

Kenny Endo 45th Anniversary Tour **Breaking Tradition through Innovation**



STUDENT PERFORMANCE GUIDE

This student performance guide is designed to help you prepare and enjoy a lecture demonstration featuring the Kenny Endo Contemporary Taiko Ensemble.

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太鼓

TAIKO

The origin of Japanese *taiko* is to some extent, ambiguous. However, the legend of the Japanese sun goddess, Amaterasu, is often attributed to the beginning of many traditional Japanese performing arts including *taiko*. Amaterasu was so displeased with her ill-mannered brother, Susano-o, that she secluded herself in a celestial cave causing the world to become dark. The people became worried and a crowd gathered in front of the cave. A woman named Uzume performed a wild dance atop an *uke*, an upturned hollow barrel. This merrymaking caused Amaterasu to peek out of curiosity. The cave door was opened and sunlight was restored to the world. Some claim that the sounds of the feet stomping on the *uke* were the first *taiko* sounds and the dance itself was the beginning of traditional Japanese dance.

Taiko has been used in both spiritual and utilitarian contexts since ancient times. Spirits were said to reside within the drums. Farmers would use it in their fields to chase away pests and to wish for a bountiful harvest. Even military generals used *taiko* to give signals to advance forward or to retreat to safety. It was also used to instill courage in the *samurai* warriors, or to provoke fear in their enemies. With time and modernization, many of these aspects of *taiko* faded but it continued to be used in a variety of contexts such as gagaku (ancient Japanese court music), noh and kabuki theatres, minyo (folk music), and matsuri bayashi (festival music). However, in 1951, a young Japanese jazz drummer thought it would be interesting to arrange music from the local shrine for a group of *taiko* drummers. Being a Western style drummer, he created an ensemble consisting of *taiko* of different sizes and different tones. This was the start of the first taiko group and the phenomenon known as *taiko* or *kumi-daiko* (group drumming) was born.

The fascination and lure of *taiko* has resulted in a *taiko* boom that is currently under way in Japan; North, South, and Central America; Western and Eastern Europe; Asia; Australia; New Zealand; and other countries. Some *taiko* groups continue the traditional forms in its purest form, some *taiko* groups are reviving past *taiko* traditions and rearranging them in their own unique way, while others are composing contemporary new music. The beauty of *taiko* is that it combines powerful sounds with exciting body movements to create a unique and explosive cultural art form. It has also become an expressive medium for ethnic pride and strength. Once considered a folk instrument, *taiko* is now appreciated for its sophisticated rhythms, techniques, movements, vibrations, and ability to awaken the spirit within all of us.

KENNY ENDO



Fifty years ago, there were only three *taiko* groups outside of Japan. One of those groups caught the eye of a young drummer, Kenny Endo, and in an instant, he knew that *taiko* would become his path in life. In 1975, he began studying and performing with Kinnara Taiko (Los Angeles), then the San Francisco Taiko Dojo, a school and performance troupe of Japanese drumming. In 1980, he embarked on a decade-long odyssey throughout Japan to study with the masters of classical, festival, and group drumming. He is the first non-Japanese native to have received a *natori*, or stage name and master's license in Japanese classical drumming.

Kenny Endo has become one of the foremost names in *taiko*, circling the globe performing in the former U.S.S.R., Egypt, at the Champs de Elysee in Paris, at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, for Michael Jackson, the artist formerly known as Prince, Princess Diana, correctional facility inmates, and for educational institutes across the country. In addition to his worldwide performances, Endo has appeared in and composed for film, video, television, animations, recordings and commercials.

"Breaking Tradition through Innovation" celebrates Endo's 45th year of *taiko* drumming in 2020. This performance tour combines members of Endo's various ensembles based in Japan and the U.S. for a nationwide performance tour. The "Breaking Tradition through Innovation" ensemble is an eclectic ensemble of innovative and talented musicians playing original compositions featuring *taiko*, and a variety of instruments which includes bamboo flutes, koto (Japanese zither), shamisen (Japanese lute), ukulele, vibraphone, drumset, as well as Japanese and world percussion. With tradition as his basis for innovation, Endo has paved new directions in the use of traditional *taiko*, bringing a refreshing and creative approach to music through his western, ethnic, and traditional Japanese influences. Endo's belief is that a strong foundation in the traditional is necessary in order to break from tradition and create innovative new music. Although Endo's music is often viewed as contemporary, it has elements of traditional and classical Japanese music. Endo's music continues to inspire people of all ages, genders, and cultures.

