

PROGRAMMING VANCOUVER'S PUBLIC REALM :
LESSONS FROM MONTREAL, THE CITY OF FESTIVALS

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 28, 2002

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY AT HARBOUR CENTRE

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MONTREAL HIGH LIGHTS Festival

PRESENTATION - SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY VANCOUVER - NOVEMBER 2002

1. BACKGROUND ON MONTREAL'S FESTIVALS

A history of our celebrations

1900-1960

Religious Roman Catholic holidays, Royal visits, Quebec City Carnival, Régates de Valleyfield, Biking Tour of New France.

1960-1985 - Events "à la baby boom"

Birth of the major festivals, including the Montreal Expo '67 (1967), the 1976 Olympic Games, Quebec's Fête Nationale (June 24 every year), the Festival International de Jazz de Montréal, the Montreal FrancoFolies, the Just for Laughs/Juste pour Rire Comedy Festival, the Tour de l'Île bicycle race, the Saint-Tite Western Festival, Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu's International Balloon Festival.

1985-2002 - The era of natural selection

The emergence of new festivals attesting to a modern, secular society, attracting international audiences.

Quality of the organizational culture

The public administration

Montreal now possesses a culture focused on event organization. This particular aspect of our city's strengths developed after the city was chosen to host Expo '67. Over time, time, Montreal triumphed yet again with the 1976 Olympic Games as well as the Floralties and other major events held on Quebec's national holiday, Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day (which gained precedence following the Parti québécois' ascent to power in 1976).

Involvement of the municipal administration (special events department), police (the city police, or SPVM, and the Sûreté du Québec, Quebec's provincial police force), firemen (SPIM).

Impassioned creators and entrepreneurs

A new generation of event organizers, originating from the artistic and cultural communities as well as the world of sports, every one of them passionate about his or her field, and wanting to share their passion with the greatest possible number of people. Private sponsors are approached.

Private or non-profit organizations

Establishment of non-profit organizations responsible for events and eligible to receive funding from various levels of government.

Involvement of citizens, the media, public officials, politicians, etc.

Public, political and economic interest in holding events that energize the city, incite public participation, while subtly and slowly helping to define Montreal's urban identity.

Taking back the city streets, urban life on the upswing

City life, urbanization

Transition, between 1900 and 1950, from a rural to an urban society. Return to the city, demise of the revenge of the cradle (families of 7-10-12 children or more). The city still considered and depicted as a den of iniquity.

Construction of the North American highway network (between 1950-1980), redefinition of the *American way of life*, suburban residential construction, interest rates promoting the purchase of bungalows, rapid urban sprawl. Invasion of the city's core by hundreds of thousands of automobiles. Pollution, noise, congestion, limited space.

The public square, the agora, the park.

A diminished sense of community, fewer people practising their faith, drastic drop in the birth rate. Massive arrival of women in the labour market. Loss of a sense of community in the suburbs, neighbourhood units with no meeting places, cocooning. Creation of secular celebrations to re-create a sense of community.

The streets taken back from the automobiles.

The streets taken back to celebrate. Public agoras and squares wrested from traffic, major festivals held in large urban parks. Streets are closed.

The real city, versus the amusement park.

Urban bustle and amusement, but within the city confines, as compared to the *resort* concept (Walt Disney World). Controlled movements, cultural and playful activities making for an agreeable urban outing that is pleasant, educational, diverting and enriching.

Charming, friendly and safe atmosphere

Feeling of security.

Safety initiatives of urban celebrations (police, volunteers, site layout, emergency services), opportunity for social and urban cocooning, a "safe" celebration, as opposed to the urban jungle, discreet and controlled surveillance.

