

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**HONOLULU
FESTIVAL
FOUNDATION**

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**HONOLULU FESTIVAL SHOWCASES PACIFIC RIM CULTURE,
MUSIC, ARTS AND EXHIBITS FOR FREE, MARCH 13-14**

Festival Visitors Provide a Boost to Hawaii's Tourism Industry

HONOLULU – On the weekend of March 13-14, Hawaii residents and visitors will enjoy captivating cultural exhibits, arts, and music performed by people from countries throughout the Pacific Rim – and it's all available for free.

The 16th Annual Honolulu Festival will feature a wide variety of entertaining cultural performances and fascinating exhibits by more than 120 performing groups over two days at four convenient locations: Hawaii Convention Center, Ala Moana Center, Waikiki Beach Walk, and Waikiki Shopping Plaza.

Under the banner of "Pacific Harmony," the festival's theme is "Discovery Through Tradition," and will be highlighted by cultural exhibits and performing groups representing Japan, China, Taiwan, Korea, the Philippines, Australia, Canada, Alaska, and Hawaii.

"We are very pleased to bring the Honolulu Festival to the people of Hawaii and provide them with the opportunity to experience and interact with the cultures of Asia and the Pacific," said Keiichi Tsujino, president of the Honolulu Festival Foundation. "Admission to the festival is free, making it a great entertainment value for the whole family and a wonderful learning experience for children."

The free cultural exhibits and performances are on display Saturday, March 13, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Sunday, March 14, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The festival concludes on Sunday with the spectacular Grand Parade along Kalakaua Avenue in Waikiki, starting at 4:30 p.m., and featuring music, cultural demonstrations and magnificent floats, including the popular *Daijyama*, or fire-breathing dragon.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann commented, "The Honolulu Festival goes straight to the heart of what makes Hawaii such a vibrant and exciting place to live and visit by celebrating the multi-cultural diversity of our people and those who come from the Asia-Pacific region. I strongly encourage people to make time in their schedule and experience the fun and excitement of this Festival that only takes place once a year."

At a time when the visitor industry continues to struggle, the festival will provide a much-needed boost. More than 4,700 visitors are coming to Hawaii, mostly from Japan, specifically to take part in the festival and are expected to generate close to \$10 million in visitor spending.

"The Honolulu Festival draws thousands of visitors to Hawaii each year and has become a favorite event for both visitors and residents," said Mike McCartney, president and CEO of the Hawaii Tourism Authority. "The festival celebrates Hawaii's rich history and multi-cultural heritage while also generating revenue for the state."

David Carey, president and CEO of Outrigger Enterprises Group, noted the festival's value to Hawaii tourism. "Anyone who works in our industry knows how important an event like the Honolulu Festival is to our business," said Carey. "The festival brings in visitors to help fill hotel rooms and use our restaurants, and it encourages *kama'aina* to come into Waikiki and enjoy the festivities. I congratulate the organizers for continuing to put on such a first-class festival that does so much good for Hawaii's visitor industry."

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Cultural demonstrations, live performances and music will be offered at the four festival locations throughout the weekend of March 13-14.

The Hawaii Convention Center will feature an expanded array of cultural offerings, highlighting arts, crafts, exhibits, and foods. Special activities at the Center – all for free – include the following:

- **Ennichi Corner:** Designed specifically for children, Ennichi Corner will offer fun, hands-on activities inspired by the traditional Japanese Saint's Day festival. Children will be introduced to customary Japanese games, crafts, foods and traditions.
- **Anime Corner:** The popular cultural phenomenon of Japanese animation will be highlighted with a performance by Japanese TV star Momoi Halko, photo-taking sessions with anime characters, video game tournaments, illustrator workshops, and other exhibits.
- **Craft Fair:** Crafters from Hawaii, Japan and other Pacific Rim countries will display their works of art representing native cultures.
- **Movie Showings:** The critically acclaimed Japanese films *Hula Girls* and *Departures* will be shown Saturday, March 13, in the third floor theater of the Hawaii Convention Center.
 - ❖ *Hula Girls* tells the true story of how the struggling Japan coal-mining town of Iwaki in Fukushima Prefecture was revived by a Hawaiian-themed entertainment center in 1965. Think of “Coal Miner’s Daughter learning to dance hula.” The film won eight Japanese Academy Awards in 2007. Showing: March 13, 10:30 a.m.
 - ❖ *Departures* tells the story of a man who finds employment in a funeral home after being let go from his job as a cellist. The film won the Academy Award in 2009 for Best Foreign Language Movie. Showing: March 13, 1:00 p.m.
- **Band and Choral Festival:** The 4th Annual Hawaii Band and Choral Festival will feature performances by bands and chorus groups from Hawaii, the mainland U.S., and Canada.
 - ❖ Hawaii Cheer and Dance Festival: March 13, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m., Oahu Room (#313-A)
 - ❖ Hawaii Band and Choral Festival: March 13, 12:00 – 4:30 p.m., Kauai Room (#311)

The Honolulu Festival celebrates and perpetuates the strong cultural and ethnic ties between the people of Hawaii and the Pacific Rim. It is the Festival’s mission to perpetuate the traditions of these cultures to future generations. This celebration of music, art and culture began in 1995 to help foster cultural and ethnic harmony between the people of Hawaii and Asia-Pacific. The Honolulu Festival Foundation, a non-profit organization formed in 2000, administers Festival activities and honors the culture, customs and traditions of Asians and Pacific Islanders through community outreach and charitable efforts.

For more information about the Honolulu Festival, please visit www.honolulu festival.com. Be a fan on Facebook and follow on Twitter at [@honfestival](https://twitter.com/honfestival).

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