



Evaluation Report

Lessons and Recommendations for the TCA Board

TCA TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

2017

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Introduction

More than 700 participants took part in the North American Taiko Conference (NATC) 2017. Players and supporters travelled from eight countries to converge upon UC San Diego's campus from August 10-13. They took part as Participants, Observers, Performers, Chaperones, Workshop Leaders and Assistants, Volunteers, Vendors and Staff and represented 157 taiko groups.

This report summarizes our endeavor to capture and honor the experiences of those who took part in NATC 2017 while learning valuable lessons for the next iteration of the conference. It contains:

- a demographic profile of NATC 2017 attendees and an assessment of how that profile differs from the wider taiko community
- an overview of the methodology used to capture and analyze data and suggested refinements to the model
- an analysis of attendees' overall experiences at NATC 2017
- an overview of attendees' workshop experiences
- a series of recommendations for the next iteration of NATC.

It is hoped our findings and recommendations prove helpful to individuals, teams and organizations coordinating taiko gatherings, irrespective of location.

Profile of NATC 2017 Attendees

711 individuals took part in NATC 2017 in a variety of roles. A breakdown of registration types¹ is presented in figure 1. It shows more than 80% of conference-goers fell into the categories of Participant, Volunteer and Observer; the remaining 10 categories comprised less than 20% of attendees.

¹ Note that participant types are capitalized when they refer to a specific registration category. For instance, a Participant refers to an individual who registered as a Participant (as opposed to an Observer, Volunteer etc.) and therefore took part in four workshops or one mini-intensive and had access to NATC spaces. To avoid confusion, the term "attendees" or "conference-goers" is used to refer to individuals who engaged in NATC irrespective of registration type.

Registration Type	Number	Percentage of NATC 2017 Attendees
Participant	408	57%
Volunteer	92	13%
Observer	79	11%
Vendor	31	4%
Workshop Leader	29	4%
Taiko Jam Performer	27	4%
Chaperone	18	3%
One-Day Participant	9	1%
Taiko Jam Staff	7	1%
Workshop Assistant	6	1%
Staff	5	1%

Figure 1: Registration type breakdown at NATC 2017

Individuals travelled from across North America and beyond to take part in NATC 2017. The home towns and cities of almost 700 attendees are plotted on the map presented in figure 2.

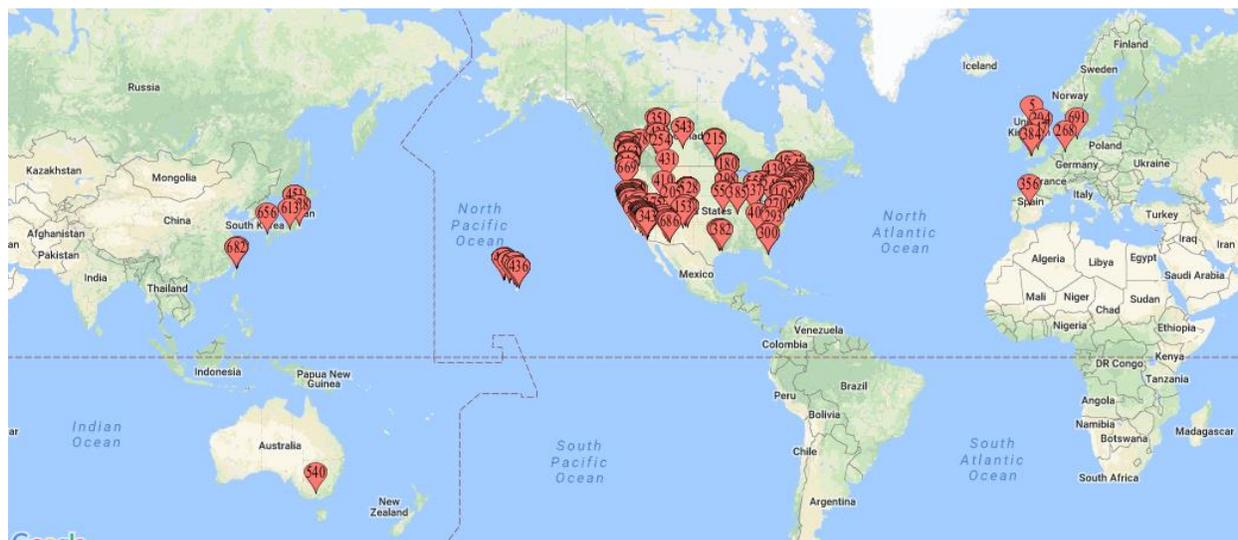


Figure 2: Map plotting NATC 2017 attendees' home towns and cities.

Taiko players resident in Australia, Canada, Germany, Japan, Spain, Taiwan, the United Kingdom and the USA took part in NATC 2017. The vast majority (97%) of attendees were resident in North America (91% from the USA and a further 6% from Canada).

The TCA Taiko Census gathered data from 1287 taiko players resident in the USA and Canada in 2016, providing a detailed profile of the community and taiko-related practices in both countries (Walker 2016: online). There were a number of significant variations between the general taiko population in North America (as identified from the TCA Taiko Census) and the NATC 2017

population. Two states were disproportionately represented at the conference: first, and unsurprisingly, California; and second, Hawaii. California residents made up 54% of the US-based NATC 2017 population yet form 48% of the broader US taiko population. Players resident in Hawaii were also disproportionately represented – they comprised 12% of US-based players at NATC 2017 yet form 7% of the general US taiko population. Furthermore, while players resident in Canada form 10% of the general North American taiko population, they formed 6% of the NATC population from North America. This may, however, be due to distance and the resultant expense – a direct flight from Toronto to San Diego takes in excess of five hours.

