



STATE VISIT TO EUROPE 2008

by Their Excellencies

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE MICHAËLLE JEAN, GOVERNOR GENERAL OF CANADA,

and

MR. JEAN-DANIEL LAFOND



November 24 to 26, 2008

REPUBLIC OF HUNGARY

November 26 to 28, 2008

SLOVAK REPUBLIC

November 29 to December 2, 2008

CZECH REPUBLIC

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The Canadian Delegation for the State visits to the Republic of Hungary, the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic (left to right): *Tom Perlmutter, Government Film Commissioner and Chairperson of the National Film Board of Canada (NFB); Alanna MacLennan, Program Director, Intersections Media, and Founder, Projections; Constance Backhouse, Professor of Law, University of Ottawa; Kay Blair, Executive Director, Community MicroSkills Development Centre; Jordan Croucher, Singer/Songwriter; His Excellency Jean-Daniel Lafond; Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada; Jack Jedwab, Executive Director, Association for Canadian Studies; Philippe Baylaucq, Filmmaker; Patrick Nixon, Chief Executive Officer, The Mustard Seed Street Ministry; Tom McSorley, Executive Director, Canadian Film Institute; and Fanny Wylde, Lawyer.*

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The following *Travel Journal* covers three countries that Canada considers friends; three countries that welcomed us with great consideration and openness; three fascinating countries, many of whose citizens now call Canada home: the Republic of Hungary, the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic.

It is important that we share with you, in all transparency, the spirit of this mission. First of all, its objectives, which consisted of revitalizing the historic relationship between Canada and that part of the world; strengthening our transatlantic ties with these countries of the European Union; laying the foundations for future collaboration and co-operation; establishing new networks; diversifying our perspectives; and expanding our areas of mutual understanding.

Next, the actual experience, that of creative diplomacy on a human and social scale, where culture and dialogue determine the encounter. For indeed, as the visit unfolded, from one country and event to the next, it was about an encounter: between peoples, where our political, economic, bilateral and multilateral relationships converge; in the richness and diversity of our voices, experiences, knowledge and sensibilities; through the sharing of our ideas, challenges, difficulties and solutions.

Every State visit is an amazing adventure. Each one is unique, shaped by the collective qualities of a very dynamic delegation made up of exceptional women and men, whose actions and achievements in Canadian civil society grabbed our attention. You will come to know what each delegate brought to the visit and the range of their perspectives, particularly through the texts and blogs they wrote for *Citizen Voices / À l'écoute des citoyens*, which allowed our fellow citizens and other Internet users to follow these visits online via the www.citizenvoices.gg.ca Web site.

Add to this the combined efforts of the teams from Rideau Hall, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and our Canadian missions in each of these countries, as well as the logistical support of the Canadian Forces and of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Without this professional, efficient and enthusiastic synergy, these visits would not have been possible. My husband, Jean-Daniel Lafond, and I are very grateful to them.

Our Hungarian, Slovak and Czech partners also made a remarkable contribution to the success of these visits, and our relations are stronger and warmer as a result. We could not be happier with the outcome, because the activities and discussions that we experienced overseas had numerous highly positive and constructive benefits.

I hope that this travel journal will pique your interest in international relations and inspire you as you reflect.

Michaëlle Jean
Governor General of Canada

FOREWORD

At the request of the Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada, and her husband, His Excellency Jean-Daniel Lafond, conducted State visits to the Republic of Hungary, the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic from November 24 to December 3, 2008.

A State visit had also been planned to the Republic of Slovenia, however, due to the political situation occurring in Canada at the time, the Governor General was only able to make a brief stopover on December 3, 2008, to meet with His Excellency Dr. Danilo Türk, President of the Republic of Slovenia, on her way back to Canada.

These State visits highlighted, among other things, democratic transition in these countries, our historic and cultural ties, our growing trade relationships, and our joint participation in NATO missions, especially the reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan.

A delegation of Canadians representing a variety of fields—including diversity and governance; minority integration; arts and culture; civic engagement; youth; and the rules of law and freedom—played an active role in Their Excellencies' meetings with civil society.

“This visit will be an opportunity to recognize the remarkable strides these countries have made since the end of the last century,” remarked the Governor General before the visit. “It will also give us the chance to reinforce and strengthen our ties and alliances in Europe, especially with the European Union.”

This publication provides an overview of the exchanges that occurred during each of these State visits through excerpts from the blogs and/or speeches of Their Excellencies, the presidents of each country, Canadian delegates and local participants involved in events in various cities.

To view the complete speeches, videos or photos of the State visits, go to <http://www.gg.ca/visits> A collection of blogs about the State visits are posted on <http://www.citizenvoices.gg.ca/europe>.

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Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean

Governor General of Canada

Michaëlle Jean was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. She immigrated to Canada with her family in 1968, fleeing the dictatorial regime of the time. After studying comparative literature at the Université de Montréal, she taught Italian in the University's Department of Literature and Modern Languages. During her studies, Ms. Jean worked for eight years with Quebec shelters for battered women, while actively contributing to the establishment of a network of emergency shelters throughout Quebec and elsewhere in Canada. She later ventured into journalism and became a highly regarded journalist and anchor of information programs at Radio-Canada television and CBC Newsworld. She is married to Jean-Daniel Lafond and they have a nine-year-old daughter, Marie-Éden. Sworn in on September 27, 2005, the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, 27th governor general since Confederation in 1867, carries out the duties of head of State. As governor general of Canada, she wants her position to be a place where dialogue prevails and where the words of citizens are heard.



His Excellency Jean-Daniel Lafond

Born in France, Jean-Daniel Lafond taught philosophy and wrote film reviews for *La Revue du Cinéma*, while carrying out research in educational sciences and specializing in media pedagogy. He came to Canada in 1974 and became a Canadian citizen in 1981. He has since devoted his time to cinema, writing and radio. In 1985, he directed his first feature-length documentary, *Dream Tracks*, for the National Film Board (NFB). He has since written and directed more than a dozen films that embody his commitment to creative documentary filmmaking. His films have received numerous awards in Canada and abroad, including the Prix Lumières in 1999. He was also appointed Companion of the Order of Canada in 2005. His most recent work includes *Madwoman of God*, a feature film inspired by the written work of Marie de l'Incarnation (1599-1672) and *The Madness of Love*. He is married to the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada, and is actively involved in the responsibilities of the office. He has enthusiastically embarked on two ambitious projects while at Rideau Hall: *Art Matters* and the *Citizen Voices* Web site.



*The Governor General and H.E. Jean-Daniel Lafond in Budapest, Hungary.
The historic Chain Bridge, Buda Castle, and Sándor Palace,
where the welcoming ceremony took place, are seen in the background*



DYNAMIC WINDOWS ONTO EUROPE

*By Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada
Canada, November 18, 2008*

I am about to set out on a new State visit, this time to Europe. At the request of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, my husband Jean-Daniel Lafond and I will be travelling to Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Slovenia, accompanied by 10 delegates representing various academic, cultural, institutional and social sectors. Four countries with which Canada has strong historic ties and thousands of whose nationals are now Canadian citizens. Four dynamic windows onto Europe, at the heart of the European Union. Four nations with which Canada wants to strengthen its bonds and pursue successful agreements.

In addition to the official program, protocol events and bilateral meetings, it is important to us that we open a dialogue with civil society, as we have always taken every opportunity to do. Bringing diplomacy back to the human level gives us a better understanding of the issues facing the countries we will be visiting and allows us to get to the heart of their realities. This will help us build interesting and more productive bridges between our societies. The members of our delegation will greatly enrich these discussions with their perspectives and expertise. We made a point of assembling a very diverse team with a wide range of interests and backgrounds, young and old alike, from various regions across Canada.

We also believe in the importance of cultural diplomacy. The *Art Matters* forums that we will hold along the way promise to be lively. Just like the youth forums, which are also on the program, based on those we have organized across Canada, that will focus on the concerns, aspirations and initiatives of youth. During our visit, we will explore a number of issues, including the place of minorities, the integration of the Roma into society, the status of women, the fight against discrimination, the place that arts and culture hold in the public sphere, governance, and opportunities for trade and cultural and institutional exchanges.

Tuesday, November 18, 2008
Ottawa, Canada

**A celebration of culture and friendship
at Rideau Hall prior to the State visit to Europe**

« *speech* »

Excerpt from a speech delivered by Robert Peck, Chief of Protocol of Canada

November 18, 2008

“I am pleased to be associated with this event in celebration of the State visits to Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Slovenia. This is the first time we have ever celebrated the start of a State visit from Canadian soil.

And why are we doing this? To highlight to our fellow citizens why we, led by the governor general, undertake State visits in the first place. Now a word about State visits.

First, they are undertaken at the request of the prime minister. A bit of history:

Governors general first travelled abroad internationally in 1927 to the United States where the then governor general was received as head of State. ... In 1971, a governor general made the first State visit to Europe and in the decades that followed these visits became common-place. Some of you present might ask, what is a State visit? In a nutshell, a State visit is a formal visit by one head of State to another, at the invitation of the other country's head of State. In parliamentary democracies, though heads of State may formally issue and accept an invitation to visit, they do so on instruction of their governments, who usually agree on when the invitation is to be issued in advance.

