

2025/26



OVERTURE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

ONSTAGE STUDENT FIELD TRIP RESOURCE GUIDE



Drum Tao

overture.org/onstage



ABOUT OVERTURE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Overture Center for the Arts fills a city block in downtown Madison with world-class venues for the performing and visual arts. Made possible by an extraordinary gift from Madison businessman W. Jerome Frautschi, the center presents the highest-quality arts and entertainment programming in a wide variety of disciplines for diverse audiences. Offerings include performances by acclaimed classical, jazz, pop, and folk performers; touring Broadway musicals; quality children's entertainment; and world-class ballet, modern and jazz dance. Overture Center's extensive outreach and educational programs serve thousands of Madison-area residents annually, including youth, older adults, people with limited financial resources and people with disabilities. The center is also home to ten independent resident organizations.

RESIDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Bach Dancing and Dynamite Society
Children's Theater of Madison
Forward Theater Company
Kanopy Dance Company
Li Chiao-Ping Dance Company
Madison Ballet
Madison Opera
Madison Symphony Orchestra
Wisconsin Academy's James Watrous Gallery
Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra

Internationally renowned architect Cesar Pelli designed the center to provide the best possible environment for artists and audiences, as well as to complement Madison's urban environment. Performance spaces range from the spectacular 2,250-seat Overture Hall to the casual and intimate Rotunda Stage. The renovated Capitol Theater seats approximately 1,110, and The Playhouse seats 350. In addition, three multi-purpose spaces provide flexible performance, meeting and rehearsal facilities. Overture Center also features several art exhibit spaces. Overture Galleries I, II and III display works by Dane County artists. The Playhouse Gallery features regional artists with an emphasis on collaborations with local organizations. The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters' Watrous Gallery displays works by Wisconsin artists, and the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art offers works by national and international artists.

Dear Teachers,

In this resource guide you will find valuable information that will help you apply your academic goals to your students’ performance experience. We have included suggestions for activities which can help you prepare students to see this performance, ideas for follow-up activities, and additional resources you can access on the web. Along with these activities and resources, we’ve also included the applicable Wisconsin Academic Standards in order to help you align the experience with your curriculum requirements.

This Educator’s Resource Guide for this OnStage presentation of **Drum Tao: The Best** is designed to:

- Extend the scholastic impact of the performance by providing discussion ideas, activities and further reading which promote learning across the curriculum;
- Promote arts literacy by expanding students’ knowledge of music, science, storytelling and theatre;
- Illustrate that the arts are a legacy reflecting the values, custom, beliefs, expressions and reflections of a culture;
- Use the arts to teach about the cultures of other people and to celebrate students’ own heritage through self-reflection;
- Maximize students’ enjoyment and appreciation of the performance.

We hope this performance and the suggestions in this resource guide will provide you and your students opportunities to apply art learning in your curricula, expanding it in new and enriching ways.

Enjoy the Show!

We Want Your Feedback!

OnStage performances can be evaluated online! Evaluations are vital to the future and funding of this program. Your feedback educates us about the ways the program is utilized and we often implement your suggestions.

Follow this link: <https://form.jotform.com/252614119409152>

and fill out an evaluation. We look forward to hearing from you.



DRUMTAO

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Education Categories



Social Studies



Social Emotional



Arts



Photo courtesy of Drum Tao

About *Drum Tao: The Best*

Drum Tao: The Best is all about startling and explosive combinations.

Their performance style blends traditional wadaiko or taiko Japanese drumming with modern energy and rock star theatricality.

The choreography fuses martial arts, acrobatics, gymnastics, and dance.

Their shows mix stunning precision and synchronization with virtuoso solos.

This gives the 11 performers (three women and eight men) a chance to shine individually and engage the audience.

Along with a dazzling variety of drums, performers also play traditional Japanese instruments, including:

- the shinobue (flutes)
- shakuhachi (woodwind)
- sanshin (a banjo-like instrument)

With eye-catching costumes, dynamic lighting, and, of course, amazing drumming, **Drum Tao: The Best** is a multi-disciplinary treat for the senses.