More generally, conference-goers travelled from 32 states and the District of Columbia with concentrated attendance from states on the eastern seaboard and the west coast.

We gathered gender data from 517 (72%) attendees. 63% identified as female, 36% as male, and 1% as other. This data is broadly in line with the wider taiko population in North America where 64% of respondents identify as female, 34.5% as male, and 0.5% as other (ibid: online).

The average year of birth for NATC attendees was 1973, resulting in an average age of 44. This is higher than the median age (41) of the general taiko population in North America (ibid: online).

348 conference-goers told us about their NATC history (i.e. whether they had attended a conference in the past). For 43%, San Diego was their first North American Taiko Conference. The remaining 191 attendees told us of on-going engagement with NATC:

Year	Location	Number of NATC 2017 Attendees that Participated	Percentage of NATC 2017 Attendees that Participated ²
1997	Los Angeles	28	8%
1999	Los Angeles	37	11%
2001	Los Angeles	52	15%
2003	Sacramento	60	17%
2005	Los Angeles	78	22%
2007	Seattle	77	22%
2009	Los Angeles	101	29%
2011	Stanford	125	36%
2015	Las Vegas	149	43%

Figure 3: Prior engagement at NATC among 2017 attendees.

Broadly speaking, the variations between the general taiko population in North America and the NATC 2017 population can be attributed to the location of the conference and the cost implications. Indeed, one significant difference between the two cohorts is expenditure on taiko –

² Note that this percentage (and the number in the adjoining column from which it is derived) refers to those who told us about their NATC engagement history rather than the entire NATC 2017 population.

the majority of players in North America (55%) spend less than \$100 per year on taiko events (such as concerts and intensives). Only 7% of players spend more than \$500 per year, a cohort that NATC attendees would likely fit into (ibid: online). Furthermore, a significant proportion of conference-goers donated as well as paying their registration fee and additional costs: more than half (52%) contributed \$10-\$99; 22% donated \$100 or more; and 23 individuals (3% of attendees) were individual sponsors, giving \$250 or more. Furthermore, 98 conference-goers (14%) were linked to a group donation. In short, those who paid the registration and ticket costs alone were in the minority – most individuals contributed financially to help cover the cost of NATC 2017.

Methodology

The ethos and approach outlined below was developed based on experience gained from designing an evaluation methodology for the European Taiko Conference. The model was subsequently refined and applied for the 2017 East Coast Taiko Conference, thereby testing it with a larger audience and in the North American context. Further (minor) refinements to the model were incorporated to reflect the specificities of the North American Taiko Conference.

Guiding Principles

The evaluation model was developed with the following principles in mind:

1. Optimal user experience. On the one hand, we wanted attendees to enjoy the conference and not feel distracted or frustrated by repeated requests for their feedback. On the other hand, we wanted conference-goers to feel that they had a voice that would be heard.
2. We only asked questions that we:
 - a. Needed to know the answers to in order to improve future iterations of NATC and TCA programming
 - b. Were in a position to action and feedback on.
3. We incentivized participation by offering taiko-related prizes for individuals who submitted responses, thereby gathering the broadest range of perspectives possible.
4. Following feedback from the board on this report, we will share our findings with attendees and the wider taiko community.

Areas of Evaluation

The scope and scale of NATC 2017 meant it could be evaluated from a range of perspectives. The guiding principles above, however, provided a framework. The evaluation model therefore sought to address the following:

- The practical components of NATC (i.e. venue, catering etc.)
- Whether the goals³ of NATC were realized for individual attendees

³ The goals are as follows: build a community of taiko groups in North America; share traditions and repertoire; support the artistic development of the art-form; document North American taiko history.

NATC presented something of an evaluation challenge as every attendee had a unique experience: the sheer volume of workshops (56) and possible add-ons (such as Summer Taiko Institutes) meant that – with the exception of those undertaking a mini-intensive – no two individuals shared identical programs. In other words, there was a need to evaluate NATC as an ecosystem, including all its component parts:

- NATC program (including leadership forum, welcome activities, opening session, workshops, mini-intensives, discussion sessions, Taiko Ten community concert, Taiko Jam concerts, Matsuri Crashers’ Battle, closing session)
- Pre-NATC Summer Taiko Institute (Women and Taiko: Past, Present, and Future)
- Post-NATC Summer Taiko Institute (Edo Kotobuki Jishi)

The Evaluation Model

Two separate strands of the evaluation model were applied: the first for NATC 2017, and the second for the Summer Taiko Institutes. These are outlined below.

1. Summer Taiko Institutes

Two Summer Taiko Institutes (STI) took place as part of NATC 2017 programming. The first, Women and Taiko, ran from 8-10 August 2017 (i.e. immediately prior to the main conference). The second, Edo Kotobuki Jishi, was offered from 14-16 August 2017 (i.e. after NATC 2017 had concluded).

For both STIs, a short survey was issued after the program had concluded using Google Forms. This set out to capture whether the objectives of the STI had been met for individuals, the value of STIs as part of NATC programming, and what learners would use and apply. Both surveys yielded a high response rate, as shown in the table below:

Summer Taiko Institutes	Number of Attendees	Survey Response Rate
Women and Taiko	45	41 (91%)
Edo Kotobuki Jishi	15	11 (73%)

Figure 4: STI survey response rate.

