize with the sound. Gradually all our heartbeats will overlap, and we will be united at last.

History of Taiko₂

Percussion was a standard part of both Chinese and Japanese ensemble music. From Chinese music, the Japanese employed three percussion instruments: a side drum (*kakko*), a bronze gong (*shoko*), and a large, hanging drum struck by two large, heavy drumsticks (*taiko*).

Taiko drumming has been part of Japanese culture for hundreds of years. Its roots lie in the countless temples and shrines scattered throughout Japan where the drums were played in religious festivals and ceremonies. It is said that the furthest point at which the village *taiko* could be heard marked the edge of the village. In later Japanese music, the *taiko* evolved into an important solo instrument in its own right and *taiko* ensemble music became one of the most spectacular "music alone" performances in Japanese tradition. Today, groups like Ondekoza, Kodo and Yamato regularly bring *taiko* to a global audience. Meanwhile, in Japan there are around four-and-a-half thousand *taiko* drumming groups, amateur and professional, encompassing a vast range of playing styles and sounds.

As with most percussion, *taiko* music is very close to the origins of music in the movement of the body and a real experience requires seeing as well as hearing the performance. Taiko performance is based on the modulation between the "female" (left hand) and "male" (right hand) strokes of the drumsticks—the female stroke is always soft and the male stroke is always strong. The modulation between soft and strong is the primary component of *taiko* performance.

In performance, cymbals, gongs, flutes, *koto* (Japanese zither) and *shamisen* (Japanese lute) augment the percussion. The rhythms the drummers use are sometimes intense, sometimes funny and warm, expressing different moods, times and places. The metaphysical aim of the musicians is to link their hearts and souls with the beatings of the drums. Masaki Ogawa explains: "We are a group of people who create the beat of life by using a simple and interesting instrument and instilling our souls into it."

Types of Taiko Drums₅

In Japan the bodies of the *taiko* are usually carved from a single log, which means that the making of a large *taiko* takes a large tree. The scarcity of old growth forests makes it difficult to obtain large enough logs. To compensate, some *taiko* makers now use used oak wine or whiskey barrels for the drum body. The traditional wood for *taiko* is *keyaki* (zelkovia) or sen. The scarcity of these woods has led some makers to use berbenga from Africa, which is itself scarce and expensive.

The drum heads of the *taiko* are made of leather, typically the rawhide of a cow. For some extremely large *taiko*, the skins of water buffalo may be used.

Taiko are measured in the traditional Japanese measures of *shaku* and *sun*. One *shaku* is about twelve inches (30 cm), and is divided into ten *sun*. Usually only the diameter of one head is measured. The most typical size of *nagado-daiko*, commonly called a *Josuke*, has a head diameter of about two *shaku* (24 inches or 60 cm), and small *shime-daiko* measure 1.3 *shaku* (15 inches or 39 cm).



The *nagado-daiko* (long-bodied *taiko*) is the most popular drum used today. They are often used in festivals, temples, and shrines. Identified by their characteristically deep sound, they come in many different sizes. Different stands hold the *nagado-daiko* in various positions, and the drums are played using many different styles.

The *odaiko* can refer to any large *taiko* drum, but it is most commonly used to identify drums that are over three feet in diameter. They are usually placed on a stand and played horizontally, and often by two people at once. One player will beat out the rhythm while the other plays the solos. These large drums can span as much as six feet in diameter.



The *hira-daiko* (left) is most often a small drum, although the sizes of these also vary. They have a sound that is similar to the *nagado-daiko*, but will decay much faster due to the shallow body.

The *shime-daiko* (right) are used in classical Japanese music, and are also called "*taiko*" or "*wadaiko*." They have lightweight bodies and thin heads.



The *oke-daiko*, or *okedo*, is made with a stave construction and is not carved from a single piece of wood (as is the case with the *nagado-daiko*). These drums tend to be larger than the *nagado-daiko*, and are around six feet in length and three feet in diameter. They have a loud, flat, booming sound, and are often played with slats of bamboo that create a slapping noise.

Other instruments

The *Shakuhachi* is a bamboo flute with four holes in the front and one in the back. Its name can be translated as “30 centimeters” and refers to the length of the instrument. The *shakuhachi* was originally used in zen meditation because its sound so closely mirrors the music of the natural world. In Meianji times (1860-1900 AD), monks would wander the country playing with a basket on their head, trusting in Buddha and gathering alms. Today *shakuhachi* is used in chamber music and many forms of jazz.



