

Media Release:

The Best of Japan Comes to Wellington

Funky shamisen player Noriko Tadano and taiko drumming duo YuNiOn from Australia will take top billing at this year's not-to-be-missed Wellington Japan Festival.

The family-friendly festival takes place at the TSB Bank Arena from 11am to 6pm on Saturday 24 November. The fifth Festival in 2016 attracted more than 30,000 people.

Melbourne-based Noriko comes from Chiba prefecture and arrived in Australia as an assistant language teacher. Having played the three-stringed shamisen since she was six, she watched other musicians busking in the Melbourne streets and decided to try her luck. Her mix of traditional and modern music drew the crowds and in 2012 she became a national sensation when she reached the finals on Australia's Got Talent.

Also from Australia, YuNiOn blends the spirited energy of the Japanese taiko drum with percussive sounds and festive song and dance. The Sydney-based group was set up in Japan by Masae Ikegawa and Graham Hilgendorf in 2005 and has since performed throughout Australia, toured internationally and given workshops throughout Japan.

Noriko is travelling to New Zealand courtesy of the Japan Foundation and the Embassy of Japan, while YuNiOn is travelling with the support of Air New Zealand.

Members of Wellington's Japanese community – including an adorable children's choir – will join the visiting performers on the stage to showcase traditional and contemporary Japan. And as always, food-lovers will have plenty of delicious choices from stalls provided by the capital's Japanese chefs.

The Japan Festival Wellington is brought to you by The Wellington Japan Festival Trust, Wellington City Council and the Embassy of Japan, with support from Wellington's Japanese community.

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