2. NATC 2017

Evaluation data was collected from conference-goers using Cognito Forms and Salesforce. The TCA census as well as the TCA membership and NATC 2017 registration processes provided a number of data points, meaning much of the information required for evaluation purposes did not need to be sought from attendees. Furthermore, it meant that each evaluation form was unique and customized according to the individual’s program.

Herewith the additional information that was collected from attendees:

1. Conference-goers completed a brief form prior to registration. This asked for a short free-text response to the following question:

“What are your main goals for attending the North American Taiko Conference?”

The form was completed electronically following a personalized email invitation. The pre-registration questionnaire was also promoted via social media channels ahead of the conference and at registration on-campus.

2. On 17 August, a link to a personalized post-conference questionnaire was sent to all attendees and promoted on social media channels. A prize (1 year TCA membership) was offered to one respondent who completed it by Wednesday 23 August when the survey closed; the winner will be announced via social media channels when this report is published online. A grand prize (complementary registration at the next NATC) was offered to one attendee who completed both the pre-registration questionnaire and post-conference questionnaire in full. The winner will also be announced upon publication of this report.

Data Validity

As outlined earlier, the methodology for NATC 2017 was applied due to the high-quality data it yielded at other taiko conferences (namely the European Taiko Conference and the East Coast Taiko Conference). At the former event, 90% of attendees engaged directly in the evaluation process. This exceptional response rate most likely reflects the nature of the event – as only the second European Taiko Conference, it marked the enthusiastic emergence of an interconnected community on the continent. Unsurprisingly, the response rate was lower at NATC 2017 – an event with an established history and significantly larger audience. Herewith an overview of the responses received for each stage of the evaluation process:

Evaluation Component	Number of Responses	Responses as a Percentage
Pre-conference survey	346	49%
Post-conference survey	309	43%
Individuals who completed both pre and post-conference surveys	226	32%

Figure 5: NATC 2017 evaluation response rates.

As alluded to above, the significant variable among the various taiko conferences is size: the European Taiko Conference hosted around 100 players, whereas the East Coast Taiko Conference accommodated 273 (and attracted a correlating lower response rate). In contrast, NATC 2017 attracted more than 700 conference-goers, suggesting that attendees may have felt their voice and feedback would not have an impact on an event of such scale. It is worth remembering that the STIs – a part of NATC programming – yielded very high responses and had small numbers of attendees, suggesting there may be some truth to the hypothesis. Nevertheless, it is worth noting

that the response rate is significantly higher than industry standards – according to Mailchimp (a global email marketing company), the industry average *open rate* for non-profit organizations is less than 25% (Mailchimp 2017: online). A far higher proportion of NATC 2017 attendees opened the email request(s) and completed the survey(s) in full, suggesting an acceptable response rate with room for improvement at the next iteration of the conference.

The response rate is important when it comes to interpreting the data as non-response bias may have affected the results. In other words, those who completed the survey were not necessarily representative of the conference population as a whole; they were more motivated and were thus more likely to report very good, good, or negative experiences, in turn affecting the overall survey results. This report presents the data received from attendees but acknowledges the statistical sampling error in the analysis.

Motivation to Participate in NATC 2017

346 attendees from all registration categories (Observer, Chaperone etc.) told us why they were taking part in NATC 2017 ahead of the conference⁴. 43 (12%) respondents provided a single objective for taking part whereas 78% provided multiple motivating factors. Herewith some typical examples:

“Seeing friends, making new ones, enjoying performances, talking taiko and learning some 'take-aways' to improve myself as a taiko player.”

“Learn and improve my techniques. Meet people in the community. Try products before purchasing them.”

“My main goals are to improve my drumming skills; discuss group dynamics, challenges and performance ideas with people from other groups; be a part of the excitement and energy among the taiko community; and meet taiko enthusiasts from around the world!”

⁴ One attendee stated that they were unclear as to why they were taking part in NATC 2017. All other respondents provided motivating factors.

Clearly, most individuals anticipated a multi-faceted experience with a range of possible outcomes. Submissions are summarized in the word cloud⁵ presented in figure 6 and grouped thematically below:

1. **Learning, skills development and improvement** – terms which were often used interchangeably by conference-goers. 259 (75%) respondents expressly stated that this motivated them to attend NATC 2017.
2. **Networking/meeting people.** This, however, was expressed in a range of ways. 44 respondents (13%) used the term “networking” yet only a handful stated any desired outcome, including “for future collaboration opportunities as well as sources of advice/information;” and “for possible job opportunities.” Just over a third of conference-goers wanted to “meet” people, including Workshop Leaders, Vendors, fellow Participants and existing friends. Again, very few had an outcome in mind – “reunite with friends, interact with well-known instructors and mentors [to] reignite the taiko flame within!” is an exception. For many, friendship and connection was the driving force: a quarter expressly referenced their taiko “friends” and/or “family” whereas 18% set out to “(re-)connect” with others. In short, social relations – be they for the purposes of friendship, connection or professional advancement – were a key driver for a significant minority of attendees.
3. **Enjoyment** – 21% referenced “fun” and/or “enjoyment” whereas others implicitly referenced this theme (e.g. “I love taiko ten and taiko jam and the post jam party!”)

