



Highlights of what happened in 2011

Bahamas Arts Festival: Cultural Cohesion in an Archipelago

**By K. Quincy Parker
Press/Cultural Attaché
Embassy of The Bahamas**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Bahamas National Arts Festival, also known as the “E. Clement Bethel National Arts Festival” concluded last month its 35th edition, judges having trekked across The Bahamas for months examining the cultural offerings of students and the wider community. After long deliberations and a meticulous judging process, winners have been selected, and will be awarded their prizes during a special ceremony in October 2011.



The judges’ deliberations occurred against the backdrop of the Inter-American Year of Culture, a year in which the member-states of the Organization of American States (OAS) are celebrating their cultural heritage in recognition of the central role that culture plays in the economic, social, and human development of all communities in the Hemisphere. The Inter-American Year of Culture is also expected to lead to the formulation and implementation of sustainable public policies, especially for the strengthening of cultural industries

and for promoting culture as a tool of social inclusion.

Overall, Bahamian cultural authorities see the results of the festival as positive indicators of cultural cohesion in the archipelago, and evidence of the unifying influence of culture on a small nation whose population is so widely dispersed. Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture, the Honorable Charles Maynard as well as the Director of The Bahamas Department of Culture in the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture, Dr. Linda Moxey-Brown spoke about the vital importance of the National Arts Festival to a small island nation like The Bahamas and about what those who participate gain from the experience.

Minister Maynard noted that over the years, indigenous folklore, music and art have become a significant part of the Festival. The minister said this steadily increasing importance of local and native traditions in the competition has led to a deeper exploration of indigenous Bahamian cultural expressions, particularly by the young participants.

Moreover, the Department of Culture reports that many artists have been inspired to produce material specifically for the Festival, either as entries in the competition or as material that would ultimately be used as set pieces or choice pieces. In addition to original music, the Festival also included original poetic and dramatic works, newly choreographed dance pieces, original fine art and specially-designed craftwork.

Still, Minister Maynard noted that despite full funding for the Festival by the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture, there is work to be done in broadening the audience of the Festival, which he said is still “seen as a private event that only attracts the attention of the Performing Arts sector.” He also added that in his view, the Festival should be “a strategic developmental tool factored into a national plan.”

For her part, Dr. Moxey-Brown asserted that “[the Festival] is extremely important since it speaks to the cultural heritage of The Bahamas.” She noted that participation in the Festival often entails detailed research into family history and community history, music and dance, arts and crafts, drama. Such research, she said, keeps the community – particularly young Bahamians – intimately involved in those aspects of Bahamian culture.

On Competition

The Festival is a months-long competition. Through a rigorous process, adjudicators from all the different arts represented in the festival (music, the visual arts, drama and the spoken word, dance, craft and other forms) travel throughout the archipelago to hear entries that have been prepared specifically for the Festival. These entries are then judged, and winners are announced and awarded.

Minister Maynard explains that: “In a country like ours, with many inhabited islands and hundreds of small communities filled with untapped talent, the [Festival] gives an opportunity for these individuals and groups to showcase their talents, compete against the rest and the best of what the country has to offer and, most importantly, get direct exposure to some of the nation’s top [arts] professionals in the persons of those who conduct the adjudication.”

The winners of this year’s Festival have already been chosen and will be awarded in October 2011. Among the prizes are scholarships to study their art form at the College of The Bahamas, international performance opportunities and opportunities to act as Ambassadors for The Bahamas through cultural exchanges.



History of the Festival

The Festival Movement started in The Bahamas in 1959. It was started by Lady Arthur, the wife of the then Governor, Sir Raynor Arthur, who – with the support of the most prominent residents of The Bahamas at the time – that year established The Bahamas Historic Society. As the community grew and matured, various celebrations of the unique and distinct artistic traditions also came into being, and in 1976, after the Ministry of Education and Culture opened the National Dance School and began considering founding a new festival dedicated to dance, the decision was taken that all of the Festivals should be combined, and thus The National Arts Festival was born.

“Creative Intersections” emerge at 5th World Summit on Arts and Culture



The 5th World Summit on Arts and Culture concluded on October 6th 2011, generating a wide range of initiatives, policy proposals and collaboration projects at the international level.

The 5th World Summit, this time co-hosted by the Australia Council for the Arts and the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA), was held at the Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre, in Australia, from October 3rd to 6th, and attracted a total of 501 delegates from 72 countries.

Previous World Summits on Arts and Culture has been held in Canada (2000), Singapore (2003), England (2006), and in South Africa (2009).

The theme of this year's Summit, *Creative Intersections*, was explored by over 80 speakers who provoked wide-ranging debate around the role of innovative government policy in facilitating intersections between the arts and other sectors for the benefit of the broader community, including health and well-being, education, environmental action, business, international aid, social inclusion and digital technologies.

