

ENTRANCE  
SEQUENCE

FROM WELCOME PLAZA TO  
CELEBRATION PLAZA

The essence of any great event is the feeling of arrival and the excitement of being involved. Whether it is a concert or a festival it all builds from the moments when one knows they are entering into *magic* with many other like-minded people. It becomes a community of new neighbours for a few hours or days.



Observations of entering into the Mariposa experience were not as charmed as that description. It was all very friendly - of course - but it was missing a sense of place and anticipation. Part of the problem is the park itself being located along a busy roadway where one comes upon it rather suddenly. The entrance itself is luckily at a traffic light intersection which helps somewhat with slowing down cars. However, there is no iconic entrance feature that announces this is J.B. Tudhope Memorial Park “the Home of the Mariposa Folk Festival”. This feature could be “more than a sign”, it can



be an artistic expression in sculptural terms.

The entrance needs to logically add order and sensible direction for vehicles to go to parking zones or *drop off* areas. During a festival event that is even all the more important as there is confusion and the need to efficiently direct the festival goers.



The Master Plan proposal handles that very well with the incorporation of a dramatic entrance feature and a re-ordering of the traffic patterns. The parking lots that previously identified the entrance would be downplayed with landscaping and



moving of the pedestrian walkway entrance from being through a parking lot to a more user friendly pathway which starts to make the experience more park-like and safe.

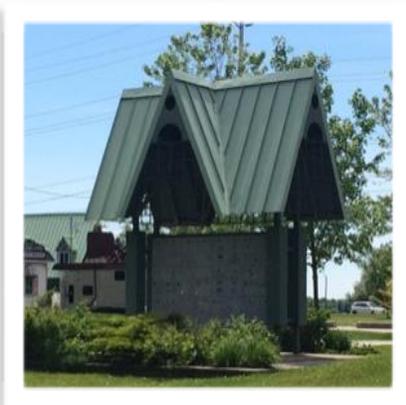
The walk from the Welcome Plaza into the park and to the Festival gate can become a building of anticipation. Although the main gate is a security zone

to check admission tickets it needs to feel more like a welcoming reception line. The people that worked the area were certainly friendly and non-confrontational (unlike many rock shows) but the ticket booths bear a resemblance to guard houses. Perhaps some other kind of soft structures like colourful tents would fit the bill or, alternatively, the incorporation of “welcomers” or “greeters” helping to direct and inform.



Once inside the Mariposa grounds it is really about getting oriented and finding one’s way. This area had too many functional things happening and not enough cultural happenings; getting into the music as soon as possible might be a good start. In the area of the Ruth Stage there could be a Coffee House Tent and the Mariposa Emporium Tent. The bike lock up makes perfect sense, however, the accessible toilets could be located not quite so soon on entering.

The whole area upon entering is what is being proposed as the Celebration Plaza - a mix of activities and fundamental services. A new building(s) to replace the concrete block buildings will help define the area and give a new visual aesthetic to the centre of Tudhope Park. The



building or if more logical, 2 separate buildings could house washrooms, first aid, lost and found, security and potable water stations, which could also be incorporated into a multi-purpose room. A seating area as part of this plaza makes it an obvious meeting and mingling opportunity. When it is built it becomes a natural cafe setting for not only Mariposa but for general park visits.



The architecture for this structure and any other structures within the Master Plan would have a shared set of design details and materials. For Mariposa days, the Celebration Plaza could become a hub of activities and might include the displays and booths that are known as the Community Village. Instead of the Village being along the walkway to Barnfield Point it could have a more central involved feel in the heart of activities and would likely have more valued interaction with people. If functional items like additional portable toilets are required in this general area they should be located in a more “masked” area (although accessible for servicing). The toilets and wash stations just appeared to be so dominant in the sight lines.

There is discussion about the Pub Tent being located onto the ball park infield which needs more study as to the real advantages. It already feels too arid and overly fenced as it is and the location on the playing field might even be a more un-natural setting. If anything, the tent should be closer to the water’s edge, straddling the trail, to take full advantage of the lakeside setting and breezes etc. Run string lights through the trees, open the tent side facing the water and there’s a perfect backdrop! The Pub is a fun element and adds to the entertainment mix of Mariposa.



