

A Taiko Gala

Our annual concert celebrating the ceremonial drumming of Japan, featuring

Dublin Taiko Group



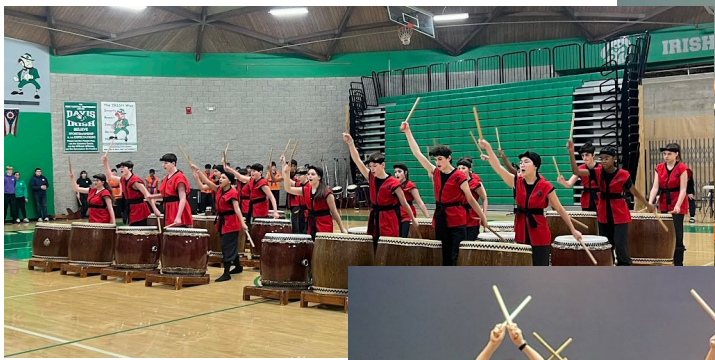
Saturday, April 20, 2024 - 7:00 p.m.



Dublin Jerome Center for the Performing Arts

DUBLIN TAIKO GROUP
2023 - 2024





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Tai - ko

“drum”

Taiko is a Japanese drum ensemble that encompasses music and choreographed movements. It embodies both cultural awareness and beautiful art.

During the 2004-2005 school year, twenty Davis Middle School students under director Susann Blair-Ewing (Dublin City Schools) were introduced to Taiko during a year-long residency with master Taiko performer Eitetsu Hayashi, through a visiting artist program with the Dublin Arts Council. Sensei Susann Blair-Ewing's love of the art of Taiko led her to carry it on to future classes as students in 6th through 12th grades continue to learn and practice this art.

In our 19-year history, Dublin Taiko Group performers have appeared at community events and cultural festivals in Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, West Virginia, Florida and Japan, and were the featured performers for the 2017 UK Taiko Festival in Exeter, England.

What twenty earnest students and one devoted teacher started fourteen years ago has blossomed into a dedicated group of over 100 student performers who demonstrate a passion for the artistry of Taiko and promote diversity and expansion of cultural knowledge in our community through performances at local events and festivals.



Susann Blair-Ewing

Susann Blair-Ewing is in her 29th year as the director of bands at Ann Simpson Davis Middle School, and Woodwind Specialist for the Dublin Scioto High School attendance area in Dublin, Ohio where she has been awarded the Golden Shamrock Award for excellence in Education.

Ms. Blair-Ewing directs concert and jazz band in grades 6 through 8, as well as teaching a music for special learners class in all three grades. Susann teaches private saxophone lessons, and her students have consistently received only Superior and Excellent ratings at Solo and Ensemble Festivals. Ms. Blair-Ewing's concert and jazz ensembles have received no lower than an Excellent rating at OMEA, Music Showcase and Music in the Parks Adjudicated Festivals for the past 25 years. Her ensembles have also been awarded Best Junior High Ensemble for 17 of those years.

Susann also directs 6 Taiko (Japanese) Drumming ensembles of close to 100 sixth through twelfth-grade students after school. Her Taiko groups have performed in Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, West Virginia, Florida and Japan, and traveled to the UK in June of 2017 for the 2017 UK Taiko Festival in Exeter, England.

Ms. Blair-Ewing received her Bachelor's degree in 1994 from Morehead State University, in Morehead, Kentucky, where she was a saxophone major and oboe minor. Susann has served two terms as President of Ohio Music Educator's Association District 15, has served on the national membership committee, and has served on the executive board as Region 3 Representative and National Secretary of ASBDA. Susann was the 2018-2020 President for the National ASBDA, and is currently acting National President until September.

Ms. Blair-Ewing has traveled and performed in Hawaii, Italy, Ireland, and Scotland. Susann has also been guest conducting many years. Her resume includes three-time conductor of the youngest band at the Wooster Music Camp, Wooster, Ohio, as well as conductor of many festival bands in Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky.

Dublin Taiko Alumni Volunteers

Jalil Brown

Jalil graduated from Dublin Scioto and the Dublin Taiko Program in 2020. Jalil has been a member of the DCS Taiko program for 9 years, 5 as a student and 4 as a returning alumni volunteer.