In addition to the principal themes noted above, respondents presented a broad range of drivers for attending conference, all of which were listed by less than 5 attendees. This suggests that in order to respond to the stated objectives of conference-goers, Taiko Community Alliance should focus its attention on providing high-quality learning opportunities and occasions for formal and/or informal networking at the next iteration of the conference.

⁵ A word cloud is an image made up solely of words used in a particular text (in this case respondents’ free-text answers). The size of each word indicates its frequency (i.e. the larger the word, the more often it appeared in free-text responses).

Program Component	Percentage of Respondents for Whom it was “Not Applicable”
Matsuri Crashers' Battle	45%
Discussion Sessions	36%
Welcome Reception	29%
Workshops	20%
Opening and Closing Ceremonies	17%
Taiko Ten Concert	11%
Taiko Jam Concert	7%
Informal Discussions/Networking	5%

Figure 7: Percentage of attendees for whom conference components were not applicable.

The data above immediately suggests that certain activities were less appealing to conference-goers than others, so much so that they elected not to participate even though they were included in the registration cost. The data may be influenced by extenuating circumstances such as Taiko Ten rehearsals, late arrival/early departure, illness, Volunteers being allocated to other activities etc. Indeed, the figure for workshops is artificially high as it was largely selected by Volunteers, Vendors and Workshop Leaders/Assistants⁶. These individuals, while integral to the success of the conference, did not take part in workshops. Nevertheless, a key trend emerges: attendees prioritized watching other groups perform and meeting with other players, and attended discussion sessions and the Matsuri Crashers’ Battle (a late night activity) in smaller numbers.

Interestingly, this trend is borne out in conference-goers’ evaluations of each component as shown in figure 8. More than 70% of players who expressed an opinion thought that the following activities definitely helped to realize their objectives for attending NATC 2017: workshops (79%), Taiko Jam concert (75%), Taiko Ten concert (74%), and informal discussions/networking (73%). The activities that less commonly attracted strong agreement were Matsuri Crushers’ Battle and discussion sessions.

⁶ 20 Participants did select not applicable for workshops yet made clear from other responses that they both took part in their allocated sessions and gained from them.

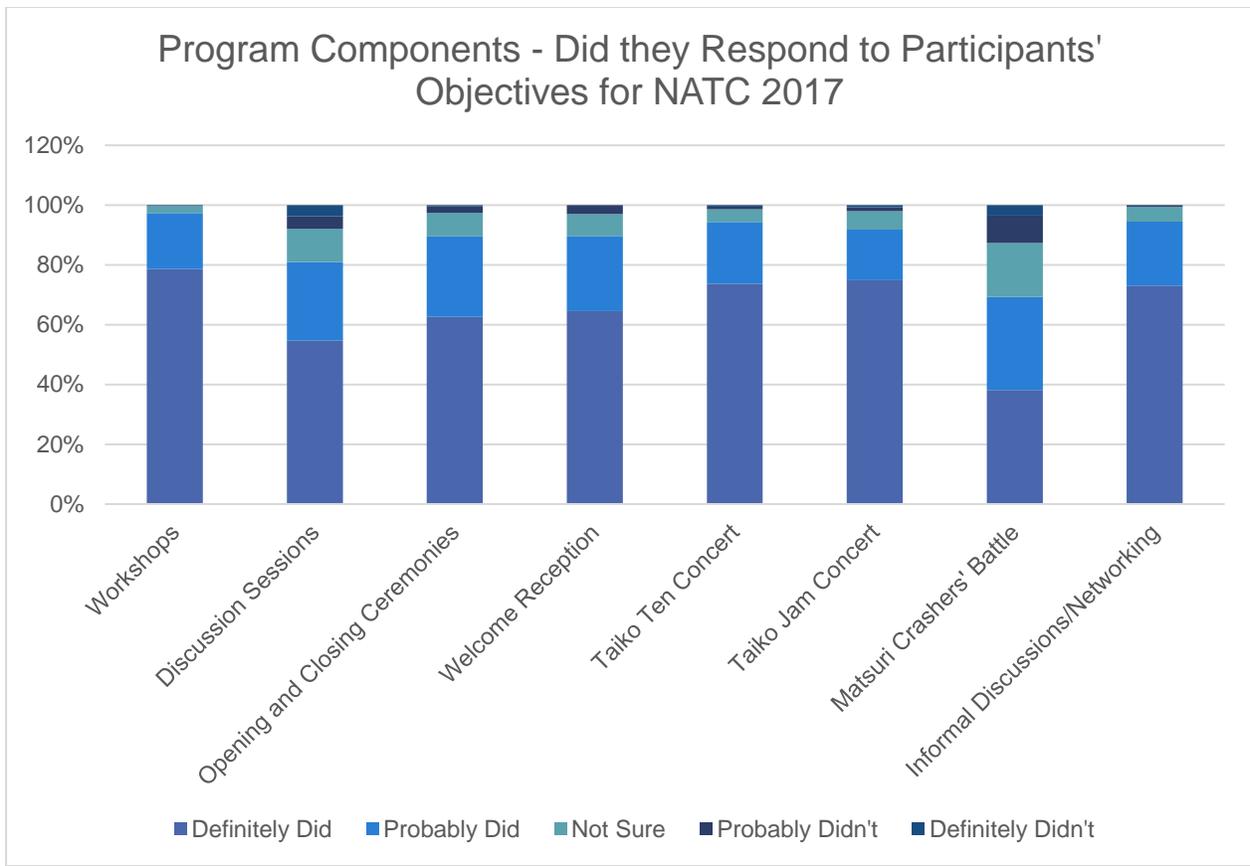


Figure 8: Support of objective realization by program component.

