



Workers yesterday erect tents on Granville Street in anticipation of this weekend's Juno Awards. Up to 50,000 fans are expected to crowd downtown streets for live music events. JASON PAYNE — THE PROVINCE

Dancin' in the streets allowed

JUNO AWARDS: Party on Granville kicks off event expected to generate \$10m

BY JOHN BERMINGHAM
STAFF REPORTER

The biggest musical event in the country is expected to inject up to \$10 million into the Vancouver economy over the next four days.

The 2009 Juno Awards and street party hits Vancouver tonight and as many as 50,000 music fans are expected to converge on downtown, to soak up sounds from hundreds of B.C. and Canadian performers.

Tourism Vancouver spokesman Richard Yore said 4,000 room-nights are booked, which alone will generate \$1.1 million.

"It really has become sort of like Grey Cup," Yore said yesterday.

The Juno street festival is a dry run for the 2010 Olympic street celebrations, he said.

"It's like a mini-test case," he said. "It's a big opportunity to show that the city will get us geared up."

The B.C. government has pitched in \$650,000 toward the Junos, and Tourism Minister Bill Bennett said it's a great opportunity to show off B.C.'s musical talent.

"It's an opportunity for us to toot our own horn on the national stage," Bennett said.

Juno organizer Bob D'Eith said: "This is going to be the biggest one yet. It's only the last couple of weeks that people have woken up and said, 'Holy crap, this is going to be huge.'"

The Junos kick off on Granville Street, starting at 4 p.m., with a free public party headlined by Victoria band Hot Hot Heat.

Eleven B.C. acts are nominated for Juno honours, including Michael Bubl , Bryan Adams, Hedley and Sarah McLachlan.

"It's a live concert," said Chris McDowall of the Canadian Academy

of Recording Arts and Sciences, which is the Juno umbrella group.

"They will never be on the same stage together again."

Tickets are still available for the Sunday night Juno awards show at GM Place, which will feature live performances by Adams and McLachlan, as well as Nickelback and Sam Roberts.

Only one event — the Saturday night gala awards dinner at the Westin Bayshore — is sold out.

All other events are either free, or have tickets, mostly in the \$15-to-\$30 range.

There will be traffic closures in the 800- and 900-block Granville Street and around GM Place until Sunday.

Charles Gauthier, executive director of the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association, said that, after years of "construction fatigue," Granville merchants badly wanted a street party.

"All the businesses will benefit, to varying degrees," Gauthier said. "We see this as a plus for the long term and the short term for businesses on the street."

Phil Orr of Granville Entertainment Group, which owns The Roxy and Doolin's Irish Pub, is bringing a busload of patrons from Whistler for tonight's Juno opening. The company's Comfort Inn Hotel is fully booked.

"This event is absolutely fantastic for us," said Orr. "For the street, it's absolutely superb."

The Juno Awards show starts at 4:30 p.m., but fans will converge on GM Place between 3 and 4 p.m. for a glimpse of the stars walking the red carpet.

The last SkyTrain leaves downtown Sunday at 12:15 a.m., and the night bus service leaves downtown every 30 minutes, between 1:30 and 3:09 a.m.

jbermingham@theprovince.com

More on the web

For the latest news, photos and videos on the Juno Awards and events around town, go to www.theprovince.com

Readership of The Province growing, says latest survey

Readership of *The Province* in the Lower Mainland is growing, according to a recent Newspaper Audience Databank Inc. (NADbank) survey.

In an average week, 824,900 people read *The Province*, an increase of 15,400 readers over the 2007-08 NADbank study.

Including Internet readership, the paper's average weekly readership jumps to 866,800.

The Sunday Province also jumped to 399,000 readers, a three-per-cent increase over the last study.

"We are very pleased with our readership results," said *Province* president and publisher Kevin Bent.

"Anytime you can extend your reach and increase your audience size, you have to be pleased. Once again, our readers have reinforced the important role newspapers play in our society.

"I want to thank all the talented journalists in *The Province* newsroom for continuing to craft such

an excellent product day in, day out."

NADBANK NUMBERS, PAGE A30

In an average week, 841,600 people read the *Vancouver Sun*, in print and online, the study showed.

The study in the Vancouver area

measured the readership habits of more than 1.86 million adults 18 and older and showed that 51 per cent have read a daily newspaper on the average weekday. When print and online numbers are combined over the course of a week, the number reached 78 per cent.

— Staff Reporter