Yamato—
The Drummers of Japan
Chousensha (The Challengers)
MONDAY, MARCH 19, 2018
11AM | Jackson Hall
Recommended for grades K–12

Common Core
Common Core broadens the definition of a “text,” viewing performance as a form of text, so students are experiencing and interacting with a text when they attend a performance. Seeing live performance provides rich opportunities to write reflections, narratives, arguments etc.

W K-12; SL K-12; RL K-12; WHST 7-8; RH 7; C3: D2.Geo 1-3, 5, 6, DS.His

About Yamato
Exuberantly loud, boisterously active and frenetically energetic, Yamato is an exciting group of 11 young performers from Japan. Much more than simply a drumming group, Yamato blends theater and musical arts into a performance of tightly synchronized percussion and expressive solos.

In Chousensha, or The Challengers, Yamato challenges themselves to achieve their potential. They say “people challenge themselves every day. Under the sky, on the ground, they keep moving forward with hope and dreams in their hearts. Sometimes, they are alone. Sometimes, they are hand in hand with someone. In pouring rain, in approaching darkness, we gather all our courage and challenge our unpredictable lives.”

Yamato was founded by Masaki Ogawa in 1993 in Nara, the ancient capital of Japan and “the land of the Yamato.” The name Yamato has special significance for this group: in the eighth century, Japan was then known as Yamato and Nara was the city where Japanese culture is believed to have started. Yamato combines traditional Japanese musical formats with modern rhythms and themes. The inclusion of women in the group is a clear break with Japanese tradition.

About Taiko
Taiko (Japanese for “big drum”) is a relatively modern revival of ancient Japanese drumming traditions. The word taiko refers not only to the art of Japanese drumming but also to the drums themselves. Taiko incorporates drums up to eight feet in diameter, struck with wooden sticks using full-body enthusiasm and almost ritualistic choreography influenced by Shinto and Buddhist ritual, the martial arts and the delicate, stylized movement of Japanese theater.

The specific types of drums used by taiko were present in ancient India and are thought to have migrated with Buddhism across China to Japan. Archeological findings in Japan indicate that taiko-style drums were present in 500 A.D. The drums used in Buddhist temples were originally intended to represent the voice of Buddha, and to help worshipers become more in touch with a sense of inner awe.

LEARN MORE:
Yamato website
Message from Yamato
Think About It

Dear Students,

1. Select three adjectives to describe the sights and sounds of the performance. Share your adjectives with a classmate and discuss why you choose them.

2. How did the sounds and vibrations of the drums make you feel?

3. What activities do you do, both in school and out, that require teamwork? What makes a good team?

4. Did the performance meet your expectations? Was there anything unexpected?

MC Fun Facts:

- The outside walls of the Mondavi Center are made from sandstone from India that is 1.8 billion years old.
- What look like fossils in the sandstone tiles, are really iron and manganese crystal dendrites.
- The building sits on 200 pillars to keep the sounds and vibrations of the freeway and trains from being heard or felt inside the theater.
- The ceiling curtains in Jackson Hall weigh 2,200 pounds each.

What is expected of student audiences at the matinee:

- To facilitate starting the performance on time, get a drink of water and use the restroom before entering the seating area
- Enter the auditorium quietly and take your seats 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
- Refrain from making unnecessary noise or movements
- Please eat lunch before or after the performance. Food is not allowed in the theater
- Use information learned from the pre-matinee discussion to enhance the performance experience
- Please do not photograph or record the artists

What your students can expect of their experience at the Mondavi Center:

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, speaking and moving about, can be heard by other audience members and by the performers. Distractions like these disrupt 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. By watching attentively the audience shows respect for the performers. Appreciation can be shown in many different ways, depending upon the art form and the culture(s) of the people in the audience. For instance, while the audience at a dance performance may sit quietly, other types of performances may invite audience participation.

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.

Mondavi Center Arts Education

Arts Education provides CueSheets for all performances in the Mondavi Center 2017–18 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.

Support provided by