

Mondavi Center

ARTS EDUCATION 2011-12
TARGET SCHOOL MATINEE SERIES

CUE

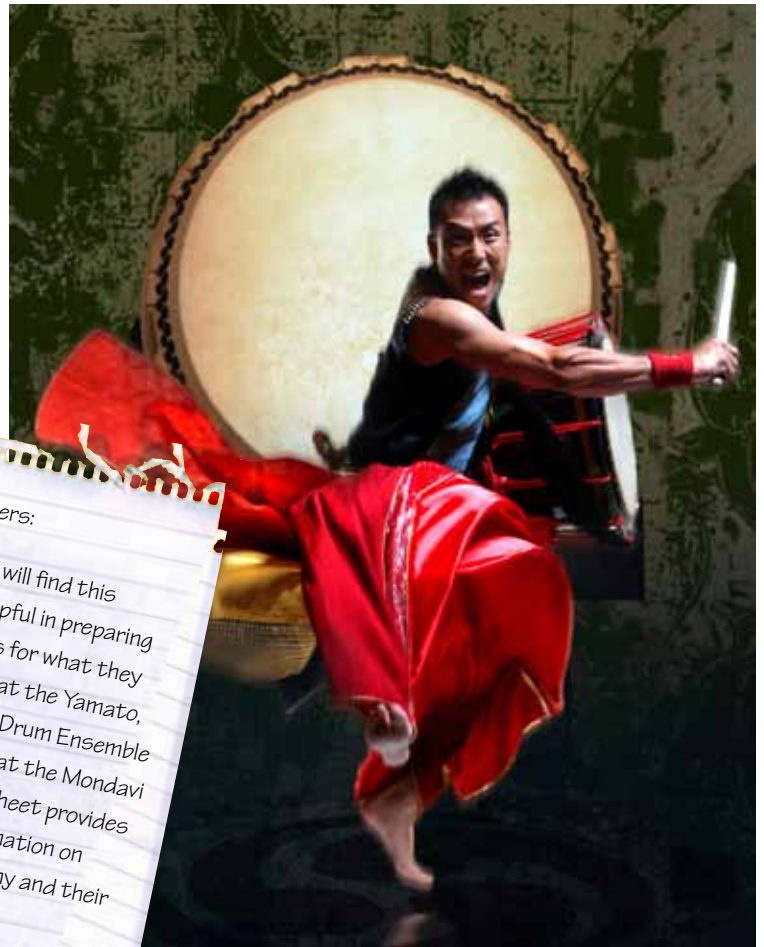
Sheet for Teachers

Yamato Japanese Taiko Drum Ensemble

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2011

11 AM • JACKSON HALL

Recommended for grades K-12



Dear Teachers:

We hope you will find this CueSheet helpful in preparing your students for what they will experience at the Yamato, Japanese Taiko Drum Ensemble School Matinee at the Mondavi Center. The CueSheet provides background information on this unique company and their performance.

ABOUT

Yamato was founded in 1993 by Masa Ogawa in Nara, the ancient capital of Japan and “the land of Yamato.” In the eighth century, Japan was known as Yamato, and Nara was the city where Japanese culture is believed to have started.

Since its creation, Yamato has performed in more than twenty countries in Asia, Europe, and the Americas. Their international debut occurred in 1998 at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, where the group was awarded the “Spirit of the Fringe” award. The following year, Yamato embarked on three international tours, covering South America, six countries in Europe, and Israel.

Yamato combines traditional Japanese musical formats with modern rhythms and themes. They think of the sound of the drums as the pulse or the heartbeat (Shin-on). It grows to a thunder as Yamato’s taiko drummers put their souls into playing the traditional Wadaiko drums that range from the tiny hand-held Uchiwa Daiko to the giant Odaiko, made from a 400-year-old tree.

Taiko drumming is one of the signature traditional arts of Japan, and the Yamato ensemble represents the new generation of the ancient art. The 15 young men and women of Yamato fill the stage with drums in sizes ranging from a few inches in diameter to giant drums six feet across, augmented with gongs, flutes, shamisen and koto.



The **shamisen** (translated as “three flavored strings”) is a plucked stringed instrument. Its construction follows a model similar to that of a guitar or a banjo.



The **koto** is the national instrument of Japan. It has 13 strings that are strung over 13 movable bridges along the width of the instrument.

LEARN MORE:

http://www.yamato.jp/info/e_index.html

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8dn1FgA54m8>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6_rghgyU2M



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think about it!

DEAR STUDENTS

- 1 Write a story about your impressions of the performance including what you saw (movement and costumes) and what you heard (songs and instruments).
- 2 According to their tradition, the Yamato drummers aim to express the "rhythmic beatings of the human spirit" through their music. In what ways do the performers convey this intention? What feelings did you have while you listened to the music and watched the musicians?
- 3 What did you like best about the performance and why? Was the performance different from what you expected? How?

ATTENDING THE THEATER

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF STUDENT AUDIENCES AT THE MATINEE:

- Please enter the auditorium quietly and take your assigned seat immediately (note that all matinees have reserved seating).
- Show courtesy to the artist and other guests at all times.
- Demonstrate appreciation for the artists' work by applauding at the appropriate times.
- Refrain from making unnecessary noise or movements.
- Please eat lunch before or after the performance; food is not allowed in the performance hall.
- Relate any information acquired from the pre-matinee discussion to the new information gained from the matinee.
- Please do not use flash photography.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE IN A PERFORMING ARTS THEATER:

A theater is a charged space, full of energy and anticipation. When the house lights (the lights that illuminate the audience seating) go down, the excitement level goes up! Theaters are designed so that the voices of the singers and actors and the music of the musicians can be heard. But this also means that any sound in the audience—whispering, rustling of papers, speaking and moving about—can be heard by other audience members and by the performers. Distractions like these upset everyone's concentration and can spoil a performance.

The performers on stage show respect for their art form and for the audience by doing their very best work. The audience shows respect for the performers by watching attentively.

Applause is the best way for audience members to share their enthusiasm and to show their appreciation for the performers. Applaud at the end of a performance! Sometimes the audience will clap during a performance, as after a featured solo. Audience members may feel like laughing if the action on stage is funny, crying if the action is sad, or sighing if something is seen or heard that is beautiful.

Appreciation can be shown in many different ways, depending upon the art form and the culture(s) of the people in the audience. While the audience at a dance performance will sit quietly, other types of performance invite audience participation.

MONDAVI CENTER ARTS EDUCATION provides CueSheets for all performances in the Mondavi Center 2011-12 Target School Matinee Series. They are intended to help teachers prepare their students for the school matinee that they will attend at Mondavi Center, UC Davis.

Sponsored by



Additional support provided by

ROBERT AND MARGRIT MONDAVI CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, UC DAVIS Don Roth, Ph.D *Executive Director*
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