



**HONOLULU
FESTIVAL
FOUNDATION**

P.O. Box 8494
Honolulu, Hawaii 96830
Tel (808) 926-2424
Fax (808) 922-1412
www.honolulu festival.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 21, 2012

**HONOLULU FESTIVAL RETURNS WITH FREE WEEKEND OF
ASIA-PACIFIC CULTURE, MUSIC AND EXHIBITS, MARCH 3-4**

HONOLULU – A treasured celebration of cultural diversity for the whole family to enjoy, the Honolulu Festival returns with a full slate of music, dance, crafts, arts, special exhibits, and fireworks display presented by the people of Asia Pacific, March 3-4.

Admission to the Festival performances and exhibit display is free to everyone and being hosted at three convenient locations – Hawaii Convention Center, Ala Moana Center, and Waikiki Beach Walk – on Saturday, March 3, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Sunday, March 4, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Following Sunday's performances, the festivities shift to Waikiki for the Festival's finale. The visiting performers from Asia Pacific will entertain in the Waikiki Grand Parade on Kalakaua Avenue, starting at 4:30 p.m., followed by the spectacular Nagaoka Fireworks Show making its first appearance outside of Japan to light up the skies over Waikiki Beach.

"We encourage everyone to come out and show their support for our visiting performers and celebrate the beauty of our different cultures in the Pacific Rim," said Keiichi Tsujino, president of the Honolulu Festival Foundation. "With free admission and the variety of all there is to enjoy, the Honolulu Festival is perfect for family fun and entertainment."

Last year's Honolulu Festival was interrupted by the tragic earthquake and tsunami that struck Japan on March 11, the eve of the Festival's opening. While the Festival proceeded with most of its scheduled activities, more than 30 performing groups comprising more than 800 visitors from Japan had to cancel their trip to Honolulu, with the highly anticipated fireworks show from Nagaoka also canceled out of respect to the victims and their families.

Presented under the banner of "*Pacific Harmony*," the theme for this year's Honolulu Festival is "*Bonding together, hand in hand*." More than 4,500 performers and visitors are coming to Hawaii from Asia Pacific, mostly Japan. Performers representing the cultures of Japan, China, Taiwan, Korea, Australia, the Philippines, Canada, Alaska, U.S. Mainland, and Hawaii will dazzle guests with their entertaining displays of music and dance.

"The Honolulu Festival is a great opportunity to celebrate our wonderful cultural traditions and share with our Pacific Rim neighbors," said Mayor Peter Carlisle.

The international visitors coming to Hawaii for the Honolulu Festival will help boost the economy, adding an estimated \$11 million in visitor spending and \$1.1 million in tax revenue for the weekend of March 3-4. In addition, more than 75,000 people – both residents and visitors – are expected to enjoy the cultural performances, parade and fireworks.

"We are looking forward to welcoming the visitors for this year's Honolulu Festival," said Mike McCartney, president and CEO of the Hawaii Tourism Authority. "Every year the festival draws thousands of visitors to the Hawaiian Islands to celebrate the unique cultures that make up Asia Pacific. We are pleased to support events like the Honolulu Festival, that not only draw visitors, but highlight what makes Hawaii so special through our people, place and culture."

David Carey, president & CEO of Outrigger Enterprises Group, noted, "The Honolulu Festival has always been a favorite event of mine because it celebrates the diversity of cultures found in Hawaii and across the Asia-Pacific region, something Outrigger has celebrated for the past 65 years. Firmly established events and activities like the Honolulu Festival excite travelers from throughout the Pacific and entice them to visit our island state. We are also proud to share the world class Waikiki Beach Walk as a major entertainment venue for the Honolulu Festival. We are looking forward to another great event, made even more special this year as we celebrate Waikiki Beach Walk's fifth anniversary!"

-more-

Along with the cultural music and dance performances, the Honolulu Festival offers a variety of other activities and offerings appealing to all ages.

SPECIAL EXHIBITS: The Hawaii Convention Center will feature a wide array of cultural offerings, arts, crafts, exhibits, and foods from the people of Hawaii and the Pacific Rim on Saturday, March 3, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Sunday, March 4, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Highlights include the following:

- **Craft Fair:** Crafters will display a wonderful variety of cultural art and exhibits.
- **Ennichi Corner:** Designed specifically for children, the 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 by a cosplay cafe, video game tournaments, illustrator workshops, and other exhibits.

BON DANCE – March 3, 11:00 a.m.: The first Bon Dance of 2012 is taking place at the Hawaii Convention Center and is open to everyone.

MOVIE FESTIVAL: Movie-lovers will enjoy the fascinating stories behind four films from Japan that are being shown at the Hawaii Convention Center (schedule below). Admission is free.

- ***Fukushima Hula Girls, March 3, 10:30 a.m. – Third Floor, Room 316ABC***
This documentary follows the story of a Japanese hula dance troupe over a four-month period following the Japan earthquake and tsunami on March 11, 2011, that severely damaged their hometown of Iwaki City. The troupe organizes “The National Hula Girl Bonding Caravan” and hits the road to lift people’s spirits, including their own.
- ***Kono Sora No Hana: The Story of Nagaoka’s Fireworks, March 3, 1:00 p.m. – Third Floor, Room 316ABC***
This film tells the story behind the start of the Nagaoka fireworks and its tribute to the people who have been lost to war and natural disasters. Following the showing will be a special lecture by director Nobuhiko Obayashi.
- ***442 – Live with Honor, Die with Dignity, March 4, 10:30 a.m. – Third Floor, Room 310 (Theatre)***
This documentary is about the Japanese American men who fought during World War II in the highly decorated 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the conflict that some felt in having to fight against parents’ fatherland.
- ***Wanko – The Story of Me, My Family, and My Dog, March 4, 1:00 p.m. – Third Floor, Room 310 (Theatre)***
This is an inspiring true story about a boy being separated from his dog and what follows after the family has to evacuate their home on Miyake Island following a 2000 volcano eruption.

FRIENDSHIP GALA – March 3, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.: This evening event at the Hawaii Convention Center features cultural entertainment from visiting Asia-Pacific performers and delicious cuisine from ten of Hawaii’s top restaurants. The Friendship Gala is the only paid event and supports the Honolulu Festival Foundation’s educational and cultural programs for schools and children in Hawaii. Tickets are \$90 per person (\$70 under age 21; free for 5 and under) and are available at www.honolulufestival.com.

FESTIVAL INFORMATION

For more information about the Honolulu Festival and its schedule of cultural performances and displays, please visit www.honolulufestival.com. Follow updates about the Festival on Twitter (@honofestival) and become a fan of its Facebook page (Honolulu Festival).

-more-

ABOUT THE HONOLULU FESTIVAL

Under the banner of “*Pacific Harmony*,” the Honolulu Festival’s theme for 2012 is “*Bonding together, hand in hand.*” Now in its 18th year, the Honolulu Festival was founded in 1995 as a celebration of music, art and culture to help promote cultural understanding and harmony between the people of Hawaii and Asia-Pacific. The Honolulu Festival Foundation, a non-profit organization formed in 2000, administers Festival activities and perpetuates the culture, customs and traditions of Asians and Pacific Islanders through community outreach and charitable efforts.

###

Media Contact:

McNeil Wilson Communications
Patrick Dugan (808) 539-3411 / (808) 741-2712
Noreen Kam (808) 539-3422 / (808) 741-2843
Patrick.Dugan@AnthologyGroup.com
Noreen.Kam@AnthologyGroup.com