

Writing Assignment for San Jose Taiko  
World Cultures, Plummer  
Spring 2008

Background: Many world musics have a spiritual, if not specifically religious, basis. Taiko Drumming is an example of this. Influences from Shinto and Buddhism were strong in the development of music and theatre in Japan. Many of the Japanese arts have a strongly ritualistic aspect to them.

Taiko drumming, particularly in the form you'll see on stage this week, is both music and theatre. It is also dance. The members of San Jose Taiko have studied other world musics. While the basis and instruments of their art are inherently Japanese, they also incorporate African, Balinese, Brazilian, Latin, and jazz rhythms. They incorporate both contemporary and traditional dance choreography. I do not expect you, necessarily, to be able to tease out which aspects of the performance belong to what cultures, but be on the lookout for stylistic shifts.

Do this:

1. Watch DVD documentary *Bob Marley and the Wailers: Catch a Fire*.
2. Attend a performance of San Jose Taiko at Rosza Center. **Save your ticket.**

The assignment: Write a 3-5 page paper exploring the relationships between spirituality, ritual, and music. The successful paper will incorporate ideas and resources relating to Taiko, Shinto, Buddhism, Reggae, and Rastafarianism. You may find it useful to refer to other musics and religions, though this is not required. The successful writer will also include specific details that demonstrate attendance at the San Jose Taiko performance.

Standards for writing and scholarship: Use a 12 point font and 1-inch margins. Double space your text, do not double space between paragraphs. Be sure to run a spell check. When you use outside sources (anytime an idea didn't come from your own brain) **cite your sources** in your paper and in a bibliography. Remember that the Writing Center is available to help with proof-reading. Attach proof of attendance to your paper in the form of your **ticket stub**.

Due: Monday, March 24, 2008. Late submissions will be docked 5 points per day.