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**All Singing, All Dancing, All Acting....**

Singapore Arts Festival  
Various Venues, Singapore  
May 25th - June 24th

The Singapore Arts Festival ([singaporeartsfest.com](http://singaporeartsfest.com)) is one of the leading international arts festivals, known for its bold, innovative artistic collaborations at the cutting-edge of contemporary arts with a distinctive Asian flavour.

Shows to look out for this year include **Beijing Ren** (Beijing People, [bjry.com](http://bjry.com)) a Chinese production performed in Mandarin with English subtitles and set in 1937. This theatre classic exposes the eclipse of traditional feudal families at a time of turbulent change in China and comes replete with a vast paper-house that bespeaks the fragility and fractured emotions of the people who live and take shelter in it. Dance fans will enjoy **Sacred Monsters** ([akramkhancompany.net](http://akramkhancompany.net)), a French/Brit production bringing together two great stars of the contemporary dance world; Sylvie Guillem and Akram Khan, in an exploration of the boundaries between two great classical dance forms, ballet and kathak. **An Arabian Passion** (*Arband. de*), inspired by Bach's Passions, is an extraordinary Arab, Israeli and German collaboration in which the spirit of Bach's baroque is intertwined and reinterpreted with the living musical traditions of the Middle East together with the improvisations of jazz.

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**Asia's Richest Horse Race**

Singapore Airlines International Cup  
Singapore  
May 20<sup>th</sup>

With SGD3 million in prize money, the **Singapore Airlines International (SIA) Cup** is one of the world's richest horse races, attracting a top international field to the beautiful Kranji Racecourse. Three-year-olds and upwards race over 2,000m/ten furlongs, with a possible 16 starters.

Don't forget to dress the part - think Ascott tropical.



**All Aboard The Purple Bus**

Priscilla Queen of the Desert - The Musical - Performance  
Lyric Theatre, Star City, Sydney  
Ongoing until July 29<sup>th</sup>

Three fish out of water... Mitzi, Felicia and Bernadette are heading west across the desert to Alice Springs in their battered old bus. They are each on their own personal journey of discovery, but together they put on a show unlike anything the locals have ever seen before.

One of the most successful Australian movies of all time has been translated into a dazzling musical spectacular; **Priscilla, Queen of the Desert** ([priscillathemusical.com](http://priscillathemusical.com)) is based on the Oscar-winning film that blitzed the box office and caused a sensation around the world with its over-the-top and unforgettable costumes and characters.

Priscilla the Musical features over 20 full-scale production numbers that will take your breath away including songs from the best-selling soundtrack like *I Will Survive*, *Finally* and *Shake Your Groove Thing*.

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**Dragons take to the Water**

Penang Dragon Boat Festival  
Penang, Malaysia  
June 8<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup>

The beautiful northern Malaysian island is gearing up once again to host the **Penang Dragon Boat Festival** which local and increasingly, international, teams race beautifully painted boats with dragons-head prows on the Teluk Bahang Dam, urged on by pounding drums and roaring crowds.

The festival is a weekend long party which has become increasingly popular with the international expatriate community around Asia and is considered to be the premiere Dragon Boat racing event for the region.

## Lacroix's Jewels and Nureyev's Swans Grace Sydney

Paris Opera Ballet  
June 16th - June 30th  
The Capitol Theatre, Campbell St  
Haymarket, Sydney

For the first time in its centuries-long history, the **Paris Opera Ballet**, universally regarded as one of the world's greatest dance companies, will visit Australia in June 2007. The Company, comprising 90 dancers and with full orchestra, will present two programs at Sydney's Capitol Theatre: *Swan Lake*, a glorious and original version choreographed by Rudolf Nureyev and *Jewels*, George Balanchine's three-act homage to the ballet and its evolution from classicism to modernity. Never before seen in Australia, this elegant production is designed by Christian Lacroix.

These are two of the most spectacular stagings in the company's repertoire and provide magnificent showcases for the talents of the entire ensemble, all of whom will travel to Australia for this never-to-be-repeated event, exclusive to Sydney.

For specific performance times and bookings visit [showbiz.com.au](http://showbiz.com.au)

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## Badly Drawn Boys

Hong Kong Ani-Comics & Game Fair  
July 27<sup>th</sup> - July 31<sup>st</sup>  
Hong Kong Event and Exhibition Centre

Almost half a million visitors are expected to visit the **Ani-Comics & Game Fair** this year. The event is heaven for kids and collectors, with five days of the best in comics, toys and computer games. In addition to the fun on paper, there's also the X-Zone, featuring demonstrations of extreme sports.



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## tokyo's Big Block Party

Sanja Festival  
Tokyo, Japan  
May 18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup>

The biggest of Tokyo's traditional "Three Grand Festivals", Asakusa Shrine's **Sanja Festival** is a glorious three-day weekend of boisterous traditional *mikoshi* (portable shrine) processions through the streets of Asakusa, with plenty of drinking, dancing, music and entertainment. Held by the Sensoji Shrine in Tokyo, the huge parade draws over two million people into the streets.

The beautiful gold and black lacquer *mikoshi* are the vehicles of the shrine's *kami* (deities) and the purpose of the processions is to bring luck, blessings and prosperity to the area and its inhabitants. Many of the 100 or so *mikoshi* are so large and elaborate that dozens of people are required to carry them.

Everyone joins in the fun on equal terms; you'll see geishas, musicians, dancers, children and even dogs wearing traditional coats. During this time, Tokyo's *yakuza* (Japanese mafia) openly display their body tattoos - something that's usually against the law - so it's a rare chance to see some of Tokyo's heavily tattooed gangsters under safe conditions.

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## queens of Heaven

Holy Cross Festival  
May 1<sup>st</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> every Sunday  
Pasay City, Philippines

On Sundays in May, if you visit Nayong Pilipino Park in Pasay City you'll find yourself in the midst of an incredible religious re-enactment - the **Holy Cross Festival** (Santacruzán).

The vast majority of Filipinos are practicing Roman Catholics, and the Holy Cross Festival, or Santacruzán, can be found in various forms across the country. Throughout the islands the finding of the Holy Cross by Queen Helena (the mother of Constantine the Great) is re-enacted in processions and tableaux.

The historical pageant in Pasay City is one of the most spectacular places to catch these celebrations. Filipino girls dress up in their finest white dresses and shower statues of the Virgin Mary with flowers and the streets come alive to the sounds and smells of Pasay City in festival mode. Folk music and delicious food and drink stalls are ubiquitous, while the parades themselves are a mirage of white dresses, frangipani and incense. Queen Helena's escorts, or *sagalas*, are played by popular Filipino film and TV personalities.