TAIKO DOJO CODE OF CONDUCT:

1. Respect your *sensei* (instructor) and *senpai* (seniors)
2. Respect the *dojo* (training space)
3. Respect your fellow *taiko* classmates
4. Respect all of the instruments
5. Respect the art of *taiko*

日本語

Japanese Terminology:

Greetings:

1. Ohayo-gozaimasu (おはようございます) = Good morning (lit. “it’s early...”)
2. Konnichiwa (こんにちは) = Good afternoon (lit. “today is...”)
3. Konbanwa (こんばんは) = Good evening (lit. “tonight is...”)
4. Sayonara (さようなら) = Goodbye
5. Arigatou-gozaimashita (ありがとうございました) = Thank you very much
6. Dou-itashimashite (どういたしまして) = You are welcome
7. Otsukaresamadeshita (お疲れさまでした) = Good work today! (You must be tired!)

Numbers:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Ichi</i> (一) = ONE | 6. <i>Roku</i> (六) = SIX |
| 2. <i>Ni</i> (二) = TWO | 7. <i>Shichi/Nana</i> (七) = SEVEN |
| 3. <i>San</i> (三) = THREE | 8. <i>Hachi</i> (八) = EIGHT |
| 4. <i>Shi/Yon</i> (四) = FOUR | 9. <i>Ku/Kyuu</i> (九) = NINE |
| 5. <i>Go</i> (五) = FIVE | 10. <i>Juu</i> (十) = TEN |

Other Taiko-related terms:

1. *Dojo* (道場) = Training space
2. *Hogaku* (邦楽) = Japanese classical music
3. *Horagai* (ホラ貝) = Japanese conch shell
4. *Kabuki* (歌舞伎) = Traditional Japanese theatre for the common people, utilizing gorgeous costumes, elaborate make-up and sets, music, dance, acting, stylized voice and more.
5. *Keyaki* (ケヤキ) = Zelkova tree
6. *Kumi-daiko* (組太鼓) = A taiko ensemble
7. *Ma* (間) = Japanese term for “space,” it is used in music to describe a period of silence.
8. *Matsuri* (祭り) = A festival
9. *Matsuri-bayashi* (祭り囃子) = Festival music
10. *Mikoshi* (神輿) = A portable shrine which is thought to be inhabited by a God
11. *Noh* (能) = Classical Japanese theatre, utilizing masks, music, chants, dance and poetry.
12. *Seiza* (正座) = A sitting position with the legs tucked under the buttocks.

13. *Sensei* (先生) = Instructor
14. *Suzu* (鈴) = Bells
15. *Don* ドン = Strong hit in center of drum
16. *DoDon* ドドン = Two strong hits in center of drum
17. *Tsu* ツ = Soft hit in center of drum
18. *Tsuku* ツク = Two soft hits in center of drum
19. *Ka* カ = Hit on rim of drum
20. *Kara* カラ = Two hits on rim of drum

Instruments of the Ensemble:

1. *Atarigane/Chanchiki* (あたりがね) – a saucer-shaped bell often hung from a cord like a small gong. Struck with a *shumoku* stick (made of deer antler and bamboo).
2. *Bachi* (バチ) = Drum sticks
3. *Chu-daiko* (中太鼓) = Medium drum
4. *Kakegoe* (掛け声) = Stylized voice patterns
5. *Kotsuzumi* (鼓) = small hourglass-shaped drum played with the hand
6. *O-daiko* (大太鼓) = Large drum
7. *Shakuhachi* (尺八) = Vertical bamboo flute. Has a low, melancholy sound
8. *Shime-daiko* (締め太鼓) Rope-lashed small drum
9. *Taiko* (太鼓) = Drum
10. *Shinobue* (横篠笛) = Transverse bamboo flute which come in many sizes and pitches.
11. *Otsuzumi* (大鼓) = large hour-glass shaped drum played with the hand
12. *Noh kan* (能管) = bamboo flute used in the Noh theatre
13. *Koto* (琴) = (13) stringed zither
14. *Shamisen* 三味線 = 3-stringed lute (banjo-like instrument)
15. *Uchiwa-daiko* (うちわ太鼓) = A fan drum, traditionally used by Buddhist priest of Nichiren sect

Other Instruments of the Full Ensemble:

