Matsuri

祭り

Tenjin Festival in Osaka
National Curriculum Links

KS2 Music
1b) Children will play tuned and untuned instruments with control and rhythmic accuracy to create festival music.
2a) Children will be taught to improvise, developing rhythmic and melodic material when performing.
3b) Children will explore and explain their own ideas and feelings about music using movement, dance, expressive language and musical vocabulary with reference to Japanese matsuri.

KS2 Design and Technology
1c) Children will plan what they have to do in order to make yakitori, suggesting a sequence of actions and alternatives if needed.
2f) Children will follow safe procedures for food safety and hygiene.

KS2 Art and Design
1c) Children will collect visual material and information about the design and style of yukata to help them develop their own ideas.
2b) Children will apply their experience of the materials and processes used to make yukata to help develop their control of the tools and techniques required to complete them.
4c) Children will consider the roles and purposes of yukata and look closely at their design.
Festivals are an important part of Japanese life, particularly during the summer months when almost every town and village, however small, will hold its own celebration, centred around the local shinto shrine.

Events vary from place to place, but there will always be a lively procession with dancers, drummers and flutes. Large floats containing images of the local gods (kami) will be carried from the shrine and around the town or village. Dancers, musicians and others in the procession will be dressed in festival costumes. Around the shrine there will be stalls selling souvenirs and hot food.
MUSIC

You will need:
- recorders
- metallic percussion - eg. triangle, cow bell
- drum - preferably wooden, and wooden sticks

Drums should sound earthy and rustic. Try using the thick end of the sticks. They provide the backbeat for the procession, so the rhythm needs to be simple and constant.

The metallic percussion is in place of the chanchiki, a hand-held metal gong played with a metal stick. This too should be earthy, not too resonant: hold a triangle in your hand to deaden the sound a little and play the following rhythm:

Now you just need to add a flute melody over the top. In Japan this would be played on a (transverse) bamboo flute, recorders will sound fine - a rustic sound is what you want.

Write your own tune
Use only the following notes: E G A B D. E is the most important note, so use it for a starting and finishing point. Begin by running up and down the scale (EGABDBAGEGBAB etc). Now add a rhythm: keep running up and down the scale but do it to a dotted (6/8) rhythm:
Now try changing the order of the notes, keeping the bouncy rhythm. Experiment until you find a pattern you like and stick to it. It need only be 10 - 20 notes long, to be repeated as many times as you like - until the dancers are exhausted!

DANCE

Dancing at festivals is relaxed and informal. Dancers accompany the procession, dancing in lines along the roadsides. Different festivals have different dances but the basic movements are very similar.

**Try this:** Hands held about head height, one palm faces forward, one back. Now twist the palms from front to back as gracefully as possible, moving from the elbow not the wrist. Walk forward, bending the back knee as you take a step, so that you “bounce” as you walk. The hands should twist in time with each step and all of it, of course, should be in time with the music.

*nb:* it is almost impossible to describe this dance with no visual aids - if you can, borrow a video from the Japan Information and Cultural Centre: speak to Ms Mika Kakinuma on 020 7465 6543 and ask for the Dance video from the Traditional Culture of Japan Series. This is available on free loan to schools, subject to application being made on school letter headed paper. Please discuss details with Ms Kakinuma.
FOOD

Food is one of the most important elements of a matsuri and yakitori is a typical, easy-to-cook example. The following recipe is intended to serve 4 - so adjust the quantities for your needs:

6 chicken thighs
12 mushrooms (shitake if possible)
4 small green peppers
2 small leeks

_for the sauce:_
7tbs sake
180 ml soy sauce
7tbs mirin
2 tbs sugar
bamboo skewers

To make the sauce, put all the ingredients in a saucepan and heat until the sugar is dissolved and the alcohol burned off. Remove from the heat and pour into a jug into which you can dip the skewers.

Cut all the meat and vegetables into bite size pieces. Begin threading them on to the skewers: chicken and leek can share a skewer, but the mushrooms and peppers should be skewered separately, because they will cook more quickly.