Photo courtesy of Drum Tao

About Drum Tao

Ikuo Fujitaka founded Drum Tao in 1993 because he was inspired by the circus.

If you're wondering how the pulsating, full-body experience that is Drum Tao came to be inspired by animal acts or clowns, think again.

Cirque de Soleil was the inspiration because Fujitaka saw the groundbreaking circus act use a wadaiko drum in one of their performances. He came away wanting to create performances that brought traditional Japanese taiko drumming into the world of modern entertainment.

Drum Tao has come a long way since then, literally. The company has performed all around the world, reaching more than 500 cities and 10 million people.

It takes a lot of work and training to be a Drum Tao performer, with training that emphasizes both mental and physical discipline.

Performers start their days at 5:30 am with an eight-mile group run, followed by one hour of non-stop drumming.

After breakfast, they have martial arts training, followed by drum and dance practice and rehearsal until 10 pm.

They do not have access to cell phones or laptops, or see much of their families and friends.

It takes 1-3 years of training at this pace to join the company.

Drum Tao is based in Oita, Japan, on the island of Kyushu. They have their own custom-designed training facility and outdoor theater in Aso-Kuju National Park.

Not only is this a beautiful setting for their performances, the remote location also means Drum Tao's thunderous drumming won't disturb any neighbors.

Taiko Drumming & Drums

Taiko drumming is an art form that bridges the past and present.

There are as many as 5,000 active Taiko drumming groups in Japan alone, and people all over the world study, practice, and perform this unique approach to percussion.

It is hundreds of years old and widely thought to have its origins in agriculture and religion. In the field, drums were used to keep workers going at the same pace as they planted and harvested rice.

In the Shinto religion, drums were used to attract good spirits and keep evil spirits away.

Although the tradition of drumming in Japan stretches back to the 6th century and was used in festivals, by the military, and in theater, this ensemble style of playing started flourishing in the 1950s.

From the stance performers use while drumming to the way they hold their bachi, or drumsticks, Taiko drumming is a very precise art form.

It also uses very specific types of drums, often made from a single piece of wood. These include:

- Nagadō-daiko – a versatile, cylindrical drum that comes in different sizes
- Ō-daiko – these huge drums have a deep, thunderous tone
- Shime-daiko – this drum has a crisp tone, due to its double-sided drumhead tightened with ropes or bolts
- Hira-daiko – a compact, flat drum with a sharper, more high-pitched sound



Taiko drum



Photo courtesy of Drum Tao

Discussion Questions (from the Des Moines Arts Center Applause Series Inquiry Guide)



Photo courtesy of Drum Tao

How does this performance add to what you knew/thought about drumming?

Does it replicate a tradition or do something new?

Who is in charge of the “meaning” of a piece of music? The listener, the performer, the composer, the tradition?

What music do you respond to/like to listen to? What about that music connects you to it?

If you perform music, what influences your decisions as a performer?

How can others “get” your expressive intent (what you are feeling or meaning in the performance) when you are creating music?

Ask students to write a paragraph or more on a musician or genre and provide reasons they connect to it.

Invite students to share samples of their songs and summarize their responses.



DRUM TAO

Arts Education Activity - Percussion Lesson Plan

From WMFT



Percussion Lesson Plan



Percussion Lesson Plan (con't)


BACH to School

Percussion Lesson Plan

Anchor Standard 7 (Responding): Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Enduring Understanding: Individuals choose music based on their interests, experiences, musical understanding, and each musical work's purpose.

Essential Question: How do individuals choose music to experience?

Anchor Standard 8 (Responding): Construct meaningful interpretations of artistic work.

Enduring Understanding: Through their use of elements and structures of music, creators and performers provide clues to their expressive intent.

Essential Question: How do we discern the musical performers' emotions, thoughts, and ideas?

