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# Pinsent, former Lt.- Gov., among GG winners

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MONTREAL - Eight years after resigning as Quebec lieutenant-governor over a youthful error, actor Jean-Louis Roux returned to the spotlight today as one of seven winners of the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards.

Roux was recognized for a lifetime of artistic achievement along with ballerina Veronica Tennant, actor Gordon Pinsent, singer-songwriters Kate and Anna McGarrigle, opera singer Joseph Rouleau and director Eric Till.

Comedian Rick Mercer received the National Arts Centre Award for achievement.

Roux stepped down as lieutenant-governor in 1996 after telling a Quebec magazine he drew a swastika on his lab coat when he was a 20-year-old student during the Second World War.

"That period was very difficult for me," Roux said of the days that followed his revelation that he had worn the Nazi emblem.

"It's part of the past. I closed the doors on that because if you go on feeling like a martyr you can destroy your life."

These days, the 81-year-old former senator has returned to his first love -



JEFF VINNICK FOR THE TORONTO STAR

Canadian acting legend Gordon Pinsent has won a Governor General's Award for the Arts for his lifetime contribution to film and theatre.

acting. It's a role that's given him great pride and for which he was honoured as well as for his achievements as a director, writer, playwright, translator, author and founder of two Quebec theatres.

"For me, it's the most important prize in all the prizes you can receive," said Roux, who has performed in more than 150 theatrical roles, acted in some 50 television parts and has translated and adapted more than 20 works by the likes of Shakespeare and Tennessee Williams.

The awards were announced in Montreal and Toronto. Each winner will receive \$15,000 and a commemorative medallion that Gov. Gen. Adrienne Clarkson will present Nov. 5 at Rideau Hall in Ottawa. A gala will follow on Nov. 6.

"In a very real sense, the performing artists we honour give us our sense of being full human beings," Clarkson said in a statement.

"Theirs are the performances which give us the ability to understand - through the fact that they act, sing, dance, direct - what we deeply feel in ourselves but cannot do for ourselves."

As some of the winners gathered in Toronto for the announcement, Mercer said the honour put him in legendary company, recalling that as a 16-year-old comic in Newfoundland, his grandmother encouraged him by saying, "Some day you'll meet Gordon Pinsent!"

"That was like the pinnacle, that I could meet Gordon Pinsent because he was from Grand Falls and my grandmother was from Bishop's Falls," he said following a brief news conference where he sat alongside Pinsent. "She would get a phenomenal kick out of this today if she was alive."

Mercer said he wanted to help struggling young artists by giving his \$15,000 prize to "the voice of Newfoundland theatre" - the Resource Centre For the Arts at the LSPU Hall in St. John's.

"Personally, the National Arts Centre has already given me so much," said Mercer, whose prize includes a glass sculpture and medallion. "The National Arts Centre showed me a phenomenal vote of confidence when in 1990 they produced my first one-man show.

"They had more confidence in me than I had in myself and that changed my career."

For his part, Pinsent said he was grateful to be able to enjoy a long and fulfilling career in his homeland.

"I can't imagine trying to put a life together in this business elsewhere unless you're absolutely in love with it which is how I feel about Canada, so I'm just delighted it happened here," he said.

Constance Pathy, a supporter of Canada's cultural community including les Grands ballets canadiens, was this year's recipient of the Ramon John Hnatyshyn Award for Voluntarism in the Performing Arts. The award is named after the former governor general who died in December 2002.

"I never really thought I'd be doing this but the arts in general are very, very important to me personally and I want to live in a city that has a rich cultural life and I see that it needs help," Pathy said in Montreal.

For the much-decorated Rouleau, learning of the honour was very emotional.

"I couldn't hold my tears I was so happy," he said, his lapel holding insignias of the Order of Canada and the National Order of Quebec.

"It's my year," he said, noting the promotion in the Quebec award and the 36 musical institutions that are honouring him this year.

"I'm 75. I hope they don't expect my death or something," he joked.

Born in the seaport of Matane, Que., Rouleau took his deep bass voice to London where he took part in 850 performances at the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden.

The singing style of the McGarrigle sisters is more contemporary but equally prized in Quebec.

Inspired by regular sessions around the family piano, the folk singers of mixed English- and French-Canadian origin appeared in coffee houses, leading to popular renown as members of the Mountain City Four.

The sisters never thought about winning such a prestigious award.

"These guys are tremendous contributors to what I guess is the culture of Canada," Kate said, looking at photos of other award-winners. "I'm very honoured to be in their presence."

Created in 1992, the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards are administered by the GGPAA Foundation, a private, not-for-profit charitable organization.

Nominations are submitted by members of Canada's performing arts community and audience, and are reviewed by peer assessment juries composed of performing arts professionals. Each jury makes recommendations for the final selection by the foundation.

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