

Lynda Thalie's band (left to right) Michel Bruno, Thalie, Denis Courchesne and Alexandre Ouellet in Algeria: "I am very proud to go into the world and represent Canada."



photo: Patrick Cameron

"There were stories of people afraid of playing piano in their apartments because it might have been considered 'western,' and thus an act of defiance," Mr. Peck explains. "Algeria is coming out of a shell, and Lynda's return marked a renaissance, bringing a message of hope and optimism, especially to young people."

At the concert in Algiers, girls stood on their chairs and threw roses to the performer and women in traditional hijabs danced on the stage. "In my 22 years in diplomacy, I've never seen an event that had such an emotional impact," Peck says.

The concerts, broadcast throughout La Francophonie from Paris to Montreal, were an emotional homecoming for Thalie. At one, she was presented with a framed copy of her birth certificate. In another memorable moment, she played a traditional Acadian song. "Everyone was clapping their hands along with the tapping of the spoons," Thalie remembers. "I actually think they liked that song the best."

Like Julie Nesrallah, Lynda Thalie accepts her role as a cultural ambassador for Canada and as a model for young women.

"When I left Algeria, I was well received by Canada, which is known for its generosity," she says. "I had a chance to live here and develop my career, so I am very proud to go into the world and represent Canada." 🍁

**For more information, visit [www.julienesrallah.com](http://www.julienesrallah.com) and [www.lyndathalie.com](http://www.lyndathalie.com).**

## Youth gets out of town

Sebastian Cluer has travelled widely to see—and to show other young people—the world.

Nightingale Productions hired Cluer as the director and cinematographer for a new teen travel series called "Get Out of Town" in an internship sponsored by Foreign Affairs Canada and the Canadian Film and Television Production Association (CFTPA). For four months last year the Ryerson University graduate from Toronto shot and directed the show in 10 cities around the world, including London, Paris, Lucerne, Munich, Mexico City, New York, Washington and Sydney. The production is airing on TVOntario and SCN Saskatchewan as well as specialty networks such as WAM! in the U.S.

At the helm of his own series at the age of 30, Cluer says he had "more creative control than I ever had before." The crew of six people was also joined by Oscar-nominated producer Erin Faith Young. They hired a teen co-host and found another local teen in each city visited who enlightened young viewers on the culture, history and sites of his or her hometown.

Sebastian Cluer went to Bondi Beach in Sydney, Australia, to shoot a segment of the youth series.

From Costa Rica's steaming rainforest to a frigid Swiss mountain, Cluer adjusted to extreme environments and a stressful schedule, working up to 16 hours a day, with only about three days to spend in each city.

"It teaches you how to be efficient, self-sufficient and adaptive to circumstances," he says, adding that the internship "has been a great experience to add to my career."

Cluer has been asked to be involved with a second season of "Get Out of Town," now in pre-production, and is continuing to work on a number of television and documentary projects, including as a cinematographer with Breakthrough Film & Television on the series "Kenny vs. Spenny" premiering on Showcase and GSN this fall.

Cluer's advice for students and new graduates? If you can't find a job, volunteer in your field of interest. "It's a win-win situation," he says, "to be behind closed doors and learn and work with professionals."

**For more information on CFTPA job placements visit [www.cftpa.ca](http://www.cftpa.ca).**

