

## ABEYA Tsugaru Shamisen Concert

### **I. Welcome**

Good evening! Welcome to the Tsugaru Shamisen ABEYA Concert. The Consulate General of Japan in Seattle and the Japan Foundation of Los Angeles are proud to present ABEYA in the United States to celebrate the centennial anniversary of the gift of cherry trees from Japan to the US.



### **II. Tsugaru Region**

Tsugaru shamisen is a genre of music from the Tsugaru region of Aomori Prefecture at the north-most point of Honshu, the largest island in Japan. The people in Aomori endure extreme winters, with more than 10 feet of snow each year. Locked inside during the freezing months, they have used their time to develop their own style of shamisen music, Tsugaru-jamisen.

### III. Evolution of Tsugaru-jamisen Music

Tsugaru-jamisen has a history spanning two to three hundred years, but has spread across Japan and rapidly developed over the last few decades. The shamisen instrument is larger, with thicker strings than shamisen in other areas of Japan. The lilting rhythms and percussive quality of this style makes it instantly recognizable. Tsugaru-jamisen music is passionate, inspiring, and includes improvisation.

### IV. ABEYA

Abeya is a shamisen sensation in Japan not only due to their amazing talent, but also for their musical innovation. As you will soon see, they have introduced Japanese flutes, drums, vocals and dance to their performance. They have transformed shamisen music into a true performing art incorporating traditional songs as well as modern elements. Their exciting approach is reflected in their group name. “Abeya” is a phrase from the Tsugaru region which means “let’s go!”

So, let’s go, Abeya!

Please enjoy the show!

