

# PLAYGROUND

PREVIEW

## Springtime blooms at cherry blossom festival

The celebration kicks off Saturday at VanDusen gardens

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Despite the cold temperatures, Vancouver's 36,000 ornamental Japanese cherry trees are expected to burst into bloom this month or in early April during the fourth annual Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival.

The festival is inspired by Japanese sakura festivals that herald the arrival of spring. The short-lived cherry blossom is said to illustrate the Japanese concept of *mono no aware*, or deep feeling towards things and sadness at their passing.

The festival starts in earnest Saturday with several events at VanDusen Botanical Garden at West 37th and Oak Street in Vancouver.

Sakura Days, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Saturday and Sunday): The Otowa Ryu Dance Group performs the Cherry Blossom Dance during Sakura Days, which include a tea ceremony, sake tasting and garden tour.

Under the Cherry Tree events include origami by artist Joseph Wu, exhibitors showing Japanese porcelain and eco-friendly cars, and numerous B.C. craft artists and ceramacists such as Matthew Freed.

Also on display will be interactive Haiku Cherry Tree Installations by designers Loretta Kong, Supatra Huangyutitham, Harald Merk and Dan Du from Bing Thom Architects.

Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Saturday, 8 p.m.: At the VSO's Musically Speaking concert, assistant conductor Evan Mitchell will be announcing the winning poems in the 2009 Haiku Invitational contest. A special ex-



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hibit of the interactive Haiku Cherry Tree Installations will be featured in the lobby of the Orpheum Theatre.

Hands on Haiku, Monday, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.: Michael Dylan Welch, a haiku writer, presents a hands-on work-

shop on how to write the perfect haiku at the Vancouver Public Library Main Branch.

Cherry Jam Downtown, Tuesday, 12 noon to 1:30 p.m.: Hosted by Bill Richardson, the free lunch-time concert inside the Burrard Sky-

Train Station features taiko drumming and duelling by Chibi Taiko and Yuaikai Ryukyu Taiko, as well as music by Kutapira and Cascade Brass Quintet.

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