State visits are the highest form of diplomatic contact between two countries and often mark the further development in bilateral relations. They take place only rarely—another good reason to be celebrating today—due to the length of preparation, costs and major ceremonial and protocol activity. State visits enhance existing bilateral relations, building on existing international relationships and strengthening ties across a broad range of sectors of Canadian life. In the case of this four-country State visit, a modestly sized but high calibre delegation of Canadians—a cross-section of Canadian society—accompanies the Governor General, bringing together civil society if you will, and senior officials of the government. Behind diplomatic formalities, delegations are offered a chance to network and develop economic, cultural and social links. And State visits often lead to investment and growth in jobs, giving a new visibility and élan to bilateral ties. In a world where we need to focus on results-based management, a study by the University of Berlin for the period 1948 to 2003, showed a positive correlation between State visits and exports of between eight and 10 per cent. The Governor General will highlight Canadian successes, celebrate individual achievement, and draw attention to opportunities yet to be realized.

Canadian State visits also play an important part in promoting Canada's interests and in projecting a positive image of contemporary Canada and Canadian values. Even in the Internet age, there is no substitute for direct human contact and *la diplomatie de proximité*, where listening and dialogue further new friendships and partnerships for the future. I should add that in developing programs for State visits, we work collaboratively with host countries to respect their protocol and traditions, and to bring out all that is meaningful in terms of the ties that bind us.”

STATE VISIT DELEGATION



Constance Backhouse



Philippe Baylaucq



Kay Blair



Jordan Croucher



Jack Jedwab



Alanna MacLennan



Tom McSorley



Patrick Nixon



Tom Perlmutter



Fanny Wylde



Robert Peck

Chief of Protocol of Canada

Mr. Peck is a graduate of Lindsay Place High School in Pointe Claire, Quebec, and of John Abbot College in Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, Quebec. As well, he holds a BA in History and Journalism from Concordia University (Montréal). Upon graduating, he served from 1981 to 1982 in the House of Commons as one of 10 parliamentary interns from across Canada. After joining the Canadian foreign service in 1982, Mr. Peck served in Ottawa, as well as at the Canadian High Commission in Lagos, Nigeria, and the Canadian Embassy in Berne, Switzerland. While at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) headquarters in Ottawa, Mr. Peck worked in Corporate Management, Personnel and the Media Relations Office. From 1993 to 1995, Mr. Peck served as press secretary and departmental spokesperson to two ministers of Foreign Affairs, before being posted to the Canadian Embassy in Athens, Greece, from 1994 to 1997. Mr. Peck was director of the Media Relations Office at DFAIT from 1999 to 2000. During a leave of absence from 2000 to 2002, Mr. Peck was director of Corporate Affairs and Investor Relations at aerospace leader CAE Inc., in Montréal. Upon his return to DFAIT, Mr. Peck was appointed acting director general of the African Affairs Bureau and was then named director of the West and Central Africa Division, a position he held until 2004. Until his appointment as chief of protocol in the fall of 2008, Mr. Peck was Canada's ambassador to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, from 2004 to 2007. Mr. Peck is married and his wife, Maria Pantazi-Peck, is also a member of the Canadian foreign service.

Tuesday, November 18, 2008
Ottawa, Canada

**A celebration of culture and friendship
at Rideau Hall prior to the State visit to Europe**



Stephen Hegedus (bass-baritone), representing Hungary



*Alena Rosochova (piano) and Andrea Herdová-Tyo (violin),
representing the Slovak Republic*



*Katerina Juraskova-Hinds (cello) and Jan Krejcar (piano),
representing the Czech Republic*



*Alena Rosochova (piano) and Andrej Stolarik (Slovak Fujara),
representing the Slovak Republic*



THE EVE OF DEPARTURE

By Constance Backhouse

Canada, November 21, 2008

As we listen to the official announcements about our role as State delegates, I cannot take my eyes off the magnificent paintings of William Kurelek that dominate the hall. ...A crowd of immigrants stands leaning over the railing of an incoming vessel, approaching the port of Halifax, about to land in their new country. The same portrait might have been painted of immigrants from Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia. My eyes are drawn to the people who line the deck of the ship. It is part of Kurelek's brilliance that he vividly captures the excitement of that moment, the families leaning forward, one man hoisting a child onto his shoulders, all of them filled with anticipation and curiosity.

We wonder. Will we do justice to their memories, as we travel in reverse?



*William Kurelek, The Ukrainian Pioneer, No. 2, 1971-1976
Acrylic, graphite, coloured pencil on masonite
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario*



Constance Backhouse, C.M.

Professor of Law, University of Ottawa

Professor Constance Backhouse is a member of the Faculty of Law at the University of Ottawa. A graduate of the University of Manitoba, Osgoode Hall Law School and Harvard University, she teaches in the areas of criminal law, human rights, legal history and feminist law. She has published a number of prize-winning books, including *Petticoats and Prejudice: Women and Law in Nineteenth-Century Canada*; *Challenging Times: The Women's Movement in Canada and the United States*; *Colour-Coded: A Legal History of Racism in Canada, 1900-1950*; and *The Heiress vs the Establishment: Mrs. Campbell's Campaign for Legal Justice*. Her latest book, *Carnal Crimes: Sexual Assault Law in Canada, 1900-1975*, was just released. She is an expert on human rights law, sexual abuse, and violence against women and children, and is an active volunteer in the feminist community. Ms. Backhouse has received the Augusta Stowe Gullen Medal (1981), the Willard Hurst Prize (1992), the Law Society Medal (1998), the Bora Laskin Human Rights Fellowship (1999), the Jules and Gabrielle Léger Fellowship (2006), the Trudeau Fellowship (2006), the Ramon Hnatyshyn Award from the Canadian Bar Association (2006), and the Killam Prize (2008). She was made a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 2004, and named to the Order of Canada in 2008.



*The Governor General with H.E. László Sólyom,
President of the Republic of Hungary, in Budapest, Hungary*



STATE VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC OF HUNGARY

November 24 to 26, 2008

ITINERARY

Monday, November 24

Budapest, Hungary

- Official welcoming ceremony with military honours
- Meeting with the President of the Republic of Hungary
- Meeting with the Speaker of the National Assembly
- Meeting with the Prime Minister of the Republic of Hungary
- Wreath-laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier
- State dinner hosted by the President of the Republic of Hungary

Tuesday, November 25

Budapest, Hungary

- Visit to Kesztyűgyár Community Centre and discussion on youth at risk

Dunakeszi, Hungary

- Visit to the Bombardier Rail Assembly Plant

Budapest, Hungary

- Reception with members of the Canadian community in Hungary
- Art Matters: The role of film in our society*



Flags from Canada and Hungary are flown on the Chain Bridge, located in the heart of Budapest, Hungary



The unveiling of a memorial plaque in Budapest, in honour of Hungarian-Canadians, Hungary



Encounter with Hungarian children and youth workers at the Kesztyűgyár Community Centre, Budapest, Hungary



Wednesday, November 26

Budapest, Hungary

Unveiling of a memorial plaque in honour of Hungarian-Canadians

Sunday, November 23, 2008
Pannonhalma, Hungary
**Visit to the Archabbey
of Pannonhalma**



THE DIALOGUE OF NATIONS

By Fanny Wylde

Hungary, November 23, 2008

Something completely unexpected transpired during the visit [to the Archabbey of Pannonhalma]. I was told that the Governor General would be presenting five Bibles to the monks, each written in one of Canada's Aboriginal languages. I also learned that one of those Bibles was written in my own language: Algonquin! I told the team that both my aunt and grandmother had been involved in translating that Bible into Algonquin.

When the five Bibles were being presented, Her Excellency gave me the opportunity to present the Algonquin Bible to the monks. But the most magical moment came when Her Excellency introduced me by mentioning my Nation and the fact that the Algonquin Bible had been translated in part by my aunt and

my grandmother. She added that one of the biggest challenges facing the Aboriginal people of Canada is preserving our many languages. ...

That evening, we dined at the Ambassador's residence. ...During the meal, I described the situation of Aboriginal people in Canada today and told the others about the historic day just a few months ago, when the Prime Minister made amends to Aboriginal people, a moment long awaited by the members of the First Nations. This allowed us to free ourselves, to forgive at last and to begin the healing process. I believe that we are a people ready to reconcile and work in peace and harmony with the other Nations of Canada! Believe me, it was one of the most beautiful days of my life!



Fanny Wylde reads a passage of a Bible written in the Algonquin language during a visit to the Archabbey of Pannonhalma in Hungary



Fanny Wylde

Lawyer

Fanny Wylde, born on April 4, 1981, in Amos, Quebec, grew up with her grandparents near the Algonquin community of Pikogan, in Abitibi-Témiscamingue. From a very tender age, Fanny dreamed of becoming a lawyer, as she believed that the best way to help her people would be to work through the justice system. Ms. Wylde excelled and earned numerous awards during her school years. Six days after giving birth to her son, she started her first session at the CÉGEP de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue; she later enrolled in a law degree program at Université du Québec à Montréal, and pursued her training with the Barreau du Québec. She then went back to her community, as she had promised her people. She officially became a lawyer on January 12, 2007, the first female lawyer in the history of the Algonquin People, and the first Aboriginal woman to become public prosecutor of the Couronne du Québec. Ms. Wylde later worked for the Conseil de la Première Nation Abitibiwinni for a short time, and currently works for the Administration régionale crie, where she attempts to bring reform to the justice system and to implement new programs in the Quebec justice system for the benefit of the Cree Nation.