Amongst the most notable speakers figured Jacques Martial, director of Paris' Parc de la Villette; Arts Council England executive director Moira Sinclair; Pang Khee Teik from Malaysia's Annexe Gallery, and the Federal Arts Minister of Australia, Simon Crean.

Additionally, conferences, panel sessions, round-table discussions, case study presentations, networking opportunities and exhibition stands, in other words, all kinds of occasions for delegations to share their experiences and best practices were also on the agenda of the Summit. Delegates also had the opportunity to participate in one of Australia's finest international arts festivals, the *Melbourne International Art Festival* which took place from October 6th to 22nd.

Very satisfied with the issue of the Summit, Alan Davey, Chairman of IFACCA, declared: “The Summit has strongly reinforced the value of international networking between leaders in arts and cultural policy making. It has also provided delegates and members of IFACCA with a myriad of ideas for ways to better support partnerships and networking between artists, arts organizations and other sectors of society in Australia, the Pacific, Asia and the rest of the world.”

It is planned that a report on the World Summit discussions, to be produced by Professor Brad Haseman of Queensland University of Technology, in consultation with a team of rapporteurs and Summit delegates, will be published shortly on the [World Summit website](http://artsummit.org/) at <http://artsummit.org/>

Release of WorldCP

Interestingly enough, in conjunction with the 5th World Summit on Arts and Culture was also held, in Melbourne, the IFACCA’s 4th General Assembly. During this occasion, the Director IFACCA, Sarah Gardner, unveiled the prototype of a major new initiative, WorldCP, an international database of cultural policies.

To the saying of Ms. Gardner, WorldCP will be a new central, web-based and continuously updated database of country-specific profiles of cultural policies modeled on the Council of Europe/ERICarts Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe.

For the moment, the prototype of the WorldCP website, currently operating for demonstration purposes, holds profiles of 12 countries in five continents: Algeria, Australia, Austria, Canada, Czech Republic, Finland, Egypt, Italy, Malta, Serbia, South Korea and Zimbabwe. IFACCA anticipates that another six to ten profiles will be added to the database in the coming 12 months including Viet Nam and Tunisia. These will supplement the profiles of a further 35 European countries that are currently accessible through the Compendium at www.culturalpolicies.net and that will eventually be available on WorldCP.

For further information please see the WorldCP brochure or visit: www.worldcp.org

Chile takes the Baton for 2014

On the last day of the encounter, The Chairman of IFACCA, Alan Davey, announced that Chile would host the 6th World Summit on Arts and Culture in its capital, Santiago, on 13th to 16th January 2014: “It is great to be able to announce the first World Summit to be held in Latin America” he said. “Chile is a nation of rich artistic and cultural heritage, and the setting, the Estación Mapocho Cultural Centre, is truly inspiring. We know that Australia has set the bar very high with the 5th World Summit, but that Chile will more than meet the challenge”, he added.

Receiving the honour in Melbourne was the Minister of Culture and President of the Chilean National Council of Culture and the Arts, Luciano Cruz-Coke. Minister Cruz-Coke addressed delegates of the Melbourne Summit and presented a video invitation to Santiago and the next Summit.

This will be the first time that the World Summit takes place in Latin America.

Suriname stands proud of the outcome of the Inter Guyana Cultural Festival 2011

Reporting: Victoriashoop Judith
Department of Cultural Studies of Suriname



The Inter Guyana Cultural Festival, held from August 26th to August 28th 2011, was crowned with success according to the authorities of Suriname and its participating neighbors Guyana and French-Guyana. Indeed, authorities consider that the Cultural Festival has met the stated purpose of the OAS *Inter-American Year of Culture* by contributing to the transfer of knowledge and ensuring the protection and preservation of cultural heritage.

The festival started on Friday August 26th, in Paramaribo, Suriname, and held various cultural workshops throughout the weekend. On Saturday, classes in literature, gastronomy and fashion were held at St. Louise School as well as at the Suriname Museum. Simultaneously, literary presentations, displays and visual arts workshops took place at the Fort Zeelandia Complex and at the Nola Hatterman Institute. On Sunday, presentations of performing arts and fashion were carried out in the Thalia Theater, and were followed by a corresponding workshop in the Combe Hall. Finally, the audience could enjoy gastronomy and hand-crafted work in the Palm Garden, where the closing ceremony of the Festival took place. Access to all events was free to the public. During the closing ceremony, Mr. Stanley Sidoel, Director of the Directorate of Culture of Suriname, stated that he was “very pleased with the outcomes of the Inter Guyana Cultural Festival”.

