

Pier 21's Opening Day

July 1, 1999, the last Canada Day of the 20th Century was chosen for the opening of Pier 21. With the re-opening of Pier 21, Canadians were at last paying tribute to those who have given Canada much of its greatness. For months prior to the opening volunteers and staff worked hard planning all of the details for this special day.

Through a partnership with CBC television the opening ceremonies were broadcast live nationally on CBC Newsworld. The CBC had also produced a TV documentary filmed at Pier 21, hosted by well-known CBC journalist Hanna Gartner. This special was originally



broadcast that night. Hannah Gartner was also on hand in Halifax on July 1 to host the Opening Day ceremony. The one-hour celebrations included performances by local choirs, Pier 21 alumni and former Irish Rover Will Miller was also on hand entertain a crowd of 10,000. Singer/songwriter Lennie Gallant co-wrote a theme song for Pier 21 with Canadian musicians Connie Klador, James Keelaghan, Michelle Campagne and Asif Illyas. In

addition to other notable guests, Prime Minister Jean Chretien provided congratulations via satellite to the celebratory crowd. He would personally tour Pier 21 six weeks later while attending the National Historic Sites and Monuments Board Ceremony declaring Pier 21 a National Historic Site.

The festivities began as the HMCS Preserver sailed into Pier 21. The Royal Canadian Navy had invited war brides aboard to share in this special sailing that re-traced their arrival at Pier 21. The Navy's participation provided a wonderful reminder of the long history between Pier 21 and the Canadian Military. By the time the HMCS Preserver and Rear Admiral Miller were preparing to depart, thousands of visitors had experienced the bilingual, interactive displays at Pier 21. These people had been touched by the stories and now had a greater appreciation of Canada's diversity.

