

Drummers lay down beats that astonish

By Niki Burnside

A DRUMMING group at Northholm Grammar has fast become one of Sydney's most distinctive school performance groups.

The school's taiko drumming group has entertained audiences at various events, including at the Sydney Opera House earlier this year with an ancient form of music.

For Charlie Walker, 13, the group has offered a challenge – one that has reaped great rewards since he first joined in year 4.

"I really wanted to start doing some percussion and when I heard about this group it seemed perfect," Charlie said.

"I really like hitting the drums and hearing the rhythms that come out ... it can get a bit challenging because everyone needs to be in time."

The group's inclusiveness has allowed each member to shine.

"I remember when I first started, I came in and they were half-way through a song and I was in the back trying to keep up. Now I know what to do and for our last piece I had the main part ... it was really good."

Modern taiko performance was developed in the 1950s and is popular worldwide.

Eliza Dessen, 15, has been a member since the Northholm group's inception, when she was just 10 years old.

She said it incorporated a lot of performance



DID YOU KNOW?

Taiko drums have a mythological origin in culture. Their presence in Japanese ritual dates back as early as the seventh century.

Traditional styles: Eliza Dessen, 15, Laura Johnson, 14, Charlotte Kohler, 14, Rory Armstrong, 14, Alfie Stratton, 14, and Charlie Walker (front) have bonded over a love for the a for taiko drumming.

"The rhythms can be really complicated but when they're mixed with everyone else it works really well."

aspects that were a visual treat for audiences. "It can be a bit surprising," Eliza said. "Not many people have been exposed to taiko drumming. There's a lot of vocals, big movements and stick throwing."

They enjoy it so much, group members have become fast friends outside of year levels and enjoy rehearsing at lunchtime.

There's something addictive about getting the rhythm just right.

"The rhythms can be really complicated but when they're mixed with everyone else it works really well," Eliza said.

"The taiko drumming is very much about rhythms and patterns, whereas other percussion is more melodic."



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