It is important to highlight that, in 2011, the Ministry of Education and Community Development of Suriname has incorporated Arts and Cultural Education as priorities in its policies. As the objective of arts and cultural education is to contribute to broadening minds on issues related to the protection of culture, the OAS Representative in Suriname, Mr. Lucien Dubois, decided to incorporate an “Educational Dimension” in the Festival Program. As the success of the festival shown, this initiative was very well received by the participants who attended the various cultural workshops in great numbers.



In the end, the three Guyanas have decided to make the Inter Guyana Cultural Festival an annual event. Guyana has been designated as the host for the 2012 Edition of the Festival. The Guyanese Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, Dr. Franklin Anthony, enthusiastically stated that his country would meet the challenges and expectations for setting up such an event and that he was looking forward to bringing the Festival to “greater heights, and to strengthen the links between the three Guyanas by such event”.

Cooperation project between Canada and El Salvador under the spotlight of the 2011: *Inter-American Year of Culture* and the Fifth Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Culture and Highest Appropriate Authorities, in Washington D.C.

On November 9th 2011, a group of young people from the city of Suchitoto, in El Salvador, performed excerpts from a play at the Organization of American States (OAS), in Washington D.C., as one of the cultural and social events that took place during the Fifth Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Culture. This performance was made possible thanks to the support of project partners, CUSO International, the municipality of Suchitoto, El Salvador, the *Stratford Shakespeare Festival*, Canada; sponsors, TACA Airlines and Virginia Suites and event partners the Permanent Missions to the OAS of Canada and El Salvador.

The event stands as an example of cultural development through international cooperation within the Americas, as it is the result of many months of hard work and exchange between El Salvador and Canada. Moreover, this presentation was of even greater significance as it occurred at the end of 2011, which has been declared by the OAS Member States as the *Inter-American Year of Culture*.

In fact, to fully understand the roots and importance of this four-year cooperation project, one must first encounter its unique history.

History

In the early 1950's the economy of the city of Stratford, Canada severely suffered when the railway industry that had sustained the town for over 80 years, withdrew. Seeing the town's survival threatened, journalist Tom Patterson, along with a committee of concerned citizens, created *The Stratford Shakespeare Festival*, a theatre festival devoted to the works of William Shakespeare, which was inaugurated on July, 1953.

Today, almost 60 years later, the Festival has an annual operating budget of about 60 million dollars and employs over 1000 people. Moreover, *The Stratford Shakespeare Festival* is now known as the largest classical repertory theatre in North America and the town of Stratford continues to exist largely because of it.

The cooperation project between Canada and El Salvador was born from the will of the citizens of Stratford to share what they had learned. They wanted to turn the tide of poverty by creating opportunities for self employment, small businesses, and community enterprises in other cities.

Concrete Results

Since Stratford and Suchitoto have many points in common – both struggled economically; geographically, both cities are located just 1.5 hours away from a major city and an international airport and both have well-preserved historical architecture – a rapid collaboration was established between the two cities, which also included CUSO International, a Canadian civil society organization that works through volunteers.

After two years of collaboration, Es Artes have created a training program and a production program. Among the most important accomplishments that came out from the collaboration between CUSO International, Es Artes and the *Stratford Shakespeare Festival* is the creation of the *Escuela Taller*, a technical trade school where subjects such as carpentry and electricity that have been taught traditionally have been expanded to include set building, prop construction, and theatrical lighting and sound. In the past year, *Escuela Taller* had 50 students participating in its technical training.

Also worth mentioning is the development of the *EsArtes* training site, a place where artists can share their love for the arts and theatre with youth. The classes at *EsArtes* consist of acting, movement, music, dance, and vocal training. As the students move into their second year they can branch out and learn more about all areas of technical theatre – props, costumes, lighting, stage management and production management and entrepreneurship. About 40 students currently participate in the *EsArtes* programs.

Erika Zenaida Martinez Ladaverde, 20 years old, believes that “*EsArtes* is a visionary development project which has helped many young people to participate in a more human and efficient society. It is the combination of the efforts of many people who believe in youth and who give us the necessary tools to succeed in our life.”

In total, since February 2010, the *Stratford Shakespeare Festival* through CUSO International has sent 17 volunteers to share their skills with the young talents of Suchitoto. These volunteers are designers, sound and light technicians, master builders, costume designers and cutters, directors and actors.

So far, the program has produced three major student productions, three smaller student presentations and a professional production. A program of education in all areas of theatre production (construction, lighting, sound, and acting) has also been launched and the ideas about a future Theatre Company are currently on the table.

Overall, the performance of the Suchitoto *Es Artes* youth group in the premises of the OAS will allow students to put in practice their hard work on an international scene and will illustrate the success of the cooperation project between El Salvador and Canada. Moreover, it will also give the chance to other countries attending the event to acknowledge this successful practice.

The presentation took place on November 9th at 6:00 p.m., in the Hall of the Americas and was followed by a *vin d’honneur* and pupusas offered to the Ministers of Culture and other invitees by the El Salvador and Canada Permanent Missions to the OAS.

