

Zenkaikon 2012

Press Kit



Event Overview

Description

Zenkaikon, an annual convention celebrating Japanese animation (anime), comics (manga), and pop culture, is returning to the Philadelphia area for its sixth annual event. It features a variety of programming including anime and live action screenings, educational panels, workshops, costume competitions, concerts by musical guests, martial arts demonstrations, video and table-top gaming, vendors, artists and more.

Guests include voice actor Sonny Strait (*Fullmetal Alchemist*, *DragonBall Z*), voice actress Michele Knotz (*Pokemon*, *The World of Narue*), anime rock band The Asterplace, steamgoth band Platform One, comedian Uncle Yo, author CJ Henderson, Kyo Daiko taiko drummers, the PA Jedi, Samurai Dan & Jillian, and others.

www.zenkaikon.com

Location

[Greater Philadelphia Expo Center at Oaks](#)

100 Station Avenue
Oaks, PA 19456

Dates

Friday, May 11, 2012, 3 p.m. to 2 a.m.
Saturday, May 12, 2012, 9 a.m. to 2 a.m.

Cost

\$30 at the door

Contact

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Background

History

Zenkaikon was founded in 2006 by the merging of two local events, Kosaikon – an anime convention held at Villanova University – and Zentrancon – an anime and science fiction convention held on the University of Pennsylvania campus. Kosaikon held its first event in 2003, where 75 individuals came together to celebrate their interest in Japanese animation. Zentrancon's debut convention took place in October 2005, when 350 people came to Philadelphia to watch anime and science fiction screenings, meet celebrity guests, and participate in video gaming.

The decision to merge was originally proposed as both conventions wanted to expand, and realized that, together, they could create an exciting annual event for anime fans in the Philadelphia area. Thus, in 2006, Zentrancon became Zenkaikon, and moved to the larger venue of the Valley Forge Scanticon Hotel and Conference Center in King of Prussia, PA, where it welcomed approximately 450 members in its first year. By 2008, membership had nearly tripled. Having outgrown its previous venue, Zenkaikon moved into the Radisson Hotel Valley Forge, where it welcomed a sold-out attendance of 1988 individuals in 2009. For its fifth annual event, Zenkaikon moved from its traditional fall date to the spring, and expanded once again to utilize both the Valley Forge Convention Center and Scanticon Conference Center. From March 18-20, 2011, the convention welcomed 3168 members. The sixth Zenkaikon convention will be held from May 11-12, 2012 at the Greater Philadelphia Expo Center in Oaks, Pennsylvania.

About Zenkaikon Entertainment, Inc.

Zenkaikon Entertainment Inc. is the membership-based organization that runs the annual Zenkaikon convention. In 2011, it became a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, which promotes knowledge and enjoyment of Japanese art, animation, and culture as well as science fiction literature and films of all origins. The organization is staffed completely by volunteers, who want to share their appreciation of these mediums with the Philadelphia region. The organization accomplishes its mission through its annual convention, as well as participation in other festivals, conventions, and educational programming throughout the year.

Selected Event Descriptions

Artist Alley

Amateur and professional artists showcase their work and original merchandise. Artist Alley merchandise traditionally includes prints, comics, models, paintings, clothing, and novelty crafts. Attendees may browse their wares, purchase items for sale, or request commissions.

Concerts

Platform One will be presenting a concert on Friday evening of the convention. The Asterplace will be holding a concert on Saturday evening.

Cosplay Masquerade

One of the most popular events at anime conventions features costumed attendees presenting short skits based on their characters. A panel of judges evaluates the skits, as well as the craftsmanship of the costumes, and then announces the winners.

Dances

Zenkaikon will feature a dance on both Friday and Saturday evening of the convention. DJs will spin tunes from anime, Japanese pop (J-pop), video games, techno, and more.

Dealer Room

Vendors offer a variety of Japanese and general “geek”-themed merchandise including anime and live action DVDs, comics, video games, clothing, figurines, collectables, and more.

Live Action Role Playing (LARP)

A LARP is an interactive game where attendees act out the roles of their favorite anime and manga characters. The game runs the course of the weekend, with an overarching plot and scheduled events.

Karaoke

Attendees sing their hearts out to their favorite anime and Japanese pop tunes. Fifteen attendees will compete in an idol-like competition.

