"Overcoming the Disaster: Gratitude from Japan to the World"
Series of Events to be Held in Los Angeles and New York to Commemorate 1 year since the Great East Japan Earthquake
Traditional folk Performing Arts from the Tohoku Region and Energetic Wadaiko Drumming

Tokyo, Japan, Feb.23, 2012- The Japan Foundation will present the cultural program "Overcoming the Disaster: Gratitude from Japan to the World" in nine cities across the globe, to include concerts performed at the Music Center’s Ahmanson Theatre in Los Angeles, and at Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York, to commemorate 1 year since the Great East Japan Earthquake.

As well as expressing gratitude for the tremendous support received from people across the globe in the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11 last year, this program is intended to demonstrate the Tohoku region's determination to recover. The cultural program features lectures, documentary films, and architectural and photo exhibits on themes of the Tohoku region and reconstruction, focused on recovery. Performances of traditional folk entertainment from the Tohoku region will also take place in a number of venues around the world.

"Overcoming the Disaster: Gratitude from Japan to the World" - Main Program

◆ Tohoku Folklore Group and Wadaiko Drumming Performances (Performers: Wakumizu Kagura / Ondekoza Taiko & Musicians)

With a focus on artists from the Tohoku region, 28 musicians from 9 groups, active both within Japan and on the international stage, have been assembled. Through the power of music, these artists will convey the message and feelings of victims, not only within Japan, but also across the globe.

Los Angeles
Date: March 2, 2012 (Fri) 18:30 start
Venue: Music Center’s Ahmanson Theatre
http://www.jflalc.org/ac-events-arigato12.html

New York
Date: March 6, 2012 (Tue) 19:30 start
Venue: Rose Theater at Frederick P. Rose Hall, Home of Jazz at Lincoln Center
http://gratitude-concert-march6.org/

*A performance is also scheduled to take place at the United Nations Headquarters

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Bamboo Instrument Workshop for Children

This is a workshop at which the group of internationally renowned musicians make musical instruments from bamboo with local communities, with a primary focus on children. Each workshop is followed by a performance that involves all of the participants including the children. The musicians of the "Ondekoza Taiko" wadaiko drumming group as well as all of the performers from Japan work together in a joyous atmosphere through hands-on experience workshop which will bring the music to children from Los Angeles and New York.

Los Angeles
Date: March 1, 2012 (Thu) 14:00 - 17:00
Venue: Lobby of the Music Center’s Ahmanson Theatre, Los Angeles
http://www.jflalc.org/ac-events-arigato12.html

New York
Date: Sunday, March 4, 2012, 14:00 - 17:00
Venue: Avenue C Studio
http://gratitude-concert-march6.org/workshop.htm

Other events include:

Documentary Screening: "Can You See Our Lights?: First Festival After The Tsunami"

New York
Date: March 11, 2012 (Sun) from 14:30
Venue: Japan Society
http://www.japansociety.org/event/can-you-see-our-lights

Drama Reading and Open Discussion by Japanese and US playwrights

New York
Date: March 11, 2012 (Sun) from 19:00
Venue: The Great Hall at Cooper Union
The actor James Yaegashi, who is from Yamagata, a nearby area affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake, appealed to his fellow Japanese and American playwrights to work together on this one day only event. All of the artists have donated their time to the project. The reading is organized by Theatre communications Group in cooperation with the Japan Society.

New York
Date: March 12, 2012 (Mon) from 19:00
Venue: Japan Society
A public discussion by Japanese and US playwrights will be held, with the featured playwright Kumiko Shinohara, from the Gekidan-Gekisakka group, who wrote a short play about the disaster.
"Overcoming the Disaster: Gratitude from Japan to the World" - Main Activities to be Held Globally

"Overcoming the Disaster: Gratitude from Japan to the World" is a cultural program which will take place in a total of 9 cities in 4 countries across the globe, beginning in the USA (Los Angeles and New York), before moving on to France (Paris), China (Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing, Guangzhou, and Hong Kong), and Italy (Rome). The project will introduce the innate attractions of the Tohoku region, in the form of its rich culture and the strong bonds that link members of the communities in the region, and has the objective of expressing the gratitude of Japanese people for the warmhearted support received from around the world, and conveying the country's firm resolve to recover from the disaster.

