



PRESS RELEASE
Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall
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JOIN US FOR A SUNSET ON THE BAY

Sarasota FL (Thursday, August 24, 2017) – Join us to Celebrate a Sarasota Sunset on the Bay welcoming guests from the World Rowing Championship and visitors from around the world. The **free** event ***Sunset on the Bay*** will take place on the **Van Wezel** bayside lawn and will welcome **Yesterdayze** and the **West Coast Black Theatre Troupe** to the outdoor stage on **Saturday, September 30, 2017** from **4PM-8PM**.

This is the first public event that the **Sarasota Bayfront Planning Organization** (SBPO), the non-profit organization behind 'The Bay Project' has announced. The public event is designed to engage the community in imagining the possibilities along Sarasota's Bayfront.

"This family-friendly event builds on the City's efforts to make the bay along the grounds of the Van Wezel a place to relax, enjoy, and experience more than a Broadway show or concert," said Van Wezel Executive Director Mary Bensel. "Our goal is to double the nearly 250,000 patrons who buy tickets to performances yearly by bringing the community together for fun in the sun on the grounds around the performing arts hall. We at the Van Wezel and the Van Wezel Foundation are proud to sponsor and be the contributing source for growing participation along our Bayfront."

"We at SBPO are pleased to have served as the catalyst to help bring this *Sunset on the Bay* celebration together," said SBPO Board Chair AG Lafley. "We want to thank Mary Bensel and the Van Wezel for putting the event together. All our lead sponsors, along with Sue Brady and the World Rowing Championships, were vital to the success of this partnership. We see the Bayfront as a place for people to come together, enjoy themselves and appreciate some of the best that Sarasota has to offer."

As the World Rowing Championships come to a close, guests from around the world are invited to mingle with the Sarasota community during *Sunset on the Bay* to celebrate achievements, enjoy live music, take in a breathtaking sunset and relax along Sarasota's Bayfront. There will also be informational opportunities from key stakeholders to answer questions about the future of the Bayfront. Patrons are encouraged to bring blankets and lawn chairs. The event will take place rain or shine and in the event of inclement weather, will be moved indoors. Outside food and drink are prohibited; coolers and large umbrellas are also prohibited. Entry to event is **Free!**

“As we begin to plan for the Bay’s future, we will continue to work with the community to program activities of interest on the site,” said Visit Sarasota County President Virginia Haley. “Sarasota continues to be a major draw for visitors from across the globe for many reasons, so my hope is that the community, full-time and seasonal, gains a deeper understanding and takes ownership of the imaginable possibilities we can envision along the Bayfront.”

Lead sponsors for *Sunset on the Bay* are the Van Wezel Foundation, atLarge, Inc., Michael Saunders and Company, Visit Sarasota County and Sarasota Bayfront Planning Organization. The event wouldn’t be made possible without the dedication and hard work by the Van Wezel and the City of Sarasota. Confirmed food vendors are Mattison’s Bayside, Gold Coast Eagle, Kona Ice, TCBY, Sofrito Mamma’s, Jerry’s Hot Dogs, Chefs 2 U, J and J Barbecue and Uniquely Organics.

For additional information, visit VanWezel.org.

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