



### **Jonathan Kirby**

Jonathan Kirby has been performing and teaching taiko professionally in the U.K. since 1998. He has written several English-language guides to learning and teaching taiko, including “Taiko for Schools” which was published in 2018, accompanied by a set of online videos. 2018 also saw the publication of “The Way of the Drum – Taiko without Borders” which tells the 20-year story of the development of taiko in the UK and proposes how the art form might expand further.

As founder and artistic director of Kagemusha Taiko, he has personally trained over 200 members of his own junior and adult groups, composing original repertoire and developing new training material on the way. The adult Kagemusha Taiko have performed in theatres and concert halls across the country and abroad. This includes a series of joint concerts with the late Grand Master Oguchi Daihachi, founder of the first modern taiko group, in what were the only U.K. performances of his long career. Kagemusha Junior Taiko have earned themselves a national reputation for performance excellence, appearing several times in the Music for Youth School Proms. In 2005, they were invited to perform in Tokyo by the Nippon Taiko Foundation.

Jonathan has also taught others extensively, focussing on teacher training and helping people to start their own groups.. He contributed the taiko scheme of work to the Musical Futures programme that was pioneered in the city of Nottingham and has led teacher-training programmes across the south-west and elsewhere, including Nottingham, Maidenhead and Hertfordshire. He is also director of the annual UK Taiko Festival which he launched in 2005. The Festival attracts adult and youth groups from across the country and professional groups from Japan and USA and has a growing reputation nationally and internationally.

In 2016, Jonathan created the first European Taiko Conference. He will direct the 4th European Taiko Conference in Hamburg, Germany, in February 2019.

Preceded by careers as a French teacher in a comprehensive school, professional kit-drummer and manager of ten years with Hewlett-Packard, Jonathan trained in 1996-7 with San Jose Taiko, one of the leading groups in the USA, and decided that taiko would be the path he would tread from then on.