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## Largest-ever Arts and Cultural Participation Event Comes to Communities Across Canada This Weekend

*Thousands of free activities planned for second annual Culture Days celebration*

**Vancouver, B.C. (September 26, 2011)** – The second annual [Culture Days](http://www.culturedays.ca) event kicks off in hundreds of cities and towns across Canada this weekend, **September 30, October 1 and 2**. [Culture Days](http://www.culturedays.ca) features free, hands-on interactive activities from coast to coast to coast that invite the public to discover and participate in the cultural life of their communities.

On the heels of Culture Days' 2010 success, this year, the pan-Canadian collaborative grass-roots movement has taken hold in some 800 communities (up from 700 last year) as more artists, organizations and supporters have mobilized to work together to promote their cultural resources and talents concurrently under the [Culture Days](http://www.culturedays.ca) banner. Notably, many municipalities have taken a lead role in mobilizing their arts and cultural communities to participate in this unprecedented outreach initiative, underscoring the valuable contribution a vibrant cultural scene makes to the economic and social prosperity of communities in Canada. Dozens of municipalities throughout the country have taken an active role in promoting Culture Days, including Surrey (BC), Swift Current (SK), Flin Flon (MB), Ottawa, Sudbury, Mississauga and Kingston (ON), Stratford (PEI) and Bear River (NS).

Over 5,500 free activities are scheduled for the weekend, spanning a wide range of arts and cultural disciplines and practices including: visual arts, music, dance, theatre, architecture, heritage, film and video, literature, culinary arts and new media. This represents a total growth of 22% in the number of activities compared to the first Culture Days weekend in 2010.

"Canada is growing a cross-country team committed to our culture. Artists and cultural organizations, municipalities and businesses have really stepped up to the plate in 2011 to collaborate and promote the creative vitality of their communities during the Culture Days weekend. It's going to be a great weekend of celebration and fun," commented Antoni Cimolino, General Director of the Stratford Shakespeare Festival and Chair of Culture Days' national Steering Committee.

The diverse activities taking place across the country throughout the Culture Days weekend include:

- **Playwrights Guild of Canada** celebrates the 25th anniversary of the Public Lending Right Commission with playwright readings in London (ON), Vancouver (BC), Toronto (ON), Medicine Hat (AB), Edmonton (AB), Winnipeg (MB ) and Scarborough (ON)
- **Culture Days @ the Library**. In collaboration with the Neighbourhood Arts Network, the Toronto Public Library offers more than 80 diverse activities in 45 library branches
- **Caribou Hair Tufting**, presented by Flin Flon Arts Council and Flin Flon Aboriginal Friendship Centre in Flin Flon, MB
- **Introduction to Flamenco Dance**, presented by Maria Osende in Halifax, NS
- **Culture Days at the NAC**. From an Interactive Stage Lighting Exhibit to Live Band Karaoke, the National Arts Centre presents 11 diverse activities in Ottawa, ON



“Our Culture Days campaign has both increased the variety and diversity of arts opportunities and built awareness of how the arts enrich people’s lives and contribute to the liveability of the community,” says Liesl Jauk, Manager of Cultural Development for the City of Richmond, B.C. “Culture Days has also encouraged an atmosphere of collaboration among community partners, including our local newspaper and Tourism Richmond. By working together, we have forged exceptional promotional initiatives that have helped us build long-term, meaningful relationships.”

Canadians can visit the Culture Days website ([www.culturedays.ca](http://www.culturedays.ca)) to plan their weekend using the new *Culture Days Bright Spots Schedule*, presented by Culture Days’ national Lead Founding Visionary Partner, Sun Life Financial. This online planning tool creates a personalized agenda of activities happening over the Culture Days weekend and includes a “smart” recommendation feature that will make activity suggestions based on those already selected. Schedules are easily exported to email, other calendar platforms and PDF.

Activities taking place across the country include those presented as part of the 15<sup>th</sup> annual Journées de la culture event in Québec and 4<sup>th</sup> annual Alberta Arts Days, both of which are part of the Canada-wide movement.

### **About Culture Days**

Launched in 2010, [Culture Days](http://www.culturedays.ca) is a collaborative Canada-wide volunteer movement to raise the awareness, accessibility, participation and engagement of all Canadians in the arts and cultural life of their communities. Culture Days was initiated by four *Founding Partners*: The Canadian Arts Summit, Culture pour tous (producer of *les Journées de la culture*), Canada Council for the Arts and The Banff Centre. National partners supporting the development of Culture Days are: *Lead Founding Visionary Partner* Sun Life Financial, *Founding Visionary Partner* The Audain Foundation, *Visionary Partners* Aeroplan and Endeavour. *Federal Government* support is provided by Canadian Heritage. *National Media Partners* are: CBC, The Globe and Mail and St. Joseph Communications. *Provincial Partners* are: Government of B.C., Government of Alberta, SaskCulture, Government of Ontario, Ontario Arts Council, Trillium Foundation, Government of New Brunswick, Government of Nova Scotia, Government of Prince Edward Island, Government of Newfoundland & Labrador and the Government of Northwest Territories. The 2011 Culture Days Weekend is taking place September 30th, October 1st and 2nd, 2011 across Canada.

– 30 –

### **For more information or to coordinate interviews, please contact:**

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