Surprise act set to open Hockey House

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METRO VANCOUVER

February 11, 2010 5:21 a.m

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Mark Hickox, left, and comedian Sean Cullen (wearing one of the hostess' dresses) rock out during a preview of Molson Canadian Hockey House yesterday.

Vancouver's massive cathedral to hockey is sure to draw pilgrims this weekend as the puck drops on Canada's religion.

Molson Canadian Hockey House (MCHH) is a massive 65,000-square foot pavilion at the Concord Place community celebration zone on northeast False Creek.

Its enormous flap zips up tomorrow to kick off 16 nights of music, comedy, beer and hockey.

"(We want) to show the world that Canada is the best place to party," said Jordan Bitove, president of VisionCo, the company behind MCHH.

Acts like Sam Roberts, Barenaked Ladies and Tom Cochrane will perform along with comedians like Brent Butt and Sean Cullen. More than 350,000 cans of Molson Canadian will be poured.

Vancouver rocker Bryan Adams is rumoured to be the surprise guest who will kick off the festivities Friday night.

"There's a lot of artists who have sold over 80 million albums," said Tyler Stewart, drummer for Barenaked Ladies and entertainment director at MCHH.

That unnamed artist "may have purchased their first instrument for a really low price, and practised on that instrument until they did themselves some physical injury," said Tyler, referencing Adam's Summer of '69.

Bob Nicholson, president of Hockey Canada (also a partner in the MCHH), said it was the first time he'd seen an Olympic pavilion dedicated to a single sport.

A portion of the massive tent, dubbed Hockey Canada Lounge, is separated off for members of Team Canada and their families.

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