



Macon, Georgia's  
International

Cherry  
Blossom  
FESTIVAL

A graphic celebrating 35 years, featuring the number '35' in a large, stylized, pink font with a white outline. The number is surrounded by several pink cherry blossom flowers and swirling patterns. The word 'YEARS' is written in a smaller, pink font to the right of the number.

35  
YEARS

**BEST EVENT**

**(WITHIN AN EXISTING FESTIVAL)**



# OVERVIEW INFORMATION

## **Introduction and background of main event**

Macon, Georgia's International Cherry Blossom Festival is a special, storied 10-day celebration in one of the liveliest cities in the south. Macon is keyed in the record books of soul and southern rock, by the likes of the Otis Redding, Little Richard, and the Allman Brothers Band. For a festival founded upon "love, beauty, and international friendship" our hearts sing most, every March, when we revel in the blooming of 350,000 Yoshino Cherry Trees. People from all around the world visit the town referred to by the Congressional Records as the Cherry Blossom Capital of the World. The 2017 festival dates were March 24th-April 2nd, where eager attendees could visit various new exciting events as well as the comfort of their legendary festival favorites. This year, we reached our momentous 35th year as the Pinkest Party on Earth!

## **Description and purpose of event within the Festival**

After 5 years out of the line-up, the return of the Cherry Blossom Festival Street Party was ready to be back in the spotlight for a truly thrilling, epic event. The event was planned and produced flawlessly with performances by Me & Molly, JD McPherson, and Macon native and former member of the beloved Allman Brothers Band and the Rolling Stones, Chuck Leavell featuring the Randall Bramblett Band. Headlining the awe-inspiring, rockin' evening was legendary soul singer Mavis Staples and the iconic George Clinton & Parliament Funkadelic. We wanted to have an event that crossed genres and was very inclusive; we were elated at the diversity of the attendees.

## **Target audience and attendance/number of participants**

We were very intentional about selecting artists that would have cross-genre appeal and influence. We were ecstatic for the response we received on social media thanking us for the diverse background of performers and how it brought out the best in Macon.

## **Overall revenue/expense budget of event**

The overall revenue for the Street Party was \$273,195.93. The actual expenses were \$172,310.00.



## **Tie-in of program to main festival**

Macon's evident connection to music led to the birth of an event that had been missing over the last couple of years. We were so proud of have an array of genres represented and a very diverse crowd. What was seen that night was the best of Macon; we truly exhibited "love, beauty, and international friendship" through music.

## **Duration of program (start to finish) and years program has been apart of event**

Gates were open to the public beginning at 3PM while the first performance began at 4PM. The evening concluded at 11PM. This was the return of the street party for the Cherry Blossom Festival, which had taken a 5 year hiatus.

## **Description of sponsor involvement with event and benefits to each.**

We had phenomenal sponsor involvement for the 2017 Street Party, our media sponsors, 13WMAZ, Cox Communications, The Telegraph, WDEN, The Creek/11th Hour, WLZN, WMGB, WPEZ, WAYS, WMAZ contributed to a grand total of \$34,177.84 with their in-kind coverage. They each received 10 complimentary tickets to the event and invitations to join the VIP dinner throughout the evening. Our presenting sponsors for the stellar show were Yuengling, Navicent Health, and YKK. Our supporting sponsors were Central Georgia Technical College, Infinity Network Solutions, The Knight Foundation, and We Care Heating & Air for a total of \$85,000. They were invited and encouraged to attend a dedicated VIP area with lanyards, catered food and drinks, and provided with 10 tickets for their employees to enjoy the show.

## **What makes the event unique and creative?**

In addition to the stellar singing, there was also delicious, decadent food to enjoy with your friends and family. The food vendors that were featured at the street party were, Corn dogs, funnel cakes, chicken fingers and fries. Lemonade, a Mediterranean cafe- Chicken, steak, or lamb gyros, gyro salads, Greek salads, cheesesteaks. Quesadilla Gourmet. There was also chicken quesadillas and Cajun inspired cuisine. We are in the south, so of course there was JD's BBQ. BBQ pork sandwiches, ribs, beans, slaw... Our VIP's also got to enjoy an especially catered dinner by the iconic Pig N Whistle, who one was a staple in Macon, but no longer operates here, so it's special homecoming was similar to the street party. For the cherry on top, we had gourmet popsicles from King of Pops and wine and beer served by Yuengling. We had something for everyone—food, music, and atmosphere!