Once the skewers are ready, then cook on a grill or over charcoal for about 5 minutes or until almost cooked. Then remove and dip into the sauce, then continue cooking for a few minutes. Once cooked, dip each skewer once more and serve.

*Recipe taken with permission from Food of Japan by Shirley Booth, published by Grub Street. ISBN:902304160. £17.99
(Paperback edition now available.)*
COSTUME: yukata

At any summer festival in Japan you will see people wearing yukata - summer kimono. Although they are never cheap to buy, the design is quite simple. The choice of fabric is probably the most important factor. It should be cotton, and for women, a large floral print would be suitable, preferably in colours reflecting the flowers of the season. For men, perhaps a geometric design in under-stated colours. In both cases, the obi or belt, should be cut from different fabric. The two fabrics do not have to be of similar colour, in fact a contrast is more usual. To get some ideas of what fabrics are used for yukata, try looking at these websites:
(nb these are commercial sites selling yukata and other traditional Japanese clothing. This is not a recommendation for their products).

www.garden-gifts.com/ayukata.asp
www.chopa.com/shopsite/yukatas.html
www.jun-gifts.com/specialcollections/yukatakimono/yukatakimono.htm

First make your pattern pieces using the pattern on the next page and the measurements given below to draw your own pieces on paper. Any paper will do - even newspaper, though be careful the print doesn't rub off on to the fabric. Then lay the pieces on your material and cut out, remembering to cut two sleeves (pieces 3 & 4).

You will need:
4 metres fabric (main garment), 150cm wide
3 metres fabric (obi - belt), 90cm wide

Here, we are making a simple bow-tied obi, so you will need a light weight fabric. If you know someone who can tie a formal obi, the fabric should be heavier and quite stiff.
Pattern for making a Yukata

1. centre back 47cm 175cm 350cm
   15cm 119cm

2. centre back 47cm 175cm 350cm

3. 36cm 93cm

4. 36cm 93cm

5. 159cm 280cm 35cm

6. nb piece 6 is the belt – cut from a different fabric

this diagram is to show the general shape of the garment when finished, before wearing.
One of the sleeves is slightly raised to show the position of the vents under the sleeve and in the side seams.
1. Stitch pieces 1 & 2 together along the centre back.

2. Pin the collar (5) along the neck edge, keeping right sides together. Stitch.

3. Turn up a 2.5 cm hem on the unsewn edge of the collar all the way round and press. Now fold the collar over the edge of the yukata and tuck the pressed hem underneath. Make sure the folded edge on the outside of the yukata lies against the row of stitching underneath. Pin and stitch. Press the collar flat. Turn in a hem at both ends of the collar; press and topstitch.

4. Fold the yukata so that the bottom edges meet, keeping right sides together. Stitch the side seams, leaving a 30 cm gap at the top for the armholes.

5. Fold the two sleeve pieces in half matching the two shorter sides together. Stitch these two edges together, keeping right sides together. Insert one sleeve into an armhole. and pin the sleeve to the garment, leaving 5cm of sleeve free at the lower edge. Stitch. Turn in a 2.5cm hem on each side of the free fabric - this will form a vent. There should also be a gap of about 10cm in the side seam of the main garment underneath the sleeve, to form another vent.

6. Turn in a 2.5cm hem on each side of the vent in the side seam. Press and stitch. (These vents are to keep you cool in summer)

7. Repeat 5 and 6 with the other sleeve and side seam.

8. Hem the front edges and the bottom of the yukata - adjust to the length you require. Press.

9. Fold the belt piece in half with right sides together. Stitch all the way along. Turn inside out and turn in a hem at both ends. Press and stitch.

Your yukata should now be finished. To wear, remember to wrap it around you, the right side at the front under the left, otherwise you are dressed as a corpse! Make sure you have tucked in all loose fabric so that the neck line is neat and respectable. Wind the obi around your waist and tie in a bow at the back as neatly as possible.

nb This is a very simple version of an obi, for casual wear or children. For more formal occasions, an obi of a firm, heavier fabric is used and a more elaborate bow is created.