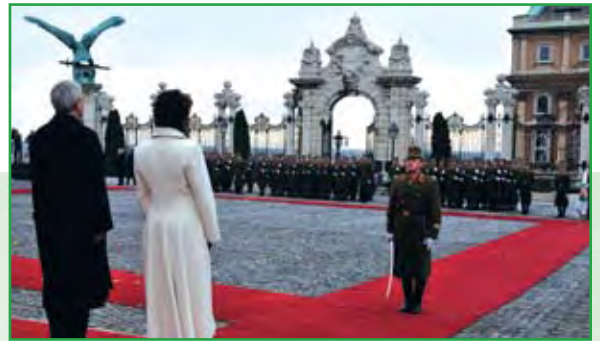
The Archabbey of Pannonhalma's library



The Governor General and H.E. Jean-Daniel Lafond taking a guided tour of the library in the Archabbey of Pannonhalma

Monday, November 24, 2008
Budapest, Hungary

**State dinner in honour of Their Excellencies
on the occasion of their State visit to
the Republic of Hungary**



The Governor General and H.E. László Sólyom, President of the Republic of Hungary, at Sándor Palace, during the welcoming ceremony with military honours, in Budapest, Hungary



The Governor General and H.E. Jean-Daniel Lafond speaking with H.E. László Sólyom, President of the Republic of Hungary, in Budapest, Hungary

« speech »

Excerpt from the address by Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada

November 24, 2008

“We believe strongly in cultural diplomacy because culture, though rooted in the places where it first took shape, is igniting a dialogue that extends beyond borders, beyond our differences, in the hope of putting a more human face on humanity. ...

In an increasingly open and complex world, where the issues we are facing require a more global approach, it is important for Canada to reinforce its alliances with European countries with which we share historical ties.”



The Governor General, H.E. Jean-Daniel Lafond and H.E. László Sólyom, President of the Republic of Hungary, at Sándor Palace, overlooking Budapest, Hungary



The Governor General and H.E. László Sólyom, President of the Republic of Hungary, at Sándor Palace, at a joint media conference, in Budapest, Hungary

“ speech ”

Excerpt from the address by His Excellency László Sólyom, President of the Republic of Hungary

November 24, 2008

“A driving force behind the co-operation of our two states and the development of human ties is the assistance that was given by Canada from the middle of the 19th century to several waves of Hungarian immigrants. The welcoming of Hungarian refugees in 1956 was of historical significance. Many of our compatriots who were forced to leave Hungary still play a role even today in the deepening of bilateral ties. One of the main objectives of my visit last year was to express our gratitude to Canada for this welcome. ...

Both countries participated in the commemoration marking the 50th anniversary of the Revolution of 1956. At ceremonies held all over Canada, Canadian-Hungarians and the home country expressed their gratitude for the reception of 40 000 refugees. This year, on the occasion of the anniversary of the City of Québec’s founding, the Hungarian Parliament

declared 2008 as the year of the Francophone community. 2009—which will mark the 45th anniversary of our diplomatic relations—is also the 10th anniversary of our NATO membership. We have not forgotten that Canada was the first member state to ratify our accession treaty.

The wealth of Hungarian-Canadian ties is proven by successful Canadian investment projects, and furthermore by the fact that both countries have made a human and financial commitment to playing a role in fostering stability and development in Afghanistan. It is in our common interests to continue our co-operation in the universal realization of democracy and human rights, as well as in our response to global challenges. I am especially hopeful about our having reached an identical position regarding the issue of environmental protection.”

His Excellency László Sólyom
President of the Republic of Hungary



Tuesday, November 25, 2008
Budapest, Hungary

Visit to Kesztyűgyár Community Centre and discussion on youth at risk



COMPASSION IN SHORT SUPPLY

By Jack Jedwab

Hungary, November 25, 2008



...what are the shared characteristics that emerged from the Canadian-Hungarian dialogue? It was the feeling of compassion for others, something that at times appears to be in short supply. Our visit occurs against the backdrop of growing economic concerns. A time when our collective degree of compassion risks being tested. At Kesztyűgyár Community Centre, we were starkly reminded that as we go forward we will need to show more compassion to the most vulnerable in our society. How can we effectively appeal to our friends and neighbours to be more empathic? It is that concern that I carry with me as we continue our dialogue in the coming days.



Jack Jedwab

Executive Director, Association for Canadian Studies

Jack Jedwab is currently the executive director of the Association for Canadian Studies (ACS) and the newly created International Association for the Study of Canada (IASC). He has served as director of the ACS since 1998. He previously served as executive director of the Quebec branch of the Canadian Jewish Congress (1994-1998). Mr. Jedwab graduated with a BA in Canadian History and a minor in Economics from McGill University, and went on to do an MA and PhD in Canadian History from Concordia University. He was a doctoral fellow of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada from 1982-1985. He has lectured at McGill University since 1983, in the Quebec Studies Program, the sociology and political science departments, and, more recently, at the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada, where he taught courses on official language minorities in Canada, and sports in Canada. He is the founding editor of the publications *Canadian Issues*, *Canadian Diversity* and the new *Canadian Journal for Social Research*. One of Canada's most-quoted researchers, Mr. Jedwab has written extensively for national media, books and scholarly journals on the issues of immigration, multiculturalism, human rights and official language minorities.



The Governor General is greeted by Hungarian students from nearby schools who attend the Kesztyűgyár Community Centre in Budapest, Hungary



Hungarian youth specialist József Kővári "Borz" takes part in the discussion about youth at risk at the newly built Kesztyűgyár Community Centre in Budapest, Hungary



Gábor Gurbacs, senior student at the Gandhi Secondary School in Pécs, Hungary, explains the educational challenges Roma youth of high school age face today



The Governor General is greeted by Hungarian students from a nearby school who attend the Kesztyűgyár Community Centre in Budapest, Hungary

Tuesday, November 25, 2008
Budapest, Hungary

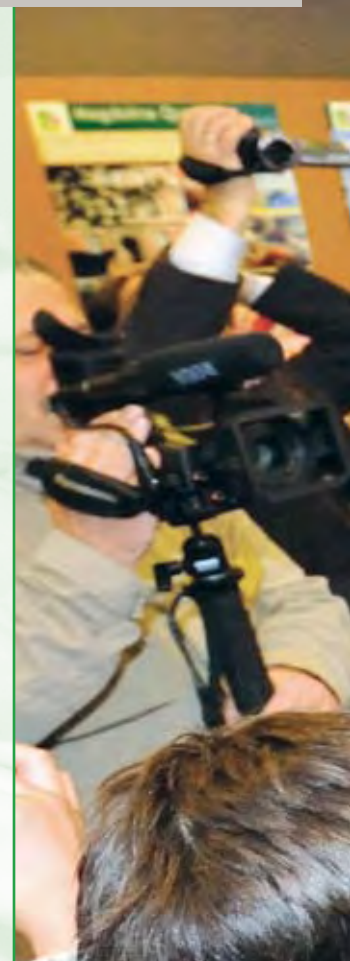
Visit to Kesztyűgyár Community Centre and discussion on youth at risk

*Delegate Jordan Croucher sings for youth
at the Kesztyűgyár Community Centre in Budapest, Hungary*

Jordan Croucher

Singer/Songwriter

Jordan Croucher has been described as an "R & B superstar", a "soul artist" and a "natural born talent". His music reflects a collaboration of R & B and soul music, with an edge of hip hop. This Halifax-born artist, with a personal story of adventure and achievement, is now making a career out of his lifelong desire to sing. Coming out of high school, Jordan was recognized as one of the top basketball players in his region. In 2001, he was selected as a member of the national men's basketball team, representing Canada in China and fulfilling one of his lifelong dreams—to play basketball at a professional level. When he decided to return to his community to work on achieving his musical dreams, Jordan began work as a support worker with at-risk students. He set up extracurricular activities, started a mentorship program, and brought in motivational speakers and athletic trainers to stimulate and inspire youth. He recorded a CD that talked with young people about their lives, dreams and difficulties, with an underlying message of positivity and strength. In summer 2007, Jordan completed and released his debut album, *No Dress Code*. Since then, he has received national nominations and awards for his music, and has opened for internationally acclaimed superstars, such as Ne-Yo, Snoop Dogg, Rihanna, Nas, Kardinal Offishall, Young Buck, Juelz Santana and K-OS. In 2008, Jordan accepted the position of ambassador and spokesperson for Democracy 250, an initiative to educate youth on representative government and democracy, to promote youth voting and to recognize good citizenship. His dedication to music, as well as to his community, has made him a role model for young people everywhere.



THE POWER AND CONNECTION BETWEEN PEOPLE, CULTURE AND MUSIC

By Jordan Croucher

Hungary, November 25, 2008

Her Excellency suggested that I sing a song close to my heart, so I chose "Hello". Afterwards, the Governor General recited some of the lyrics of the song back to the children—"Hello, hello, hello my love"—and a child in the audience quickly responded by repeating the same line back. ...

The energy of the children reminded me of my community and the energy that the kids have there. Today was a special day for me, and it demonstrated to me the power and connection between people, culture and music.



Csilla Sárkány

Director, Kesztyűgyár, Rév8 Ltd.



Blog

GIVING THEM THE COURAGE TO CHANGE THEIR LIVES

By Csilla Sárkány

Hungary, November 25, 2008

Five years ago, when I discovered this building, I immediately envisaged a community centre there. A place which would accept children and youth living in the area, and one which could provide assistance to people who wished to change their lives. Nowadays, almost only Roma kids attend the neighbouring school. In most cases, parents live on temporary jobs and welfare, without any qualifications. Apartments are small and overcrowded; in many cases 8-10 people share a room. After primary school, only a few kids go to secondary education and almost none to university. Middle class families flee the quarter because half of the residents are Roma.

We dreamt of a community centre which would bring together people from various social and cultural

backgrounds, and which could provide dignity to the Roma living here. The activities that we offer kids aim to encourage them to cross the boundaries of their own little worlds and to give them the courage to change their lives. ...

