TaikOnStage

Article by: Soo-Im Jansson, 2026-04-23



Photo: Courtesy of Mónica Vedia

"Amateur taiko groups focus mainly on technique, but sometimes overlook the performative aspect, I noticed a lack of stage awareness. While there was often a strong focus on rhythm and technique, the theatrical and expressive aspects were sometimes missing." – *Mónica Vedia*

Mónica Vedia is a professional actress of the scenic arts, specialized in dramatic art, dance, gestural theater and improvisation. She has more than 20 years of experience in taiko and is the founder and teacher of the Japanese percussion school TaikoMon since 2017 in Madrid, Spain. She is also the artistic director of Taiko-Mon performing group, and creative leader of educational and inclusive projects through the use of Taiko. Additionally, Mónica is a collaborator in international taiko events.

Soo-Im Jansson (SJ): *Could you tell me a little about your taiko background and what got you started with taiko?*

Mónica Vedia: I am an actress, taiko artist and educator with more than 20 years of experience. My taiko journey began in 2003, when I was walking through the streets of a small village in Japan and heard the sound of taiko for the first time. That moment stayed with me - and since then, that heartbeat has never left me.

I started my journey with taiko, because I loved its powerful energy and the strong sense of community it creates. What really captured me was the combination of rhythm, movement, and expression. Over time, I have continued to develop my skills through practice, performances, and learning from other taiko players, and it has become an important part of both my artistic and personal growth.

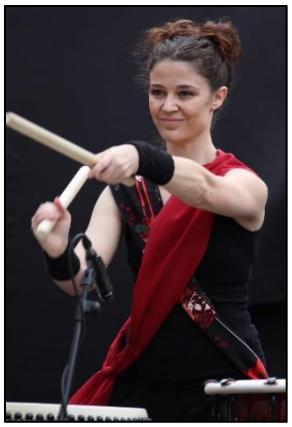

***Photo** Courtesy of Mónica Vedia*

For me, taiko is visual music in motion. It is a multidisciplinary art form that connects body and mind with the

instrument through vibration, breath, voice, and movement. Over the years, I have developed both as a performer and as a teacher, and I am deeply passionate about sharing taiko and seeing people truly enjoy playing.

SJ: *Could you tell me about the workshop TaikOnStage?*

Mónica Vedia: TaikOnStage is a workshop that focus on bringing taiko performance to a more expressive and stage-oriented level. It explores what makes a performer stand out on stage - what captures the audience's attention, and how we communicate beyond technique.

In the workshop, we work on body awareness, stage presence, and emotional expression. We also explore how each piece can have its own atmosphere, its own character - almost like different characters within a larger story.

The goal is to help performers not just play taiko, but truly inhabit the stage, also communicate with the audience.

SJ: *What inspired you to create this workshop, TaikOnStage?*

Mónica Vedia: The idea for TaikOnStage came from noticing that many amateur taiko groups focus mainly on technique, but sometimes overlook the performative aspect, I noticed a lack of stage awareness. While there was often a strong focus on rhythm and technique, the theatrical and expressive aspects were sometimes missing.

I wanted to create a space where people could explore taiko as a full stage experience - connecting movement, rhythm, and emotion - and feel more confident performing in front of an audience.

As someone who also enjoys creating performances - from costume and scenography to direction - I felt the need to share these tools. I wanted to offer a space where taiko players could develop confidence, overcome stage fear, and discover their own artistic voice on stage.

SJ: *What are your thoughts on the growing global taiko community?*

Mónica Vedia: I find it very inspiring to see how taiko is growing all around the world. It shows how powerful and universal this art form is. The global taiko community brings together people from very different backgrounds who connect through rhythm, energy, and collective expression.

At the same time, I believe it is important to stay connected to the roots of taiko, while continuing to explore new creative paths. This balance between tradition and innovation is what keeps taiko alive and evolving.



Photo
Courtesy of Mónica Vedia

Links:

TaikoMon
https://taikomon.com/en/taikomon-home/

taiko (太鼓)
Taiko is the Japanese word for drum. In the west, it is also used to describe the art form. Since any drum, e.g. tom-tom, bongos, djembe, conga, are called taiko in Japan, the word *wadaiko* is used to differentiate drums that are native to Japan.

Taiko Shin Kai

Taiko Shin Kai is a non-profit organization, that wish to encourage and spread taiko in Sweden. Taiko Shin Kai offers taiko courses in Uppsala as well as taiko workshops.