For more information about this project please visit the following Websites:

<http://www.esartes.org/esartes/>

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Suchitoto-Project/179358451138>

<http://www.cuso-vso.org/donate/stratford.asp>

<http://www.yptdc.org/>

Manifesto Festival of Community and Culture takes over Toronto, Canada



From September 15th to 25th 2011, the city of Toronto, Canada, held the electrifying Manifesto Festival of Community and Culture, an event aiming at uniting, supporting and celebrating Toronto's vibrant and diverse music and arts community.

The event was organized by the "Manifesto Community Projects" a non-profit organization whose work is to provide the resources needed to advance the growth of the arts as a tool for positive change at individual, community and city levels.

In total, the Festival featured 11 days of events across the city and brought together hundreds of artists and performers as well as thousands of attendees, to showcase Toronto's most talented arts community. Art exhibitions, dance competitions, workshops, free outdoor concerts, film screenings, networking opportunities, seminars and a pop-up arts market figured among the list of activities.

First introduced in 2007, Manifesto Festival's point of origin lies in the hip hop culture. In fact, the event, which celebrated this year its Fifth Edition, is now known as Canada's largest hip hop Festival. However, one must not see it as exclusive, since it also acts as a catalyst for cross-pollination and collaboration within different fields of art. "Creating a space for wrongfully marginalized people is part of hip-hop's history", explains Che Kothari, Executive Director of parent organization at Manifesto Community Projects. "But we're now trying to push the definition of hip-hop [...] Our aim is to create a sort of meeting place where different people get inspired and then create their own reality and vibe", he says.

Among the most notable events of the Festival figured the **ArtReach Pitch Contest** (September 15th), which allowed artists aged 16 to 24 to perform in front of a judging panel and to compete for \$15 000 in prizes, as well as the **Wombmanifesto** (September 18th), a series of workshops and panel discussions where women and trans artists joined together to examine the interaction between feminism and hip hop and how motherhood can be balanced with artistic projects. Also worth mentioning was the night event **The Movement** (September 23rd), which attracted large audiences, as Toronto's Street Dance Community performed showcase acts, battles and open cyphers.

Finally, the Festival culminated on September 25th with the program **Live at the Square**, a massive all-day free outdoor concert at Yonge & Dundas Square in the heart of downtown Toronto, which also included an open dance floor, a graffiti wall, open canvas artworks, workshops and a "Fresh Goods Market".

The Festival counted on the support of numerous sponsors, among which were the Ministry of Canadian Heritage, the Government of Ontario and the Arts Council of Toronto. The event was also registered in the framework of the *Inter-American Year of Culture* of the Organization of American States.



Canada's national public broadcasting channel presents unprecedented one-day documentary on the life of Canadians

On Saturday, April 30th, 2011, in Canada, someone gave birth to his/her first child; someone else danced until dawn; another went hiking in the Rockies; a couple got married; and millions of other Canadians had millions of new experiences over the course of those 24 hours – some surprising, some routine, some joyful. Based on the idea that Canadians, every day, have remarkable stories to tell, Canada's national public broadcasting channel (CBC/Radio-Canada) conducted the "1 day, 24 hours, 34 million lives" project, a two-hour documentary aiming at encouraging audience participation.

For weeks, Canadians were encouraged to get prepared for April 30th, a day where they could record and submit their personal video contributions shot over those 24 hours, and hence, share their experiences of that single day through a website created specifically for the event.

Of all the footage gathered, a documentary was created: one version intended for the Francophone Canadian audience and another for the Anglophone Canadian audience. Both versions shared the same objective, which was to give Canadians the opportunity to participate in the production of a documentary, thus helping other Canadians discover their vast country and the variety of people who inhabit it.

This project was also launched as CBC and Radio-Canada celebrated their 75th anniversary this year. The idea of the project was therefore to reverse roles and have the general public make their own news. "We've been telling your stories for the past 75 years, and for our anniversary, we want you to tell us your stories", indicated the broadcaster.

The French version of the documentary was first aired on August 20th, 2011 on Radio-Canada while the English version was aired on August 21st, 2011 on CBC Television. It is planned to rebroadcast the documentary on other platforms this year.

About CBC/Radio-Canada

CBC/Radio-Canada is Canada's national public broadcaster and one of its largest cultural institutions. The Corporation delivers a comprehensive range of radio, television, Internet, and satellite-based services. Deeply rooted in the regions, CBC/Radio-Canada is the only domestic broadcaster to offer diverse regional and cultural perspectives in English, French and eight Aboriginal languages, plus seven languages for international audiences.

For more information, or to see the documentary, visit the following links:

FRENCH NETWORK: <http://unjour.radio-canada.ca/>

ENGLISH NETWORK: <http://1day.cbc.ca/>