

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S

state visits highlight Canadian culture

Culture was the focus when Governor General Adrienne Clarkson travelled to Argentina, Chile and Germany for state visits in 2001. Accompanying her and her husband, writer John Ralston Saul, were prominent Canadian novelists, poets, playwrights, musicians, filmmakers, dancers and visual artists, as well as representatives of some of Canada's leading cultural institutions.

The visits featured a series of public discussions, providing the centrepiece for cultural programs in each of the three countries.

"Culture is the expression of who we are as people; it's what gives life meaning and context," said Madame Clarkson. "These discussions were open and focused on themes about how we arrived as countries to this place and time, what has shaped our culture and national psyches, and what role culture plays in our societies, now and in the future."

Of the delegates accompanying Madame Clarkson and Mr. Saul to Argentina and Chile in spring 2001, almost half came from various areas of Canadian cultural life. Among them were Argentinian-Canadian writer Alberto Manguel and Governor General's Literary Award recipients David Adams Richard, Robert Lalonde, Herménégilde Chiasson and Émile Martel. Visual artists included Susan Point of the West Coast Salish and Rafael Goldchain, a Chilean-Canadian. Representing the publishing industry were heads of leading Canadian houses. Also on hand were directors

of major Canadian cultural institutions: Pierre Théberge of the National Gallery of Canada, Roch Carrier of the National Library of Canada and Victor Rabinovitch of the Canadian Museum of Civilization.

The delegation to Germany included the cutting edge of Canadian culture: installation artists Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller (see p. 18); filmmakers Atom Egoyan (see p. 13) and Don McKellar; composer Alexina Louie; and playwright Michel Marc Bouchard, who has already made his mark in German theatre.

Present on both state visits were many Aboriginal artists and leaders. They received a warm welcome—particularly in Germany, where there is great interest in Canadian Aboriginal art and culture. In Dresden, Berlin and Düsseldorf, playwright and musician Tomson Highway (see p. 11) took part in roundtables on cultural identity in literature. And at the Arsenal



photos: Sgt. Julien Dupuis, RCMP



Madame Clarkson and John Ralston Saul speak with children in Santiago, Chile, during a 2001 state visit.

Above: Governor General Adrienne Clarkson, with German President Johannes Rau, in Berlin at the start of her 2001 state visit to Germany. She is wearing a coat designed by Dene fashion designer D'Arcy Moses of the Northwest Territories—a member of the delegation to Germany.

Theatre in Berlin, Zacharias Kunuk's *Atanarjuat* (see p. 15) was screened during a week-long "Imagine Canada" film festival.

Also featured at "Imagine Canada" were works by Atom Egoyan and Don McKellar. Madame Clarkson participated in panel discussions with the two directors after the screening of their films. 🍁