It has been noted that the Celebration Plaza is actually the high point in the park and at the intersection of paths and roadways. It is a natural location for a focus attraction that becomes a visual beacon and a natural destination for visitors. By having the Emporium located alongside, it becomes a natural home base and touchstone as “Mariposa Central”.



By concentrating as many features of involvement in the immediate area of Celebration Plaza the committee can really focus adding “exterior decor” such as regalia, banners, maypoles, tree string lights, Chinese lanterns, tree kites and art displays.



# FOOD COURT

This is a difficult one to idealize as there are so many players and stakeholders, all with unique identities and themes to match their distinct offerings in food choices. It is also an area of the festival site that puts demands on services such as water and electricity as well as security and ease of proximity and accessibility. In any case and with those criteria in mind, there are creative ideas that could become possibilities and realities.



There are few festivals that have done a spectacular job of setting up a food services area that felt romantic or intriguing as destinations. They often become parking lots with trailers or mobile food trucks with cords, cables and hoses spreading out from them.



What can be done to make the food services area into something resembling a food court? Realistically, it is not an easy task to entertain and pull off within the kind of budget and site conditions that Mariposa is subject to. It has been noted by Mariposa that the food choices should be clustered in a fairly close proximity to each other so that visually, folks can scan the choices. That sort of precludes having ‘pitas at the point’ or a “falafel at the flats” or “tacos at the tall trees”.

The food units do not have to be lined up on both sides of the road in straight lines - as long as there is new power and water distribution pedestals set into the landscape in a non-linear arrangement. Tables and chairs, or picnic tables could occur between food booths. Or a fun idea is what they do at European festivals with a continuous long table set up in the middle of the food court. The continuous community table could have a vinyl table cloth that comes by the roll and can be weighted down.





The whole idea of calling the area the “Food Court” suggests that the seating is part of the experience and not just a secondary consideration. The committee has done a very good job at choosing a variety of vendors of quality. It is kind of ethnic like a mall’s food court so perhaps there could also be more ethnicity in the theming and decor surrounding the area - the Canadian *vertical mosaic* of our society.

The separation of some food into various areas in the park, such as a coffee cafe in a shaded grove area where people could meet for a home made dessert, would provide an alternative in spirit and energy from the more savoury offerings of the food court. It could be tied in with the Mariposa Emporium which could draw more attention to items for sale such as musicians’ recordings and mementos. In Europe at festivals they have simple planks as tables and logs on bases where people gather and sit to enjoy hot drinks and desserts and ice creams etc.



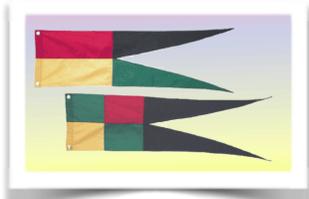
This idea of separation was exemplified this past year as a flavored popcorn tent away from the food area that really worked as it was not lost in the mix, however, it was likely placed there as their requirements for electricity and water were not too demanding. There may be other opportunities for booths that can occur in other parts of the park that give a festive feel - like dipped apples, or homemade chocolate truffles, or chocolate covered fruit on a stick, or simple BBQ shish kabobs or fish tacos etc. Something simple that becomes something to look forward to each year at Mariposa.



# ARTISANS VILLAGE



The setting that the artisans are in with the tree canopy and the proximity to the water's edge pathway is quite bucolic. However, it does not have a unified village feel. It needs some commonality themes and elements much like the Food Court suggestions. Some of those commonality ideas might include lighting such as waterproof Japanese lanterns strung through the trees, flag / banner standards along the pathways in a heraldic sense of a medieval village, etc.



The variety of goods for sale was impressive as was as the unique designs and quality. That particular committee in charge does a great job adjudicating who gets invited. It speaks to the history and culture of Mariposa. Many other festivals really lack the kind of variety evident at J.B Tudhope Memorial Park.

It is suggested that some artisans could benefit from being located within the food court. Artisans specializing in food related items whether it be canning of fruits and vegetables or the housewares kind of goods such as knives, wooden cookware, charcuterie boards and ceramics could be mixed in with food vendors.



This kind of synergy were the two areas start to blend together could certainly be positive for sales to both groups. Perhaps there could be more seating for dining in the artisans area and more artisans mixed into the food court. If you were surrounded by the artisans while seated to eat it would all feel more inclusive.