“It has been very enjoyable and educational to come back and help teach alongside Mrs.Ewing. Taiko is a rare art form that I'm grateful to have been a part of and continue to experience. Currently, I'm on a pre-dental hygiene track at Columbus State Community College and work full-time in retail.”



Saoirse Hurley



Saoirse is a freshman at the Ohio State University currently studying the double bass. She has extensive musical performance and teaching experience from her years in Dublin and at OSU. Saoirse has been involved with the taiko program for almost 8 years, and intends to continue helping the group however she can! In her free time, she enjoys looking for new ways to engage her

students, spending time with her close friends, and rock climbing.

Sydney Lewis

Sydney Lewis is a 2022 Dublin Scioto High School graduate. She's been a member of the Dublin Taiko Group for 8 years, and has enjoyed spending the 2023 - 2024 season there as an Assistant Director. Special highlights of her time in Taiko include: meeting & playing with renowned taiko masters Eitetsu Hayashi (who mentored Mrs. Blair-Ewing), Shoji Kameda (founder of contemporary taiko group On Ensemble), and critically acclaimed Kenny



Endo, as well as being introduced to various parts of Ohio & getting the opportunity to share Japanese drumming with others!

Her hobbies include travel, music, and spending time with friends and family. Special interests include collecting, learning about different cultures, and pop culture. In addition to her love for taiko, she has been a violist for 10 years and is in the process of learning the bagpipes. She also has a background in dance and has a black belt in Kung-Fu.

Sydney has a passion for helping others, which is a driving force behind her currently working towards obtaining a Bachelors in Psychology. She will minor in Sociology and Political Science. She currently resides in Dublin with her parents and two cats, Hocus and Pocus.

Jeremy Strohl

Jeremy Strohl is a proud 2020 alumni of Dublin Taiko and has been giving back to the program in a variety of ways since graduation.



This year, he has been serving as a volunteer Assistant Director to Susann Ewing. Percussion has been a passion of Jeremy's since his early teens. During Jeremy's middle school and high school tenure, he was a percussionist in the Davis Middle School Band led by Susann as well as the Dublin Scioto Marching Band and Scioto Concert Band later in high school.

Joining Dublin Taiko in 7th grade, Jeremy had the opportunity to be taught by Eitetsu Hayashi and performed with him and members of Fu-un no Kai on two separate occasions. He also had the opportunity to learn under Shoji Kameda in addition to the tireless direction under Susann herself. These experiences resulted in Jeremy becoming a skilled Taiko artist and his desire to be involved in the program after graduation. Jeremy is currently studying Psychology with plans for a future career as a mental health therapist

Taiko Gala

2024 Performances

-- ACT ONE --

Sen No Kaikyo-Umi No Sho --“Mother Sea Suite” from “Thousands of Waterways”

Composed by Eitetsu Hayashi

Performed by the Dublin Taiko Beginners

This piece was composed for a memorial event celebrating the port city of Kobe’s recovery from the damages caused by a massive earthquake. The world premiere of the piece was a huge success, performed by 1,000 drummers. It expresses the strength of the human spirit, persistence, and the way that the people never gave up hope. The song begins with the sound of the waves crashing on the shore, of volunteers’ footsteps rushing to help, and the sound of people trying to stand up. It then goes on to the cheerful Matsuri Bashi with a kind shuffle beat.

Ready, Set, kaDon!

Composed by Shoji Kameda

Performed by the Dublin Taiko Group

This piece is based around three simple patterns which are designed to be practice phrases found in many Taiko pieces. Ready, Set, kaDon! challenges the performers to deepen their understanding of how phrases relate to each other and interlock.

Isami Goma

Composed by Oguchi Daihachi, founder of Osuwa Daiko in Nagano Prefecture

Performed by Dublin Taiko Veterans

Isami Goma translates to “heroic” or “brave stallion”. It is usually performed after “Hiryu Sandan Gaeshi, which was written by the same composer.

Stepping Stones

Composed by Oliver Kirby of Kagemusha Taiko

Performed by the Dublin Taiko Group JV

This upbeat and free-spirited arrangement is a fun celebration of the art of Taiko. Stepping Stones has been played by hundreds of Taiko performers around the world. Dublin Taiko learned this piece while attending the 2017 UK Taiko Festival in Exeter, England.

