

And now for something completely different:

HEEBONICS

MC prepared cities across Canada for torch relay

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Staff Reporter

Bram Goldstein's cross-Canada road trip included -37 C temperatures, crowds of 15,000 cheering fans and a 300-metre jog with an Olympic torch.

Goldstein, head of BiG Entertainment in Toronto, was approached by RBC, an official sponsor of the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics, and asked to create a 10- to 15-minute show to get cities ready for the Olympic Torch Relay.

"It's a big deal," Goldstein, 35, said of the offer. "RBC... trusted me to represent them on the world stage."

Goldstein created a mobile art show, which included one of two artists splattering paint onto a spinning canvas as Goldstein MCs. The globs of paint eventually formed an image of a torch bearer, which was donated to each city involved in the relay.

"This is the biggest thing I've ever been a part of," said Goldstein.

For the MC, the show epitomized his love of the entertainment industry.

"It's that bar mitzvah feeling. You get onstage, you're talking to the people, you're getting them jumping, singing, dancing... We really have a lot of fun up there."

Goldstein started off his career in the entertainment industry as a DJ when he was about 15. It didn't take long to get hooked.

"I wear many different hats. I loved performing, I loved music, I loved being my own boss. I loved events," he said, adding that he started his own party-planning company, BiG Entertainment, nine years ago. "I enjoyed standing back and watching people have a good time. The best feeling in the world is when you come up with a concept and see people have a good time."

At the pre-relay Olympic shows, Goldstein was able to do just that. He MC'd for about 80 of the 106 days, and toured through hundreds of cities, including Yellowknife, Timmins, Ont., and Victoria.

"We got to see every community, every gas station, every restaurant," he said, adding that he toured with some 250 others from RBC and Coca-Cola Canada.

"It was amazing... When you go into the town and you see the Canadian flags waving, it puts a smile on your face."

For Goldstein, the tour allowed him to connect to his country.

"[When you] live in Toronto, you think you live in a bubble. [On the tour] I saw places I'll never be able to see again. You're in a car, you're seeing the landscapes, you're seeing how other people live and you're realizing you're very lucky."

One of Goldstein's most memorable moments came on the first night of the relay, in Victoria.

"You're standing in front of a crowd of 15,000 people, seeing them all so excited. That first night, when we did the first show, I knew it would be a success," he said.

Goldstein also remembers a cold day in Timmins, Ont., where the temperature was -37 C. The performers were freezing, the stage was filled with blankets and heaters, and the show went on.



Bram Goldstein, 35, created and MC'd a show to get communities ready for the Olympic Torch Relay. He also helped carry the torch through Merritt, B.C.

"It was definitely an unforgettable night," he said.

While on the cross-country tour, Goldstein got to see hundreds of torch bearers, including hockey superstar Sidney Crosby and singer Shania Twain, who ran in Timmins.



"She asked to see if she can have one of our paintings. She loved it," he said.

When watching the Olympics on TV, Goldstein always enjoyed the montages of the best and worst moments.

"I was more into that, seeing the music come together with somebody crying or falling or winning gold," he said.

Goldstein's role in the tour was to get the crowds excited for the torch. But he ended up becoming a part of the relay's bigger goal – to bring Canadian communities together.

"We've seen families come together. Every time you hear *Oh Canada*, that's the moment that we stand there in silence and we're so proud," he said.

"I never in my life have been more proud to be Canadian. People ask us all the time what energizes us each day. It's going into the towns. You see the kids, you see people smiling, dancing, singing. It makes you feel alive."

As a reward for creating and running his show, Goldstein got to represent RBC as a torch bearer in Merritt, B.C.

"It was a huge honour for me. That was a big moment... I've had some incredible experiences in my life, but this tops it all," he said. "When you look up and someone passes that torch to you, it all comes together."

Goldstein ran about 300 metres while carrying the torch. It was 300 metres he'll never forget.

"What I remember is that the flame came really quickly. I remember you just take in the moment. It's hard to describe in words," he said, adding that while he held the torch, he thought of his wife and daughter.

"I can't wait to get home to show Samantha that her daddy was a torch bearer. I made a difference. That's why I'm here. That's why I got a chance to run. We gave them a show."