



powell street festival society

パウエル祭協会

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**For Immediate Release - Vancouver, B.C. (Tuesday, June 8, 2021)** - Known as the largest Japanese Canadian art and culture event in the country, the Powell Street Festival Society (PSFS) adapts to public health restrictions and revamps its programming so festival-goers can stay bubble-safe yet connected to the historic Japanese Canadian neighbourhood for its annual celebration on July 31 and August 1, 2021.

The 45th Powell Street Festival offers an array of on-demand creative works, on-location performances, DIY workshops, and community-building activities. There will be no large public gathering event. The festival website ([www.powellstreetfestival.com](http://www.powellstreetfestival.com)) is the hub for its programming throughout July, culminating in a critical mass of activity during the BC Day Long Weekend.

“We are prioritizing community connection,” says Executive Director Emiko Morita. “In consultation with our stakeholders, we’re supporting our grassroots groups to create self-sufficient, accessible interactions and resources. Martial artists, Japanese folk singers, actors, poets, musicians and dancers will host bubble-safe programs through the internet and/or in person, these events will then reverberate through photographs, YouTube videos, or Zoom virtual gatherings. Follow **#powellstfest** to witness this high velocity of activity.”

PSFS President Edward Takayanagi says, “The spirit of Powell Street Festival is carried inside every one of our festival goers and community groups, it is their connection to the festival that makes us strong. We are offering a DIY package of celebrations and encouraging folks to ‘take the festival to your own neighbourhood park!’ We envision a rippling of good festival vibes emanating from the **#powellstfest** hashtag.”

The On Demand content includes a showcase of local and international artist collaborations that PSFS commissioned specifically for digital consumption, including:

- **Dub This Road** is an innovative musical meeting of British hapa singer and recording artist Denise Sherwood and Vancouver’s Sawagi Taiko and Onibana Taiko, featuring a special mix and mash by legendary dub reggae producer Adrian Sherwood, masterminded by Vancouver artist Don Chow.
- **Ritual-Spective 廻融** is an online experimental media art collaboration between Kazuma Glen Motomura カズマ・グレン 本村一真, Berlin/Tokyo based Japanese and South African experimental dance artist, and Sammy Chien 簡上翔, Vancouver/Taipei based Taiwanese-Canadian interdisciplinary artist. The project seeks to investigate the intergenerational dialogue on artistic, cultural and spiritual legacy, as a ritual of honouring the past, by listening, learning and processing, then re-integrate them to what is the here and now.
- Composer and singer Jody Okabe works with producer Rup Singh and film director Aya Garcia to create an experimental electronic wave pop exploration that dives into the depths of the human and supernatural experience. Lending their voices to hold the space between ancient futures by honouring the gifts of their ancestors.
- Based in Vancouver, dance artist Shion Skye Carter and calligraphy artist Kisyuu create work that adapts traditional and contemporary art forms, and celebrates their shared Japanese heritage while embracing new media art forms. Originally premiered as a video at Powell



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Street Festival in 2020, the new iteration of **Flow Tide** expands the artists' exploration to the shoreline of Spanish Banks. There will be a live performance and a video edition.

- **From the Prairies to the Pacific Rim** is an auditory experience from amiskwaciwâskahikan to the Salish Sea. The listener is invited to join this immersive poetic soundscape and conversation with artist-activist-poets Rita Wong, Emily Riddle, Sacha Ouellet, and E. Hiroko Isomura to journey downriver, deepening connections to language, land, waterways, and one another, along the way.