On the whole, all activities contributed to realizing attendees’ objectives at NATC 2017. The most positively rated activities, however, share three common themes: they involve playing and learning taiko, watching staged performances of taiko or networking with others. These broadly reflect the goals set out by conference-goers in the pre-event survey.

Housing was available at the UCSD campus at the Marshall Lower Apartments. These units were suite style with the capacity to house four attendees per unit. Rooms shared a common bathroom and kitchen/living area. A minority (49%) of survey respondents reported staying in on-campus accommodation. Of those who expressed an opinion (167), 60% thought that it definitely met their objectives for attending the conference and a further 23% thought it probably did.

Individual Development and Outcomes

Attendees were asked to reflect upon their individual development. Specifically, we asked whether they had developed artistically and, if so, how and why. This reflects the strong theme of skills development/learning as an objective from the pre-conference survey as well as NATC’s goal to “support the artistic development of the art-form.”

As shown in figure 9, almost two-thirds of respondents stated that they had improved their practice during the course of the conference. While it appears that a significant minority – almost 1 in 5 –

had not developed their taiko practice, this can be accounted for by their registration type – all were registered as either Volunteers or Chaperones.

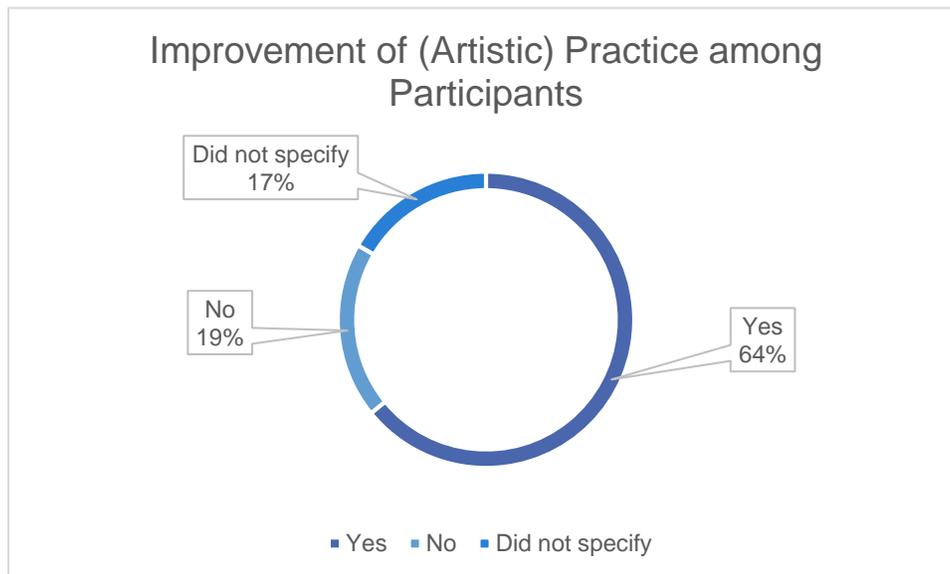


Figure 9: Percentage of respondents that reported improved practice over the course of NATC 2017

This data suggests that individuals registered under any other category universally experienced growth in their taiko practice. This is very positive, particularly in light of the pre-conference objectives set by attendees. Furthermore, it speaks to the contribution made by NATC 2017 Volunteers and Chaperones who gave their time to ensure others had a positive experience and passed on a unique opportunity to develop their own taiko skills.

313 individuals stated that they had developed their practice over the course of the conference. 83% of these respondents articulated what had improved and 80% told us how/why they had done so. Development areas are summarized in the word cloud presented in figure 10. 85% of respondents provided multiple areas of growth whereas 15% provided only one area. Unsurprisingly, the specificity of respondents' answers varied significantly – some were a little esoteric (e.g. “taiko playing as a way of communicating and my body and spirit as instruments of that communication”) while others were more concrete (e.g. “I vastly improved my naname strike”).

Taking responses to both questions into account, two principal themes emerged: first, access to high-quality instruction in forms and techniques not normally accessible to attendees, particularly o-daiko and percussion instruments; and second, a particular focus on movement and the taiko-body connection. Although players referenced a host of different styles (e.g. naname, miyake) and instruments (chappa, atarigane etc.), the following responses are broadly typical of the two themes:

contents, specifically the welcome reception, opening session, Taiko Ten concert, and closing session. To date, the segment with the highest number of viewers (764) is Taiko Ten.

With 157 groups represented, we sought to understand the reach of NATC 2017 in terms of sharing skills and repertoire with the wider community. We therefore asked attendees if they felt able to share some of the knowledge (e.g. the demographic characteristics of members of the taiko community) with taiko players who could not attend conference as well as repertoire or specific taiko skills.

