

▲ More hip than the world realizes: Canada has done well in the region in avant-garde electronic music, which is used as ambient sound in clubs or stores.

Paola Poletto, Director of Research at the prominent agency. "We have been working on building design markets in Japan in the cultural arena for several years... We have a lot to learn from each other."

Canadian artists believe there's much contemporary creativity to project from a country that is more hip than the world realizes.

"We want to rebrand Canada a bit, to show that there's a lot more going on here than just natural resources and the established culture," declares Christine McLean, Director of The Association for Electronic Music in Shefford, Quebec. Young people in Japan are "very receptive" to the avant-garde music used as ambient sound in clubs or stores, says McLean, who is leading a trade mission of music producers and distributors to Expo 2005.

The reverse is also important. FAC and ITCan have brought delegations of buyers from Asia to events like the East Coast Music Awards, resulting in Canadian artists being invited to perform abroad.

Australia is an easy destination for Canadians such as Calgary rocker Kris Demeanor, who successfully tours that country with each new CD he brings out, and for a wide range of Canadian writers. Authors Austin Clarke, Corey Frost, Isabel Huggan and Jane Urquhart took part in the 2004 Brisbane Writers Festival. A musical piece composed by an Australian and inspired by the writing of Canadian Anne Michaels also premiered at the event.



▲ Calgary rocker Kris Demeanor



photo: courtesy of LWP&C

Canadian films are regularly featured at events in Asia Pacific. The Canadian Trade Office in Taipei, Taiwan, is showcasing new and classic Canadian films in March and April in conjunction with SPOT, Taipei's leading alternative film venue. Featured will be the Oscar-winning *Ryan* and Oscar-nominated *Hardwood*, as well as Denys Arcand's *The Barbarian Invasions* and *The Decline of the American Empire*. Two documentaries on the Chinese-Canadian experience, *In the Shadow of Gold Mountain* and *The Magical Life of Long Tack Sam*, will also be screened.

Canadian film and filmmaking are popular in India, from being featured at venues such as the 10th Kolkata Film Festival last year to the use of the Rocky Mountains in Alberta and British Columbia as backdrops for the popular snow and ice scenes in Hindi movies. Young Indo-Canadians are making their mark in the huge Indian film industry centred in Bombay, as profiled in the popular 2002 National Film Board documentary *Bollywood Bound*. The directorial debut of Nisha Pahuja, that film premiered at the Indo-Canadian Film Festival in Delhi, India.

Canada's expertise in animation is increasingly sought after in the

region. For example, Algonquin College in Ottawa has signed an agreement with Animaster, India's largest training and production studio, based in Bangalore, which offers cutting-edge animation technology and a faculty made up of industry leaders from North America and Asia Pacific.

Canadian animators have been invited to South Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam and the Philippines, "and the response we get there is incredible," says Kelly Neall, Managing Director of The Ottawa International Animation Festival. Along with well-established companies such as Nelvana, which has significant working relationships in India and Taiwan, Canadian animators including Asia China Media Ventures, China Film Animation and Cookie Jar Entertainment (of *Caillou* fame) are making significant inroads.

"Having this artistic niche is an invaluable public relations vehicle for our country," Neall adds. 🍁

To learn more about Canadian culture in Asia Pacific, visit the Foreign Affairs Canada Arts and Cultural Industries Web site at www.international.gc.ca/arts.

▲ Leading edge: Projects such as a design for an aerial tramway by Lang Wilson Practice in Architecture Culture in Vancouver are putting Canadian design on stage in Asia.