

PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT For Immediate Release

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Jero in Concert – Tickets Still Available **“Honored to be Performing in San Francisco”**

SAN FRANCISCO (March 8, 2010) – The Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC) is looking forward to hosting the West Coast debut of the *enka* singing sensation, JERO. This west coast tour will kick-off with a performance on Sunday, March 28, 2010 at the Palace of Fine Arts, 3301 Lyon Street, in San Francisco at 4:00 p.m. and a limited number of tickets are still available.

In a recent interview with Jero for Nikkan-san in Los Angeles, Jero mentions “while living in Pittsburgh, my grandmother would always play *enka* in her house. She enjoyed listening to *enka* because it reminded her of Japan.” The first song he remembered singing as a youngster was Misora Hibari’s “Echigo Shishi no Uta” which he learned quickly and when he sang it to his grandmother for the first time, “she was very pleased.” He also explains *enka* as “Japanese Blues,” to those who are unfamiliar with it because “the lyrics are very deep and poetic.”

“I am very honored to be performing *enka* in San Francisco and Los Angeles. I am very much looking forward to it and I hope everyone enjoys the performance,” Jero states as he closed his interview.

“It is our hope that this young Japanese/African American from Pittsburgh will inspire others, especially younger generations of Japanese Americans, to learn more about Japanese culture,” states Paul Osaki, Executive Director of the JCCCNC.



Consul General Yasumasa Nagamine is also “pleased that JERO is making his first U.S. Tour, including a concert in San Francisco. I am always impressed by his soulful singing of traditional *enka* ballads. I am certain that you will enjoy his performance,” he adds in a Letter of Greeting for the concert.

There are still a very limited number of tickets left, including Premium Ticket Packages that include a post-concert reception featuring an appearance and opportunity to meet Jero, as well as the “best seats in the house” for \$250 per person.

General ticket prices are \$100, \$55 and/or \$35 plus a minimal ticket and order fee. General tickets can be purchased by contacting City Box Office by phone at (415) 392-4400 or by visiting their website: www.cityboxoffice.com.

The JCCCNC has arranged shuttle service from Japantown (Peace Plaza) to the Palace of Fine Arts. Shuttle service will begin at 2:45 p.m. from Japantown Peace Plaza and return immediately after the show concludes at approximately 6:00 p.m. The cost of the roundtrip is \$8 per person and you must call to reserve your seat.

Don't miss this soon to be SOLD OUT tour as it opens in San Francisco.

This U.S. concert tour is co-presented and co-sponsored by the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center (based in Los Angeles) and the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California. Supporters of the San Francisco concert and reception include Ozumo Restaurant, the Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco, KTSF, FujiTV, Nichi Bei Weekly, BaySpo and the Kanrin Maru 150th Anniversary.

To order premium tickets, please contact the JCCCNC at (415) 567-5505 or email imatoba@jcccnc.org and for general tickets, please contact City Box Office at (415) 392-4400.

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About Jerome Charles White, Jr. aka JERO. JERO makes his long-awaited U.S. concert debut with this exclusive performance in San Francisco. As the first African American *enka* singer in the history of Japanese music, Jero single-handedly reignited interest in the musical ballads that emerged in Japan's post-war era.

Raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania by his Japanese grandmother and half-Japanese mother, Jero grew up listening to records of *enka* legend Misora Hibari. He continued to study Japanese language throughout high school and college, as well as studying at Kansai Gaidai University of foreign languages in Japan.

Jero majored in information science at the University of Pittsburgh and graduated in 2003, moving to Japan in the same year. Two months after arriving in Japan, he entered the NHK Nodoko Jiman competition broadcast on TV.

Jero first began pursuing his dream to become an *enka* artist because of the influence of his grandmother Takiko who had met his grandfather, an African-American serviceman, at a dance during World War II. Jero worked toward becoming an *enka* singer because he promised his grandmother that one day he would perform at the annual NHK Kohaku Uta Gassen (New Years Eve) song show (Kohaku). As a result, he actively participated in numerous singing contests. Sadly, his grandmother was never able to see her grandson achieve *enka* fame, as she died in 2005, three years before he became famous.

His first single, *Umiyuki*, literally *Ocean Snow*, was released in Japan in early 2008 and it entered the music charts at number four. This marked the highest-ever debut for a single released by an *enka* singer in Japan. He won the Best New Artist Award in the 50th Annual Japan Record Awards in December 2008.

Jero was selected to appear on the 59th annual Kohaku musical show, on December 31, 2008. In his participation, he fulfilled a pledge he made to his dying grandmother to appear on the yearly competition. Jero appeared wearing a black and white shirt bearing the image of his grandmother.

Critics have lauded the way this meteoric talent has managed to mold an old musical genre around a modern context in a way that appeals to both old and new generations. Looking like a hip-hop star, with a voice of an angel, he has redefined the soul of Japan. Jero also appeared in this year's 60th Anniversary Kohaku show on the White Team.

About JCCCNC

Envisioned by the Japanese American community, JCCCNC will be an everlasting foundation of our Japanese American ancestry, cultural heritage, histories and traditions. The JCCCNC strives to meet the evolving needs of the Japanese American community through programs, affordable services and administrative support and facilities for other local service organizations. The JCCCNC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit community center based in San Francisco.