

**Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2014**

## **Earls Court One Turned Into Hot Japanese Town As HYPER JAPAN 2014 Closes With Record Attendance**

HYPER JAPAN, the UK's biggest J-culture event, closed at 18:00 on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2014 with a record number of visitors. Tens of thousands of guests attended across the three-day event, keen to check out the latest exhibitors in gaming, anime, fashion, music, food, drink and more. A vast array of pop culture and traditional performances all served to showcase the *real* Japan to the UK.

Throughout the weekend, HYPER JAPAN 2014 was *the* place to discover the real essence of traditional and modern Japan. Made up with three new major areas: the HYPER Game and Anime Park, the HYPER KAWAii!! Zone, the HYPER FRINGE Market, alongside the enduringly popular Eat-Japan food area, and featuring a total of 216 exhibitors, the event was hugely scaled up from last year to fill the new bigger venue of Earls Court One.



### **HYPER KAWAii!!**

The HYPER KAWAii!! Zone was without a doubt a highlight of the event, born from a very successful collaborative partnership with ASOBISYSTEM, which is famous for producing Japanese singer Kyary Pamyu Pamyu. As part of ASOBISYSTEM's mission to export the Kawaii concept to the world, the zone had a whole range of delights on offer. The HYPER KAWAii!! Stage played host to a number of fashion shows, demonstrating Kawaii fashion with along with Japan's famous brand Spinn's, which expresses a new look that combines sweet and sinister motifs such as teddies and skulls. Several catwalks took place on stage over the weekend featuring Japan's kawaii models and members of the UK public together. FujiFilm celebrated the revival of the polaroid camera in Japan, offering visitors the chance to get their photo snapped with a kawaii model from the show. There were anime songs and J-pop karaoke, while Domo kun, television station NHK's much-loved mascot was on-hand to have his photo taken with guests. J-pop live, featuring performances by Yun\*chi, Yanaginagi and Anna Yano also attracted a huge number of fans.



### **HYPER Game & Anime Park**

Without a doubt the most famous and popular exhibitor of the event was Nintendo. Guests swarmed the 500 square metre Nintendo area in the HYPER Game and Anime park where they were offered the chance to try out brand new Wii U Mario Kart 8 on a big screen along with the Nintendo 3DS. Bandai Namco and Toei Animation teamed up to provide games such as Tale of Xillia and One Piece. The whole area was full of anime and gaming characters – Mario and Luigi and Pikachu were there to play with the audience while a huge inflatable One Piece character Chopper hovered above the guests. Cosplayers strolled around showing off their anime character costumes, while Kodansha and JP-Books proved hugely popular for manga comic shoppers.



### **EAT-JAPAN**

Eat-Japan is Europe’s Biggest Japanese Food Festival and it has been always one of the event’s most successful zones. It offers an extensive range of Japanese Street Food and many guests grab tasty dishes such as Japanese curry, takoyaki, Japanese sweets, a large range of green teas, sake and much more.

Once again, the Eat-Japan area played host to the Eat-Japan Sushi Awards. Guests tasted five different sushi creations from five leading Japanese UK restaurants and gave their votes to confirm Wojciech Popow from Roka Charlotte Street as the ‘Sushi of the Year 2014’ champion with his ‘Seabed Shipwreck’. This tasty creation involved succulent slices of octopus marinated with fresh green peppercorns, sansho pepper, lemongrass and sesame seeds, carefully wrapped in a glistening translucent jelly made from yuzu juice, cider and vinegar, and then topped with deep-fried seaweed fronds, dehydrated bonito flakes flavoured with soy sauce, and a drizzle of ume sauce. This visually stunning sushi captures the scene of an octopus curled up in quiet reflection in the shipwreck he has made at the bottom of the ocean.

The Sake Experience, the biggest consumer sake tasting event in Europe, brought together 25 different sake varieties from 11 breweries for visitors to try. Those that took part voted in a number of polls to decide the People’s

Favourite Sake, the Perfect Sake for British Summer, Best Match with British Food, and the Sake for that Special Someone. The winners of each category are as follows:

- **People's Favourite:** Sho Chiku Bai Shirakabegura MIO Sparkling Sake
- **Perfect Sake for British Summer:** Premium Sparkling Sake Suzune Wabi
- **Best Match with British Food:** Rocky mountain "Gozenshu 9 Regular"
- **Sake for that Special Someone:** Premium Sparkling Sake Suzune Wabi



### **HYPER JAPAN Fringe market**

The HYPER JAPAN Fringe market was the height of individuality and artistic expression, showcasing a wide range of amateur artists, designers and performers who all display a passion for Japanese taste and culture. With 65 exhibitors, including 30 hand-made accessory exhibitors, 20 comic or manga artists offering their own designs and illustrations and much more, there was a vast amount to see and buy. The HYPER Gakuen-sai booth featured products designed by about 20 students from the Cross-Disciplinary Art and Design department at Joshibi University of Art and Design. Gakuen-sai is an intrinsic part of Japan's University culture and the stall brought this concept to the UK for the first time.



### **Culture**

From traditional to modern culture, the latest technology and Japan as a tourist destination, this was the area to absorb all the culture that Japan is truly proud of. Repeat Gold Medalists at the Chelsea Flower Show, the Federation of British Bonsai Societies made their first HYPER JAPAN appearance with a display of some of their best work as well as demonstrating to visitors how to create bonsai. Some of the main stage artists such as Vocaloid™ Opera AOI, Robot Garage, ONE NOT'E and YANAKIKU had booths where they could chat to visitors directly. SIRO-A put

on 5-minute performances at their booth and gave the audience a chance to be a part of it.