Monk playing
Shaku-hatchi

Shinobue (shee-noh-booe) is a small woodwind similar to the piccolo. Its melody combines well with the *taiko* and is often used in Kabuki theater. The Shinobue is made of a single length of bamboo.

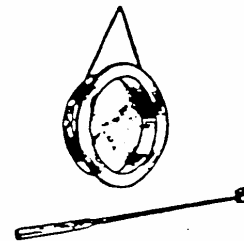
String Instruments

The *Koto* is a semi-cylindrical zither, normally made of paulownia wood. It uses 13 strings, each of which has a movable bridge. This allows many unique tuning combinations. The strings are plucked with small picks on the thumb, the index and middle fingers of the right hand. The left hand raises the pitch or changes the tone. The 13 stringed koto, modeled on the Chinese Zheng (or Cheng) is approximately six feet long. It also dates back to the 8th century and was found in court music ensembles.

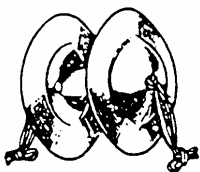
The *erhu* is a Chinese two-stringed fiddle commonly referred to as a spike fiddle. It is often used in folk ensembles and is the principle bowed instrument in the modern Chinese orchestra. It is also used to accompany operatic singing.

Other Percussion

The *Atarigane* (ah-tah ree-gah-neh) is a small brass gong held in the hand and played with a mallet. The mallet head is made of antler or bone set on a bamboo stick. By hitting different parts of the gong, a variety of tones can be produced.



Hyoshigi (heeyoh-shee-ghee) are hard wood clappers played in the Noh theater during a fight. Their clatter adds greatly to the power of the fight. Outside the theater, the sound of the *hyoshigi* was once used by the fire watcher to signal the night patrol. During the day, the same signal was used by the candy vendor, signaling to the children.



Chappa (chahp-pah) are small hand cymbals made of bronze. Because the *chappa* are so small the player can move and dance about freely.

Costumes

Taiko is at its roots a folk music. It grew from the need for music at festivals and celebrations in ancient Japanese village life. All of the people in the village were included; farmers, carpenters, fishermen, everyone. When they played, they often wore the clothes they worked in. Over time these work clothes developed into the costumes worn today.

The *Hachimaki* (headband) was originally used by farmers and fishermen as a towel to wipe away sweat. Today it is worn by anyone that intends to work hard. The Japanese also believe that putting pressure on the forehead helps concentration. Japanese children wear the *hachimaki* with the rising sun symbol to help them study.

Happi



The *Happi* is the coat worn by *taiko* players. It is believed that this style developed from a coat designed by the fire brigades of Tokyo in the Edo period.

The *Donburi* or vest was originally a carpenters tool belt. It has many pockets for tools, nails, and rulers. After a *taiko* piece is played, the drummer will often use the pockets of his *donburi* to hold the *bachi* while moving equipment.

The pants are referred to as *Momohiki*.

The shoes of a *taiko* drummer are called *Tabi*. Like mittens for the feet, they are shaped to keep the big toe separate from the others. Most Japanese find this more comfortable, probably because they are used to wearing thongs which also have something between the big toe and the other toes. The socks underneath are shaped the same way in order to fit comfortably.



Teki or wristbands are worn to keep the wrists warm and limber during cold Japanese winters. They also prevent sweat from running onto the hands and making the *bachi* slippery.

The sticks used to play the *taiko* are called *bachi*. Drummers use different stick sizes, shapes and weights depending on the drum being played. In Japan, Japanese oak is most often used because it has a long straight grain. This helps prevent small pieces chipping off when the drum is played very hard. In America, drummers use oak or ironwood.

The Country of Japan ^{3,4}



Geography

The islands of Japan lie between the Sea of Japan and the Pacific Ocean, and are part of a chain that runs along the coast of Asia opposite China, Korea, and Russia. The four main islands of Japan are Kyushu, Hokkaido, Honshu, and Shikoku. There are also roughly three thousand smaller islands.

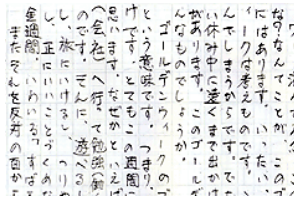
The country has four well-defined seasons. Two of the most beautiful sights in Japan are the cherry blossoms in spring and the vibrant reds, oranges, and yellows of the autumn leaves.