Anchor Standard 9 (Responding): Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

Enduring Understanding: The personal evaluation of musical work(s) and performance(s) is informed by analysis, interpretation, and teacher- or student-established criteria.

Essential Question: How do we judge the quality of musical work(s) and performance(s)?

Anchor Standard 10 (Connecting): Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Enduring Understanding: Musicians connect their personal interests, experiences, ideas, and knowledge to creating, performing, and responding.

Essential Question: How do musicians make meaningful connections to creating, performing, and responding?

Objectives: Student(s) will:

- Learn the history of the percussion instruments
- Listen to two percussion songs
- Compare and contrast percussion songs

Materials: Computer, Speakers, Smartboard, Classroom Percussion Kit

Illinois State Standards

Percussion Lesson Plan (con't)



TIME	SONGS/ACTIVITIES	PROCEDURES
2-7 mins	Listen and Watch (listen to all or a portion)	Harry Potter Medley performed by Lafayette Percussion Ensemble
15-20 mins	History of Percussion Instruments	<p>Students share what they already know about the percussion instruments (list as many as possible).</p> <p>Percussion History (click on link)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sounded by striking, shaking, plucking, or scraping Drums used worldwide since before 6000 BC In Africa, drums protect tribal royalty (African drum - djembe) In medieval and Renaissance Europe, snare drums sent coded instructions to soldiers Different classes of percussion instruments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Latin percussion instruments: maracas, claves, castanets, timbale, etc. Classical percussion instruments used in orchestras: timpani, xylophone, bass drum Modern percussion instruments used in rock, pop, and jazz: drum kit (uncountable possibilities) Drum kits can include bass drum, side drum, tom-toms, cymbals, hi-hat, cowbells, and more "Anvil Chorus" from Verdi's opera <i>Il Trovatore</i> "Anvil Chorus" by David Lang performed by Matt Keown Percussionists must have a very good sense of rhythm
5-13 mins	Listen and Watch	West Side Story – Percussionist's Perspective performed by Joe Martone
10 mins	Compare and Contrast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which examples do you prefer and why? How do the examples sound similar? How do the examples sound different? What do you see/hear from the GoPro percussion perspective?
15 mins	Depth Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do individuals choose music to experience? How do we discern the musical performers' emotions, thoughts, and ideas? How do we judge the quality of musical work(s) and performance(s)? How do musicians make meaningful connections to creating, performing, and responding?



Resources



Photo courtesy of Drum Tao

Drum Tao [website](#)

An [overview](#) of Taiko drumming

[Background](#) on Taiko drumming

More on [Taiko drumming](#)

[Information](#) on Taiko drums

[Fun facts](#) about drumming

BE YOUR OWN CRITIC

Now it is your turn to tell us what you thought about the performance that you saw at Overture Center! Use this worksheet to brainstorm some ideas. Make sure to use specific examples from the performance. If you forgot anything, ask your friends and teachers who went to the show with you. Turn your ideas into a rough draft and then send a final copy to us!

I saw _____
(SHOW TITLE)

Overture Center is...



because...

What would you say this show is about?



Two things that I really loved about the performance were...



Two things that could have been better in the performance were...



I thought the artistic elements (scenery, sound/music, lighting, costumes) were...



because...

I would want to meet the character...



in real life because...

If I could ask the performer(s) a question, I would ask them...



Imagine that you're telling a friend about this show. What would you say?



Wisconsin Academic Standards

Social Studies

SS.BH1.a.4: Describe how a person’s understanding, perceptions, and behaviors are affected by relationships and environments.

SS.BH1.b.4: Describe how culture, ethnicity, race, age, religion, gender, and social class can help form self-image and identity.

SS.BH2.b.4: Give examples of how peoples from different cultures develop different values and ways of interpreting experiences.

SS.BH3.a.5: Investigate how interpretations of similarities and differences between and among cultures may lead to understandings or misunderstandings.