The little ones danced in a circle, the big girl and the big boy in the middle. Her Excellency saw the little dancers and started to dance with them in her coat, clapping her hands and smiling. On the faces of the kids was pride and happiness. It was a magical moment. For those few minutes, the "world" came to Kesztyűgyár: a promising, open and tolerant one. We are very grateful that Her Excellency paid a visit to us and that we had a chance to meet her. Her own story, her sincere love and devotion to neglected kids and youths at risk set an example and give us the strength to go on with the work that we started.

Tuesday, November 25, 2008
Dunakeszi, Hungary

Visit to the Bombardier Rail Assembly Plant





The Governor General visits the Bombardier Plant with Stephen Krenz, President of the Business Unit, Germany and Scandinavia, Bombardier Transportation Passengers, and Jozsef Dian, of Bombardier-Máv Kft

« speech »

Excerpt from the address by Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada, at the discussion on trade and investment relationships between Canada and Hungary

November 25, 2008

“At a time when there are so many large economic blocks, Hungary and Canada must be committed to increasing the number of opportunities for their citizens to open themselves to the world. And this relationship must be reciprocal.

I firmly believe that co-operation must be part of and practised within an ethical framework that is respectful of the people, of their history, of their culture and of the ecological integrity of their communities.”

Tuesday, November 25, 2008
Budapest, Hungary

**Art Matters: The role of film
in our society**

Tom Perlmutter

Government Film Commissioner and Chairperson of
the National Film Board of Canada (NFB)



A fervent advocate of groundbreaking and socially relevant cinema, Tom Perlmutter became the 15th government film commissioner and chairperson of the NFB, on June 11, 2007. Since joining the NFB in 2001 as director general of the English program, Mr. Perlmutter has been one of the organization's leading ambassadors at the national and international levels. He revitalized documentary and animation programming, forged critical ties with important partners abroad, and provided greater access for up-and-coming, culturally diverse filmmakers. He has also led the NFB through major technological advances in multi-platform production. Under his aegis, the NFB has received numerous honours, including two Academy Awards®. Mr. Perlmutter enjoyed a prestigious career in the Canadian film industry before joining the NFB. As founding head of documentaries at Barna-Alper Productions, he created and produced many award-winning features and series.



H.E. Jean-Daniel Lafond and delegates having a discussion with Hungarian filmmakers in preparation for an Art Matters forum in Budapest, Hungary





ART, MEANING AND NATIONALITY

By Tom Perlmutter

Hungary, November 25, 2008

Hungarians know that art matters. They know it because their artists suffered censorship, repression, imprisonment and, perhaps worst of all, condemnation to silence. The dictators and totalitarian regimes who perpetrated these awful deeds understood something profound—that art is transformative and art liberates. What they shackled with chains, the artist undid with the imagination. ...

His Excellency started the ball rolling, taking us on a dizzying, exciting intellectual journey about art, meaning and nationality. Kriszta opened us up to ways of working with communities on the margin. They are not her subjects; they are her co-creators. György brought a fine discrimination in his reading of film. Zoltán challenged us with his earthy realism. Philippe showed us how a filmmaker's engagement with a larger world resonates amidst our domestic concerns. In the end, it seemed to me that we were inscribing yet one more commentary on William Blake's Olympian claim: "imagination is not a state; it is human existence itself."



Gabor Dettre
Film Director



THE ROLE OF FILM IN OUR SOCIETY

By Gabor Dettre

Hungary, November 25, 2008

...the arts—especially in the almost total absence of religion—are the only real guides left to teach us how to relate to one another and to our natural environment caringly and unselfishly.

Being at the forum was an uplifting experience! For the first time in my life, I saw an influential leader speaking on what I had always been convinced about concerning the real importance of art. I know those were only words in Uránia Theatre that night, but I also know that sometimes one single word, one thought, one film, one book or piece of music can make a great deal of difference.

Tuesday, November 25, 2008
Budapest, Hungary

Art Matters: The role of film in our society



Delegate Tom Perlmutter takes part in the discussion during an Art Matters forum held at the Uránia National Film Theatre in Budapest, Hungary



Participants taking part in the discussion of an Art Matters forum at the Uránia National Film Theatre in Budapest, Hungary



Philippe Baylaucq

Filmmaker

Philippe Baylaucq studied sculpture and cinema at Hornsey and Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, in London, England. He is currently an independent movie, television and video producer, and also produces documentaries, as well as experimental and fiction films. Among his films, *Lodola* (1996) and *Mystère B.* (1997) both earned the Téléfilm Canada Award at both the 15th and 16th International Festivals of Films on Art (FIFA). *Les couleurs du sang* (2000), a documentary on painter André Biéler, his grandfather, was chosen by FIFA in 2001 and nominated for three Prix Gémeaux. That year, he also produced *Hugo et le Dragon*—a musical tale for the whole family—that was very successful. That film earned him the Téléfilm Canada Award at the Banff Mountain Film Festival and a Gémeaux in 2002 for best children's television program. In 2001, he won a Lumières award for his contribution to the advancement of the status of producers while he was president of the Association des Réalisateur et Réalisatrices du Québec, from 1996 to 2000. In 2007, as a director/co-ordinator, he joined a collective of screenwriters to make the feature film, *Et il y avait la poésie*. In 2008, he produced a scientific documentary entitled, *La dynamique du cerveau*, and during the 11th edition of the Rencontres internationales du documentaire de Montréal (RIDM), he launched *Le magicien de Kaboul*, a feature-length documentary filmed in New York, Tokyo and Kabul, Afghanistan, in 2004.



Hungarian film director Zoltán Kamondi discusses the role of film in society as part of an Art Matters forum in Budapest, Hungary

Blog

OUR NATIONALITY = OUR PASSION

By Philippe Baylaucq

Hungary, November 25, 2008

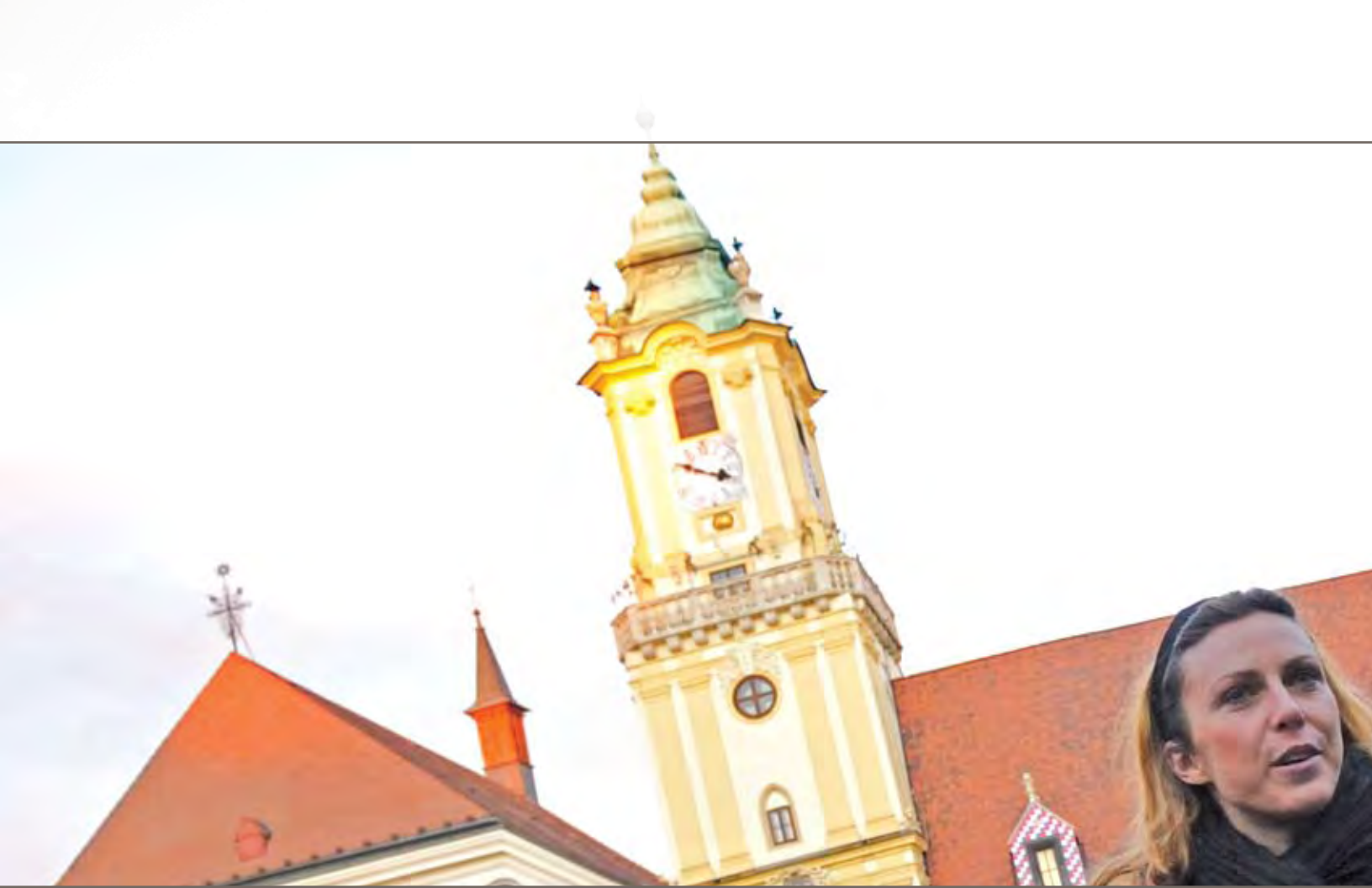
The recent history of each of the three countries we will be visiting is vastly different from our own. For one thing, our colleagues spent at least their childhood and were educated under a regime that, as we know, fell right along with the fall of the Iron Curtain nearly 20 years ago. And 20 years of a new reality, one that is more open to Europe and the world, is a major change to experience in a lifetime.