◆ **Tohoku Folklore Group (Wakumizu Kagura, Kuromori Kagura, Usuzawa Shishiodori), Ondekoza Taiko & Musicians: Performances in the USA, France and China**

Three Tohoku folklore groups will participate in the performances in 8 cities across 3 countries. *Wakumizu Kagura* from Tono City, which is located inland and served as a hub for providing support to the devastated coastal areas, and traditional folk entertainment groups from two tsunami-stricken regions on the Sanriku coast will give performances in these countries, conveying the feelings of the people of their home districts. Besides the traditional folk performing arts, workshops will be held with local children in each city where they will make musical instruments from bamboo and perform concerts with an array of performers featuring *Ondekoza Taiko*, which is known for its energetic *wadaiko* drumming performances, jazz musicians, Okinawa *sanshin* musicians and female *gidayu* (music theater) performers.

*From March 2, 2012, the performance will tour Los Angeles, New York, Paris, Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing, Guangzhou and Hong Kong.*

◆ **Architectural Exhibition: How Did Architects Respond Immediately after 3/11 (The Great East Japan Earthquake)?**

This exhibition uses photographic panels and models to introduce various activities conducted by Japanese architects, aimed at assisting in the reconstruction following the Great East Japan Earthquake. It will showcase new ideas at each stage, from the evacuation shelters in the immediate aftermath of the quake and tsunami, to temporary housing as the next stage, and the construction of houses and districts that are resistant to disaster, as the final stage. There will also be a lecture by Professor Taro Igarashi, Graduate School of Engineering, Tohoku University, who is the curator of this exhibition.

*From March 6-31, 2012: The Japan Cultural Institute in Paris; Plans to tour South Korea, Russia, and other countries from April*

◆ **Photography Exhibition: TOHOKU Through the Eyes of Japanese Photographers**

This is a photography exhibition by photographers who have continued to focus on the true nature of the Tohoku region, with its beautiful scenery and rich culture. The exhibit introduces works by a group of historic and contemporary photographers who’s work has captured the essential charm and beauty of the Tohoku region, where recent media coverage has tended to focus on the scale of the devastation in the disaster-stricken areas.

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March 10-16, 2012 (Beijing World Art Museum)
End of March - end of April 2012 (The Japan Cultural Institute in Rome); plans to tour Australia and other countries after April

◆ Film Screenings
A group of documentary films will be screened that portray the recovery from the earthquake and tsunami in areas that were badly damaged, as well as selected films on the subject of recovery from and reconstruction after natural disasters. The works due to be shown are:
In addition, a set of four other films and three documentaries will be sent to 126 Japanese diplomatic missions and overseas branches of the Japan Foundation around the globe to screen for local audiences.

About the Japan Foundation:
The Japan Foundation was established in 1972 by special legislation in the Japanese Diet and became an Independent Administrative Institution in October 2003. The mission of the Japan Foundation is to promote international cultural exchange and mutual understanding between Japan and other countries. The Japan Foundation activities, aiming comprehensive and effective development of its international cultural exchange programs, consist of following three major categories: Arts & Cultural Exchange, Japanese-Language Education Overseas, and Japanese Studies and Intellectual Exchange. The Foundation maintains its headquarters in Tokyo and operates through a network of 21 overseas offices in 20 countries worldwide.

Please refer to the URL below for further details of events in each city as part of the "Overcoming the Disaster: Gratitude from Japan to the World" program. http://www.overcoming-disaster.jp/

*Digital photos are available upon request

[Contacts]

For enquiries related to the performance scheduled on March 6 at the Rose Theater at Frederick P. Rose Hall, Home of Jazz at Lincoln Center please contact:

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