



Grass Valley Taiko Bio 2007

Grass Valley Taiko was founded in 2000 from modest beginnings as a basic Taiko workshop conducted in Grass Valley. In 2004 founder Mitzi Garnett took lead of the group's direction and today the group has over 50 members ranging in ages from 7 70+ and makes Taiko Dojo home in historic Saint Joseph's Cultural Center in Grass Valley. Grass Valley Taiko conducts classes 4-6 times per week and actively participates in many community and educational events, among these events are the Nevada County Fair, school assemblies, parades, wedding receptions, picnics, grand openings, and dedications. Mitzi Garnett combines her creative interpretations of traditional pieces with those created by Grass Valley Taiko to present a cornucopia of styles and rhythms which intrigues and delights audiences of all ages.

Grass Valley Taiko's highly dedicated members build their own drums and create their own costumes while actively raising funds to support the Taiko group's growth. Members practice a traditional teaching of the discipline of Taiko under the tutelage of Grand Master Seiichi Tanaka, founder of San Francisco Taiko Dojo and Father of North American Taiko and returns to Grand Master for continued instruction and direction. This commitment to Grand Master's disciplines was made by the group when they were presented to Grand Master in January 2005. Grass Valley Taiko received the honors to play Grand Master's highly acclaimed Hiryu Sandan Geishi/Isama Goma (Leaping Dragon/Galloping Horse). Grand Master has only extended this honor to a total of three groups world-wide.

In August 2005, Grass Valley Taiko collaborated with CATS (Community Asian Theater of the Sierras) to present their first-ever Taiko Festival brought to Grass Valley. This festival presented the new material of Grass Valley Taiko and shared the stage with invited guests San Francisco Taiko Dojo, Marysville YBA Taiko and Ume Taiko Dan of Penryn. The Taiko Festival culminated in two sold-out encore performances in the acclaimed Center for the Arts

In September 2005, Mitzi Garnett and senior member Claudia Jones of Grass Valley Taiko were accepted to participate in an intensive training program with the world premiere Taiko Group KODO in Sado, Japan. This opportunity was limited to 20 participants. This great fortune has allowed Grass Valley Taiko to hone their techniques, expand their exposure to the folk art directly from Japan and continue evolving their skills as a group.

The year 2006 brought two exciting events to our county as well as our group. Grass Valley Taiko hosted Taiko Camp 2006 and enjoyed a gathering of more than 200 taiko players from around the world and hosted five of the top Masters of North American Taiko including Grandmaster Seiichi Tanaka of San Francisco Taiko Dojo.

In December 2006, Mitzi Garnett and Saul Rayo co-produced a drumming extravaganza "World of Drumming; Hearts Beat For The Tibetans in Exile". Funds raised from this performance were used directly to install the first computers learning lab for the Nuns of Jangchub Choeling Nunnery in Southern India. Grass Valley Taiko's graphic designer/marketing expert, Melanie Sullivan of *Tibetech.org* went to the nunnery in January 2007 to deliver and install the computers to the women of the nunnery on behalf of the group.

For more information on these events and ongoing Taiko classes, please visit www.grassvalleytaiko.com, e-mail info@grassvalleytaiko.com or call 530.273.2285

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