These filmmakers are therefore part of the generation bridging the gap between the generation that experienced filmmaking sponsored entirely by the State (large schools and studios) and the next generation that, like filmmakers throughout our globalized world, must learn to make do with increasingly threatened support from the State and the draconian demands of market survival.

It is easy to bemoan this fact. Everyone we met understood that our discussions were far too precious

to be monopolized by negative considerations. Nonetheless, whether in Canada or elsewhere in the world, making a film is always a complicated undertaking; and the harder it is, the more we get the impression that it is important to see it through to the end. Be it Zoltán Kamondi, with his series of portraits of Hungarians in his country or elsewhere (Romania, USA) and his magnificent dramas, or Kriszta Bódis, who reveals the (all-too-often tragic) realities of the Roma in her country, it is the urgency to create that matters most and the need to invent new ways of creating and making others see. ...

I left Hungary with the feeling that despite the real difficulties (television is not part of the funding chain), national cinematography is going strong in a country where language and culture are profoundly rooted in genuine pride, in an identity that looks to both the East and the West, just as its language does, and in a unique and incredible cultural life.



The Governor General and H.E. Jean-Daniel Lafond meet with H.E. Ivan Gašparovič, President of the Slovak Republic, and Mrs. Silvia Gašparovicova in Bratislava, Slovak Republic

ITINERARY

Wednesday, November 26

Bratislava, Slovak Republic

- Official welcoming ceremony with military honours
- Meeting with the President of the Slovak Republic
- State dinner hosted by the President of the Slovak Republic

Thursday, November 27

Bratislava, Slovak Republic

- Wreath-laying ceremony to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the 1968 events
- Discussion at Comenius University: Solidarity in a Global World
- Discussion with local non-governmental organizations
- Discussion with members of the film community and H.E. Jean-Daniel Lafond



STATE VISIT TO THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

November 26 to 28, 2008



The Governor General lays a wreath by the plaque commemorating the deaths of three Slovak citizens after the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact invasion in Bratislava, Slovak Republic



The Governor General visiting the Better World Café, a unique service facility for people with disabilities in Bratislava, Slovak Republic

Friday, November 28

Hronsek, Slovak Republic

Visit to the Articular Wooden Church

Banska Bystrica, Slovak Republic

Discussion with local non-governmental organizations

Opening of the exhibit *Images and Reflections*,
from the Triangle Gallery of Calgary

Friday, November 28

Bratislava, Slovak Republic

Reception hosted by the Canadian ambassador to
the Slovak Republic

Wednesday, November 26, 2008
Bratislava, Slovak Republic

**State dinner in honour of Their Excellencies
on the occasion of their State visit
to the Slovak Republic**

His Excellency Ivan Gašparovič
President of the Slovak Republic



“ speech ”

Excerpt from the address by His Excellency Ivan Gašparovič, President of the Slovak Republic

November 26, 2008

“This first ever official visit by a Canadian governor general to Slovakia is without doubt a milestone in our bilateral relations. We consider it as proof of Canada’s interest in strengthening and furthering friendly and partner relationships with the Slovak Republic at the highest level. ...

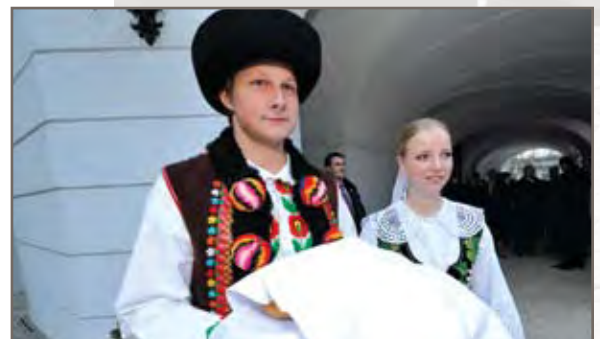
Allow me to use this opportunity to declare that Slovakia is truly interested in the further development and improvement of its relations with Canada, based on our shared values. ...

For Slovaks, Canada epitomizes a country with a high quality of life, encompassing not only economic prosperity but also untouched nature, an excellent educational system and comprehensive social welfare.

Canada is, for us, an example of how to build a multicultural and multi-ethnic society, which shows us different models for the implementation of diversity in a modern community. In addition, Canada is also a source of new innovative ideas and practices for us, since Slovakia considers the issue of multiculturalism and social cohesion an important one.”



Arrival in the Slovak Republic



Before entering the Presidential Palace, the Governor General was invited to share the traditional bread and salt



H.E. Ivan Gašparovič, President of the Slovak Republic, introducing the Governor General to officials in Bratislava, Slovak Republic

“ *speech* ”

Excerpt from the address by Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada

November 26, 2008

“In an increasingly open and complex world, it is important for Canada to reinforce its alliances with member countries of the European Union and to create new bridges that span the Atlantic. ...

My husband, filmmaker Jean-Daniel Lafond, and I share your conviction, Excellency, that culture is an instrument of civilization, and never has this been more true than today, as we continue to be plagued by a standardization of the ways in which we express ourselves and the barbarism of one-track thinking.

Failure to recognize this, as you yourself have said so well, Excellency, is to be ‘scornful of ourselves’ which can only lead us to ‘lose ourselves’ and ultimately reduce the human experience.”

Thursday, November 27, 2008
 Bratislava, Slovak Republic

**Discussion at Comenius University:
 Solidarity in a Global World**



Delegate Philippe Baylaucq taking part in the discussion



Delegate Jack Jedwab speaks at Comenius University



Patrick Nixon, C.M., A.O.E.

Chief Executive Officer, The Mustard Seed Street Ministry

As founder and chief executive officer of The Mustard Seed Street Ministry, Pat Nixon heads one of Canada's leading ministries for the homeless and less fortunate. Born in Vancouver, British Columbia, in 1960, Pat left home at 12 years of age to escape an unhealthy home environment, leaving him on the streets, illiterate and utterly alone. Pat arrived in Calgary at age 15, and began panhandling to stay alive. One day, he was approached by men from First Baptist Church. Pat asked for money but they offered him a meal and a home. They cared for Pat for a year before he slipped back into old patterns. By age 16, Pat was in a prison for adults. Two years later, he returned to Calgary with renewed momentum to move forward. His new commitment and his faith empowered his determination to change. He began volunteering at an inner-city coffeehouse ministry, and at the age of 24, started a full-time street outreach program and was licensed as a pastor. In 1984, The Mustard Seed was born. Under his leadership, the organization has grown into a life-changing ministry, supported by 11 000 annual volunteers, and over 200 staff, who care for over 1 200 people every day.



SOLIDARITY IN A GLOBAL WORLD

By Constance Backhouse

Slovak Republic, November 27, 2008

[The] trials [of two immigrants who hired Canadian women to work for them in the early 1900s] demonstrate the pernicious *racism* and *sexism* that were practiced in my country historically. And they offer up heroines (and leaders) for us to admire: Nellie Lane, an uneducated, working-class waitress, who insisted in a Prairie courtroom just after the turn of the century that race was an absurd concept, and that people should treat each other as they would like to be treated themselves. We should have listened more closely to her. It was a lesson in *solidarity* that we are still struggling to implement.



Constance Backhouse

Professor of Law, University of Ottawa



“YES”

By Patrick Nixon

Slovak Republic, November 27, 2008

There are two types of “yes” statements—there is “Yes, there is a need,” and then there is, “Yes, I am going to do something about it.” One of these speaks to recognition, while the other is a response. One is intellectual, while the other speaks to behavior; both are needed to change the world.

Throughout our trip with the Governor General, I have witnessed the harmony of these two statements. ...I, along with everyone in the room, was greatly impacted by the Slovak people’s stories of standing up against an oppressive power and emerging a democratic country with a dream.

At the same time, we were reminded that Canada has been far from perfect in its record of human rights, gender equality, the respect of individuals and segregation. We were also reminded of our successes—how we have taken responsibility for many behaviors and actions that were unjustified

throughout history. I was incredibly proud of our country, Canada, when the Governor General related the actions of our prime minister, humbling himself in giving a sincere apology to First Nations people for the way they were mistreated.

After the talk, I thanked one of the young students for coming, as if this was just a respectful visit on her part. She said to me, “I told you before that I came 30 minutes early to get a seat; that was not the truth. I came over one hour early to make sure I would have a seat.” Then she said, “I want to learn.” So I asked her if this experience had an impact on her. She responded with tears in her eyes, “Yes, I am going to do something about it.”

Let us all join with this young woman by saying “Yes to the need” and “Yes to doing something about it.”



The Governor General delivers the keynote address on the theme of “Solidarity in a Global World” in front of 200 students, community leaders, politicians, and members of the diplomatic corps gathered at Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovak Republic

Thursday, November 27, 2008
Bratislava, Slovak Republic

Discussion with local non-governmental organizations



The Governor General is greeted by Dušan Mikulec, Director of the Better World Association, at her arrival to the Better World Café in Bratislava, Slovak Republic



Lenka Surotchak, Director of the Pontis Foundation, welcoming the Governor General to the Better World Café for a discussion with local NGOs in Bratislava, Slovak Republic



THE POWER OF CIVIL SOCIETY'S VOICE

By Lenka Surotchak

Slovak Republic, November 27, 2008



Lenka Surotchak
Director, Pontis Foundation

Everyone felt the uniqueness of the moment created not only by the Governor General's extraordinary charisma, but also by the incredible sense of pride, honor and respect demonstrated toward her by the members of the delegation. They were drawn from Canadian civil society; she selected them as ambassadors of her country to share their incredible stories and their amazing track record of accomplishments. The fact that she picked them to represent the richness, openness and commitment of Canada to continue engaging in and tackling the global challenges around us said so much. As we recollected the years of assistance provided to Slovakia by the Canadian International Development Agency—which helped us to establish our own mechanisms to engage on the international development scene—I remembered the experience of my own organization, the Pontis Foundation, with Canada. It was the Canadian representation in Bratislava that helped us to host Belarusian opposition leader Alexander Milinkievich in 2006; that put us in touch with the Canadian Business for Social Responsibility organization; and that matched a number of projects carried out by Slovak NGOs in the Balkans, including assistance provided to us in developing the first university course ever focused on Western Balkans in Slovakia.



