

# Shamisen



SISH100

The Shamisen is one of the most popular and widely played instruments of Japan. As is the case with several other instruments, this lute originates from Chinese string instruments, and came to Japan only at the end of the 16th century. There it developed its form as we know it today. The Shamisen consists of a rectangle or oval wooden body with a long slim neck. The rather small resonating box is mostly covered with skin from cats or dogs which gives it a brilliant sound. The width of the neck influences the sound too therefore three different sizes exist.

The three stringed lute is held like a guitar and plucked with a plectrum. To play the Shamisen was part of the education of a Geisha, the Japanese entertainer-artist. It is a perfect solo instrument but also suits ensemble and chamber music. The Shamisen has an established place in Japanese stage music.