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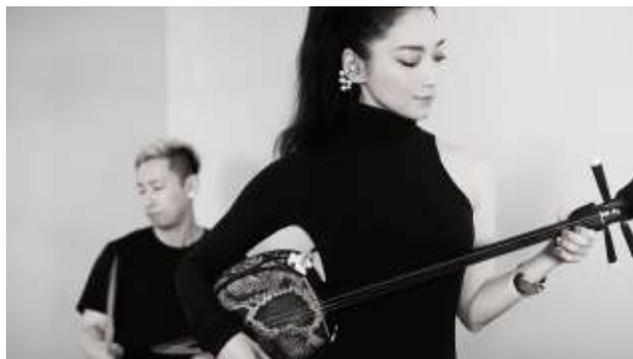
OPENING CEREMONY KICKS OFF SPRING AND HONORS GIFT OF TREES WITH WORLD-CLASS TALENT FROM THE U.S. AND JAPAN

Washington, DC [March 4, 2020] – The National Cherry Blossom Festival’s signature [Opening Ceremony](#) will take place Saturday, March 21 at the Warner Theatre from 5-6:30 p.m. The event welcomes the nation’s greatest springtime celebration and marks the annual commemoration of the 1912 gift of cherry blossom trees from Tokyo to Washington, DC. The friendship between the U.S. and Japan is celebrated through outstanding performances from acclaimed artists with ties to both countries; Festival leaders and dignitaries help narrate the ceremony. Free tickets have all been claimed, but the ceremony will be live-streamed on [Facebook](#).

Performers include:



[Naotaro Moriyama](#): Naotaro Moriyama is a songwriter and J-pop singer who has appeared in numerous music scenes, TV shows, and radio programs since his debut in 2002. Mr. Moriyama’s lyrics represent his own distinct worldview that is firmly rooted in Japanese cultural tradition, and his clear and impressive singing voice along with his guitar techniques have attracted a wide range of fans. His second major single, “Sakura (Cherry Blossom)”, was a smash hit and has been considered by many Japanese to be the song most emblematic of the spring season in Japan and remains extremely popular at karaoke and high school graduation ceremonies. Mr. Moriyama has been featured three times in NHK’s Kohaku Uta Gassen (NHK Red & White Year-End Song Festival), a prestigious music TV program with almost 70 years of history that airs on New Year’s Eve by Japanese public broadcaster, NHK, both nationally and internationally.



[Anna Sato X Toshiyuki Sasaki](#)

An alternative musical ensemble featuring Anna Sato, a master of shima-uta (traditional folk songs of Japan’s Amami Island) and a drummer, Toshiyuki Sasaki. Shima-uta is a singing tradition in which the voice is simply accompanied by a drum called chijin. This ensemble creates a new sound while embracing the fundamental composition by combining the sounds of shima-uta, sanshin (traditional three-stringed instrument from

Amami Island), Amami harp (traditional vertical harp of Amami Island) and western drums.



[GoGo Symphony](#)

The critically acclaimed GoGo Symphony plays symphonies that people can dance to. It celebrates go-go music, a sub-genre of funk that is the official music of Washington DC. Its main features are lively swinging polyrhythm and audience participation. The Go-Go Symphony incorporates the rollicking features of go-go with the musical expression of a classical symphony to create thunderous, percussive atmosphere.

The Opening Ceremony is co-presented with The Japan Foundation. It is supported by JCAW Foundation, Inc., JNTO, The National Press Club, Toyota, DENSO International America, Inc, Event EQ, Kawasaki Heavy Industries (USA), Inc., Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (USA), Inc, MUFG Bank, Ltd, and the Warner Theatre. Media partners are NBC4/Telemundo44.

The National Cherry Blossom Festival is one of the world's greatest celebrations of spring. The 2020 Festival, March 20 – April 12, includes four weeks of events featuring diverse and creative programming promoting traditional and contemporary arts and culture, natural beauty, and community spirit. Leadership Circle Sponsors of the 2020 Festival are Events DC and ANA. Visit nationalcherryblossomfestival.org or call 877.44.BLOOM for more information, or check out [Facebook](#) (CherryBlossomFestival), [Twitter](#) (@CherryBlossFest), and [Instagram](#) (@CherryBlossFest).

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