The Governor General meeting a participant in the programs supported by the Better World Association at the Better World Café in Bratislava, Slovak Republic



Ján Orlovský

Director, Board of Directors, Western Slovakia Energy



WESTERN SLOVAKIA ENERGY

By Ján Orlovský

Slovak Republic, November 27, 2008

...Her Excellency, the Governor General of Canada, in herself and in her life experiences, arrives with a message of tolerance and diversity. Even though as a country we have been enjoying impressive economic growth in the past decade, one feels that the aspects concerning the quality of our interactions as humans have taken a trip southward. I hope that our panel

will be a great chance for the Slovak students to learn about the Canadian approach to living in a very diverse country and world. On the other hand, with ambassador Opiela, we will offer to our Canadian guests a glimpse of some great stories of the striving civil society in Slovakia, as well as the challenges we are still facing today.

Thursday, November 27, 2008
Bratislava, Slovak Republic
**Discussion with members
of the film community and Jean-Daniel Lafond**



Philippe Baylaucq
Filmmaker

BRATISLAVA, SLOVAK REPUBLIC

By Philippe Baylaucq

Slovak Republic, November 27, 2008

The filmmakers are young and looking firmly toward Europe. Like Hungary, the Slovak Republic is now a member of the European Union, which gives filmmakers new funding options and good outlets for distribution. The Slovak Republic is a small market, so survival depends necessarily on co-production and international distribution. The new generation is pragmatic and, as is the case with filmmakers in small states, is seeking ideally to create works that are decidedly Slovak yet fairly universal to reach audiences elsewhere (within the Union and beyond). Clearly, something is happening, because several recent documentaries were selected at prestigious festivals around the world.



H.E. Jean-Daniel Lafond and delegates at a discussion with members of the Slovak film community, in Bratislava, Slovak Republic



The Slovak Film Institute in Bratislava, Slovak Republic



Delegate Tom Perlmutter before a film screening at the Slovak Film Institute in Bratislava, Slovak Republic



CANADA—A HUMAN AND FRIENDLY GIANT

By Yvonne Vavrová

Slovak Republic, November 27, 2008

Canada is a diagnosis. It is a chronic longing to be part of the special interconnection of nations, nationalities, national minorities, creeds and ethnic groups which continuously strive to remain independent, multicultural and environmentally clean, all the while protecting nature. Canada is a giant that takes you aback when it transforms into a human and friendly one. ...

For me, Canada has become a land that has its own “character” and its own unmistakable identity. Canada possesses something that itches filmmakers to keep returning and trying to capture its diversity and, at the same time, its natural ruggedness.

Canada is a part of the story of my life, and of my film story.



Yvonne Vavrová

Director, Screenwriter, Producer and Camerawoman



MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF THE SLOVAK FILM COMMUNITY

By Tom Perlmutter

Slovak Republic, November 27, 2008

We wanted to understand something of their situation and what cultural collaboration could mean. ...

Funding is a problem, distribution is difficult, audiences are small...and yet, despite that, when we talked film, the sense we had around the table was of great creative dynamism. There was a commitment to their stories, a passion for their film heritage and an eagerness to engage beyond their borders. The films get made, the stories get told. ...if I ever question the value of the kinds of meetings and exchanges that happen in the wake of a State visit, I can point to concrete outcomes on the sharing of information, best practices and even trade with a dollar-and-cents price tag.

But in ways that are harder to quantify and sometimes harder to articulate, what is more valuable is the sharing of spirit.



Tom Perlmutter

Government Film Commissioner and Chairperson of the National Film Board of Canada (NFB)

Friday, November 28, 2008
Banska Bystrica, Slovak Republic

Discussion with local non-governmental organizations



Delegate Tom Perlmutter takes part in a discussion with local non-governmental organizations on civic participation and public advocacy at the Centre for Public Advocacy in Banska Bystrica, Slovak Republic



**A DEMOCRATIC NATION
19 YEARS AFTER NOVEMBER 1989**

By Pavol Žilinčík

Slovak Republic, November 28, 2008



Pavol Žilinčík
Executive Director, Via Iuris

I...consider one of the main challenges for the future to be a significant expansion of the involvement of citizens in decision making and the openness of the justice system to public discussions regarding the quality of judicial decisions.

The visit of Her Excellency Michaëlle Jean may become an opportunity for us to realize the following two things.

The first one is that since November 1989 we have been in possession of a tool of feedback to state authorities. At the same time, this can become an inspiration for us to continue in expanding and utilizing this opportunity. This is how we will eliminate the inheritance of history, which is still present more than it is healthy for our society.



Peter Medved of Ekopolis explains the mandate of his organization

Friday, November 28, 2008
Banska Bystrica, Slovak Republic

Opening of the exhibit *Images and Reflections*, from the Triangle Gallery of Calgary



*The Governor General viewing an exhibit
at the State Scientific Library in Banska Bystrica, Slovak Republic*



*The official opening of the Canadian art exhibit
Images and Reflections in Banska Bystrica, Slovak Republic*



PROMISING PERSPECTIVES

By Alanna MacLennan

Slovak Republic, November 28, 2008

It inspires and encourages me to “spread the word” back home to artists who might be able to find and expand the audience for their work through such partnerships. Knowing that there is such an appetite for Canadian creative works and that the art of Canada is so very vast, I hope that this is the “start of something great” and that their collection can be built on and expanded (and perhaps even including multimedia) to reflect its richness.

Alanna MacLennan

Program Director, Intersections Media, and Founder, Projections

Alanna MacLennan is the founder of Projections, an innovative film and video mentoring program for youth with limited access to resources. Launched in 2001, the goal of the project was to bring street youth together with filmmakers and artists to create short films, and in the process, to facilitate the transition of these youth into employment and education opportunities in the creative industries, and ultimately to self-sufficiency. In 2007, Projections became the anchor program for Intersections Media, the non-profit affiliate of Infinity Features Entertainment (the producer of such award-winning feature films as *Capote*, and most recently, *The Stone of Destiny*). Projections is defined by its unique, diverse and cross-sectoral partnerships with the business, film, arts, social services, government and youth communities. Previously, Alanna worked for the National Film Board of Canada, Pacific Yukon Region, where she managed their Arts in Action youth program. She also worked with the PHS Community Services Society, where she spent four years on the development of #1 West Hastings into a multi-purpose arts space in Vancouver. She was also a managing board member of the Interurban Gallery. Her grandmother—a teacher and mentor—always said, “If you are not learning, you are not teaching.” Alanna feels she learns so much on a daily basis from the amazing people with whom she works, from youth to the people who fund the projects. “It is within this premise that I work, aiming to celebrate and pursue the promise, while preparing for the challenges that each of us face.”





The Governor General receiving a gift from Leos Valka, Director of the Palaestra Youth Centre, in Prague, Czech Republic



Welcoming ceremony with military honours in Prague, Czech Republic



The Governor General and H.E. Jean-Daniel Lafond lay a wreath by the war monument in Prague, Czech Republic

ITINERARY

Saturday, November 29

Brno, Czech Republic

Discussion at Masaryk University—Canadian Cultural Diversity: Gender, Minority and Public Life

Visit to the *Muzeum romské kultury* (Museum of Romani Culture) and discussion

Traditional dinner hosted by the Governor of the South Moravian Region

Monday, December 1

Prague, Czech Republic

Official welcoming ceremony with military honours

Meeting with the President of the Czech Republic

Luncheon hosted by the President of the Senate of the Parliament

Courtesy call on the Lord Mayor of the City of Prague

Meeting with the Chairman of the House of Deputies

State dinner hosted by the President of the Czech Republic



STATE VISIT TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC

November 29 to December 2, 2008



H.E. Jean-Daniel Lafond hosting an Art Matters public forum to discuss the role of film and art as tools for political action in Prague, Czech Republic

Tuesday, December 2

Prague, Czech Republic

Meeting with the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic

Multicultural Dialogue hosted by the City of Prague

Governor General's Youth Dialogue on Civic Engagement

Art Matters: Political Art

Saturday, November 29, 2008
Brno, Czech Republic

Discussion at Masaryk University—Canadian Cultural Diversity: Gender, Minority and Public Life



Delegate Kay Blair taking part in the discussion on cultural diversity and integration of minorities at Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic



CULTURAL DIVERSITY, GENDER, MINORITIES AND PUBLIC LIFE

By Kay Blair

Czech Republic, November 29, 2008

...toward the latter part of the 20th century, democratic societies including Canada became very conscious of the desirability of a diverse society, and the need for such diversity to be reflected in the country's legislative assemblies. As Canada became increasingly more diverse during that period, the country's political leadership recognized the need and value of welcoming people of other countries and cultures. Nevertheless, this new direction does not erase the decades of exclusion based on race,

origin, sex, or other identity markers that cause immigrants, ethno-racial minorities, and women to be under-represented in critical decision making processes and electoral politics. ...

Cultural diversity is about opening the doors to everyone. When we do so, we all benefit—the neighbourhood, the community, the country as a whole, and our global community.