1. Japanese percussion = *zuri* and *bin sasara* (bamboo clackers), *hyoshigi* (wood clackers), *suzu* (bells), *atarigane* (hand-held gong), *bongi* (wood blocks), *horagai* (conch shells), *chappa* (cymbals)
2. *Koto* (琴) = a Japanese zither normally having 13 strings
3. Latin percussion = *conga*
4. *Vibraphone* = a percussion instrument resembling the xylophone but having metal bars and motor driven resonators for sustaining the tone and producing a vibrato.
5. World percussion – *djembe* (African drum) Tibetan bells, *clave* (wood blocks), cowbell, shakers, woodblocks, windchimes, cymbals.
6. Hawaiian slack key guitar – a finger-style genre of guitar that originated in Hawaii
7. *Ukulele* – member of the lute family of instruments with 4 strings originating in the 19th century; a Hawaiian adaptation of the Portuguese machete, a small guitar-like instrument
8. *Shamisen* (三味線) = 3 stringed banjo-like lute
9. *Drumset* – Western drums consisting of a snare drum, tom tom, bass drum

Before the Performance:

Suggested Activities for elementary school students:

- Do a social studies unit on Japan. Include a map of Japan and its flag.
- Learn basic Japanese phrases (greetings, numbers, etc.)
- Do a Japanese activity (origami, calligraphy, rock-garden, tea ceremony, kendo, judo karate, *taiko*!)
- Study the traditional clothing of Japan
- Discuss Japanese foods that have become part of American culture.
- Study different types of Japanese music and instruments
- Discuss elements of Japanese culture that have been absorbed by American culture.
- Listen to Western drum music and make a comparison. How do you think *taiko* will sound similar/different?

Suggested Activities for secondary school students:

- Learn basic Japanese phrases (greetings, numbers, etc.)
- Do a comparative study of Eastern and Western instruments: *Taiko* vs drumset; *ukulele* vs guitar; bamboo flutes vs Western flute; *shamisen* vs banjo; *koto* vs harp; etc.
- Do a study about the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II.
- Improvisation – Do you improvise in your job, in school, in conversation? In what ways? What is important in improvisation?

Suggested Activities for college students:

- Do a comparative study of Eastern and Western instruments: *Taiko* vs drumset; *ukulele* vs guitar; bamboo flutes vs Western flute; *shamisen* vs banjo; *koto* vs harp; etc.
- Do a study about the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II.
- Recently there have been many hate crimes against Asians, in what ways can we create a kinder, more accepting society? Many Asian Americans did exceptionally well during the Beijing Olympics. Do Americans accept Americans with different color skin?
- Improvisation – Do you improvise in your job, in school, in conversation? In what ways? What is important in improvisation?

During the Performance:



Things to notice:

- Japanese taiko drumming can be visual as well as musical. How?

- Note the Japanese clothing and costumes. How are they different from western clothing? Does it look comfortable? Is it practical?
- When you listen to *taiko*, how does it make you feel? Close your eyes and listen to the music. What parts of your body seem to be affected by the drumming?
- What images can you see when listening to one of the pieces? If you were to associate colors with the music, what colors might that be?

The Audience: Part of the Ensemble

“Ensemble” means a group of individuals who come together for a common purpose. During a performance, Endo feels that the performers and the audience unite to form a special kind of energy. You, the audience are the final element in this extraordinary *taiko* performance! The energy of the performance depends on the audience working with the performers. As part of a live performance, you can make the event exciting by:

1. Focusing your attention on the performer: Performers are distracted if you talk to the person sitting next to you or if you leave your seat – even if they pretend not to notice. Give them your undivided attention and they will give you their best performance!
2. Responding: If the music and movements make you gasp, smile, or move, DO IT!
3. Applauding the performer: Use your own percussive instruments, your hands, to let the ensemble know that you enjoyed a particular musical piece. At the end of the concert, if you feel the experience was extraordinary, give the ensemble a standing ovation!

After the Performance:

Questions to ask yourself:

- What part of the performance did you like the best? Why?
- What images came to mind when you heard *taiko*? Why?
- Which instruments did you enjoy the most? Why?
- Which instrument would you like to learn if you had the chance? Why?
- In what way is *taiko* similar/different from western drums?
- Discuss the method of learning how to play *taiko*. How is it different from the way one learns to play music in an American/western society?
- What do you think is necessary and required of a person in order to play *taiko*?
- In Japan, *taiko* is utilized in many ways. When and how can *taiko* be used religiously? Culturally? In times of celebration?
- In what ways can *taiko* and Japanese percussion be used as a form of expression? How did it affect your mood?