## **Overall effectiveness/success of event within the Festival**

We set out to produce an event that would cover an array of genre and reach all of those who live in Macon and beyond. The attendance was well-over 9,000. The set list was truly phenomenal and received extremely positive press from influential community members in the opinion section of the Telegraph. Al-Tillman, Macon-Bibb Commissioner said, "What were they thinking when someone associated with the Cherry Blossom board suggested bringing back the street party? Who knew the weather would cooperate? Who knew George Clinton's Funkadelic/Parliament Band would bring out so many diverse people? Who knew this would appear to be one of the most successful street parties ever? The answer is, unless we give it a try, we will never know. Kudos to all those who played a role in this years Cherry Blossom Festival." Furthermore, we received additional praise from Charles Richardson, Editorial Page Editor for the Telegraph in Macon. "I don't know whose idea it was to combine Molly and Me, JD McPherson, Chuck Leveall and the Randall Bramblett Band, Mavis Staples, and George Clinton, but who ever it was deserves a medal. There was something for everybody and the single stage at Poplar at Cotton was perfect." He said. Jessica Walden, daughter of famed Alan Walden, who along with his brother Phil Walden, managed Otis Redding and helped propel the Allman Brothers to southern rock stardom, also commended the Cherry Blossom Street Party. She said, "This diverse Cherry Blossom crowd danced, sang along and reached out to touch a new hand when Mavis (Staples) sang for us to find a friend. We respected ourselves; we respected each other." She said. We're still reminiscing about that legendary evening and we are busy preparing to produce an even more epic street party for 2018.



# SUPPORTING QUESTION

**What challenges/obstacles did you foresee/encounter in creating the program, and how did you handle them?**

The return of the Cherry Blossom Street Party to the spotlight was not without its unique challenges. The event was produced in less than 6 months and the proposed artists changed several times. However, we knew that reincorporating this event would mean great morale within the community, and would help reinvigorate our brand. We stayed the course and had an incredibly memorable and successful Street Party. Bring on 2018!

# SUPPORTING MATERIALS

**THE CHERRY BLOSSOM STREET PARTY** Returns ...

**SATURDAY 1ST 2017 APRIL**

Macon Georgia's International **Cherry Blossom FESTIVAL** 35 YEARS

— Featuring —

**GEORGE CLINTON**

**& PARLIAMENT FUNKADELIC**

**MAVIS STAPLES**

**CHUCK LEAVELL**  
WITH THE RANDALL BRAMBLETT BAND

**JD MCPHERSON** *Me & Molly*

TO PURCHASE TICKETS VISIT [CHERRYBLOSSOM.COM](http://CHERRYBLOSSOM.COM) OR IN PERSON AT EL CAMINO & THE ROOKERY

|  |                                 |   |  |
|--|---------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>RAIN OR SHINE</b><br><small>Refund only in event of cancellation.</small> | <b>TICKETS ON SALE FEB 15TH</b> | <b>\$20 ADVANCE</b><br><b>\$25 DAY OF EVENT</b> | <b>GATES OPEN @ 3PM</b><br><b>COTTON AVE &amp; POPLAR ST</b> |
|--|---------------------------------|---|--|

13 WHAZ • The Creek • Pig and Whistle • Black Pages • The Telegraph • The 11th Hour • Cumulus Stations – WPEZ, WHGB, WLZN

This was the premiere promotional poster we used on our social media account which got hundreds of interactions.



Local favorite Chuck Leavell, former member of the beloved Allman Brothers Band and the Rolling Stones, was warmly welcomed by the crowd.



We want the funk! Attendees were thrilled to see legendary funkmaster, George Clinton & Parliament Funkadelic.



Two legends: The funky George Clinton and soulful Mavis Staples preformed together on stage for a set at the 2017 Cherry Blossom Street Party.



Me & Molly got the show started off right! Molly is a Macon native who grew up attending the Cherry Blossom Festival.