



## ARTIST PROFILES

Artsinspire has deep respect for the cultural traditions and commitment to artistic excellence brought to each performance by master taiko drummer s Toshi and Junko Sakamoto and shamisen player extraordinaire Noriko Tadano.

### **Toshi and Junko Sakamoto and Wadaiko Rindo**

Toshi Sakamoto is a master taiko drummer. He has studied under Takashi Fukuda, a percussionist with the Kumamoto Philharmonic Orchestra, and received intensive lessons and training from Ondekoza's Yuu Imafuku as well as various well-known Taiko teams in the area. Toshi came to Australia under the auspices of JAPEP (Japan Australia Professional Exchange Program, now called Artsinspire), an organisation promoting cross-cultural professional exchange between Japan and Australia in 1995. In 1997, Toshi's was joined by his wife Junko, also a talented and experienced taiko drummer and in that year, their performances and workshops at schools received a recommendation from the Victorian State Ministry of Education. They now have a wadaiko school teaching more than 100 students and perform throughout Australia and international with their wadaiko ensemble Wadaiko Rindo.

### **Noriko Tadano**

Born in Chiba prefecture, Japan, Noriko started learning traditional Japanese folk songs and Tsugaru-shamisen at age 8, and started performing locally. Since moving to Melbourne in 2004, she has created a huge following for her solo performances and collaborations with both traditional and contemporary musicians from many genres. She has even played rock and roll on the popular television programme "Spicks and Specks". She teaches shamisen and has formed a Tsugaru-shamisen based group called "The Shamies" which also performs regularly.