



# Japanese cultural drums come to life

By Katina Curtis

THE spirit of the Samurai comes to the Canberra Theatre next week with an elite company of martial arts drummers.

Drum Tao is made up of 13 young drummers who are trained in traditional Japanese percussion.

Lead drummer Taro Harasaki said it was the chance to promote the traditional culture of his land that drew him to the drum troupe.

He had been living in Montreal in Canada but searched for a job that would allow him to return to his home country.

"I was looking for a job that was to export Japanese traditional stuff to overseas," he said.

"I saw a TV commercial of Tao and that is very Japanese traditional stuff and I was interested in playing an instrument."

Harasaki said he had played

Western-style drum kit for an amateur band, but had never tried Japanese drums before auditioning for Tao.

"I had some difficulty to learn the Japanese drums and I'm still learning. It's not easy," he said.

"Everyone can make a sound – once you grab the drum sticks and beat the drum you can make a sound – but the drum doesn't have any melody so you need to learn to express emotion through the drumsticks.

"If you have a melody, like with flute and guitar it's easier to do this."

Harasaki said while the Drum Tao show did show off traditional Japanese drumming skills, beating with precision, vehemence and persistence, it was just as much about entertainment.

"What we are doing on stage is totally different to a Japanese traditional drumming show," he said.

"We call it an entertainment drumming show so our aim is to entertain the people."

He said they used other traditional instruments, such as bamboo flutes, as well as the huge Wadaiko Drums.

The 13-strong troupe also dance, using their whole bodies to express the music they create.

Harasaki has been part of Drum Tao since 2004, and said he enjoyed the chance to travel the world.

He also liked the reaction the show elicited from its audiences.

"It seems our show encourages and energises a lot of people," he said.

"It's good to do a job that people like and appreciate and I'm very satisfied to do that job."

## DRUM TAO

- **WHEN:** Tuesday, July 13 at 7.30pm
- **WHERE:** Canberra Theatre
- **TICKETS:** From \$70.90
- **BOOKINGS:** 6275 2700 or [www.canberratheatre.com.au](http://www.canberratheatre.com.au)



The young percussionists in Drum Tao will demonstrate traditional Japanese culture in their show