

performers, creators and entrepreneurs who work in cultural affairs are in the main individualists. However, they lend depth, colour and diversity to our identity as it evolves.

When people attend your performances, they are both inspired and brought face-to-face with what they are. More than simply celebrating beauty, you are challenging us to escape the daily routine and take a look at what we are and where we are going.

Your unique contribution, expressed on the stages of the world's major cities, exemplifies the objectives of Canada's international cultural involvement.

In general, through international cultural affairs we seek to achieve the following:

- make Canada a leader in the new world economy by projecting the image of a country that is unique, creative, innovative and hence competitive;
- protect our cultural sovereignty;
- undergird the Canadian identity by exhibiting its most creative aspects on the international scene; and
- promote the growth and vitality of the culture and education sectors, and thereby help create jobs.

The cultural sector contributes significantly to job creation in Canada.

It accounts for nearly 3 percent of the gross domestic product and more than 425 000 jobs; the number of people working in it has increased by 122 percent over the past 10 years, a growth rate twice that of Canada's labour force as a whole.

Canada's domestic cultural market is small and regionally based. Your presence on the main international markets not only helps you to develop artistically, but it also has become essential to maintaining employment in Canada.

Thank you.