Kay Blair

Executive Director, Community MicroSkills Development Centre



Since 1988, Kay Blair has been the executive director of the Community MicroSkills Development Centre, a community agency in the Toronto area that provides services to the unemployed, the underemployed, immigrants, low-income women and youth. Under Kay's leadership, MicroSkills has grown dramatically and is viewed as a leading agency by funders, government, the business community, clients and other service providers. Kay has initiated many innovative programs and projects, including the first Women's Enterprise & Resource Centre, the first Women's Technology Institute in Ontario, and the Dixon Youth Centre. Most recently, in North York, she launched the Centre of Excellence for Women and Newcomers, which features programs designed to enhance the leadership capacity of women and newcomers, and to accelerate their labour market participation. Kay is often consulted on issues of access, equity, and organizational and community development, and has participated in numerous task forces and public forums concerned with improving the quality of life for women, immigrants and racialized individuals. Kay frequently meets with government, the corporate world and other community agencies to discuss diversity issues and the concerns of newcomers, women, youth and other disadvantaged groups. Kay holds an MBA with a specialization in leadership from Royal Roads University, and is currently a Doctor of Education candidate at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto.



Delegate Jack Jedwab participating in the discussion on cultural diversity and integration of minorities at Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic



The audience, which includes local and national government officials, representatives from non-governmental organizations, academics, students, community leaders and members of the general public, at the discussion on cultural diversity and integration of minorities at Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic

Visit to the *Muzeum romské kultury* (Museum of Romani Culture) and discussion



Fanny Wylde
Lawyer



THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE FIRST NATIONS OF CANADA AND THE ROMANI COMMUNITY

By *Fanny Wylde*

Czech Republic, November 29, 2008

...I began to see similarities between my people, the First Nations of Canada, and the Romani community. One at a time, they spoke with great emotion as they described the realities they face every day: racism, oppression, rejection, condescending prejudices and indifference, to name but a few.

In their eyes and in their words, I could see my own Aboriginal brothers and sisters, and feel the same suffering. ...

Their words and descriptions, which I have heard time and again in my own community and at many First Nations gatherings, rekindled in me the desire to combat indifference, denounce prejudices, show my pride and awaken theirs. ...

I felt a calling at the very core of my being: to help these people, which I intend to do. I believe that the First Nations can bring so much to the Roma, because there is no question that our situation is much better than theirs. We have leaders and role models throughout all of Canada's Aboriginal communities, who are taking action, breaking down walls and advancing our cause every day.



The Governor General views the exhibit at the Muzeum romské kultury in Brno, Czech Republic

“ speech ”

Excerpt from the address by Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada

November 29, 2008

“The unprecedented opening of borders that we have seen since the end of the last century is not enough to create a world that is free, once and for all, of every insidious form of individual and institutional discrimination. There is no doubt that exclusion remains one of the most glaring issues that our societies are facing as we enter the third millennium. ...

We have come together today to dream of a better future. Let us be daring together. Because I believe that building a world from which exclusion is forever banished and in which we embrace our differences like so many precious facets of the human experience, starts with this dream.”

Saturday, November 29, 2008
Brno, Czech Republic

**Visit to the *Muzeum romské kultury*
(Museum of Romani Culture) and discussion**



CONNECTING THROUGH SONG

By Jordan Croucher

Czech Republic, November 29, 2008

Before entering the *Muzeum romské kultury*, we were greeted by a group of Roma children. As I embraced the situation, I could tell this was a special group of children. Immediately, a young boy approached me and began to speak, but I couldn't understand what he was saying; in the meantime, other children began to gather around. Philippe Baylaucq, a fellow delegate, suggested that I sing a song for them. They appeared to be excited that I was a singer, so I began to take requests from the group and sing a few songs that were familiar to them. ...

It showed me again the power of music and how much these children appreciated music in their culture.

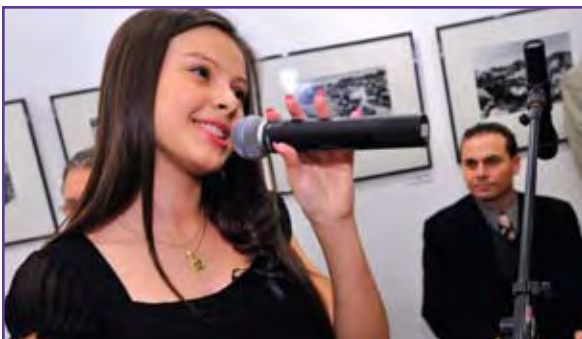
Jordan Croucher
Singer/Songwriter



Delegate Jordan Croucher singing "I Just Called to Say I Love You" with Roma children outside the museum in Brno, Czech Republic



Roma musicians performing for the delegation in Brno, Czech Republic



A young Roma artist performing for the delegation in Brno, Czech Republic



Members of the Romani community taking part in a discussion with the Governor General on integration and civic life in Brno, Czech Republic



The Governor General meeting with members of the Romani community in Brno, Czech Republic



Blog

THE ROMA HISTORY

By Jack Jedwab

Czech Republic, November 29, 2008

Jack Jedwab

Executive Director, Association for Canadian Studies



This emotional day was at its peak when we toured the *Muzeum romské kultury* in Brno. ...
The museum, which is the only institution of its kind in Europe, was fascinating. ...

When we sat as a group for the final hour of the visit, the chairs were arranged in a circle, and the Roma leaders (all male speakers but one, a blind artist) spoke movingly and with great emotion about their discriminatory treatment in Central Europe, and about their fear of skinheads and of violence. They spoke about forced relocations, about their inability to obtain jobs, about the dismissal of their culture and music, and about their efforts to immigrate to countries like Canada. They said that they did not want to leave the land of their birth, but that they were so afraid, it seemed there was little choice but to leave.

Several of the men who spoke cried as they tried to explain their situation. There is something about the Governor General that invites such open and emotional sharing of confidences.

Monday, December 1, 2008
Prague, Czech Republic

**State dinner in honour of Their Excellencies on the occasion
of their State visit to the Czech Republic**



The Governor General and H.E. Jean-Daniel Lafond, in the company of H.E. Václav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic, and Mrs. Livia Klausová, during the official book signing at Prague Castle, Czech Republic

« speech »

Excerpt from the address by Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada

December 1, 2008

“In our country and around the world, young people are speaking out about the major issues facing all of our societies and have told me time and again that solidarity is a responsibility.

They do not define that solidarity in terms of ethnicity or a place of belonging, but rather in terms of the values we all share.

Values, Excellency, that are opposed to the one track thinking of the years of communism that you yourself defined, last October in Seattle, as ‘a model of radical rejection of freedom’.

This year, as we mark the 40th anniversary of the Soviet invasion, it is so important that we listen to what our youth have to say and allow them at last to share their visions of the world with us.”

« speech »



His Excellency Václav Klaus
President of the Czech Republic

Excerpt from the address by His Excellency Václav Klaus, President of the Czech Republic

December 1, 2008

“While the first contacts between our countries were often the accidents of history, over the course of time, they expanded to full fledged co-operation and multifaceted relations in business, science, sports, culture and all fields of human endeavour.

Remembering the friendship and solidarity of the Canadian people, one cannot fail to mention the shelter Canada provided to thousands of Czech refugees during the time our country did not enjoy the freedom and democracy we have today. ...

We consider Canada to be not only a friend, we see Canada in many ways to be a source of inspiration.”

Tuesday, December 2, 2008
Prague, Czech Republic

Multicultural Dialogue hosted by the City of Prague



Kay Blair

Executive Director, Community MicroSkills Development Centre

INTEGRATING IMMIGRANTS IN URBAN CENTRES

By Kay Blair

Czech Republic, December 2, 2008

...let me share with you the hallmarks of what I consider to be the critical elements of an inclusive city:

- Commitment to diversity that brings about the engagement and participation of all citizens;
- Opportunities for human development that include growth and mobility;
- Opportunities for and encouragement of political participation, and civic and cultural engagement, for everyone;
- Minimal disparities in living conditions among residents, through the availability of affordable housing and meaningful employment; and
- Availability of and access to the support services provided by community and social services, including such services as income maintenance, language training and recreation.

Cities that commit themselves to inclusion, that develop a plan that will lead to opportunities for growth and prosperity for all residents, are those cities that will grow and thrive in these increasingly troubled times. Such cities will forge the blueprint for the cities of the future, the cities upon which the rest of the world will come to depend for stability and leadership.

Delegate Kay Blair speaking during the Multicultural Dialogue in Prague, Czech Republic



Tuesday, December 2, 2008
Prague, Czech Republic
**Governor General's Youth Dialogue
on Civic Engagement**



The Czech Republic's leading Roma artist, Gipsy.cz, performs at the Youth Dialogue

« speech »

Excerpt from the address by Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada

December 2, 2008

"I could think of no better way of opening our dialogue than by watching a live performance of the one and only, Gipsy.cz. I think Gipsy.cz's success can be attributed to the group's incredible ability to weave together traditional Romani music and hip hop and to share a message that resonates across cultures and generations.

It is an ability that demonstrates the infectious capacity of young artists to bring people together. And that same spirit of togetherness inspired the motto I chose as governor general of Canada: 'Breaking down solitudes'. 'Breaking down solitudes' is about tearing down the walls of prejudice, hatred and indifference. 'Breaking down solitudes' is about abandoning the narrow notions of 'everyone for himself or for his clan' so prevalent today. 'Breaking down solitudes' is about working hand-in-hand towards our dream of a better world.

During my visits to communities across Canada, Latin America, Africa, and Europe as head of State, I have been so impressed to see how much that philosophy resonates among many youth who are implementing innovative projects to address global challenges. That is why I am convinced that youth must be considered part of the solution and valuable partners—not only in the future, but here and now."



