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## **Japanese Performers Rock the Honolulu Ekiden & Music Festival** *Waikiki Shell Concert adds Finishing Touch to Fitness, Music & Cultural Event*

HONOLULU – The anticipation is mounting, as the Fifth Annual Honolulu Ekiden and Music Festival comes to town, Sunday, May 21<sup>st</sup>. The marathon-length relay race will kick things off at Queen Kapi'olani Park. More than a thousand participants, some dressed as their favorite characters and super heroes, will wind their way around one of Oahu's most picturesque shorelines, to Sandy Beach, and back to the park. And, this year's entertainment lineup blends cultures and music styles.

Dirty Heads, a multi-genre band, which infuses reggae, hip-hop and rock sounds and Gin Blossoms, which has been defining the sound of jangle pop and indie rock for more than two decades, round out the American entertainment.

However, the Fifth Annual Honolulu Ekiden and Music Festival is also a celebration of the culture of Japan. Singer/Songwriter Piko Taro, of "Pen Pineapple Apple Pen" fame, will take the open-air stage at Waikiki Shell that night. His video, "PPAP (Pen Pineapple Apple Pen)" went viral on the Internet after being posted on YouTube last summer. Shortly after that, Justin Bieber posted on his Twitter saying it was his favorite video on the Internet, which stirred more buzz. CNN and BBC picked up the story and turned Piko Taro into a globally recognized star. Currently his video has been viewed more than 1 billion times.

While Japan is steeped in history and tradition, it also rocks in the modern world – especially with music! Case in point, the five-piece Japanese rock band FLOW, which will also grace the Waikiki Shell stage. Bursting on the music scene in 2003 with a single "Blaster," which showcased their strong twin vocal melody and wide range of musicality, FLOW is most known for the group's numerous anime tie-in songs such as "GO!!!" the opening theme song for "Naruto."

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Japanese Singer/Songwriter, Piko Taro. Last Summer, his hit song, “PPAP (Pen Pineapple Apple Pen),” launched him into stardom!



The Japanese rock band FLOW, known for their song “GO!!!,” the opening theme song for “Naruto.”



Heavily influenced by reggae, hip-hop, and rock, Dirty Heads is most known for their hit songs, “My Sweet Summer,” “Lay Me Down,” and “That’s All I Need.”



The Grammy Nominated band, Gin Blossoms is recognized worldwide for their hits “Hey Jealousy,” and “Follow You Down.”

Stop by Tamarind Park at Bishop Square (1001 Bishop Street) on Wednesday, May 10, between 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. for the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Ekiden Race and Music Festival promotion. There will be a Meet-and-Greet giveaway for Dirty Heads and Gin Blossoms, as well as a Buy-One-Get-One special on Lawn Tickets for the Music Festival (Limited Quantity) and a Team Registration Discount Offer on the Ekiden (Limited Quantity).

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