

The idea that arts and culture can open international doors isn't exactly new. Since 1995, when the Government of Canada undertook a major foreign policy review, the promotion of Canadian values and culture has been a key "pillar" of its foreign policy. The review concluded that a country not projecting itself well abroad was doomed to anonymity on the international scene.

Barlow says that the diversity and talent of Canadian artists help to represent Canada as a creative, innovative, culturally diverse and tolerant nation. But artists can also demonstrate to others the benefits that an open society brings. He calls this approach "cultural diplomacy." Canada's Governor General has made it a priority: to Europe and other continents, she has led delegations including distinguished artists as well as Aboriginal leaders and business people from Canada (see p. 27).

### Support across the spectrum

Responsibility for cultural promotion is shared by DFAIT with the Canada Council for the Arts and the Department of Canadian Heritage. But with its network of embassies, high commissions and consulates, DFAIT is uniquely placed to give on-the-ground support to Canadian artists in other countries.

Spearheading efforts are the officers responsible for public affairs and culture at missions abroad. They are constantly on the lookout for opportunities to promote Canada and its artists. At the same time as *Amelia's* première in Prague, for example, Canada was the "country of honour" at the Cervantino Festival in Guanajuato, Mexico—one of Latin America's most prestigious cultural events (see *Canada World View*, Issue 17, pp. 16–17). Performing arts groups from across the country showed the dynamism and range of Canadian culture, enjoying rapturous receptions; many of them are profiled in this issue. Officers also help promote Canadian artists through parallel representation or networking events linked to major cultural gatherings, such as the Cannes Film Festival or the Edinburgh International Festival.

In addition, Canadian artists abroad can tap into a variety of DFAIT travel and export development programs. And then there are career development grants and support for Canadian festivals and conferences, as well as for cultural exchanges.

Barlow oversees a \$6.5 million program that provides travel grants to cultural professionals and arts organizations to cover the cost of international transportation. Individuals or groups in the fields of performing arts, visual and media arts, literature and publishing, film, video, and television are eligible. The subsidies may cover up to a maximum of 30 percent of the total project budget. DFAIT is not the main source of funds for artists but its grants often lend them credibility, helping them leverage additional funding elsewhere. Many of the artists featured in this issue of *Canada World View* have benefited from these types of grants.

"Our intent is not to fund all Canadian cultural events abroad but to increase the number and quality of those events," says Barlow. "We strive to support a mix that, over time, is representative of all artistic disciplines, all Canadian provinces and territories, both official languages, Aboriginal people, and youth, as well as different cultural communities. This is a true reflection of our country and its cultural make-up."



Aboriginal dance troupe Damien Brazier