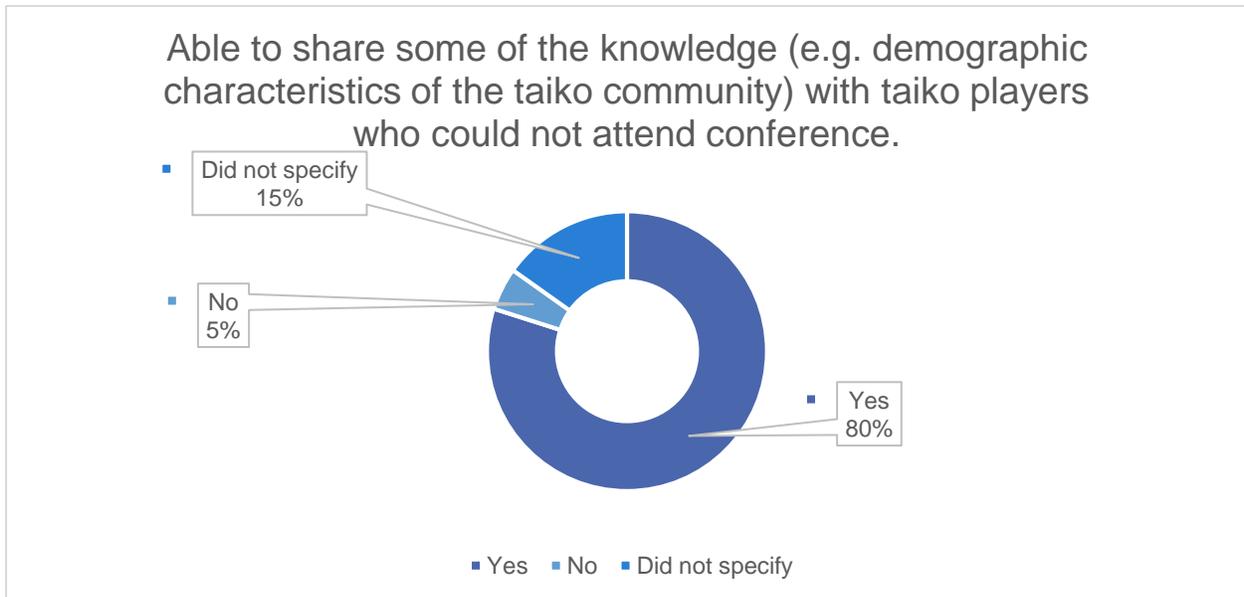


Figure 11: Percentage of respondents that felt able to share taiko knowledge gained at the conference.

For both, a majority stated that they felt able to share beyond the confines of the conference, although this dropped to less than 7 in 10 when examining repertoire and skills. Whether attendees have gone ahead and shared is quite a different matter. Given we cannot accurately gauge the impact of NATC 2017 on practice nationwide, it would seem sensible to focus further upon access at the next conference (i.e. making more content available on-line). This would allow for more accurate tracking but also enable some access to those unable to participate in person.

Able to share repertoire or specific taiko skills with members of my group or other taiko players who could not attend conference.

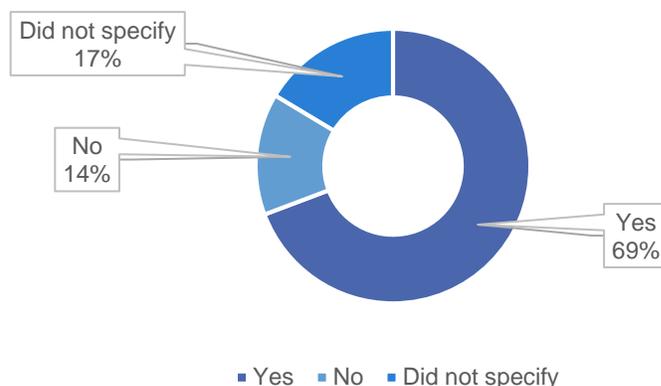


Figure 12: Percentage of respondents that felt able to share taiko skills and repertoire gained at the conference.

Figure 13 shows that just under 7 in 10 players intended to connect with other players encountered at the conference in the future. Interestingly, 1 in 6 stated that they would not; it is not clear whether there are particular barriers in place. Themes of connection and sharing are ripe for exploration during any follow-up research.

Will actively connect with groups/players met at the conference (e.g. take a workshop, attend a conference, share repertoire).

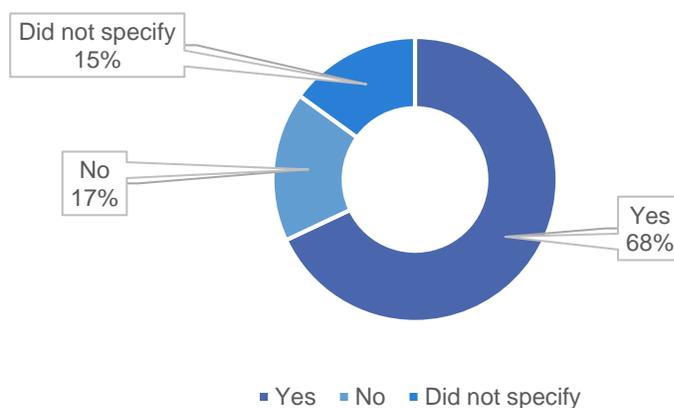


Figure 13: Percentage of players that intend to actively connect with contacts made at NATC 2017.

Practical Elements of NATC 2017

A minority of post-conference survey respondents (27%) provided their opinions on whether the workshop spaces were fit for purpose. 62% either agreed or strongly agreed that they were, whereas 11% provided a negative response (disagreed or strongly disagreed). A far larger number

(418) provided their opinions on whether the quality and range of food and drink available at the conference was good. 61% responded positively, either agreeing (41%) or strongly agreeing, whereas 7% provided a negative response. Lastly, opinions were gathered regarding on-campus accommodation. 177 attendees provided an opinion, with 47% agreeing that it was comfortable, convenient and good value for money. A further 27% strongly agreed with the statement, whereas only 4% gave a negative response. More than 1 in 5 (22%) of respondents were neutral about housing.

