

## **12<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL VANCOUVER CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL BEGINS APRIL 3 WITH VANCOUVER SINGS ONE SONG**

*The festival artfully creates new experiences to welcome springtime beyond the blossoms*

**VANCOUVER, BC (April 3, 2017)** - Delicate pink and white Sakura flowers are blossoming just in time to celebrate the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival. The springtime event begins on April 3<sup>rd</sup> with the new Vancouver Sings One Song massed choir event, followed by the annual free noon hour Cherry Jam Downtown Concert on April 5<sup>th</sup> at the indoor concourse of Vancouver's Burrard SkyTrain station.

Proving petal by petal and note by note that there is more to experience than just the blossoms, the month-long festival kicks off with sakura inspired celebrations in song. Vancouver Sings One Song, sponsored by Leith Wheeler Investment Counsel will host 400 singers at Christ Church Cathedral directed by Kathryn Nicholson led by the choir Sound Eclectic, to learn the new Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival song, "[Cherry Blossoms For You and Me](#)". The song was inspired by the Festival Haiku Invitational poem written by Oz Hershfield of Vancouver:

*blossoms bursting  
each tree is a choir  
singing to the sun*

The theme song will be featured at other events, including a performance at the popular lunchtime Cherry Jam event (April 5) and Sakura Days Japan Fair (April 14 & 15) in VanDusen Botanical Garden.

The Festival will officially kick off on Thursday April 5 with the fan favourite Cherry Jam Downtown concert on April 5<sup>th</sup> that will treat audiences to spectacular multi-cultural performances, including a traditional Chinese Lion Dance, a Vancouver Chinese Music Ensemble collaboration with Chinese er-hu (Chinese violin) paired with tap dance, Tetsu Taiko and shamisen (a traditional three-stringed Japanese instrument) collaboration with Alvin Ramos, and readings of the 2017 Haiku Invitational winning poems.

Supported by presenting sponsors, Coromandel Properties and The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, the Festival features dozens of free small and large events to engage Lower Mainland residents in celebrating the cherry blossom throughout the month of April. Festivities include:

- Sakura Days Japan Fair feature at VanDusen Botanical Garden presented by JTB International & Silkway Travel (ticketed event), **April 14-15**
- The Big Picnic at Queen Elizabeth Park presented by TD Bank Group **Saturday, April 14**, noon to 3 pm, at 33<sup>rd</sup> and Cambie
- Spring Lights Illumination Queen Elizabeth Park **Saturday, April 14**, 8 pm to 10 pm at 33<sup>rd</sup> and Cambie
- Sakura Nights Gala fundraiser, features seven of Vancouver's top chefs presented by McMillan LLP (ticketed event with tax receipt) **Sunday, April 22**
- Bike the Blossoms city bike tour along cherry tree-lined streets - **Saturday, April 28** (TBC - bloom dependent)

Festival-long activities:

- Tree Talks & Walks seven guided interpretative walks across the city - check the website for updates

- Haiku Invitational poetry contest presented by Leith Wheeler Investment Counsel
- BC Blossom Photo Watch Contest presented by TELUS PureFibre
- Cherry Scouting
- Neighborhood Maps where you can find 2,689 locations of where our 54 cultivars bloom

Full information about every event, and an interactive map of all the cherry trees blossoming in Vancouver are available on the Festival's website at [www.vcbf.ca](http://www.vcbf.ca). Please check for updates as bloom dependent event dates could change!

"It's incredibly powerful to gather as a community and welcome springtime to our lower mainland neighbourhoods once again," said VCBF founder and executive director Linda Poole. "The festival has become a Vancouver tradition, hosting a wide variety of events to inspire others to get outside and enjoy the magic of the Cherry Blossoms. We have taken a new approach to the festival this year by starting off the new massed choir event to sing our way through springtime. We look forward to celebrating this truly special time of year with Vancouverites and visitors from around the world."

### **About the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival**

The Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival is a charitable not-for-profit organization with the objective to sustain and renew Vancouver's cherry tree heritage while educating and actively engaging diverse communities in local arts and culture to celebrate the fragile beauty of the iconic cherry blossom. For more information on Cherry Jam Downtown concert and to see the full Festival schedule, visit [www.vcbf.ca](http://www.vcbf.ca)

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