Panels & Workshops

Guests and attendees will present a variety of intriguing and entertaining panels and workshops throughout the convention. Just a few examples of nearly forty scheduled panels include “A Look at Women in Anime”, “Video Game Literature”, “Webcomics: Behind the Panel”, and “Lolita Fashion: Where to Start.”

Tabletop Gaming

A tabletop gaming area will feature a variety of board games for attendees to play. The area will also feature workshops on Asian board games.

Video Gaming

A wide variety of consoles and games are available for attendees to enjoy throughout the convention. Gaming tournaments allow attendees to compete for prizes.

Guest Biographies

Biographies provided by guests or their agents.



The Asterplace (Band)

The Asterplace is a Japanese anime rock band based in New York City. The group is composed of Steven Lin (Guitar), Luo Qingyun (Bass), Ji Hoon Moon (Keyboard), Kota Mori (Drums), and Kota Tsukimoto (Vocals/Guitar). They perform original rock numbers and your favorite anime cover songs. In June 2011, they released their first full album, entitled [Moon]. The album features a variety of musical themes – from melodic, fast punk to piano love ballads. Tsukimoto-san lends his heartfelt vocals to a combination of melodic guitars, beautiful piano, groovy bass, and a powerful drum beat. The Asterplace has performed at a number of events including Anime Syracuse, Anime SOHO, Tribeca Film Festival, and the DC National Cherry Blossom Festival. They are very much looking forward to performing at Zenkaikon 2012!



Platform One (Band)

Platform one first came together in Rhode Island in 1999. Now based out of New York this band of highly energetic musicians brings together danceable beats, well thought out lyrics, and an appeal that crosses all genres. A combination of pop, gothic and alternative with a side of oontz, Platform one ranges in influence from And One to The Psychedelic Furs, and Peter Gabriel to The Cure. They are currently working on their third full-length album.



Michele Knotz (Voice Actress)

You may have heard of Michele Knotz from a little well-known anime series called *Pokémon*. Now in its 15th season, Michele has returned as the voice of Team Rocket's Jessie and has picked up a few new Pokémon - Woobat, Swoobat, Minccino, and the female Snivy. Before Season 14, Michele voiced May, Nurse Joy, the Pokédex, Piplup, Manaphy, Squirtle, Bulbasaur, Chimecho, Beautifly, Masquerain, Dustox, Cacnea, and many others. She also voiced Misty for the Pokémon 10th Anniversary Special, *The Mastermind of Mirage Pokémon*. In the Pokémon Special *Pokémon Mystery Dungeon, Team Go-Getters Out of the*

Gate, she voiced Chikorita. Other anime roles include Hajime Yagi in *The World of Narue*, Takako Kawashima in *Shootfighter Tekken*, Matsumoto and various additional characters in *To Heart*, Razali, Cindy, Greta, and The Fairy in *The Third*, Ogiue Chika in *Genshiken*, Koyuki Asagiri in *Kujibiki Unbalance*, Chou'un Shiryuu in *Ikki Touden*, Tomoe and Airi in *Queen's Blade*, and Potaru Tanaka and Inumi in *Magical Witch Punie-Chan*. In video games, Michele has voiced the Pokémon Trainer, Squirtle and various other Pokémon for the Nintendo Wii's *Super Smash Bros. Brawl*, Piplup and many others in *PokéPark Wii - Pikachu's Great Adventure*, Snivy, Piplup and many others in *PokéPark 2 Wonders Beyond*, and various characters in *Heathcliff the Fast and the Furriest*. Not only does Michele work on anime and video games, but she's also a script adaptor for various dubbing projects and lends her voice to many other types of work. You can see all of Michele's credits, pictures, and listen to her voice demos, on her website.



Sonny Strait (Voice Actor)

Sonny Strait is most recognized as the voice of Krillin on *DragonBall Z*, and as an illustrator for the comic book series *Elfquest*. He has over 20 years of experience in the arts. He has voiced many popular animated characters including Maes Hughes from *FullMetal Alchemist*, Usopp from *One Piece*, and Cartoon Network's laid back, robot host Toonami Tom. He has also worked as a writer and director on several TV series including *DragonBall Z*, *Case Closed*, and *Lupin the Third*.

As a comic book artist, he has seventeen published works to date including his self-published series *Mr. Average*, featured in *The Comics Journal*, and *Elfquest*, which was published by both WARP Graphics and DC Comics. He also wrote and illustrated a graphic novel about a reluctant punk rock, faerie princess named Goat. The book, called *We Shadows*, was published by Tokyopop and was nominated by The American Library Association for Best Graphic Novel in 2008.