Delegate Alanna MacLennan talks about her experience working with youth in Vancouver

Tuesday, December 2, 2008
Prague, Czech Republic
Art Matters: Political Art



DOCUMENTARY AND POLITICS

By Tom McSorley

Czech Republic, December 2, 2008

Each panelist spoke about the political role of documentary cinema and its ethical underpinnings. Audience members wondered how one defines the 'documentary'. I spoke about how documentary cinema stands before our contemporary crisis of empiricism. In an age of 'reality television' (a McLuhanesque misnomer if there ever was one), seeing is decidedly *not* believing. The documentary cinema must, therefore, become a cinema of skepticism and interrogation, of doubt: it must turn seeing into thinking and investigating, for, as Luis Buñuel once observed, "to look is to ask".



The Governor General offers opening remarks at an Art Matters forum hosted by H.E. Jean-Daniel Lafond to discuss the role of film and art in the promotion of political ideas and ideologies



Moderator Michal Bregant shares some ideas to launch the discussion



Tom McSorley

Executive Director, Canadian Film Institute

Tom McSorley is executive director of the Canadian Film Institute. He is also a sessional lecturer in Film Studies at Carleton University; a freelance film and theatre critic for CBC Radio One; the editor of *Rivers of Time: The Films of Philip Hoffman* (2008); and co-editor of *Self Portraits: The Cinemas of Canada Since Telefilm* (2006). He is the author of numerous articles and book chapters on Canadian and international cinema, and the author of a forthcoming critical study of Atom Egoyan's 1991 feature film, *The Adjuster*.



Blog

PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

By Philippe Baylaucq

Czech Republic, December 2, 2008

For me, preparing to meet with the Czech film community took place largely at FAMU, the legendary national film school. Almost all of the big names in the Czech Republic's film industry over the past 50 years have passed through its halls, and it shows! You can sense the depth of this relatively young tradition of teaching the seventh art. ... The directors are young; they have travelled and, in part, have been trained abroad. The look is Czech and the perspective is global. ...

Our concern was therefore to succeed in recreating in public at the *Art Matters* forum the spark that had illuminated our preparatory meetings. But the idea was to share and specifically to open up the discussion to those who, out of curiosity, had come out to see what Canada and the Czech Republic could have in common with respect to documentary filmmaking. ...

Like the setting itself, the discussion was rich, eclectic, memorable.

During each of the three encounters in Budapest, Bratislava and Prague, there was a natural tension emanating from the idea of creating an instantaneous community with unfamiliar creators. The challenge was daunting. ...

Without supplying all of the answers, and rather modestly, the Canadian caravan left behind pertinent questions and bridgeheads that ask nothing more than to be advanced further. By travelling to other countries that resemble us in many ways, we can understand the important role that Canada can play. Through documentary filmmaking, Canada is actively working to create opportunities for people to come together to celebrate.

Philippe Baylaucq

Filmmaker





CANADIAN CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

By His Excellency Jean-Daniel Lafond

Canada, December 3, 2008

Discussing cultural diplomacy can be provocative in a world in which culture is too often relegated to the sidelines and seen as an unnecessary leisure activity, one of idleness, unproductiveness and luxury that we treat ourselves to when everything else is said and done.

This is completely backwards! Culture is not something we have; it is something we are. It is essential to our very survival! Whether through education, creation, self-searching, sharing with others, searching for meaning or spiritual enlightenment, ever since our ancestors made the very first drawings on cave walls, arts and culture have helped human beings interact.

We see culture as our first attempt and last resort to clear up misunderstandings with our fellow humans, so it is the civilized world's first diplomatic action. It brings dialogue to conflicts and helps build lasting, national or international peace.

That is my creed and it is one I share with my wife, the Governor General, and with all those who have joined us at the *Art Matters* forums we have held here in Canada and abroad during official visits.

Since 2006, *Art Matters* has allowed us to bring together a range of artists, creative spirits, decision makers, researchers and thinkers all across the country to hold (constructive) discussions on culture in Canada. This sharing of ideas has given voice to a diversity of visions, and has allowed us to find common ground, share our experiences, bring different practices together and strengthen our communities. We believe education is essential to understanding the importance of culture and its role in society. Schools have an essential role to play, as does

the media, the government and the private sector. Canadians should know that what is created in Canada creates Canada, here and all over the world. Modern cultural diplomacy depends on it and we must act in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

The *Youth Dialogues* and *Art Matters* forums we hold during State visits are organized with members of our delegations (individuals, community representatives, institutional leaders) and their counterparts in the respective countries. These meetings help integrate Canadian cultural action and its diversity in the globalization of cultures.

In Europe, two *Youth Dialogues* highlighted the social role the urban arts play as a means of expression and integration for young people, especially those at risk. In addition, we held two major *Art Matters* forums in Hungary and the Czech Republic to discuss how we produce and disseminate documentary films and the role these play in democratic life.

These working sessions and debates took place in public in an attempt to create lasting ties between the participants, and to share knowledge and practices. Discussing film is not just comparing production conditions, financial constraints and the role that television plays; it is also confronting society's projects and culture's respective visions. These are fundamental challenges in a world in which globalization cannot develop successfully unless it carefully takes into account the uniqueness of every nation, community and individual. This is a fundamental geopolitical challenge if we want to guarantee harmonious development that respects economic relationships, equal sharing of responsibilities in managing and protecting the environment, and



His Excellency Jean-Daniel Lafond

open international dialogue, all while making sure we do everything we can to resolve conflicts in the world and reduce social inequalities.

In that sense, cultural diplomacy is not an unnecessary luxury; rather, it responds to the state of emergency the world is facing and the fact that we all must help establish a global moral consciousness in order to face the real risk of global erosion—destruction, really—at the hands of human beings.

This is the kind of cultural diplomacy that we develop during State visits, and it is in line with one of Canada's fundamental values: to contribute to peace efforts around the world to build a better, fairer world.

In Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, as in Brazil, Argentina, Africa, France, Haiti and all across Canada, we learned that we were not the only ones who believe that, these days, culture is a weapon of mass construction.

Citizens, make art!

Dancers from the National Slovak Ballet performing before guests at the reception offered in honour of Their Excellencies, at the Historical Building of the National Council in Bratislava, Slovak Republic. Mário Radačovský, Director of the Ballet Company of the Slovak National Theatre, presented an original choreography on the occasion of the State visit by Their Excellencies to the Slovak Republic. The work of this artist, born in Slovakia, and who became principal dancer with Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal, is a wonderful example of cultural exchange.





RETURN FROM THE STATE VISIT TO EUROPE

*By Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada
Canada, December 3, 2008*

We set out on our recent State visits in the hopes of strengthening our transatlantic ties. My husband Jean-Daniel Lafond and I, along with a dynamic and diverse Canadian delegation, visited three countries in Central Europe: Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Slovenia was the fourth country on the program, but unfortunately, we were unable to do more than a brief stopover. I had to cut my visit short because of the political situation in Canada.

The bridges between Canada and Europe are built on a number of key pillars. First, our historical ties with these countries, including many of their citizens who, fleeing the famines of the 19th century and the repression of the Soviet regime in the 1950s and 1960s, found safe harbour on our shores and a place to put down roots. Our co-operation within international organizations and multilateral missions has been productive, as are our bilateral relations in a number of sectors. Recently, our governments signed mobility agreements, and Canada lifted the mandatory visa for Hungarian, Czech and Slovak citizens, which has opened up opportunities and allows for a greater flow of people, goods, experiences, expertise, knowledge and ideas.

The program for these visits included meetings and formal, official discussions with the heads of State and government, the presidents of parliamentary assemblies, various political representatives, mayors and governors, military authorities, and members of the diplomatic corps. To this, we added numerous opportunities for dialogue with civil society, youth, community and spiritual leaders, and community, cultural, academic and business representatives. We took our *Art Matters* forums and *Youth Dialogues* with us to Hungary and the Czech Republic. These discussions gave us the opportunity to broaden our understanding of the realities and challenges facing this region of Europe and to put them in perspective and compare them to our own experiences and realities here in Canada. The contribution of the delegates helped us forge new ties, create new networks and lay the foundation for future collaboration. We need to focus on this kind of diplomacy on a human scale and on the strength of cultural diplomacy.

The issues most often raised during these discussions with the public dealt with the integration of minorities and the strengthening of social ties in diversity. They are interested in the Canadian point of view: our experience, our approaches, our structures, our resources, our laws, and our grassroots initiatives. This region of Europe has been profoundly shaped by history, totalitarian regimes,



devastating wars, population shifts, and borders that have been drawn and redrawn. Today, all of these countries belong to the concert of nations that have come together in peace and stability within the European Union. These modern, dynamic and determined societies have succeeded in stabilizing their economies, carving out their rightful place in world markets, restructuring their institutions, and re-establishing the rule of law and democracy. They are building their future on the need to learn from a rich and complex past.

The blogs written by the delegates and citizens we met along the way allow you to see how the visits unfolded and to gain an insider's perspective on the concerns, discussions and discoveries.

I hope that they will inspire you and encourage you to explore the many possibilities and to strengthen and enrich our ties with these peoples of Europe.



Visit www.citizenvoices.gg.ca to join in the discussion by reading blogs and contributing to forums. An innovative and dynamic tool, www.citizenvoices.gg.ca allows people to communicate easily, expand their networks and connect with the Governor General.

To view the complete speeches, videos or photos of the State visits, go to <http://www.gg.ca/visits> A collection of blogs about the State visits are posted on <http://www.citizenvoices.gg.ca/europe>.