

Peace-Liard
Regional

Arts Beat

Fall and Winter, 2000

Fort St. John to Host BC Festival of the Arts

Submitted by Festival Office, Fort St. John

From May 29 - June 3, 2001, the BC Festival of the Arts will be hosted by the City of Fort St. John. The BC Festival of the Arts is Canada's largest multi-disciplinary event in the performing, visual and literary arts. It is designed to showcase and develop British Columbia's most talented emerging artists.

In preparation for this exciting event, an official launch was held on Saturday, Oct. 14th, in the North Peace Cultural Centre. Beginning with the "Cultural Corridor" in the afternoon, the launch featured free family activities including "Hands on Fun"; Stage North "Gore and Goo" workshop and readings, make and take stations, library readings and First Nation's hand games, drumming and drum making). Demonstrations were given by local artists: spinners and weavers, painters, sculptors, carvers, photographers and potters. There was also numerous displays featured various artists, art organizations, and the Literary Society. Balloons were distributed at the door to children. This event was an astounding success and many people participated.

The evening's Launch Performance offered FSJ an opportunity to shine. Local and visiting dignitaries were welcomed to the special production, "Change the World", which featured local performers. A VIP Reception followed the gala performance. In the end approximately 1000 people contributed to and participated in the exciting Launch activities for the BC Festival of the Arts.

The community of Fort St. John is working hard in preparation for the BC Festival in May, 2001. From over 75 regional events and calls-for-entry involving 60,000 artists across the province, nearly a thousand delegates are selected to participate in the BC Festival of the Arts. Approximately half of these delegates are students aged between 14 and 18; the rest are adults.

The heart and soul of the Festival are the professional artists and artisans who act as mentors to nearly one thousand Festival delegates. These mentors provide adjudication, workshops, master classes and conference sessions in such areas as: visual arts, literary arts, contemporary song writing, Indigenous art, film and video, theatre, classical music, and dance. Events include workshops, exhibits, nightly film and video screenings, Indigenous arts presentations, drama presentations, literary readings, world music and classical concerts. In Fort St. John, almost every hall, school, church and arena, as well as the North Peace Cultural Centre, the Curling Rink and many other spaces will feature over 300 events. At least 40% of all events are open to the general public and many have free admission. Funding for the Festival comes from the Province of British Columbia, the City of Fort St. John, national and provincial sponsors and local fundraising. The local committee is also hopeful that financial support will be forthcoming from the Federal Government.

This is the largest festival of its kind in Canada. The successful production of this event will enhance Fort St. John's reputation as an ideal setting for festivals and other large scale events. A wide range of high-quality art and talent will be performed and exhibited at this festival. Presenting this inspirational event to members of the region, especially youth, will have a lasting effect on our interests and aspirations. Training and experience in



Artisan Tara Brule creates Masterpiece



Make and Take Fun!

event planning gained by the local Host Committee members, staff and volunteers will stay in the community. This community asset will be able to support the ongoing work of attracting events of this magnitude to Fort St. John.

Over 4,000 volunteers will assist in coordinating regional events and the Fort St. John Festival will recruit over 800 volunteers to stage the Festival - approximately 10,000 volunteer hours! As the Festival dates come closer, the opportunities in Fort St. John to become actively involved are many and varied. Nearly 800 volunteers will be required to stage the Festival in a manner that will set the standard for others to follow.