Engagement at Future NATC 2017

Conference-goers were asked whether they planned to attend the next NATC. Only 5% of respondents stated that they did not expect to take part in the next conference. They listed twelve barriers to participation which appear in figure 14.

Barrier	Percentage of Attendees who Reported the Barrier
Cost	68%
Location	36%
Not relevant to my development as a taiko player	12%
Time of year	12%
Program	8%
Poor value for money	8%
Health issues	4%
Personal issue	4%
Frailty	4%
Level too advanced	4%
Child care	4%
Anticipated group change	4%

Figure 14: Barriers to future NATC participation.

Clearly, cost and location (which may be interlinked) are the key barriers to participation at the next iteration of the conference. This again suggests a need to focus on access to the resources on offer at conference for those unable to attend in person.

General Feedback and Suggestions from NATC 2017 Attendees

Attendees were provided with the opportunity to leave additional comments and suggestions. 262 respondents elected to do so. The majority of comments were expressions of thanks to TCA and the volunteers as well as positive reflections on the personal impact of the conference. Additionally, some attendees left constructive criticism. Some comments/suggestions were unique, but those which appeared five times or more are listed below.

Theme	Number of Attendees who Referred to Theme	Concerns
Campus	60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too great a distance between venues (accommodation, dining hall, workshop spaces) • Participants and Workshop Leaders arriving late due to distance between rooms • Poor signage resulting in lost and frustrated attendees • Less mobile players unable to engage in the full conference program due to distance between rooms/venues • Volunteers not familiar with campus and misdirecting attendees as a result.
Workshop Rooms	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise bleeding from adjacent rooms; particularly affected discussion sessions and those using quieter instruments (e.g. fue) • Ceiling height/room size restricted players' movement • Lack of effective air-conditioning.
Workshop Allocation and Notification	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissatisfaction with workshop allocations, particularly among those allocated workshops which contained very little playing time or irrelevant content for them (e.g. taiko for children). Note a handful of players stated they would not return if the system remains the same at the next iteration of conference • Players wanted to know workshop allocations prior to the conference in order to know what to pack (e.g. chappa, fue, specific bachi etc.) • A general sense of the process being less well-organized than in previous years and repeated calls for a return to “first-come, first-serve” basis • Resentment/frustration regarding discussion sessions – would rather participate in a workshop.

Access and Diversity	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to move around campus for those with mobility issues – size and scale of campus and lack of access to particular rooms (due, for example, to an out-of-order elevator) • Speech to text microphone did not work effectively for those with hearing loss and deafness, meaning much of the discussion was not accessible • No all-gender bathrooms • Workshop Leaders not representative of the general NATC or taiko population (in terms of gender identity, age and previous experience at NATC 2017).
Parties	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop Leaders and those seeking rest raised the issue of parties/social gatherings taking place outside dorms until 3am.
Ease/Difficulty of Workshops	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A handful of attendees, including a Workshop Leader, sought for some workshops to be differentiated by difficulty level in future to avoid sessions being too easy or complex for Participants.

Figure 15: Common concerns raised by NATC 2017 attendees.

A list of thematic recommendations is set out at the end of this report for ways to tackle the concerns outlined above.

NATC 2017 Workshops: What the Data Tells Us

A total of 56 workshops were offered by 23 Workshop Leaders as part of NATC 2017. 36 workshops (64%) were led by men and 20 (36%) by women. This is almost the inverse of the general NATC 2017 population (63% female, 36% male, and 1% other), evidencing a significant discrepancy in the number of females putting themselves forward and being selected for a teaching and leadership role at conference.

Herewith a breakdown of scores received for all workshops at NATC 2017:

Score	Leaders	Workshops
90%-100% (an "A")	12 leaders (52% of leaders)	32 workshops (57% of workshops)
80%-89% (a "B")	7 leaders (30% of leaders)	16 workshops (29% of workshops)
70%-79% (a "C")	4 leaders (17% of leaders)	7 workshops (13% of workshops)
lower than 70% (a "D")	0 leader	1 workshop (2% of workshops)

Figure 16: Overall scores for workshop leaders and workshops.

19 leaders (48 workshops) scored 80% or higher, suggesting the selection process for NATC 2017 was largely successful. Interestingly, 58% of the top 12 leaders were women, despite their underrepresentation as a whole. Despite broadly positive results, 4 leaders scored a “C” and 8 workshops achieved less than 79%, suggesting there is scope for improvement. Furthermore, the overall workshop score (presented below) is lower than that achieved in 2015, 2011, and 2009. Herewith an overall summary of the results:

	Workshops	Discussion Sessions	Mini-Intensives
Achieved Objectives	4.5	4.28	4.61
Clear Descriptions	4.43	4.33	4.67
Ability to Use after Conference	4.5	4.17	4.83
Overall Average Score	4.48 (89.6%)	4.26 (85.2%)	4.70 (94%)

Figure 17: Scores by session type.

It is suggested that the separate detailed breakdown of feedback for individual sessions and workshop leaders is used to support the selection process for the next iteration of NATC. In particular, it is recommended that workshop leader conduct is set out when the call for workshop leaders is issued to avoid confusion or dissatisfaction. It is also suggested that TCA retains the mini-intensive format as it was highly regarded by those who took part.