2. CONDITIONS LEADING TO SUCCESS

Festive public outlook, Latinesque atmosphere

Winter vs. summer

Excellent ideas, creativity at its best, great promoters

Support from political authorities

Involvement of public administration employees

Positive outlook of police and public safety authorities

Government funding

Canada

Departments, Communications Canada, Canada Council for the Arts

Quebec

Departments, SGF (Société générale de financement du Québec), SODEC, CALQ (Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec)

Municipality

Departments, CAM (Conseil des arts de Montréal)

Corporate Crown Corporation Sponsorships

Canada

VIA Rail, Canada Post, Parks Canada

Quebec

Hydro-Québec, SAQ (Société des Alcools du Québec), Loto-Québec

Corporate Sponsorships

15 major companies, 20 medium-sized ones and 50 small ones

Banks, credit card companies, insurance companies

Telecommunications, computers

Services

Gaz Métropolitain, Hydro-Québec

Food and beverages

Food products (Kellogg's, Christie, Kraft), beer (Labatt, Molson, Stella Artois), milk, soft drinks and water (Coke, Pepsi, Naya, Dessani), wines and liquor.

Car manufacturers, rail companies, airlines

Tobacco

Equipment producers, manufacturers

Retail shops

Pharmacies, grocery stores, sporting goods stores, mass outlets (category killer), hardware stores

Event revenues

Box office revenues (cultural shows, sporting events, meals)

Sale of souvenirs, food and beverages

Sale of artistic items (paintings, photographs)

Benefit or charity events for the Festival

Tickets (draws) for Festival contests

Involvement of the print and electronic media

Premiums paid by the associated media for advertising space or airtime

Revenues from the television or radio rights of sporting or cultural events

3. WHY FESTIVALS?

Polarity of private cocooning - gregariousness

The Western world is in retreat

People mistrust one another (fortressing)

However, people want to be surrounded by others, to join in a vibrant group activity

An urban / village experience

Creating a village atmosphere in the city by setting up a "Place des Festivals" and a village (tents, food services, public washrooms, etc.)

True critical mass

Preparation of a program that focuses on a sporting or cultural theme and offers a true critical mass opportunity for attracting die-hard festival-lovers and amateurs.

Free, accessible dissemination of culture

Cities and villages in the spotlight

Montreux (jazz), Beirut (Wagner), Calgary and Saint-Tite (western), Venice, Rio, Quebec City and New Orleans (carnival), Perpignan (photography), Avignon and Stratford (theatre), Edinburgh and Chicago-Ravina (performing arts), Cannes (film, television).

Hall concerts partially pay the costs of free outdoor or other shows

The strolling public gets a taste of culture

The public gains access to more complex works

Event highlights, ideal for mass media coverage

The basis for the event calendar

The crowd effect and the craze give rise to mass media interest

Television grabs hold of the event

The event is considered in all of its aspects: cultural, sporting, social, **economic**

Economic and social impacts, along with a growing reputation

Direct jobs in the fields of art and design

Temporary work for youth

Youth work employment program

Direct tourism-related spin-offs

Hotels stays, restaurant meals

Development of organizational expertise

Growing reputation of the city or village

Preservation and restoration of historic sites

Use of historic sites for holding events

Example: the arenas of Avignon, la "grande cour"

Building of new infrastructures

1976 Montreal Olympics
Celebration of Montreal's 350th anniversary in 1992
Floralies, Mosaïculture
Festival International de Lanaudière
Barcelona Games
Albertville Games
Berlin bid to obtain the Olympic Games (year 2000)

New methods for traditional advertising

Saturation of traditional advertising
Sponsorship, a form of integrated communication

- Merchandising
- Sampling
- Internal and external public relations
- Business relationships
- Advertising
- Promotion

Social involvement, contributing the cultural and intellectual life of citizens

4. A BRIEF LOOK AT CELEBRATIONS

Religious holidays (mythological, mystical, anthropological)

Calendar of events based on agricultural activity, seasons
(ploughing, weeding, planting, harvesting/picking, slaughtering, wintering, etc.)
Solstices, equinoxes, solar feasts, celebrations of light and fire.

Calendar of events based on Roman Catholic (or Protestant, Anglican, Muslim) celebrations

Christmas, Twelfth Night, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, All Saints' Day, Thanksgiving, Candlemas (pancakes and candles), an obvious link with the seasons and therefore, with human fears and sorrows.

Good or bad harvests, harsh winters, lack of food.
Non-religious or capitalistic/commercial adaptation of these celebrations

Christmas = the two-month period before, during and after Christmas

Lent = carnivals in Quebec City, Rio, Venice, New Orleans

Thanksgiving = millions of huge turkeys and hundreds of thousands of flights across America

Halloween = millions of pumpkins... invasion of the black and orange... yikes!

