

Traditional and modern fashion show to wow Wellington

The fashion show covers a wide range of Traditional and modern Japanese fashion including Kimono, Uniforms, Ganguro and Gothic Lolita.

Japan's Gothic Lolita street fashion phenomenon, better known as Loli-Goth, hits the runway.

Loli-Goth is inspired by fashions from the Rococo, Romantic and Victorian periods. It draws its inspiration from historical mourning garb, maidservants' wear, children's dresses, and dolls' clothes. The parade will feature five Loli-Goth garments created and constructed by AUT University Fashion staff members for the Auckland Museum exhibition.

Aucklanders Bevan Chuang, Anny Wang, Szu Kao and Bom Park will stage a fashion parade and presentation based on the 2007 Auckland War Memorial Museum exhibition Loli-Pop, which was supported by Asia:NZ. The exhibition was curated by Kathryn Hardy Bernal in association with Bevan.

Models Bevan Chuang, Anny Wang, Szu Kao and Bom Park have been brought to Wellington by the Asia New Zealand Foundation.



Street dance Japanese-style comes to town

The Natural High Dance Team from Sydney's renowned Dancekool studio will be a star attraction at next month's Japan Festival of Wellington.

Top hip hop Dancekool members Satoshi (Japan), Jono (New Zealand), Masaki (Japan), Hyungik (Korea) and Naohisa (Japan) will perform a dance choreographed especially for the festival.

Founded in 2002, Dancekool is the first and finest street dance studio in Sydney. It is also the only one to have focused on hip hop over the years.

Dancekool has developed a reputation for authentic street styles and professional teaching and has taught and performed all over the world, including Japan, the United States, China and the Philippines.

The school runs and is involved with many dance events throughout the year to help showcase and encourage the growth of hip hop dance.

The Natural High Dance Team has been brought to Wellington by the Japan Foundation, Sydney.



Garden of Japanese delights

A spectacular celebration of Japanese culture gets underway at the Wellington Town hall on Saturday 11 July.

The inaugural Japan Festival of Wellington is organised by Wellington City Council with support from the Embassy of Japan and Asia New Zealand Foundation.

Bring along family or friends and relax in the tranquil ambience of the age-old Japanese tea ceremony, try your hand at writing a haiku poem or take part in a competition to roll New Zealand's longest sushi.

International performers include the amazing Clown LOTO!!, puppeteers Dalmamori and Eriko, and street dance Japanese-style from Sydney's famous Dancekool.

Renowned classical musicians from Japan will give two free concerts at the Ilt Theatre during the festival, one on Friday 10 July and the second on Saturday 11 July.

There'll also be food stalls, Japanese traditional and street fashion, children's entertainment and a language competition.

This exciting free festival celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Japan Society of Wellington and the 15th anniversary of the sister city relationship between Wellington and Sakai.

Musical puppetry captivates kids

Whoever heard of a two-humped camel getting lost in the desert? Or stranger still, a mermaid in an oasis?

These are just some of the strange goings-on in a musical puppetry show by Japanese puppeteers Dalmamori and Eriko at the festival.

Dalmamori's stories of a snake ball, a shining moon drum and a mysterious shadow merchant draw children into a creative wonderland, full of humour and fantasy.

Dalmamori launched his original musical puppet shows with musical accompaniment by Eriko seven years ago. He also produces handmade picture books and musical instruments which can be heard during the puppet performances.

Do not miss this spectacular mix of music, puppetry and storytelling brought to you by the Japan Foundation and the Embassy of Japan.



Music Fair of Japan 2009 - a night of Japanese harmony

Two free Music Fair of Japan concerts featuring leading Japanese musicians will be a major drawcard at the festival.

The concert at 7pm on Friday 10 July will include solo and ensemble performances on piano, flute, violin, koto and shamisen. On Saturday 11 July the concert will also feature a guest performance by NZSO Principal Contrabassist Hiroshi Ikematsu.

The Music Fair of Japan is presented by the Embassy of Japan in association with the Japan Foundation.

While the concerts are free of charge, bookings are required to secure seats. For enquiries or further information, please contact the Embassy of Japan on (04) 495 8333 or email japan.cul@ej.org.nz

The visiting artists are:

Susumu Aoyagi (piano)

A child maestro, Aoyagi made his first orchestral debut with the Fort Worth Symphony when he was only nine.

At the age of 23, he won the sixth prize at the prestigious Marguerite-Long-Jacques-Thibaud International Competition and shortly after began touring the world.

Aoyagi has produced five solo CDs, all have been highly acclaimed.

Takako Hagiwara (flute)

A graduate from the Tokyo University of the Arts, Hagiwara is an active international performer, regularly competing in numerous recital contests internationally. She has received exceptional praise from distinguished music specialists such as cellist Mstislav Rostropovich and clarinetist Peter Schmidl from the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra.

Ayako Ishikawa (violin)

An outstanding Merit Scholarship student from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, Ishikawa (Eminence: Destiny, Piano Stories, Passion) graduated from the Con as the principal violinist with First Class Honours.

Ishikawa was selected as Best Performer of 2003 at Australia's Overall Instrumental Winner's Concert, and won the Australian Musician's Academy Award in 2001.

Risa Kataoka (Koto and Shamisen)

An expert in the koto and shamisen, Kataoka has had the honour to play for their Imperial Highnesses Prince and Princess Akishino in 2007.

Her versatility extends to playing everything from koto classics to singing bel canto opera. She has appeared in numerous shows on television, radio and commercial broadcasts.

Clown LOTO!! set to steal the show

Japan's award-winning Clown LOTO!! will be one of the highlights of the festival.

Clown LOTO!! otherwise known as Yoshinori Fukai, followed the example of millions of his compatriots and began his career as a businessman.

Three years later, at the age of 22, he threw away his briefcase and became Clown LOTO!! Circus Gagstar.

Since then, Clown LOTO!! has performed at festivals in Japan, China and the United States, including the Smithsonian Museum.

Earlier this year he also performed in New Zealand at the World Buskers Festival, where he stole the show with what the Christchurch Press termed his "goofy charm, impeccable timing, a real sense of physical theatre and some pretty nifty magic tricks".

Whether its rhythmic gymnastics, pantomime, magic or juggling, Clown LOTO!! is guaranteed to have you in stitches.

Look out for Clown LOTO!! busking around Wellington in the run up to the festival.

Clown LOTO!! has been brought to Wellington by the Asia New Zealand Foundation.

The Japan Festival is organised by Wellington City Council with support from the Embassy of Japan and Asia:NZ.