There are also opportunities to visit the Powell Street neighbourhood, including the following socially distanced activities\*:

- Community Food Groups will offer a menu of festival favourites that can be pre-ordered for scheduled pick-ups at the **Festival Depot**, Vancouver Buddhist Temple (220 Jackson Avenue), July 31 and August 1.
- Japanese crafts and merchandise will also be available for pick-up at the **Festival Depot** through a partnership with Japan Market, July 31 and August 1.
- Randall Okita's **Book of Distance**, an animated immersive film that places the viewer inside the context of Okita's grandfather Yonezo Okita's life during the internment of Japanese Canadians in World War II, can be experienced at the Vancouver Japanese Language School and Japanese Hall (VJLS, 475 Alexander Street), July 28 to August 1, registration required.
- **360 Riot Walk** guided tours will be offered in Cantonese, Punjabi, Japanese and English, July 24, 25, 31 and August 1.
- Tasai Collective will offer an immersive poetry/music installation at VJLS's Japanese Hall, July 31.
- **Durational Taiko Drumming** from the rooftop of VJLS will be heard from the neighbouring streets and can be view as a live stream. Details to be confirmed.

\*Advance registration is required for most events. Please visit [www.powellstreetfestival.com](http://www.powellstreetfestival.com) for details.

Online workshops, community messages and other resources are vast. Here is a sample:

- Are you missing the festival's annual sumo tournament? Fold origami sumo wrestlers and host your own paper-version competition.
- Fold at least 25 origami Daruma, make wishes for your family, friends and community, drop off your Daruma at the Festival Depot to contribute to the Daruma Well-Wishing Installation at Oppenheimer Park, an outpouring of good will.
- Join Za Daikon in their community collage project, Let's Learn and Enjoy the Japanese Classic Passage "Haru wa akebono..." by iconic female author, Sei Shōnagon.
- Banana Bread's instructional video describes their songwriting process, with a particular focus on writing in Japanese. This will include inside scoops on how the members create melodies with Japanese lyrics, along with performances of the songs.



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- Learn the Paueru Mashup community dance and discover opportunities to join flash mob performances.

For interviews, phone Duston Baranow-Watts at (604) 343-0269 or [media@powellstreetfestival.com](mailto:media@powellstreetfestival.com).

第45回パウエル祭  
THE 45TH ANNUAL  
**POWELL  
STREET  
FESTIVAL**  
CELEBRATING JAPANESE CANADIAN  
ART & CULTURE

ON DEMAND AT :  
[www.powellstreetfestival.com](http://www.powellstreetfestival.com)

ONLINE  
AND LIVE  
EVENTS

FREE THROUGHOUT  
JULY AND  
JULY 31<sup>ST</sup> & AUGUST 1<sup>ST</sup>

   @POWELLSTFEST #POWELLSTFEST

ARTWORK BY: RACHORL WADA



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## About Powell Street Festival Society

Powell Street Festival Society's (PSFS) mission is to cultivate Japanese Canadian (JC) arts and culture to connect communities. The main activity is producing Powell Street Festival (PSF), an annual celebration of Japanese Canadian arts, music and culture in Vancouver's historic Japanese Canadian neighbourhood, Paueru Gai. The PSFS's vision includes a society enriched and interconnected through Japanese Canadian arts and fostering the recognition of Japanese Canadians as a creative force within the broader community.

A grassroots organization with social justice at its core, PSFS is deeply connected to its geographic location in unceded Squamish, Musqueam, and Tsleil-Waututh territories. The Powell Street neighbourhood was once a bustling Japanese Canadian community and today is known as one of the most impoverished districts in North America, the Downtown Eastside (DTES). The festival envisions itself as a space where progressive and quality arts presentation is an empowered contribution to society at large, enabling conversations about diaspora, diverse histories, and contemporary issues.

Creative social engagement is combined with traditional and contemporary art practices, exploring Japanese Canadian diversity to its fullest. Festival programming supports a mix of traditional and contemporary art forms. Off-season events are spaces where both emerging and established artists can push their practices, challenging themselves along with the audience. PSFS connects artists across disciplines and builds communities across cultures and socio-economic divides, with a commitment to community engagement and development.

PSFS, a charitable non-profit arts organization, gratefully acknowledges the financial support of The Canada Council for the Arts, BC Arts Council, the City of Vancouver, and its donors, all of which make this program possible. Donations can be made via Canada Helps. [www.powellstreetfestival.com](http://www.powellstreetfestival.com)