Release

Composed by Diana Wu

Performed by the Dublin Taiko Group

Drawing inspiration from the spirit of San Francisco Taiko Dojo, "Release" is a high energy, high intensity piece where performers find the confidence and courage to completely let go and bring their most powerful, most wild presence to the stage. In addition to the raw emotion of the piece, the choreography draws influence from wushu, a type of martial art; thus, the performers must constantly train their bodies to better execute the physical challenges of the piece, and yet, still maintain the musical and emotional elements. Naruwan Taiko's signature piece encourages each performer, as well as the audience, to reach into the deepest recesses of their energy source, collect their raw spirit, and release it all, through not only the Taiko, but also with their voices and expression! Naruwan Taiko believes the sheer passion and strength of each performance, whether here today or another time, is a collective release of energy from both the Taiko group and its audience! So feel free to kiai!

-- INTERMISSION --

-- ACT TWO --

Umino Hojo-sho --“Abundance of the Ocean”

Composed by Eitetsu Hayashi

Performed by the Dublin Taiko Group

In this piece, Taiko are set up on both sides of the players, who beat them with large acrobatic movements. The image of a series of small islands lined up across the horizon of the Setonaikai Inland Sea is the inspiration for this piece. If you imagine the Taiko drums to be the small islands, the drummers as bridges across the islands or as people who live on the islands, the piece embodies the abundance of resources and relationships between the Inland Sea, the islands and the islanders' lives.

Ogi Matsuri

Composed by Fujimoto Yoshikazu of Kodo

Taught to the group by Esther Vandecar of Phoenix Taiko Kai, Phoenix, Arizona

Performed by Dublin Taiko Veterans

This piece was written by Fujimoto-san as a gift for the little port town of Ogi next to where the Kodo drummers have their base. Esther-sensei brought this piece back from Japan many years ago. During her workshop, she remarked that the Ogi Matsuri (Festival) was one of her favorites. She also remarked that she hoped that the students would love to play the piece, and that she hoped that they would make the piece their own.

Matsuri

Traditional Piece Arranged by Shoji Kameda

Performed by the Dublin Taiko Beginners

Matsuri simply means festival in Japanese. The basic patterns of this piece come from patterns found in Bon Odori. The slant or naname style featured in this piece comes from a group called Sukeroku Daiko, which was founded by four champion Bon Odori drummers. Their style has had a huge influence on the art form as many groups around the world, and especially in North America, use this slant-drum style.

Omiyage

Composed by Shoji Kameda

Taught to the group by Masato Baba and Chris Bergstrom of Taiko project, Los Angeles, California

Performed by the Dublin Taiko Group JV

Omiyage in Japanese is most easily translated into “souvenir or gift”. When visiting the country of Japan, it is customary to bring gifts to those that you are visiting. Omiyage is the gift that Taiko project has given to audiences through performance, and the gift that they have given to us through their workshop.

Michi-wo Yukuhito -- “A Pilgrim on the Road”

Composed by Eitetsu Hayashi

Performed by the Dublin Taiko Group - Seniors

This piece was composed in 1999, inspired by the historical 12th-century pilgrimages to the Sacred Kumano Mountains. Kumano is located in a steep mountain range with beautiful waterfalls and is considered a sacred place to worship nature. For centuries, people took long journeys to Kumano, crossing dangerous waters and climbing steep hills. They did this with the belief that overcoming such hardships would make their wishes come true. In this piece, two people face the drum from each side as if they are facing the mountain, and single excerpts from an ancient poem about the hardship of pilgrimage.

Senior 2024 RecognitionsSensei Susann Blair-Ewing

*We would like to say farewell to the following graduating seniors of
Dublin Taiko Group:*

Camren Abel
Brady Asbury
Mio Awano
Deeksa Kasirajan
Daniel Kirchhoff
Jeffrey Newport

Kyrie Paez
Kaitlyn Rogers
Adam Schaaf
Gabe Shaw
Austin Toczynski

We wish you well in all your endeavors!