Activities for the Classroom:

1. Gather information about Japan by researching cultural, educational, media and language topics. Report back to the class. There are many words and ideas that we can identify as Japanese. What do these things represent? For example, what is *sushi*? What exactly is a *samurai*? What are traditions of *sumo* wrestling? What is *Shinto* or *Zen Buddhism*? Historically, where does the word *kamikaze* come from?
2. Research about modern Japan. What are the trends that have stemmed from Western culture? How has Western culture influenced the Japanese economy, education, culture, media, electronics, fashion, music, youth attitudes and ways of communicating?
3. Draw a picture along with an essay on your impressions of the lecture/demonstration.



4. Write a *haiku*. The rules are simple: The poem must be three lines long. The first line has 5 syllables, the second 7, and the third 5. The aim is to provide a quick, clear glimpse of an image that evokes a moment in time. Often it is about nature, especially the seasons. Even very young children can write mock-haiku. In that case, don't worry about counting syllables; just use as few words as possible to make a picture of a feeling. Here are some examples:

5-7-5(proper)

*My birthday is done,
I am full of happiness,
Now I have to wait.*

3-3-4(mock)

*See my cat?
I love her,
She is purring.*

5-4-5(mock)

*Don Don do do Don
Drums are pounding
Excitement and Joy*



5. Make a class *tokonoma*, a place of serenity in which a beautiful and meaningful object is displayed. Treat that area with utmost respect. Make one in your own home too, and write about the significance of your *tokonoma*.

6. Make a simple rock garden. You will need: A box lid, sand or gravel, three different rocks, a comb or fork. Fill the lid with the sand or gravel at least a quarter inch deep all over. Put your 3 rocks in. Think of them as islands in the sea. You can arrange them in any way. With a comb or fork make ridges in the sand. These represent waves in the water. Straight lines represent calm water. Wavy lines represent moving water. Circles represent fallen raindrops.



7. Activity: Let's Start Jammin'!

You don't need the Kenny Endo Taiko Ensemble's extraordinary instruments to create rhythms and beats. You can use everyday objects to make your own music!

Step 1: Find two or three objects that will make a sound when you tap them. For example:



- a spare tire
- empty cans
- a plastic bucket
- metal kitchen bowls
- different-sized glasses containing different amounts of liquid
- writing utensils (pens, pencils, crayons)
- your notebook
- a ruler

Step 2: Use your objects as percussion instruments. What sounds do they make when you tap them? How can you make the sounds louder or softer? Develop your own rhythmic patterns. Here are the basic drum sounds of *taiko*:

KA or **KARA** (sound when hitting the rim of the drum)

DON or **DO-DON** (large sound when hitting the center of the drum)

TSU or **TSU-KU** (soft sound when hitting the center of the drum lightly)

TEN (sound when hitting a small drum in the center)

TEN TEN (sound when hitting a small drum in the center twice)

SU (space/silence, no sound but still occupies a space in the music, a rest)

Example: (4 measures/4 beats to a measure)

1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
DON	DON	DON	DON	DON	kara	DON	kara
DON	tsuku	DON	tsuku	DON	tsuku	DON	DON

Step 3: Try tapping out rhythms that show how you feel when you are doing your favorite activity, or when you wake up in the morning, or even when you are angry! You'd be surprised to see how the rhythms differ according to how you feel.

Resources: Here are just a few good related sites:

1. Kenny Endo: www.kennyendo.com or www.taikoarts.com
2. Haiku: <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/content/2246/>
3. Japan Guide: www.japan-guide.com
4. Japan Map-Guide: www.mapion.co.jp/
5. Japan National Tourist Organization: www.jnto.go.jp/
6. Japan News: www.japantimes.co.jp
7. Judo: www.usjudo.org/
8. Kabuki: www.shochiku.co.jp/play/kabukiza/theater/
9. Kendo: www.kendo.or.jp/english-page/english-top-page.html
10. Metropolis Tokyo Magazine: <http://metropolis.japantoday.com/default.asp>
11. Noh Theatre: www.artelino.com/articles/noh_theater.asp
12. Sumo Wrestling: www.sumo.or.jp/eng/
13. Shotokan Karate: www.ska.org/
14. Sushi: www.eatsushi.com/
15. Tea Ceremony: www.teahyakka.com/
16. Ukiyo-e: <http://user.bahnhof.se/~secutor/ukiyo-e/>
17. Zen Buddhism: <http://zen.thetao.info/index.htm>
18. Taiko Center of the Pacific www.taikoarts.com

“Breaking Tradition through Innovation” is a project supported in part by The Japan Foundation – Performing Arts Japan, Taiko Arts Center, Pasifika Artists Network, and private donors. This educational guide was compiled by Taiko Center of the Pacific. Kenny Endo’s taiko are provided courtesy of Miyamoto Unosuke Shoten of Tokyo.