Japan's lands are very mountainous, and about eighty percent of the country is covered by hills and mountains. The highest point is Mount Fuji, at 3,776 meters. The climate is tropical in the south and cooler in the north. Japan's land area

is slightly smaller than California.

The People

The population of Japan is approximately 127,000,000 people, making the country one of the highest population densities in the world. The majority of the people are Japanese, although there is a small number of Korean, Chinese and Brazilians of Japanese ancestry. Japanese is the national language, and it is written in three different ways – *kanji*, *katakana*, *hiragana*. Eighty-four percent of the population practice the Shinto and Buddhist religions, with Christianity, Islam and Confucianism practiced by the remaining sixteen percent.



History

Japan has a long and rich history. Inhabited since the Paleolithic Age (Old Stone Age), the Jomon culture, named for its style of pottery, is the first known culture (800 – 300 BC). Migrations from the mainland of what is now China occurred around 200 BC to 600 AD, and brought with them Buddhism, Confucianism, metalworking and other technologies. Small cities and states began to develop and various alliances were formed until a central power was established in the capital at Nara. The capital moved to Kyoto in 794, where it remained for over a thousand years.

Emperors ruled Japan from 600 AD to 1192 AD, when the power was then transferred to the military commander called a Shogun. The power of the Shogun lay in his control of the warrior class, the Samurai. The Shogun position and subsequent control of the government was passed from one great family to another.

The first western visitors arrived in 1543 from Portugal, and were soon followed by Dutch, British, and Spanish merchants and missionaries. In 1639, the Shogun decided to ban all foreigners from Japan with the exception of a few Dutch merchants confined to Nagasaki. This isolation ended in 1853 with the arrival of Commodore Perry from the United States.

The Shogun lost its control when the Emperor Meiji took control of Japan in 1868. It was at this time that the capital was moved and renamed Tokyo, and Japan was opened to the outside world. Today, Japan is an independent country, and is considered to be one of the most important economic powers in the world.

Traditional Culture

Traditional performing arts that continue to thrive in Japan today include *kabuki*, *noh*, *kyogen*, and *bunraku*.

Kabuki is a form of classical theater that evolved in the early seventeenth century, characterized by the rhythm of the lines spoken by the actors, extravagant costumes, flamboyant makeup (*kumadori*), and the use of mechanical devices to achieve special effects on stage. The makeup accentuates the personalities and moods of the characters. Most plays draw on medieval or Edo period themes, and all the actors, even those playing female roles, are men.

Noh is Japan's oldest form of musical theater. The story is told not just through dialogue but also through *utai* (singing), *hayashi* (musical accompaniment), and dance. Another feature is that the leading actor, dressed in a colorful costume of embroidered silk, usually wears a lacquered wooden mask. The masks depict such characters as an old man, a young or old woman, a divine figure, a ghost, or a young boy.

Bunraku, which became popular around the end of the sixteenth century, is a kind of puppet theater that is performed to the accompaniment of narrative singing and music played on the *shamisen*. *Bunraku* is known as one of the world's most refined forms of puppet theater.

The tea ceremony (*sado* or *chado*) is a highly structured method of preparing green tea. But there is far more to *sado* than the ritual making and serving of tea. It is a profound total art that requires a wide range of knowledge; delicate sensitivity; explores the purpose of life; and encourages an appreciation of nature.

Japanese flower arrangement (*ikebana*), evolved in Japan over seven centuries and has its origin in early Buddhist flower offerings. This art is distinguished from purely decorative use of flowers by the extreme care taken in choosing every element of each work, including the plant material, the container, where each branch and flower is placed, and how the branches relate to the container and the surrounding space.

Modern Culture

Classical music was brought to Japan from the West and enjoys a broad following. Concerts are held all over the country. Japan has also produced many conductors (such as Ozawa Seiji), pianists, and violinists who perform around the world.

Since Kurosawa Akira won the Golden Lion Award at the Venice Film Festival in 1951, Japanese cinema has been the focus of global attention, and works by great directors like Mizoguchi Kenji and Ozu Yasujiro have been widely hailed. More recently, Kitano Takeshi won the Golden Lion Award at the 1997 Venice Film Festival with *Hana-bi* and the best director award at the 2003 festival with *Zatoichi*.