Currently, Sonny is reprising his roles in both the new *DragonBall Z* and *FullMetal Alchemist* series and plays the title role in the Xbox game *S'plosion Man*. He also illustrates Marvel Comic's sketch cards for Rittenhouse.



Uncle Yo (Comedian)

Psst. Hey, you. Yeah, you! Don't look away, or they'll get suspicious. You like stand-up comedy? Don't nod - they'll think you're crazy. Then you should meet Uncle Yo. He's a geek-specific stand-up comedian who's already one his fourth straight year touring conventions and talking about anime, video games, Japanese culture, and all those things you

talk about that makes your mother think she dropped you on your head.



Japan America Society of Greater Philadelphia

Established in 1994, the Japan America Society of Greater Philadelphia (JASGP) is an association of individuals, corporations and organizations in the Greater Philadelphia region. Its mission is to bring the peoples of Japan and United States closer together in understanding, appreciation and cooperation by promoting and encouraging a better understanding of the business, cultural, social, educational and political practices and customs of Japan and the United States.

JASGP is the primary organization in the Greater Philadelphia region devoted to fostering relationships between Japanese and Americans. From networking events to the annual Subaru Cherry Blossom Festival and the Philadelphia-Japan Health Sciences Dialogue, from its Japanese Conversation Club to lectures and seminars, the Japan America Society of Greater Philadelphia offers numerous ways to get involved in the Japanese and American communities in Philadelphia.



Kyo Daiko (Taiko Drummers)

Kyo Daiko is a community-based group which is the result of a collaboration between Settlement Music School and the Shofuso Japanese House and Garden in Fairmount Park in Philadelphia. The group is directed by Kristopher Rudzinski, who has previously performed with Taikoza and studied with Taikoza's founder, Marco Lienhard. Kyo Daiko regularly performs at school and community events, and has also performed at the National Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington DC, Stanford University in California, and for ESPN's Monday Night Football.



PA Jedi (Martial Arts)

Have you ever wanted to dress up as a Jedi or Sith and wield a Light Saber? Have you ever dreamt of using the Force? Do you wonder if there are restrictions on what to wear? Come and explore PA Jedi, a group of performing artists who use light saber stage combat to prepare our members for public performances and charity events as our way of giving back to the community. Equipped with 35,000 years of stories from the Star Wars Universe and your own imagination we are able to assist you in designing your

own PA Jedi character. Our members will help you design your own basic character and the costuming that will bring them to the next level!



Samurai Dan & Jillian (Martial Arts)

The husband and wife team of Daniel and Jillian Cogan are full-time martial art instructors, specializing in 16th century Samurai Arts. When not teaching at their dojo, the Kojokan, they travel the United States performing and teaching the ancient ways of the most famous warriors in history. With a combined 35 years of experience, their show is a unique blend of history, combative skill, and humor, designed to educate and entertain audiences both large and small. Beyond their martial skills, the dynamic duo collaborated to write, direct, host, and star in a 12 episode TV series entitled, *The Way of The Samurai*. Daniel is also an author, with several martial art articles published, and is currently working on his second full-length novel.



DJ Hi5

Hi5 was attending conventions long before he began DJing them. First taking the convention stage at Otakon, he last played the Zenkaikon rave in 2009 and is excited to be back! He attributes DDR as his original gateway to electronic dance music. Following the footsteps of Deadmau5, Porter Robinson, and BT, Hi5 works on his own productions, as well as remixes and instrumentals for other artists. Mashing up classic video game tunes with the latest in electro/progressive is his specialty. If you like high energy dance parties with some of your favorite songs, don't miss him Saturday night!



DJ Kurono

DJ Kurono is a UK Hardcore/J-Core DJ and amateur hardcore music producer from the East Coast. He started mixing Japanese Happy Hardcore music in early 2009 and the happy tune of the melodies gave him a great interest to take things a step further. Kurono has done several live performances at raves, parties, and conventions, such as AnimeNEXT, Otakon, Kotoricon, and many others. A friendly collaboration with Japanese vocalist Elderberry began in July 2011 and they have produced a number of unreleased anime/video game remixes since they met. One of Kurono's main focuses today is to promote Hard Dance/UK Hardcore/J-Core music and bring it straight to the dance floor with his own flavor of turntable scratching and mixing. Prepare yourself for the wave of Hardcore Sounds!