

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND RESIDENCIES

TOKARA offers one of the most well-known and respected taiko residency programs in the world - from single workshops to long-term intensive residencies. Each of these can be adapted for participants of all levels, from elementary school performances to university classes and demonstrations to community workshops.

Since being given the title of Master Wadaiko Artist by Grandmaster Daihachi Oguchi, Artistic Director Art Lee has been vigorously involved in taiko education since 1998 and has gained an international reputation for offering a diverse range of community and school programs that give students a chance to explore the culture of Japan and the world of Taiko in Japan.

Art has taught weekly classes to children and adults in both the U.S. and Japan, as well as being the resident instructor of Japanese community taiko groups: Suiko and Nadeshiko. Since 2004, TOKARA has conducted over 150 school educational performances and lectures in Japan, The United States, Canada, Europe and Taiwan. Art Lee has further conducted special taiko education workshops and long-term residencies in ten countries.

Art Lee created both the INADANI Taiko Drumming Course and the Tokara Wadaiko Bookcamp in Nagano, Japan. Both are one to two week courses and are currently two of the most sought-after taiko drumming courses in the world. He has also acted as long-term resident artistic director in the United Kingdom, and twice in Australia.

Activities

TOKARA presents lecture demonstrations lasting 45 minutes, in which students are given a basic introduction to TOKARA and to Japanese taiko and culture, as well as a chance to view a performance of wadaiko pieces from the group's repertoire.

Depending on the length of the residency and the preference of the presenter, the following topics may be covered:

- Introduction to Taiko Instruments
- Movement and Rhythm
- Traditional Taiko Pieces
- Introduction to Japan
- Japanese Language and Daily Life

CHOREOGRAPHIC COMMISSIONS

TOKARA enthusiastically collaborates with dancers and musicians of all styles. Art Lee's choreographic collaborations have involved Indian, Flamenco, African, Japanese and Modern dance companies, as well as Piano, Djembe, Korean Dance, and Philharmonic Orchestras. Recent collaborations include South Indian Dance Group, Ragamala Dance; and Shakuhachi and Koto Japanese Traditional Music Group, Ensemble Rivelta.

HIGHLIGHTED WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

Dento Yori -

To fully understand what taiko is, it is necessary to study the history and traditions.

A great beginning class for learning taiko - start with the classics. This workshop brings taiko practitioners and beginners into the fascinating and abundant world that is traditional wadaiko. Learning what came before in the world of taiko; its culture and tradition, is one of the guiding principles upon which Wadaiko Ensemble TOKARA is founded; each member must learn and master many traditional pieces before being allowed to perform the original pieces. Participants to this workshop will study, just as beginning Tokara members, the history, theory and playing styles of one or many traditional taiko pieces, depending upon the length of the workshop.

Hip Up Taiko -

Worried about rhythm? No problem. A great way to become simply enjoy taiko.

"Hip Up" is a phrase used in Japan meaning to become physically fit. Hip-Up Taiko is a new style of workshop for both taiko practitioners and those who have no experience in taiko at all, and is designed with the idea of playing very simple taiko rhythms mixed with a full aerobic body workout. Movements are dynamic upper and lower body movements based upon the unique TOKARA style of taiko. Rhythms are extremely simple and fun, allowing all participants to get a good full-body workout.

Taiko Stairmaster -

Taiko Stairmaster is the ultimate taiko exercise to make both left and right hands equal.

As many taiko drumming pieces emphasize the right hand over the left, many practitioners gradually find a large difference strength and control between the right and left hands. With this in mind, Art Lee created the Taiko Stairmaster in 2004 with seven levels of difficulty.

The Taiko Stairmaster workshop has become one of the most sought after taiko workshops among intermediate to professional taiko players as well as percussionists of many styles. Intermediate to professional levels are recommended, although beginners are welcome to take the challenge.

Uchikomi -

This is taiko at its most pure. High level training for mind and body for any level participant.

How to hit the drum...how to produce the best possible sounds from each section of the drum...how to endure no matter how tired you get. This is Uchikomi.

The honing of the mind and body through non-stop practice. Each participant is guaranteed to have a good night's sleep after this practice.

INTENSIVE PROGRAMS IN JAPAN

INADANI TAIKO DRUMMING COURSE

Beginners Course

This course is designed for the purpose of bringing the taiko practitioner closer to understanding the art that is Wadaiko in Japan. For this reason, the training site, nestled between the mountains of Shimoina, was specifically chosen to enhance an experience and atmosphere which cannot be had in any other country of the world. This course offers a unique experience as it takes place in the heart of Japan - Nagano Prefecture. It is here that taiko, as a performing art, was created.

Each participant will be surrounded by and immersed in the culture from which comes the heart and spirit of the Wadaiko.

Details and application can be found on the course website: www.wadaikoworld.net/japantaikocourse.html

TOKARA WADAIKO BOOTCAMP

Intermediate/Advanced Course

The TOKARA Wadaiko Camp (also known as TOKARA Boot Camp) in Japan takes place during the most lively time of year in Japan; Obon Festival Season. This course will allow the taiko practitioner to fully immerse themselves in the world of taiko in Japan; from intensive training during the day to enjoying the rural life of Japan through festival performances every evening. On the weekend, participants travel to Tokyo to see the Tokyo International Wadaiko Contest - a grouping of some of the up-and-coming taiko groups from all over Japan. Then the Taiko Kenbunroku - the All-Star Concert featuring Honoo Daiko, Imafuku Yuu, Yoshikazu Fujimoto of Kodo, and other specially chosen guest performers. This is an opportunity for participants to experience what it is like to live in Japan as a taiko player, and to train in and see firsthand the vast abundance of taiko styles that abode in Japan.

Details and application can be found on the course website: www.tokara.net/taikocamp.html

All workshops are currently taught by Art Lee and Tokara both within Japan and throughout the world during international tours. If you would like to book one of these workshops for your event, please contact Wadaiko TOKARA Japan.