Sen no Kaikyo - Hikari no Sho

"Light" Suite from "Thousands of Waterways"

Composed by Eitetsu Hayashi

Performed by the Dublin Taiko Group & Dublin Taiko Group JV

The main theme of "Sen no Kaikyo" is played in a rapid and linear tempo in this suite. It is a good piece for intermediate drummers who have practiced the "Mother Sea" suite and are ready to be challenged at the next level. The piece is the finale of the suites and addresses the people whose lives are affected by natural disaster and who continue to move forward with hope. This movement requires powerful, spirited performance.

DUBLIN TAIKO

High school and Middle school students from Dublin City Schools

Susann Blair-Ewing, Sensei/Director

DUBLIN TAIKO GROUP

Aubrey Abel	Lexie Neace	Adam Schaaf*
Camren Abel*	Eric Neill	Gabe Shaw*
Brady Asbury*	Ian Nelson	Briana St. Germain
Mio Awano*	Jeffrey Newport*	Samuel Strohl
Skylar Heiser	Kyrie Paez*	Jonny Timmons
Deeksa Kasirajan*	Will Porter	Austin Toczynski*
Daniel Kirchhoff*	Kaitlyn Rogers*	Hannah Weisen

*2024 Seniors

DUBLIN TAIKO JV

*Performers with at least two years of Taiko experience
and are working towards membership in DTG*

Alaina Eddy	Jack Lenehan	Efi Varveris
Aiden Haggerty	Finnegan Seiler	Michiko (Coco) Weasner Webb
Colin Huh	Luci Tonga	Maxx Wenzel
Maya Ibrahim	Vijayragav Varadarajan	

DUBLIN TAIKO VETERANS

Performers with at least one year of Taiko experience

Taylor Alexander	Isabella Haas	Maria Romoli
Mason Badertscher	Trinity Heisler	William Sanders
Anthony Booker	Sora Kojoma	Moira Seiler
Colton Butler	Andrew Kotso	Deacon Steveson
Ella Chinn	Nayuta Matsuda	Jake Toczynski
Collin Coho	Selah Mosley	Anna Varveris
Colin Cook	Karobo Omufere	
Niko Demertzis	Katlego Omufere	
Veronica Demertzis	Arianna Rojas	

DUBLIN TAIKO BEGINNERS

First-year Taiko performers

Ovidius Chan
Michael Corcoran
Harmony Dulay
Isaac Emerson
Trenton Hazelbaker
Harley Heisler
Daisy Hui

Jamesha Jones
Aika Masuda
Yuki Nabeya
Edward Niday
Pooja Patel
Aadarsh Patel
Michael Ramos

Paola Sanchez
Nikolai Sherkulov
Miles Sholl
Alena Stevenson
Mai Tanabe
Alexandra Villegas Morales
Titus Williams

Camren Abel

My favorite Taiko memory would be the 15 year anniversary performance.

My future plans are to major in Business Management and Administration at the University of Akron.



Brady Asbury

My favorite Taiko memories have been every opportunity to play somewhere out in the community! I love to play for people who are experiencing what Taiko is for the first time.

After graduation, I'll be attending Bowling Green State University and plan to major in financial analytics and intelligence and minor in insurance and risk management.

Mio Awano

My favorite Taiko memory was playing in my first Taiko Gala.

My plans for the fall are to go to college for a Sports Journalism or Broadcasting degree.



Deeksa Kasirajan

My favorite Taiko memory was my 2nd year of JV, I was really struggling to play the spins in the song Yodan, and I couldn't get it right during practices or even during Gala rehearsal. I practiced a lot while we waited to perform and once it was time to play, I played the song perfectly.

It was the happiest and proudest moment I've ever felt playing Taiko and it reminded me of how much I enjoy playing.

In the future I will be attending OSU to study Biological Engineering. I hope that I will be able to visit Dublin Taiko again as an alumni.

Daniel Kirchoff

My favorite Taiko memory is when we all get together in a big circle before the Gala

My future plans are to attend the University of Cincinnati majoring in Fashion Design and Marketing



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Jeffrey Newport

My favorite Taiko memory was the 15th Anniversary Performance.

My plans for the fall are undetermined.

Kyrie Paez

Kyrie's favorite Taiko memory from the last six years has been teaching songs to the other groups.

Kyrie's is continuing her education at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music majoring in Theater Production and Design.