SS.Geog4.a.m: Explain how place-based identities can change places over time. Investigate how place-based identity results from the characteristics of a place and can sometimes result in stereotypes of people from a specific place. Describe students’ perceptions of a place that are based on indirect sources (e.g., television, movies), versus on direct sources (e.g., residing in a place, visiting a place).

Dance

Respond

D.D.R.5.i: Dance Literacy: Identify dance specific vocabulary through verbal, physical, written, and/or digital means.

D.D.R.6.i: Reflection: Explain how movement communicates feelings and ideas through examples.

D.D.R.7.i: Analysis: Describe the various components and movement characteristics of the performance.

D.D.R.8.i: View Performance: Demonstrate developmentally appropriate etiquette skills with guidance in response to a performance.

Connect

D.D.Cn.5.i: Cultural Social Awareness: Explain how dance relates to self, others, and the world.

D.D.Cn.6.i: Career Connections: Examine dance professions and describe how dance skills translate to other careers.

D.D.Cn.7.i: Cross Disciplinary: Explore how dance and other content areas interrelate.

D.D.Cn.8.i: Life Skills: Demonstrate an understanding of how dance can influence healthy lifestyle choices.

Theater

Theatre Performance: Respond

TP.R.4.i: Analysis: Identify separate elements in a theatrical work such as characters, plot, and performance elements.

TP.R.6.i: View Performance: Demonstrate developmentally appropriate audience etiquette.

Theatre Performance: Connect

TP.Cn.5.i: Cultural Social Context: Explain how theatre relates to self, others, and the world.

TP.Cn.6.i: Research: Identify the “given circumstances,” environmental and situational conditions that influence a theatrical work.

TP.Cn.8.i: Cross Disciplinary: Identify how theatre connects to literature and social studies.

About Live Performance

Theater, unlike movies or television, is a LIVE performance. This means that the action unfolds right in front of an audience, and the performance is constantly evolving. The artists respond to the audience's laughter, clapping, gasps and general reactions. Therefore, the audience is a critical part of the theater experience. In fact, without you in the audience, the artists would still be in rehearsal!

Remember, you are sharing this performance space with the artists and other audience members. Your considerate behavior allows everyone to enjoy a positive theater experience.

Prepare: Be sure to use the restroom before the show begins!

Find Your Seat: When the performance is about to begin, the lights will dim. This is a signal for the artists and the audience to put aside conversations. Settle into your seat and get ready to enjoy the show!

Look and Listen: There is so much to hear (dialogue, music, sound effects) and so much to see (costumes, props, set design, lighting) in this performance. Pay close attention to the artists onstage. Unlike videos, you cannot rewind if you miss something.

Energy and Focus: Artists use concentration to focus their energy during a performance. The audience gives energy to the artist, who uses that energy to give life to the performance. Help the artists focus that energy. They can feel that you are with them!

Talking to neighbors (even whispering) can easily distract the artists onstage. They approach their audiences with respect, and expect the same from you in return. Help the artists concentrate with your attention.

Laugh Out Loud: If something is funny, it's good to laugh. If you like something a lot, applaud. Artists are thrilled when the audience is engaged and responsive. They want you to laugh, cheer, clap and really enjoy your time at the theater.

Discover New Worlds: Attending a live performance is a time to sit back and look inward, and question what is being presented to you. Be curious about new worlds, experience new ideas, and discover people and lives previously unknown to you. Your open mind, curiosity, and respect will allow a whole other world to unfold right before your eyes!

Please, don't feed the audience: Food is not allowed in the theater. Soda and snacks are noisy and distracting to both the artists and audience.