Japanese *anime* (animated shows), which have been entertaining Japanese children since the 1960s, are now exported all over the world, and series like "Astro Boy," "Doraemon," "Sailor Moon," and "Dragonball Z" are now global children's favorites. Meanwhile, director Miyazaki Hayao's "Spirited Away" won the Oscar for best animated feature in 2003, and "Howl's Moving Castle" was chosen for the Osella Award at the 2004 Venice Film Festival.

In literature, Japanese Nobel Prize winners include Kawabata Yasunari and Oe Kenzaburo, while the works of more modern authors like Murakami Haruki and Yoshimoto Banana are popular among young Japanese and have been translated into many languages.

Fast Facts about Japan

- Mount Fuji is a sacred mountain for the Japanese. Pilgrimages are made to the mountain every year.
- The Japanese word for Japan, *Nihon* (*Nippon*) means “source of the sun.”
- The 4 main islands of Japan are : Kyushu, Hokkaido, Honshu, and Shikoku. The capital is Tokyo, located on the island of Honshu.
- The Japanese Imperial Family is headed by Emperor Akihito. The Emperor and Empress Michiko have three children: Princess Sayako, Crown Prince Naruhito, and Prince Akishino.
- Japan is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary government. The current Prime Minister is Yasuo Fukuda.
- Japan’s most famous train is the *Shinkansen*, the bullet train, which links Tokyo and Osaka. On busy days the train carries over a million passengers.
- Shoes are removed before entering homes and religious shrines.
- Kite-making is a traditional craft.
- Sushi is made of rice prepared with vinegar, vegetable, egg, or raw seafood, garnishes and served cold. Modern sushi was developed as a “fast food” that could be eaten on the roadside or in a theatre. Two popular forms are: “*nigri-sushi*” which consists of an oblong mound of sushi rice, formed between the palms of the hand, and a topping; “*maki-sushi*” which is rice and a topping rolled in a cylinder wrapped with *nori*, or dried seaweed, and sliced into 4 or more pieces.
- Some basic Japanese words and phrases
 - Hello: *Ohayogozaimasu*
 - Good afternoon: *Konnichiwa*
 - Goodbye: *Sayonara*
 - Goodnight: *Oyasuminasai*
 - Thank you: *Arigatogozaimasu*
 - You are welcome: *Doitashimasite*
 - Thank you for food you are about to eat: *Arigatogozaimasu itta dakimasu*
 - Excuse me: *Sumimasen*
 - I don’t understand anything you are saying: *Zenzen wakarimasen*

Elements of Music

There are many different elements of music. The major elements that will be experienced in the Yamato performance are: beat, tempo, pitch, and dynamics. Discuss these elements with the students and then lead the students in the various activities. Musical examples are given, but feel free to use any musical recordings that you feel pertain to the exercise!

- (1) Beat – The basic rhythmic unit in a piece of music., such as 4/4, 6/8, 12/8, etc... Play a piece of music, such as Brahms Hungarian Dances, No. 18, and have students tap out the beat using their hands. To expand this exercise, lead the students in keeping the beat using different parts of their body (tapping on their head, shoulders, knees, waving their hands, etc). Have individual students come to the front of the class and lead their classmates in tapping the beat using different body parts.
- (2) Tempo – This is the timing or pace of the music. For example, some music is fast and some music is slow. Play music that has slow and fast qualities. An example includes the slow sections of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 3 and the fast sections of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. Lead the students in different movements that express the tempos of the music (slow hand and arm movements, or rapidly jogging in place). Another idea is to have students make drawings of how both of the tempos make them feel.
- (3) Pitch – This refers to the quality of the sound in relation to other sounds, and is often described as “high” and “low.” For example, a flute has a high pitch whereas a tuba has a low pitch. Fill plastic jugs or glasses with different levels of water. Have students tap on the jugs with a spoon or stick and describe the pitch as being either high or low. If you have a piano or other instruments in your classroom, you can do this activity by playing different notes.
- (4) Dynamics – The loudness or softness of a piece of music. Lead the students in a song that they all know, and use arm gestures to convey the dynamics that you want them to sing with. Arm gestures above your head would be very loud, while arm gestures down towards the floor would be soft.

Remind students to listen for these elements while they are watching Yamato.