Kaitlyn Rogers

My favorite Taiko memory was when I had the opportunity to work with Dublin Scioto's marching band to lead a Taiko feature for their show titled "A Place of Peace" my Senior year. I got the chance to help compose, rewrite, and collaborate with middle schoolers as well as multiple music directors in creating a fabulous performance that collectively got a Superior rating at state competitions.

For the future, I wish to pursue psychology with a minor in classical studies at an undecided university in hopes to become an advocate for children in a legal setting.

Adam Schaaf

Adam's fondest memory of Taiko was getting the opportunity to play at the UK Taiko festival and watching all the groups from around the world.



Adam plans to attend The Ohio State University in the College of Pharmacy's Early Assurance Program to pursue a Doctor of Pharmacy.



Gabe Shaw

My favorite Taiko memory was the first time playing "Release" at the Special Olympics.

My future plans are currently undecided, but I'm planning on studying Business Information Systems.

Austin Toczynski

My favorite Taiko memory was performing at the Asian festival over the Summer; it was really fun getting to play outside in the midst of a giant festival! I really enjoyed getting to spend time with my family and friends after our performance too, it was a great experience!



I plan to study mechanical engineering and I am undecided which college I will attend.



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Dublin Taiko Boosters

Sensei/Director	Susann Blair-Ewing
President	Karen Schaaf
Vice President.....	Eric Schaaf
Treasurer.....	Matthew Lenehan
Corresponding Secretary	Mickey Wiesen
Recording Secretary.....	Jason Seiler
Social Media Coordinator.....	Samantha Strohl
Performance Coordinator	Samantha Strohl
Transportation.....	Toby Strohl
Uniforms	Wendy Timmons
Web Master.....	Jason Seiler
Spiritwear/Merchandise.....	Jason Seiler
Gala Coordinators	Lisa Nelson and Vika Tonga

Dublin Taiko Boosters would like to give special thanks to:

The parents of the performers, who drive their children to practices and performances, volunteer their time and provide enduring love and support to Ms. Blair-Ewing and the students in so many ways.

The administration and staff at Davis Middle School, led by principals Jaime Stewart and Jason Snyder, for the encouragement and enthusiasm that has kept Taiko an active part of the Davis experience for the last nineteen years.

Shout-Outs to our Taiko Performers!!

**Congratulations Gabe
Class of 2024!**

From Beginners to
DTG, we couldn't
be more proud of
you!

Love,
Mom, Dad, and
Koel



**Daniel,
We've so enjoyed
watching you grow in
Taiko these past 7 years.
We're so proud of you.**

Love,
Mom, Dad,
Charlotte and Ben



**Best wishes to
Colin Cook and Collin Coho
for a terrific performance
at the Taiko Gala!**

Your hard work and
dedication make your
parents proud! Way to
represent GMS Celts as you
show perseverance and a
strong work ethic during
practices and performances!
You are awesome and
amazing!



**Otsukaresama!
Keep up the great
work Mason!**

We love you,
Mom and Collin

**Jonathan, we are
so proud of you!**

**Love,
Mom, Dad, and Aunt
Diane**



**We're so proud of
your hard work!**

Love you!

**Love,
Mom & Dad**

William Sanders



**Determination
and dedication
has brought you
so far!**

**we are very proud
of all you have
achieved!**

**Congratulations
Jeffrey!**




**Brady –
Happy Senior Gala!
It has been so fun watching
you advance through the
years. We have loved
every one of your
performances. Best of luck
in your college adventures!
Love – Mom and Dad**



**Colton –
We are so incredibly proud
of you. Keep up the hard
work and pursue your
dreams. We love you!
Love – Mom and Dad**



TROOP 332
Columbus OH 

**To our brothers in Scouting,
Drum On!**

**Brady Asbury, Mason
Badertscher, Austin Toczynski,
& Jake Toczynski**

**Jake, we're so happy to see how
much you enjoy Taiko! We're
proud of the young man you are
becoming. Your hard work,
persistence, and willingness to
challenge yourself have stood
out this year. We Love you!**

Mom & Dad



**Austin, we are so proud of you
for all you have accomplished
and are even more impressed
with the person you have
become.**

**While your academic
accomplishments are great, it is
your character and commitment
to God that will best serve you in
the areas of life that matter
most.**

**Congratulations Austin!
We love you! Mom & Dad**



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