

2001 FIJI MUSIC DAY

Saturday, June 23rd, 2001

Minister for Women, Culture , Heritage,
and Social Welfare, Hon. Ro Teimumu Kepa

SALUTATION

Your Excellency the Ambassador of France, Mr. Jean-Pierre Vidon, the President of Alliance Francaise, Mr. Shiu Raj, Fellow Musicians, Composers, Performers, Distinguished Guests, and Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am indeed honored as the Minister for Women, Culture & Heritage to have been invited here this afternoon for the celebration of the **Fiji Music Day – 2001**.

Any geographical region or cultural realm can be identified by a style of music unique to their culture. This is why music plays an important role in every society. It is an “art that is concerned with combining sounds-particularly pitches-to produce an artifact that has beauty or attractiveness, ... and a cultural expression which requires special skill on the part of its creator” *Encarta Encyclopedia (1996)*. This form of art is one of those elements that are knitted together with others, such as folklore, paintings, dance, and chants, to distinguish between different cultures.

For all you musicians, composers, and performers participating here this afternoon, I believe, it is your dedication, commitment, and love of music that has enabled you all to create your own distinctive styles which somehow illustrates the great diversity that exists within our society,

hence your profession, likewise those of our visual artists, is a pivotal one.

The Interim Administration is aware of the vital importance of Fiji's culture and heritage, including music, as a nation-building component and has therefore committed itself to its preservation, promotion, and development of relevant policies. For far too long this sector has continued to be marginalised driven only by the commitment and passion of the stakeholders. Cognisant of this the government, through my Ministry, has established a Department of Culture and Heritage to oversight the developments in this sector at the policy level. The Department in implementing its activities is working in close cooperation with other relevant ministries such as Ministry of Tourism, and non-governmental organisations. The Department has also started to establish links with musical associations such as the Fiji Performing Rights Association, Fiji Composers Associations, and Fiji Musicians & Entertainers Associations.

I therefore take this opportunity to urge and encourage all aspiring and professional musicians, business houses and all music lovers who are here today to continue your good works after this event. Now more than ever when resources are limited a true spirit of cooperation comes when national government and all important stakeholder organisations and peoples work together to build a better Fiji.

Through this sort of initiative, and encouraged by our collective efforts, Fiji's musicians are rest assured that they will gain the competitive edge to tap into regional and international markets.

And now, on behalf of the Ministry of Women, Culture & Heritage and Social Welfare, I would like to thank the:

- **Alliance Francaise** for being the driving force behind this event;
- all our **talented musicians, performers, and composers**, who I know, will make tonight a memorable night; and
- to those of you, whom I may not have mentioned, but also contributed to the success of this event A BIG Vinaka Vakalevu.

For without you all an event of this magnitude would not have been possible.

VINAKA VAKALEVU