

## Arts and Entertainment



*Showcasing the diverse works of Canada's seasoned and emerging creative talents.*

Through CBC/Radio-Canada, audiences across Canada and around the world can enjoy and learn about Canada's actors, writers, composers, musicians, dancers, comedians, orchestras, theatres, and film companies.

### **Arts and Culture**

Throughout 2003-2004, CBC/Radio-Canada offered a wide range of arts and culture programming that celebrated and promoted Canadian talent from across the country. On all of our networks, arts information programs helped Canadians to stay abreast of developments on the country's cultural scene. We also made a vital contribution to sustaining Canadian culture in a very competitive environment dominated by foreign programming by spending over \$120 million on the purchase of productions and on artistic competitions.

CBC Television's *Opening Night* returned for a fourth season with its weekly two-hour, commercial-free presentation of exciting artistic performances. Beginning with *Elizabeth Rex*, a stunning adaptation of the Stratford Festival production of the play by the late Timothy Findley, *Opening Night* also featured the opera, *Noye's Fludde*; a musical portrait, *Measha Brueggergosman: Spirit in her Voice*; a dance performance of *The Firebird*; and a re-broadcast of CBC Television's 1961 production of *Macbeth* with a young Sean Connery. Not surprisingly, audiences and critics raved about the series, which received nine Geminis.

CBC Television also presented *Canadian Reflections*, which has been showcasing Canadian short films for decades, and *Mary Walsh: Open Book*, the weekly talkfest about classic and contemporary bestsellers and their authors.

Télévision de Radio-Canada's immensely popular *Les Beaux Dimanches* returned for its 36th season to present such celebrations of Canadian creativity as the 2003 *Gala des Prix Gémeaux* and the *Prix du Gouverneur général pour les arts de la scène*. The program also featured television adaptations of Francophone theatre, comedy and music performances from across the country. Among them were *FrancoFolies de Montréal*, *C'était ça le burlesque* and *Un homme et sa musique*, as well as regional programs such as *Christiane Charette en direct* (Montréal), *Brio* (Moncton) and *Le Garage* (Ottawa). To help audiences partake in key Francophone celebrations across the country, the network also presented special programs such as *La francophonie chante Félix Leclerc* (broadcast on the Journée internationale de la Francophonie), *La fête en Acadie : Retour à l'Île St-Jean*, *Le Festival franco-ontarien : Faut qu'ça swing*, *Le Festival d'été de Québec : L'Été de la musique*, and *Le Festival de Lanaudière : Yannick Nézet-Séguin et Lorraine Desmarais* (from L'Orchestre Métropolitain du Grand Montréal). New regular programs introduced this year included *Mémoires d'enfance* (in which renowned personalities recounted their childhood experiences), *Qui l'eût cru!* (in which Patrice L'Ecuyer interviewed well-known talents before a live audience) and *L'union fait la force* (in which teams competed for a monetary prize for their favourite charity).



CBC Radio continued to promote new Canadian artists, composers and performers through such key programs as *The Arts Today*, *Writers & Company* and *Richardson's Roundup*. Music programs included CBC Radio Two's *In Performance*, *Take Five* and *On Stage* (broadcast on CBC Radio One and CBC Radio Two). In high-profile literary competitions like *Canada Reads* and *Poetry Face-off*, we brought some of Canada's seasoned and emerging literary talents to national attention. Early in 2004, CBC Radio One added two new programs: *Radio Nomad* (a thematic journey through short stories, anecdotes and drama written and performed by Andre Alexis) and *Wordbeat* (with Lillian Allen exploring performance poetry). Our dedicated arts and culture network, CBC Radio Two, initiated a comprehensive scan of the Canadian culture and music environment this year, as part of a three-year project to redefine and enhance the network's mandate and programming role.

Radio de Radio-Canada's networks, the Chaîne culturelle and the Première Chaîne, also reflected the dynamism and quality of Canadian arts and culture. Developments across the country were featured on weekday arts magazines such as *Aux arts, etc.*, *Bouquinville* and *Rayon musique*, as well as on the cultural news bulletin, *Info-culture*. The Chaîne culturelle de Radio-Canada featured music of all types in *Concerts sans mesure*, *Escale jazz*, *Les Refrains...*, *Macadam tribus*, and *L'Opéra du samedi/L'Opéra du Metropolitan*. Music documentaries included *Folie douce*, *Diane Dufresne en paroles et musique*, *Claude Gauthier, son plus beau voyage : la vie* and *Denys Arcand, un portrait pour la radio*.