# PUB TENT

The Pub Tent was a real winner as it brimmed over with energy and good vibes. The musicians that were programmed for the tent had the right kind of performance talent to match up with the beer and good times. There is something about enclosures and walls that create a warm ambience not unlike a coffee house or in this case a good music pub. The idea that Mariposa is an outdoors festival gives this opportunity a fun balance - that you can enter another atmosphere for a whole new experience.



The interior of the tent was too basic, it could use some theming and simple decor. Something as simple as coloured fabric ribbons dangling down from the tent pipe structure to resemble the sun rays of the Mariposa logo and perhaps developing into a rainbow. The stage needs a backdrop to give better definition and dramatic impact to the performance. Drapery is the simplest as it can be stored easily and installed without much fuss. Just coloured panels again picking up on the sunshine and rainbow themes could be a practical solution at very moderate expense.



The Pub Tent should incorporate a sales feature for artists' merchandise and food, to accommodate impulse buying when within the confines of the area. Food, like slices of pizza or sausage dogs, to would service people who don't want to get up and leave the performance to grab some food in the food court.





The area approaching and surrounding the tent was arid and sketchy looking. It really shouted out “security” too much, however, it is understood that Mariposa needs to be responsible to the rules and regulations of the Ontario Provincial Police and the Alcohol and Gaming Commission. Potential flexibility for applying a lighter hand of security appearance should be explored through discussion and approval of these regulating bodies.



Similar to the suggestion for hanging lanterns for the food court and the artisans village the perimeter fence could look more festive with twinkle string lights and posts with decorative banners. As Mariposa occurs in early July when the sun does not set until around 9 it is hard to really have dramatic lighting as part of the social ambience but the suggestions surrounding lighting are not expensive or impractical.



# MAIN STAGE



The main stage performances feel like a special but separate part of the Mariposa experience. Just watching the blankets appearing each morning in front of the main stage infers that nighttime brings on a whole *village atmosphere*. Main stage concerts are always a highlight of any festival and artistic directors try to build the evenings as different stage productions leading up to the headliner act.

Folk festivals are typically low on the ego meter with a shared sense of community unlike the pop world where the stars may shine brighter but burn out a lot faster. The folk family tends to have a longer democratic life and humble face and this in some ways makes the evening concerts feel very intimate. Productions are not like rock shows - no dry ice and lasers but there could be a bit more pizzazz to the evening shows.



Not unlike previous statements surrounding evening lighting, at Mariposa it doesn't get appreciably dark until 9 pm, so being outside in nature isn't like being at an arena or hall concert. The screen behind the performances on stage had some simplistic pretty slides rotating which were OK but there could be slide shows prepared well in advance together with the artists performing that night. Slide photos or imagery that resonated with the musicians and their songs. At Jimmy Buffet concerts, for example, he shows slides of the city he is playing in - photos he takes

as he rides his bicycle around with selfies and pics of colourful locals. That's *Jimmy style* but there are so many possibilities for adding production value to the main stage shows that borrow from other creative music styles.

When one looks at photos of any festival scene there is always the blind spot behind the sound booth where no one sits, a V shape of no mans land. The sound and lighting booth is often a tent and often a scaffolded affair and in an ideal world we would all like to see it disappear. In many concert bowl conditions the booth can be built into the berm of the terraced bowl and spectators are not blocked from seeing the stage. That's the ideal but often hard to incorporate in the typical festival setting and sound booths become a reality to consider.



A suggestion in this particular case is to remove the tent roof so there is more visibility for those perched behind in the periphery. The tent could be located there all day while sound checks are being done and the technicians need sun control or rain protection. If the evening looks to be great weather then dispense with the tent portion to enhance visibility for viewers.



Another aesthetic that needs some discussion on is the main stage setting. At Mariposa, the park setting and the backdrop of Lake Couchiching is ideal. However, the connection to the hospitality tent and the back stage production trailers detract from the sense of awe. At Tanglewood in the Berkshire Mountains, the hillside setting viewing down to the stage is awesome. The stage is the focal point and it stands alone as it should. This is not always possible given the constraints and in this case J.B. Tudhope Memorial Park lays out in such a way that there are only certain variables that will work for orientation.

There could be consideration for making the stage and especially the areas flanking it more dramatic as opposed to practical in nature. Yes, things need to be in proximity, but the whole hospitality area does not need to be associated with the main stage itself and some of the production trailers and tents could be better masked from view. They could be away from the water's edge and the terrific stage setting.