## **Main Stage**

### **Humanoid Robot, Robi Introduced**

Tomotaka Takahashi of Robot Garage attracted a huge crowd with his humanoid robot creations. Last year, JAXA, the Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency, sent Tomotaka's creation, Kirobo to the International Space Station to see how well robots and humans could interact. Kirobo was designed to speak with JAXA astronaut Koichi Wakata and took part in the very first robot-to-human conversation, when they were both on-board the space station in December 2013. On stage at HYPER JAPAN he introduced Robi who charmed the audience with his adorable movements and comments. Tomotaka Takahashi's ambition is for all people to have their own humanoid robot just like Robi to keep them company.



### **First ever viewing at HYPER JAPAN! VOCALOID™ Opera AOI with Bunraku Puppets**

In true HYPER JAPAN style, a brand new artistic trend called VOCALOID™ combined traditional performing arts with 300 years of history. Presented as an opera film, the audience was treated to a performance taken from ancient Japanese literature inspired by the book Tale of Genji, also referred to as the world's first novel. Bunraku puppets, life-like puppets known to act beyond human ability performed with VOCALOID™ technology, where pre-recorded voices and melody are stored in a comprehensive Singer Library, extracts are then taken and synthesized without the use of an actual singer. The unhuman voice and puppets profoundly express the story's emotional conflict of jealousy and sorrow.

### **Dragon Gate**

Dragon Gate made a huge impact during their visit to HYPER JAPAN appealing to the massive Japanese wrestling fan base in the UK. The dedicated ring was put up on Sunday morning where all the wrestlers took part in matches, as well as offering fans the chance to have their photo taken with them. Each Dragon Gate wrestler has a strong personality and 8 wrestlers in total, including popular characters in Japan such as YAMATO and Naruki Doi battled it out right in front of the audience!



### **SIRO-A made a great comeback**

Technodelic performance troupe SIRO-A made a triumphant return to Earls Court following their popular show at HYPER JAPAN 2013. Drawing a huge crowd to the main stage, the group gave the audience a thrilling taster of what their Leicester Square Theatre shows will involve later on in the year!



### **Up and coming talent made first appearances at HYPER JAPAN**

DEN Entertainment performed 'THE SAKE', a dynamic performance that combined Japanese tradition with technology to describe sake, while emphasizing their motto "feel Japan through the five senses". The group will now go on to appear on stage at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Masked Ninja Hiroki performed with weapons such as the sword and the Okinawan Nunchaku to show his own "Mukei Mugen-Ryu" style developed over 25 years of hard work. J-pop singers YANAKIKU and Yanaginagi and J-rock group ONE NOT'E were all hugely popular acts across the different stages.



### **Winner announced! ECG – European Cosplay Gathering**



HYPER JAPAN once again hosted the UK Preliminaries for the European Cosplay Gathering (ECG) contest this year where cosplayers from all over Europe come together! After 2 days of COSparade competitions and ECG on Saturday, the winners were announced.

The winners are Shirak who played Lydia Deetz in Beetlejuice in the Individual tournament and Nomes and Altria who

played the Lenneth and Valkyrie characters from Lord of Vermilion in the group tournament. They will go on to participate in the final at JAPAN EXPO in 2015.

HYPER JAPAN had a photo shoot for the photobook "HYPER", which will be published in September 2014. The photobook will immortalise the fashion and cosplay at HYPER JAPAN in print for the fans to enjoy! HYPER will be a full colour photobook, featuring both the very best images taken by professional photographers, as well as the best submissions from the HYPER JAPAN community. Many photogenic cosplayers and kawaii guests participated in the photo shoot for the book so keep an eye out for it!

**The director of Cross Media Ltd. Mr Marumo comments on the event:**

*"We have been organising HYPER JAPAN since 2010 and this is the sixth event we have held. The event has been steadily gaining in popularity so I believe now is the right time to go onto the next stage. We will now be holding HYPER JAPAN twice a year in summer and winter. The summer event will be scaled up further and the winter event will feature different acts and will further explore ways to put more emphasis on business participants. HYPER JAPAN CHRISTMAS MARKET 2014 is the first step for the future of HYPER JAPAN. Holding HYPER JAPAN in the Christmas shopping season will mean it is much easier to introduce new things such as unknown Japanese items or products when the whole nation is in the mood to shop! In the future we would like to work with both Japanese and UK companies in order to bring more great Japanese content to the UK; furthermore we would like to see more Japanese businesses penetrate the UK and EU market."*

**– Ends –**

**Social Media**

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/hyperjapan](http://www.facebook.com/hyperjapan)

**Twitter:** @hyperjapanevent

Hashtag: #hyperjapan

**YouTube:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajIu76baXHA>

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For images and logos please log on to the following links:

<http://hyperjapan.co.uk/category/contactus/press/>

**Notes to Editors:**

**HYPER JAPAN is organised by:** Cross Media Ltd

**HYPER JAPAN sponsors include:** Asahi Beer, Bandai Namco Games, British Airways, InsideJapan Tours, JP Books, Nintendo, SIRO-A, SOZAI COOKING'SCOOL

**HYPER JAPAN supporters include:** Digital Content Association of Japan, Embassy of Japan in the UK, Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), Japan Foundation, Japan Local Government Centre, Japan National Tourism Organization, The Association of Japanese Animations, The Foundation for Promotion of Music Industry and Culture, Visual Industry Promotion Organization

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