Revisions to the Evaluation Methodology

It is clear that the evaluation approach adopted was only partly successful. While it yielded thoughtful and detailed comments from those who took part, a higher response rate would have provided more data points. One workshop leader graciously provided the evaluation team with access to survey responses gathered through Google Forms for the three sessions they delivered. They carved out 10 minutes at the end of each session to ask those present to complete the form

on their smart phone. Surveys collected names, email addresses, a quantitative rating of how helpful the session was, a quantitative rating of how helpful it would be to the players' group, and which parts were most/least helpful. The response rate appeared to be high – a member of the evaluation team took part in one session which appeared to achieve a 96% response rate.

In future, it is suggested that feedback is collected at the end of each session/component part through personal electronic devices. However, additional time will need to be carved into the schedule to enable this to take place. Furthermore, it becomes particularly important that sufficient time is allocated between sessions to allow attendees to move punctually between rooms.

Recommendations for the Next NATC

The data gathered from attendees provided significant food for thought. The feedback suggests a conference that was highly valued and appreciated yet which can be further improved upon. While the response rate could have been higher, we can still surmise general trends and make recommendations for the future. It is hoped that the “final take-aways” at the end of this report are reviewed in conjunction with detailed workshop feedback when planning begins for the next NATC. Although simple, many of the suggestions would address the most commonly raised concerns.

More broadly, however, the data suggests the board focuses upon four key themes at the next iteration of conference:

1. High-quality and practical learning opportunities at the center of programming, including access to a range of styles and techniques not widely available to the North American taiko community
2. A concerted focus on access: first, to ensure that all those on-site can access the program and all its component parts in full, including gender-neutral spaces; and second, to allow access to the knowledge and experience at conference by those unable to take part in person due to distance, cost or other barrier
3. A wider view of artistic development as something that can occur beyond workshops. E.g. sessions reviewing a Taiko Ten concert (i.e. how to critique effectively)
4. Formal and informal networking opportunities for attendees to learn and share.

A renewed focus on these themes and utilization of the practical check-lists would serve to address both the objectives of conference attendees and the concerns they raised. In addition, the recommendations directly respond to the stated goals of NATC: to build a community of taiko groups in North America; share traditions and repertoire; support the artistic development of the art-form; and document North American taiko history.

References

“Email Marketing Benchmarks,” Mailchimp, accessed October 10, 2017, <https://mailchimp.com/resources/research/email-marketing-benchmarks/>

Kate Walker, “Taiko in the USA and Canada: Key Findings from the Taiko Census 2016.” *Taiko Community Alliance*, 2017, https://taikocommunityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/TCA_Census2016_NorthAmerica.pdf

The Venue - Final Take-Aways

<i>Point</i>	<i>Responsible Person</i>	<i>Done</i>
The schedule allows all attendees, including those with impaired mobility, to move between rooms etc. in time and arrive punctually for their next session		
Rooms and building are well sign-posted and use colored and branded signs to make them easily distinguishable		
Volunteers have received a “walk-about” tour to enable them to easily direct attendees to the correct room/building		
Rooms are allocated with noise in mind – active taiko sessions are located away from discussion and/or quieter sessions to ensure the latter are not disturbed		
Rooms are of the appropriate size (floor space, ceiling height) to accommodate taiko players, including tall players.		

Workshop Allocations - Final Take-Aways

<i>Point</i>	<i>Responsible Person</i>	<i>Done</i>
Workshop sign-ups function on a first-come, first-serve basis to encourage early-bird registration.		
Participants are informed of their workshop allocations in advance to enable them to pack/prepare appropriately		
Workshop Leaders are informed at the point of application that descriptions form a promise to Participants and should not be deviated from.		
A list of required materials (particular bachi, chappa, notebook etc.) is issued for every workshop.		
Workshop Leaders and Participants are informed in advance that video recording is allowed by default; Workshop Leaders must expressly state in their application if video recording is forbidden and this must appear in the workshop description.		
A selection of workshops is geared towards particular ability levels at both ends of the spectrum (beginner and advanced) to ensure satisfaction for all levels of players.		
Mini-intensives form part of the NATC program		
Summer Taiko Intensives form part of the NATC program		

Access and Diversity - Final Take-Aways

<i>Point</i>	<i>Responsible Person</i>	<i>Done</i>
The Workshop Leader selection process is contextual and actively addresses significant discrepancies between the general NATC population and Workshop Leader population		
Assistive technology (e.g. speech-to-text microphone) functions correctly and allows participation by all		
Gender-neutral bathrooms are available		
All rooms and spaces are fully accessible for those with limited or impaired mobility and it is practical and convenient to move between rooms/spaces.		
High-quality broadcasts of conference program elements are made available to those unable to attend via live-streaming		
Where practically possible, conference resources (outputs, recordings, concerts etc.) are made available to the wider taiko community.		

The appointment of an Access Coordinator might prove an effective way of ensuring full participation by all conference-goers, regardless of (dis-)ability.

Miscellaneous - Final Take-Aways

<i>Point</i>	<i>Responsible Person</i>	<i>Done</i>
It is clear that the Leadership Forum (if it retains this name) is open to all attendees		
An orientation is provided for new-comers and/or solo representatives of groups at conference and bespoke information is issued in advance so they know what to expect		
Workshop Leaders are introduced during the opening ceremony; if possible, they attend the orientation session.		
Locality is printed on delegates' name badges (otherwise group names can be meaningless).		
Water is available in each room for attendees.		