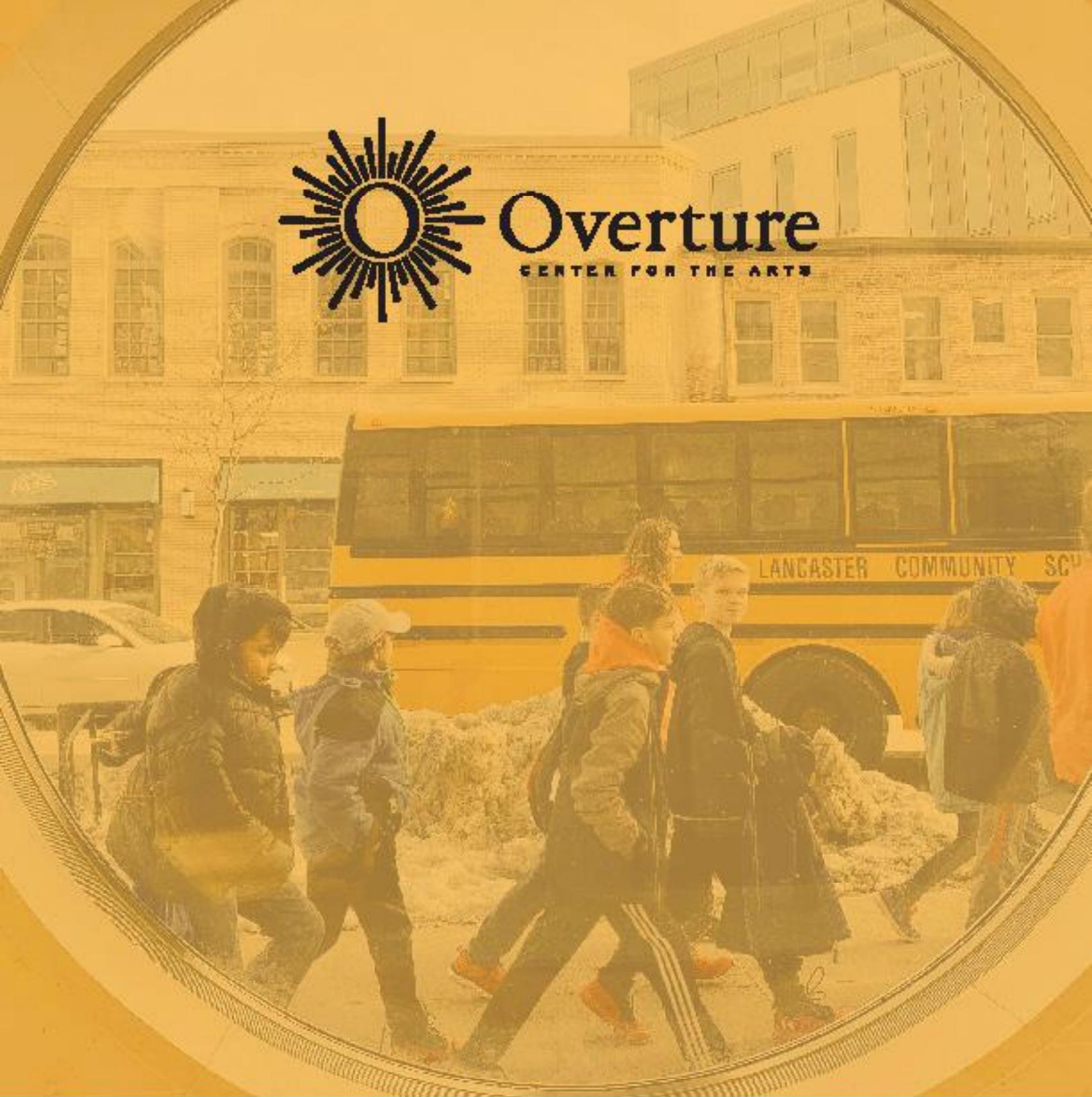
Unplug: Please turn off all cell phones and other electronics before the performance. Photographs and recording devices are prohibited.





Overture

CENTER FOR THE ARTS



PARTNERS:



Overture Center's mission is to support and elevate our community's creative culture, economy and quality of life through the arts.

OnStage is supported in part by: American Girl's Fund for Children, Madison Community Foundation, Nelnet and Patrick & Linda McKenna and contributions to Overture Center for the Arts.

overture.org/onstage

201 STATE STREET MADISON, WI 53703