

Joni Mitchell joins stellar festival lineup

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EDMONTON — Canadian music legend **Joni Mitchell** will make a rare live appearance at the 15th Edmonton Folk Music Festival Aug. 4-7 — only her third concert in the past five years.

"We needed to attract more headliners to develop a sense of anticipation," festival producer **Terry Wickham** said. "**Joni Mitchell** has that star quality and she was born in Alberta. We're delighted."

Mitchell was born in Fort Macleod and raised in Saskatoon, Sask.

Now 50, she first won an audience in the sixties as a folksinger, with wistful acoustic ballads such as *Both Sides Now* and flowers-and-beads anthems like *Woodstock*.

Later, she dug deeply into jazz, working and performing with musicians like Charles Mingus and Pat Metheny. Her latest work has moved from hard-edged urban rock to more reflective music — some of which reminisces about her prairie upbringing. She has received both Grammy and Juno awards.

Wickham resolved to coax Mitchell to Edmonton after hearing her at a Los Angeles nightclub. Mitchell will perform Aug. 4. A bid for Celtic

soul master Van Morrison is less likely to succeed, said Wickham.

Among the other more than 50 acts expected at the festival are Canadian roots rockers Blue Rodeo, Alias Ron Kavana, fifties rhythm and blues queen Ruth Brown and gospel-soul patriarch Solomon Burke. Dynamic solo veterans include Joe Ely, T-Bone Burnett, Taj Mahal and Richard Thompson.

"We're still around 40 per cent Canadian," said Wickham. "No one country has a share of folk talent that big. And while we wanted to look back a bit for our 15th year, 50 per cent of the talent will be new. I don't want us to necessarily be the most traditional, the most hip, the most Canadian, the most anything. In the end my job is to put on an affordable show our audience is happy with — and I'm happy with."

Last year's festival lost \$65,000, a victim of what Wickham identifies as a weaker lineup, two days of miserable weather, a slow economy and competition from a nearby country music festival.

With a budget of \$1.1-million, Edmonton remains one of the largest folk festivals on the continent.