

Communiqué

MANITOBA ARTS COUNCIL

Names Manitoba Arts Award of Distinction Recipient

FEBRUARY 5, 2009 - WINNIPEG:

Roland Mahé, Artistic Director of Cercle Molière – Canada’s oldest active theatre company, has been named the seventh recipient of the Manitoba Arts Council’s Manitoba Arts Award of Distinction. This \$30,000 award is presented annually to recognize the highest level of artistic excellence and distinguished career achievements by a professional Manitoba artist.

Native and resident of St. Boniface, Mr. Mahé strongly believes in the need to develop the Franco-Manitoban identity and his priority is French theatre – written, directed and presented by Manitobans. He has spent 40 years devoted to developing quality theatre, training new actors, and identifying and encouraging local authors. Mr. Mahé has been instrumental in encouraging young people to engage in and develop an appreciation for theatre in French. In 1970 he founded Festival Theatre-Jeunesse to encourage teenagers to create French theatre in a school environment. In 1983, he established the Pauline-Boutal scholarship fund to support the professional training of young people interested in pursuing studies in theatre. Mr. Mahé also encourages the development of Manitoban playwrights by staging local plays with the goal of developing a strong Franco-Manitoban dramatic base. To date, he has staged more than 100 plays of varied content and style.

Mr. Mahé is a founding member of the Association des theatres francophones au Canada, an association that speaks for theatres in minority settings. He is also co-founder and vice-president of the Association of Western Theatre Companies. Mr. Mahé was the recipient of the Prix hommage pour les arts et les industries culturelles, awarded by the Fédération culturelle canadienne française in acknowledgement of his contribution to both cultural vibrancy and the theatrical community of Canada. In March 2004, Mr. Mahé was the recipient of the Ordre des francophones d’Amérique in Quebec City for his inestimable contribution to the French language and culture in Canada. In May 2004 he was appointed a member of the société québécoise d’études théâtrales in recognition of his major contributions to French speaking theatre in Canada.

For over four decades, Mr. Mahé has been committed to theatre, fully dedicated to his art and forever loyal to the company he leads with such diligence. Roland Mahé will be honoured at a public ceremony to be held during Manitoba Arts & Culture week in March. Previous Arts Award of Distinction recipients include: Leslee Silverman (2002), Robert Kroetsch (2003), Grant Guy (2004), Guy Maddin (2005), Aganetha Dyck (2006) and Dr. Robert Turner (2007).

MEMBERS OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL:

Roberta Christianson
Louise Fiset
Allan Gilliland
Steve Gouthro
Cherry Karpyschin
Lendre Kearns

The **Manitoba Arts Council** provides funds to professional artists and arts organizations. It is an arm’s-length agency of the Government of Manitoba and is funded by the Department of Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport.

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