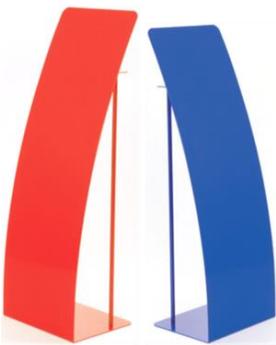
For Mariposa to entertain the goal of attracting larger audiences, the park area for the main stage needs to be dramatically redesigned to achieve great sight lines and the right level of audience comfort and general ambience. The concept of terracing up from the stage in concentric arcs is the ideal. This would also address the drainage issues that this part of the park experiences when rain happens when it shouldn't. J.B. Tudhope Memorial Park is such a beautiful location for concerts of all sorts and this recommendation for a terraced design would go well beyond just the scope of Mariposa and into many Orillia entertainment possibilities.

# SECONDARY STAGES

The stages throughout the park are well located with the exception of the Ruth Stage, which will be commented on further in the report. These small stages are similar to other festivals where workshops and mini concerts are programmed throughout the day. They are the *heart and soul* of a festival as they allow for intimacy with the musicians on stage as viewers can be as close as a few feet away. The settings, usually in shaded grove areas, are ideal for sitting on the grass, a blanket or a lawn chair and easily mixing with your neighbours. They also allow patrons to graze and just listen in for a while and one can choose to stay or move on without disruption to others.



They are simple constructs using only a tent and ground level platform as the stage. Estelle Klein is actually credited with the concept of satellite stages such as these as festival workshops where musicians could share stories and songs usually programmed around themes (travel, discovery, love, trains, planes and automobiles...).



The location where there is usually a sign announcing the stage name could be more pronounced with a larger grouping of signs that has the schedule for all satellite stages to allow folks to easily see the choices to make without referring to the program booklet. Along with the stage line up there could be displays of the CDs and other promo materials associated with the acts on stage or upcoming; sort of a mini version of the Emporium mixed with a theatre marquee display. This would be a great place for the musicians to hang out after

they leave the stage so they can mix with their fans and even have a chance to sell some of their recordings. This could be a terrific way for them to promote coming gigs in various towns and cities. The folk music scene has always been grassroots and it seems that building a fan base happens best in person and not at the mercy of the internet.



The tents for the stages is another opportunity for setting a scene that gives each stage its own identity and sense of place. The Estelle Klein Stage for example could have a collage of Estelle photos and her interaction with musicians over the many years of her involvement with Mariposa and folk music. The Barnfield Stage could have a historical photo bent to it that identifies the name and sense of place in the community. The Sunshine Stage could have sun images printed on fabric backdrops or sun coloured tie dyed fabrics. The Bohemian Embassy really speaks of the history of coffee houses that were part of the lifestyle landscape of the 70s and there are plenty of photos, menus, posters etc that could be incorporated into a giant photo collage printed onto panels or fabric to be used as the stage backdrop.



The Ruth Stage stood out as being an awkward location for live music. It was not under shade trees but set up on a hot patch of grass near the festival entrance which had all kinds of things going on such as a bicycle rig to recharge your cell phone and bike lock ups and accessible toilets and wash station. It did not feel park-like or intimate. There is rationale for locating stages so there is no over bleed of PA sound from area to area - that is a constraint of this park in particular, there are only so many possibilities. The set up of tent resembling a small coffee house would promote intimate enclosure with

tables and chairs set up and provide an alternative ambience to the Ruth Stage. There should be a coffee bar inside and some simple desserts as an alternative to the food court.



This coffee house could even operate in the evening as an alternative to the Main Stage although this might not strike a harmonizing chord to some. Not everyone may

like a particular main stage act and would like an alternative to the Pub Tent - sort of an all ages friendly venue. The decor of the coffee house tent could be wonderfully retro and could be the shrine to Mariposas of years past - an archive of folk roots and musical friends.



The Emporium is an opportunity not fully leveraged for optimum sales. Perhaps the Emporium could play more of a major role re-located to the main entrance so that upon entering one encounters the coffee house as a place to meet friends and then the Emporium to get some shopping done and see and hear musicians' CDs. This whole area could be a very hospitable and engaging experience as you first arrive and get oriented to the over-all experience.