Easter = chocolate, bunnies, ducks, hats.

Political holidays

Monarchic

Visit of King George, Golden Jubilee, weddings, deaths, births

Republican, Democratic

Declarations of independence, liberations, revolutions (1789 vs. 1917), national holidays (June 24 vs. July 1st, 350th anniversary of the founding of Montreal, Canada's 100th birthday (1867-1967 = Expo '67), political movement (France's Fête de l'humanité)

Wars

Conflicts, truces, attacks (9-11), massacres, genocides, Hiroshima, D-Day

Secular festivals and social events

Theme days, weeks, months, years

Women, work, rights and freedoms, theme days for charity or for raising awareness: AIDS, wildlife, flora, Earth-Day, air, music, taste and flavours

Mother's Day, Father's Day, St. Valentine's Day

Corporate anniversaries

Walt Disney's 100th, Radio-Canada's 50th

Cultural, sports and entertainment festivals

Film festivals, festivals featuring opera (Wagner Festival in Beirut), performing arts, jazz, pop, blues, rave, techno, folklore, traditions, sculpture, painting, poetry (Festival international de poésie de Trois-Rivières), counter-culture festivals.

Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games, circumpolar Native Games, Jeux de la Francophonie, special games (persons with disabilities), Games with other

themes, including gays, Pan-American, disciplinary championships, traditional, as well as Games by country, region, age, category and gender.

Marathon, bicycle tours (RAGBRAI, Five Boro Bike Tour)

Fireworks, Balloons

Food products (wine festivals, including: Niagara and Bordeaux), Pampelune tomatoes, Hershey chocolates, Cheddar cheese, all celebrations traditionally linked to farming cycles.

Quebec City Winter Carnival, New Orleans Mardi-Gras, Spring Break in the United States, meetings of hobby associations (e.g.,: Trekkies)

Annual collectors' meetings (e.g.,: stamps, coins, Porsches)

5. MORE SPECIFIC CATEGORIES OF CULTURAL, SPORTING AND ENTERTAINMENT FESTIVALS

Imported: circuits, series, tournaments

International

Olympics, international theme-based exhibit (Expo 67, Seville, Vancouver 86), the World Cup (soccer), millennium celebrations

International sporting events (Grand Prix racing, Canada's International Tennis Championships, Transat, Louis Vuitton Cup.

International meets

Marathon

Commonwealth Games, Jeux de la Francophonie

North American (claiming to be international)

Rose-Orange-Super Bowl, World Baseball Championship

Canadian

Grey Cup

From Quebec

Jeux du Québec

Copied, inspired, transformed, adapted

The Festival International de Jazz de Montréal (Marciac, Montreux)

FrancoFolies de Montréal->Francofolies de La Rochelle

Tour de l'Île de Montréal-> Five Boro Bike Tour, New York City

Festival de la nouvelle danse
Cirque du Soleil
Pure creativity, from scratch

Passionate

Just for Laughs

New technology or trend

Mutek, New cinema festival

Defending a cause, helping ideas gain ground

Le Tour de l'Île de Montréal

Sponsor's target market

Beach volleyball

Television broadcaster

Temptation Island, Survivor

6-THE SPECIFIC CASE OF THE MONTREAL HIGH LIGHTS FESTIVAL

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The Festival's background and development plan were prepared with due consideration given to the results of a number of tests and surveys published over the last several years.

- ▶ The titles marked **ORG** refer more specifically to the organization of events and festivals, the role of festivals in a community's economic, tourism and cultural life, and event and festival sponsorship.
- ▶ The titles marked **HIS** address, in part, the history of Montreal as well as the history of recreational events.
- ▶ The titles marked **BB** mainly focus on the demographic influence (the power of numbers) of baby boomers on events, fashion, economic cycles, etc.
- ▶ The titles marked **MOD** specifically address the analysis of trends and fashion (consumerism, social phenomena, social classes, cultural classes, etc.)
- ▶ The titles marked **CRI** focus on critiques of the consumer society, the vast amount of advertising surrounding us, and the perverse consequences of the doughnut effect.

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