Activity 1 - Rhythm

Objective – Learn to identify rhythm and tempo

Rhythm is a regular pattern of sounds that repeats. Every day you hear rhythms all around you, like rain hitting the ground, telephones ringing, or water dripping. Even when you walk your footsteps create a rhythm.

Tempo is how fast or slow the pattern repeats itself. For example, the sound of rain falling will usually have a faster tempo, or speed, than the sound of water dripping.

Slap, Snap, Tap, Clap

Grab a friend and get a rhythm going by slapping your knees, snapping your fingers, tapping your feet, or clapping your hands together in the following rhythm:

clap, clap, tap, tap , snap, snap, snap

clap, SLAP, clap, SLAP

tap, tap, tap

{Repeat }

Keep repeating until you have the rhythm down. Then change the tempo by repeating the rhythm going faster or slower than before.

Activity 2: Sounds from the Natural World

One defining characteristic of Japanese music is its affinity for and inclusion of sounds from the natural world. *Shakuhachi* is famous for its replication of winds blowing through the bamboo, the koto for falling water. Similarly the *taiko* has been used to represent thunder, earthquakes and tidal waves.

Task

Sit quietly for 1-2 minutes, preferably outside, but this is not essential. Write down the different sounds you hear. (this can be done over a period of a week or month as well) Was there a barking sound? Chairs scraping? An air sound? A metallic sound? A quick sound? Slow sound? Does anyone hear a melody in these sounds? Have the group see if they can replicate (sing, clap, tap) everyone's sound in some sort of pattern, preferably in the same sequence and timing that they heard it. (Allow space to be a part of the piece).

You can also demonstrate natural percussion rhythms. Take a ball (basketballs work great). Drop it from head height. Listen to the accelerating rhythm of the sounds. This accelerating rhythm is used frequently in Japanese music.

Activity 3: Newspaper *bachi* (drumsticks)

Items needed: newspaper, duct tape

Take 6-8 layers of newspaper and roll them so they are an even thickness throughout . The diameter should be about 1 1/2 – 2 inches. Fasten the ends with duct tape. If possible, tape the entire newspaper surface to make a firmer *bachi*. have each student make two.

Activity 4: Working together

1. Seat class in a circle. Each student has a pair of sticks, or *bachi*. All hit rhythm sticks together seven times, counting in Japanese. On “8” or *hachi*, students are silent, with their *bachi* apart, while one student says loudly: “*Su*” (which means rest). Go around the circle until all have had a turn.
2. Students work as partners to make a 10-count exercise that incorporates rhythm and body movements. The two should try to integrate their movements together. They may mirror each other, work side by side, or compliment each other’s movement. Emphasize that *taiko* uses movements while beating the drum. Students then demonstrate their exercise to the rest of the class.

Japanese Numbers

one	<i>ichi</i>
two	<i>ni</i>
three	<i>san</i>
four	<i>shi</i> (or <i>yon</i>)
five	<i>go</i>
six	<i>roku</i>
seven	<i>shichi</i> (or <i>nana</i>)
eight	<i>hachi</i>
nine	<i>kyu</i> (or <i>ku</i>)
ten	<i>jyu</i>

Activity 5: Interpreting a folk tale

Objective

This lesson plan is structured to introduce students to Japanese stories, from these stories they can learn about a different culture’s attitudes and values while also engaging their own imaginations and expanding their vocabularies.

The Tale of Amaterasu and the Cave tells of the mythological origin of the *taiko* and drummer in Japan. The following is one version of the tale.

Opening Discussion

Read the story and answer the following questions:

- Who are the characters in the story?
- What do they look like?
- Can you draw pictures of the major characters?
- (Plot) What happens in the story?
- Can you arrange the events in chronological order?
- (Setting) Where does the story take place?

- What does it look like there?
- Can you draw a picture of the place?
- (Exposition) How did the story begin?
- How were the characters introduced?
- (Climax) Was there a high-point in the story where the story became more exciting?
- Did the story have surprises?
- (Conclusion) How does the story end? Is there a lesson that the story teaches you?

Discussion/Follow Up

Have the students turn this folktale into a play, using the different elements of a story you've just discussed.

Amaterasu and the Cave

One day long ago, the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu was visited by her brother Susano, the Storm God. He carelessly let loose his horses in her rice fields to feed them. Amaterasu's crops were destroyed and she became very angry. So great was her anger that she hid away inside a cave vowing never to come out.