Again this year, there were many examples of cross-media collaboration in arts and culture programming. CBC Radio One and the Chaîne culturelle de Radio-Canada jointly

produced a live, bilingual broadcast of the *CBC Literary Awards Gala/Prix littéraires Radio-Canada* (from the Museum of Civilization in Ottawa) and *Blue/Bleu* (from the Blue Metropolis International Literary Festival/Metropolis Bleu in Montréal). In music, the two networks cooperated on *Parlez-vous Country?*, a highly entertaining show blending country music popular in Saskatchewan with Cajun music popular with the province's Francophones; and *MnM* (highlighting performances and composer profiles from the first Montreal New Music Festival). CBC Television and CBC Radio Two collaborated to bring national audiences the *2004 East Coast Music Awards* live from Mile One Stadium in St. John's.

CBC/Radio-Canada's New Media continued to work closely with our broadcast services, both to enrich our cultural content and to reach out to new audiences. For example, in collaboration with our English and French Radio networks and Galaxie, *Radio-Canada.ca* featured *100 ans de blues*, a webcast of the Harvest Jazz & Blues Festival from Fredericton. *Radio-Canada.ca*, in partnership with the weekly publication, *Voir*, featured a comprehensive overview of current as well as upcoming films, shows and events on the cultural scene.

### **Drama, Comedy and Variety**

CBC/Radio-Canada also features a wide variety of distinct Canadian entertainment programming. Produced in every region of Canada, our high-quality dramas, movies, mini-series, comedy, and variety programs portray Canadian lives and experiences and showcase domestic talent from across the country.

This year, CBC Television presented a number of high-impact specials, including the two-hour





dramatic documentary, *Shattered City: The Halifax Explosion*, the six-part *The Canadian Experience* and the powerful story of refugees depicted in *Human Cargo*. The network also introduced a number of exciting new dramatic and comedy series. *This is Wonderland* focused on a young criminal lawyer facing an over-taxed justice system. *Snakes and Ladders* irreverently took us through Ottawa's world of spin, scrums, damage control, and "landmines". In *Rick Mercer's Monday Report*, the unrelenting Newfoundlander crossed the country to chat with Canadians, then delivered his biting weekly report on the state of Canada and the world. Ken Finkleman's acclaimed series, *The Newsroom*, returned with all-new episodes. Back again for a sixth season was Canada's most popular dramatic television series, *Da Vinci's Inquest*, now seen in 45 countries on five continents. *Distant Drumming*, a fifth *North of 60* mystery movie, was aired this year, while the *Jinnah on Crime* mystery movie series returned with *White Knight*, *Black Widow*. Also back were the very popular and award-winning comedy series, *Royal Canadian Air Farce* (11th season), *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* (11th season), *The Red Green Show* (13th season), and *An American In Canada* (2nd season).

Télévision de Radio-Canada again produced a wide variety of popular drama series that reflected contemporary Francophone life and showcased the work of some of Canada's leading Francophone writers. The new comic téléroman, *Les Bougon, c'est aussi ça la vie!*, followed the fictional Bougon family in their attempts to make a living by cheating the social welfare system. *Le Bleu du ciel*, a moving saga about colourful characters battling their weaknesses and demons, was both set and produced in the Bas-Saint-Laurent region. *Grande Ourse*, a passionate new 10-part series, centred on life in Northern Québec.

Télévision de Radio-Canada also brought back such immensely popular and award-winning shows as *Rumeurs*, *L'Auberge du chien noir*, *Virginie*, and *Le Monde de Charlotte*.

Our French Radio networks continued to provide an important platform for French-Canadian writers and comedians from across Canada. Through such regular programming as *Histoire de raconter* and *Devine qui vient nous voir ?*, the Chaîne culturelle invited audiences on a journey with the stories and people who best reflect our Francophone roots. Many of the Chaîne culturelle's works of fiction were produced outside of Québec, including *L'exécution*, *Léna* and *Laurie*.

CBC Radio's dramatic contributions this year included CBC Radio One's *The Mystery Project* and CBC Radio Two's *Monday Night Playhouse*. In comedy, *Madly Off In All Directions* traversed Canada following the thread of humour that runs through Canadian communities. *Richardson's Roundup* continued as a popular meeting place for Canadians of all ages with its generous dash of conversation, music, and lateral thinking. *Definitely Not the Opera* was also back for a ninth season of exploring pop culture.

On *CBC.ca* and *Radio-Canada.ca*, Canadians again found detailed programming information and unique, interactive features related to their favourite drama, comedy and variety programming. Web pages related to new programs like *Rick Mercer's Monday Report* and *Les Bougon, c'est aussi ça la vie!* have proven to be highly popular.

