



powell street festival society

パウエル祭協会

**POWELL STREET FESTIVAL RETURNS AUGUST 5 – 6 WITH HARUKI MURAKAMI’S TOP TRANSLATORS, ALMOST ASIAN’S KATIE MALIA & A PRESENTATION ON JAPAN’S THIRD GENDER**

*Musical highlights include Australia’s ‘George & Noriko’, Japan’s ‘Ensemble Liberta’ and numerous taiko groups including California’s ‘JODAIKO’*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** Vancouver, B.C. (June 5, 2016) – The Powell Street Festival, the largest Japanese Canadian festival in the country and Metro Vancouver’s longest running community arts festival, will return for its 41<sup>st</sup> year on August 5 & 6, 2017 from 11:30am – 7:00pm daily. The festival is centered at Oppenheimer Park (400 Block, Powell Street) and surrounding streets (Jackson and Dunlevy Avenues, Alexander Street) and venues - the **Firehall Arts Centre** (280 East Cordova Street), **Vancouver Japanese Language School and Japanese Hall** (475 Alexander Street) and **Vancouver Buddhist Temple** (220 Jackson Avenue).

This year’s lineup of dozens of performers is an eclectic mix of local and international talent. One of the many highlights include performances from the dynamic duo **George & Noriko** – a Japanese blues cowboy and Tsugaru shamisen player from Melbourne, Australia who will play an additional performance with local musicians **Bernie Arai** and **Brian Minato**. Other acts include **Ensemble Liberta** who will bring their classical Japanese instruments all the way from Japan, live calligraphy by **Kisyuu**, and a mix of Taiko groups including California’s **JODAIKO**.

Literary events will include a special presentation by iconic Japanese author **Haruki Murakami**’s key translators **Jay Rubin** and **Ted Goossen**, the return of festival-favourite **Sally Ito**, who will read from her new book “*Are You an Echo?*” and performances by **Joy Kogawa** and **Soramaru Takayama**.

Film screenings at the Firehall Arts Centre, co-presented with the **Hapa-palooza Festival**, will include the award-winning short film **Born With It** and a screening of episodes from **Almost Asian** – a web series created and starring **Katie Malia**, who will be in attendance from LA.

Other special events include a presentation on Japan’s third gender curated by **Asato Ikeda**, a production of **NeOn-ね音** – **Mayumi Yoshida**’s play about love inspired by her late grandmother’s arranged marriage, and a performance by Ottawa-based artist **Matt Miwa**.

Guests can enjoy the festival’s interactive installations, children’s activities, craft market and visit over twenty food vendors. “**Macro-Maki**”, the winner of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Design Competition, allows festival attendees to don pillow-sized sushi costumes and shoot selfies on a stage that’s designed like a massive sushi tray. The craft market will be selling a wide variety of original handmade goods not available in stores. Food vendors will be serving authentic and delicious Japanese food along Dunlevy and Jackson Avenues.

All events at the Powell Street Festival are free.

About the Powell Street Festival Society:

The Powell Street Festival Society's (PSFS) mission is to cultivate Japanese Canadian arts and culture to connect communities. Its main activity is producing the Powell Street Festival (PSF) in Vancouver's historic Japanese Canadian neighbourhood, located on unceded Squamish, Musqueam, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations territories. In addition, PSFS engages in co-presentations with arts organizations and produces an annual season of cultural and artistic programming including 'Spatial Poetics' on July 8, 2017 at the Vancouver Buddhist Temple.

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For press materials, including hi-res images, please visit:  
<http://www.powellstreetfestival.com/festival2017/media/>

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