The people on earth began to worry. If Amaterasu remained in the cave there would be no more sunshine upon the earth. Without sunshine, the earth would be dark and cold and crops would not grow. Surely they would die. So the people prayed to the gods and goddesses to help them. Finally, Uzume, the Goddess of Mirth came forward.

Uzume went to the cave entrance and began a joyous dance upon a hollow log. She stomped her feet, beating out wild and inviting rhythms. Inside the cave Amaterasu's curiosity grew and she had to find out what was making the wonderful sounds. Outside the cave entrance the gods and goddesses held a great mirror (the first mirror made by the gods). When Amaterasu peeked out of the cave, her great radiance was captured by the mirror. Amaterasu was so delighted by her beautiful reflection that she forgot her anger and sunshine was restored to the earth.

Activity 5: Learning a Taiko Piece

Objective

Taiko songs are not learned in western style by reading notation. Instead *taiko* uses a drum language or syllabary. In Japanese this system is called *Kushishoka*- where *kushi* is "mouth" and *shoka* means "to sing". Literally, *taiko* players learn to "sing" the *taiko* songs and then transfer that song into playing it on the drum. Each verbal sound represents a sound made by the drum and a time value.

Write the following on a blackboard:

<i>Renshyu Daiko- Practice Piece</i>							
Don		Kon		Don		Kon	
Do	Ko	Don	Kon	Don	Kon	Don	Kon (Repeat both lines)
Do	Ro	tsu	ku	Do	Ro	tsu	ku (Repeat)
Don	Ka	Ra	Don	Ka	Ra	Don	Kon (Repeat)
Don	Do	Ko	Don	Do	Ko	Don	Kon (Repeat)
Su	Don	Su	Kon	Su	Don	Kon	Ho! (Repeat)

- Don Hard right hand to the center of the drum (1/4 note)
- Ka Right hand to the wooden rim of the drum (1/4 note)
- Kon Hard left hand to the center of the drum (1/4 note)
- DoRo Used instead of Don Kon when the beat get faster, because it is easier to sing
- Ra Left hand to the wooden rim of the drum (1/4 note)
- Do Light right hand to the center of the drum (1/4 note)
- Ko Light left hand to the center of the drum (1/4 note)
- Ho A shout of enthusiasm
- Tsu (tsoo) Soft right hand strike to the drum head (1/4 note)
- Tsu ku (tsoo-koo) Soft right/left strikes to the drum head (two 1/4 note)
- Su A rest – don't play, sung as a space holder

Task _ Practice *kushishoga*

Have all the students learn to sing the song, repeat it many times until everyone can sing it.

Hints: A. The rhythm is in straight 4/4 time and the first line can be thought of as:
 Don 2 3 4, Kon 2 3 4, Don 2 3 4, Kon 2 3 4

B. The second line has twice the notes :

Do rest Ko rest Don rest Kon rest
 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

The second line also increases in volume as it proceeds.

C. The third line has a note on every beat.

3. Once they can sing it, have the students play the song by drumming (gently) their open hands on their thighs for the don, kon, and do, kos and playing on their desk or tables for the Ka and Ra. (they can play on anything that makes a higher pitched sound). After learning to sing the piece it should be significantly easier to learn the drumming.

RESOURCES

Books for Younger Students:

Japan the Land (1989)
By Bobbie Kalman

A to Zen: A Book of Japanese Culture (1992)
By Ruth Wells

Japan (1998)
By Ann Heinrichs

This Place is Crowded (1992)
By Vicki Cobb and Barbara Lavallee

Books for Older Students:

Japanese Culture (2000)
By Paul Varley

Japan: Its History and Culture (2005)
By Scott Morton

Web Sites

Kids web- Japan
<http://web-japan.org/kidsweb/>

Japan America Society of Maine
<http://www.maine-japan.org/index.htm>

References

1. Excerpted and edited from the Wadaiko Yamato website at www.yamato.jp/english
2. Excerpted and edited from Flynn Center for Performing Art study guide.
3. Excerpted and edited from CIA World Factbook at www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ja.html
4. Excerpted and edited from Kidsweb Japan
5. Taiko drum photos courtesy of Dan Lindenmeyer's website www.worldsphere.net
6. Drawings of additional instruments by Nissa Kauppila