



Join Us for *Spirit of 150 Victoria - First Night*, A Family Friendly, Multicultural Celebration at Victoria's Inner Harbour

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For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — *Spirit of 150 Victoria - First Night* will be the place to be on New Year's Eve. On Saturday, from 5 p.m. – 9:30 p.m., Victoria's iconic Inner Harbour will be the backdrop for a family-friendly, multicultural celebration, featuring festive lighting displays, live performances, local food vendors and spectacular fireworks to launch Canada's 150th in 2017.

"We invite the community to bundle up and join us downtown to enjoy the free family-friendly festivities and ring in Canada's sesquicentennial together," said Mayor Lisa Helps. "Victoria's Inner Harbour is rich with First Nations history, and with the City of Victoria having declared 2017 a 'Year of Reconciliation', it feels right to begin our reconciliation there on the eve of Canada's 150th.

The City of Victoria in partnership with the Greater Victoria Spirit Committee is hosting the event, made possible by \$224,000 in funding from Canadian Heritage's [Canada 150 Fund](#). The City of Victoria is one of 19 municipalities across Canada to receive support from the Canada 150 Fund, designed to create opportunities for Canadians to participate in local, regional and national celebrations that contribute to building a sense of pride and attachment to Canada.

"I would like to thank Canadian Heritage and our many sponsors for making *Spirit of 150 Victoria – First Night* possible," said Alan Lowe, Chair of the Greater Victoria Spirit Committee. "We have an exciting line-up of multicultural festivities planned that end early enough for families to enjoy, while enabling others to visit downtown venues after the fireworks to ring in the New Year."

Fronting Government Street, the First Night Main Stage will be stepped back from the corner of Belleville and Government Streets, between the Royal BC Museum and the Legislature Building.

Emceed by local radio personality Robyn Burns and Vancouver film producer Bruno Baronet, *Spirit of 150 Victoria - First Night* will kick-off with a First Nations Welcome Ceremony and performances by the Lekwungen Dancers and the Esquimalt Singers and Dancers on the First Night Main Stage, followed by École Campus View Elementary School's children's choir singing the bilingual version of the Canadian anthem.

The First Night Main Stage will feature a diverse range of regional and local talent. Headlining the First Night celebrations will be Vancouver-based *Dear Rouge*, the husband and wife Juno winning duo of Drew and Danielle McTaggart. Their song, "I Heard I Had" peaked in the top 10 of the alternative and rock charts in Canada.

Also taking the Main Stage will be BC resident and Cuban-born, *Alex Cuba*. Harnessing the sugarcane-sweet melodies and pop-soul hooks, Cuba has won multiple awards including two JUNO Awards and a Latin Grammy Award.

Franco-Manitoban band, *Jérémie & The Delicious Hounds*, from St. Boniface, will also grace the stage. New to the Winnipeg music scene, these dedicated Francophone musicians gather the sounds of their instruments and their eclectic tastes around leader Jérémie Brémault's smooth, smoky voice, dynamic range, and earnest stage presence. The Hounds have an inclusive style, and the band pools together into a symphony of soul, funk, reggae, and blues-rock.

Creative projections on buildings surrounding the Inner Harbour and lighting displays will provide a welcoming, illuminated event. In addition to the Main Stage performances, family-friendly activities will include Victoria Harbour Ferries performing a special, festively-lit evening ballet in the Inner Harbour, and the trials bike demonstration featuring the Beshano Bike Trials Club. Children will have the opportunity to meet larger-than-life illuminated puppets roaming the festivities. Canada 150 tattoos and flags will also be available.

The community will be able to warm up with a hot drink and enjoy a delicious meal or snack from one of a dozen of Victoria's most popular food trucks along Belleville and Government Streets. *Spirit of 150 Victoria – First Night* will culminate with spectacular fireworks at 9 p.m. set to music over Victoria's Inner Harbour, timed with fireworks in the nation's capital viewable on large screens. The event will end at 9:30 p.m.

Transit will run on its usual Saturday schedule on New Year's Eve, and service will be free after 6 p.m. Additional buses will be added to the regular service to assist those who wish to head home after the firework show.

"The entire Commission and I are happy to support people celebrating the New Year with a free and safe ride home," said Susan Brice, Chair of the Victoria Regional Transit Commission. "I hope everyone in Victoria has a great time ringing in 2017, and I look forward to another productive year of collaboration in delivering transit solutions for our city."

VicPD officers and reserves will be greeting the public and ensuring *Spirit of 150 Victoria – First Night* is a family-friendly event that is fun for everyone.

"Our officers will be on site to support a safe, family-friendly kick-off celebration to Canada's 150th year," A/Chief Constable Del Manak said. "Our officers are looking forward to this historic event for our community and our country."

Roads around the Inner Harbour will close at 3 p.m. on New Year's Eve in preparation for the event to start at 5 p.m.

The public can learn more about what's planned by visiting the event's interactive website at Spirit150victoria.ca, the one-stop resource for all Canada 150 events taking place in the Capital Region in 2017. In addition to *First Night*, 11 days of multicultural programming are planned leading up to Canada's 150th on Saturday, July 1, 2017.

ATTACHED: Schedule of Events and Road Closure Map

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For updates during *Spirit of 150 Victoria – First Night*, follow **@Spirit150Vic** on Twitter.

For a detailed schedule of events, performer bios, sponsors, and a social media dashboard, visit: Spirit150Victoria.ca

For More Information:

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