

IN BRIEF

Ensemble Noir: promoting Canadian culture and values in a new partnership with Africa.

Ensemble Noir Opens Doors in Africa

Toronto contemporary classical group Ensemble Noir made its first-ever tour of Ghana, Nigeria and South Africa this past summer with the help of cosponsorship by the Canadian government.

"This African tour by Ensemble Noir demonstrates Canada's commitment to promoting Canadian culture and values in a new partnership with Africa," said Jean Augustine, Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women). "Culture influences the way people see Canada and is an important element of Canadian foreign policy."

Led by award-winning South Africa-born composer and conductor Bongani Ndodana, the seven-member

ensemble combines contemporary Western and African music as it performs sounds, rhythms and melodies of traditional African music using Western orchestral instruments. For this historic tour, entitled "Open Doors," Ensemble Noir featured new music by composers from Africa and Canada, including J.H. Kwabena Nketia and Akin Euba, both deans of African classical music.

Canada Contributes to Landmine Education

Canada is contributing \$100,000 to a United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) mine-risk education project in Cambodia.

Cambodia is one of the most heavily mine-affected areas in the

world. The Canadian financing for UNICEF Cambodia will help bring mine-risk education into school curriculums, teacher training and non-formal peer education. The program will help to build knowledge and skills to deal with the threats posed by unexploded landmines.

For more information on Canada's support for landmine action visit www.mines.gc.ca/menu-en.asp.

Canada Makes Inroads in Europe for Wine and Spirits Industry

A new agreement between Canada and the European Union on wines and spirits will significantly open the European market to Canadian products. The agreement was signed

National Arts Centre Orchestra on Tour

Classical met high tech in the National Arts Centre (NAC) Orchestra's tour of Mexico and the United States this fall.

In Mexico, the orchestra performed in Monterrey and Mexico City and at the Cervantino Festival in Guanajuato,

the most prestigious cultural festival in Latin America. U.S. appearances included stops in New York, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Miami and Philadelphia. Led by Pinchas Zukerman as both conductor and soloist, the orchestra presented works by Beethoven, Schubert and Mozart, as well as a major new work by Canadian composer Denys Bouliane.

During the tour, supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade through a \$250,000 travel grant, Maestro Zukerman and musicians from the orchestra also led an ambitious range of master classes, lectures, workshops and sectional rehearsals at leading educational institutions.

The tour was every bit as modern as it was classical. The orchestra coordinated its touring, recording and publishing, linking a growing CD catalogue, cutting-edge Internet projects, and a series of acclaimed study guides.

In Monterrey, the orchestra presented innovative educational activities using Internet video conferencing technology. Schools in Canada, the U.S. and Mexico were linked through the NAC's next-generation Internet facility. Orchestra members also posted diary entries in Web journals on the NAC's highly successful youth Web site, www.ArtsAlive.ca. 🍁



Master class: Pinchas Zukerman teaches on tour in Monterrey, Mexico.