

# A blooming sign of spring

**Vancouver's love affair with the Japanese cherry tree begins all over again.**

Travellers through Burrard SkyTrain Station will be treated to a free concert today to launch the third annual Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival marking the change of seasons across the city.

"Coming out of the grey winter that we have the blossoming trees really signal spring," said festival director Linda Poole. "And that's the whole theme: Renewal, rebirth, hope and rejuvenation."

Festival events, running through to April 20, give cherry blossom enthusiasts a chance to examine and experience the blossom's delicate pink petals through innovative events like the first-ever Bike the Blossoms.

More than 250 people



**Cherry blossoms in every corner of the city are a beautiful sign that spring has sprung.**

*- Rob Kruyt, 24 hours*

have already signed up for the open bike ride April 19 that starts at VanDusen Botanical Garden and runs along blossom-lined streets with stops at local eateries where cyclists can sample some of

Vancouver's finest cuisine.

For the most part, Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival offers free events for people to develop newfound appreciations for the city's 36,000 Japanese cherry trees.

"They're so brave," Poole said. "They come out and they're so beautiful and they live such a short time, maybe a week or 10 days, so it kind of reminds us of this ephemeral nature of lives."

*- Dharm Makwana, 24 hours*