

**Lieutenant-Governor's Awards
for High Achievement
in the Arts**

2009

Lieutenant-Governor's Awards
for High Achievement
in the Arts

2009

artsnb
artsnb.ca

Excellence is an art won by training and habituation.
We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence,
but we rather have those because we have acted rightly.
We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not
an act but a habit.

— Aristotle (384 BC-322 BC)



Introduction

It's a privilege and an honour to share this moment, an occasion to celebrate excellence, with you. In partnership with His Honour, Lieutenant-Governor Graydon Nicholas, and the Minister of Wellness, Culture and Sport, the Honorable Hédard Albert, the New Brunswick Arts Board is pleased to recognize the exceptional contribution made by people who have made a difference by adding their unique creations of beauty to our planet.

What would our environment, our homes, and our public spaces be like without the arts and culture or without artists and writers? In his message to artists, in 1965, the future Cardinal Casoroli, who was, at the time a well-reputed diplomat, said that "artists are the guardians of the beauty in the world." The award-winning artists and writers celebrated here have made a difference, and continue to do so, through their physical and spiritual presence in the artistic and literary life of our province and our world.

For these artists who, through technology, enjoy an increasingly far-reaching audience, this year's awards are new and improved. Formerly called the New Brunswick Arts Board Excellence Awards, they have become the Lieutenant-Governor's Awards for High Achievement in the Arts, and are accompanied by a more substantial financial award. From now on, three awards will be offered annually, one in the discipline of Visual Arts, one for Performing Arts and one in Literary Arts — the latter will alternate between Anglophone and Francophone literary arts. Every year, awards will be given for different forms of art, recognizing each discipline in turn. This year, however, to mark its twentieth anniversary, the Arts Board is awarding four prizes: one to an Anglophone writer, one to a Francophone writer, one in Theatre, and one in the Visual Arts.

On behalf of my colleagues on the Board of Directors of the New Brunswick Arts Board and myself, it gives me great pleasure to offer you this special publication honouring artists who have given the best of themselves throughout their career, sharing their artistic talents and making a unique and lasting contribution to the vision of the world we want to leave as our legacy to future generations.



Benoît Duguay
Chairperson, New Brunswick Arts Board

RAYMOND FRASER

Lieutenant-Governor's Award for High Achievement in English Literary Arts

"He is one of the most gifted writers I know, and among his gifts are two that are all too rare: a zest for life and a sense of humour. He belongs to the timeless tradition of storytellers."

— Alden Nowlan

"*In Another Life* is a work of great love. It's a beautifully wrought story, tragic, poignant and full of rich detail. It's just masterful."

— Robert Lecker

"*In Another Life* is heart-warming and heart-wrenching all at once. It's the real deal, a genuine masterpiece of storytelling, sadly beautiful, and perhaps Fraser's finest work to date."

— Stephen Clare
The Book Club, Halifax



RAYMOND FRASER

Hockey player, Olympian, soldier of fortune: these are just three of the careers a young Raymond Fraser considered before settling on his true calling: writing.

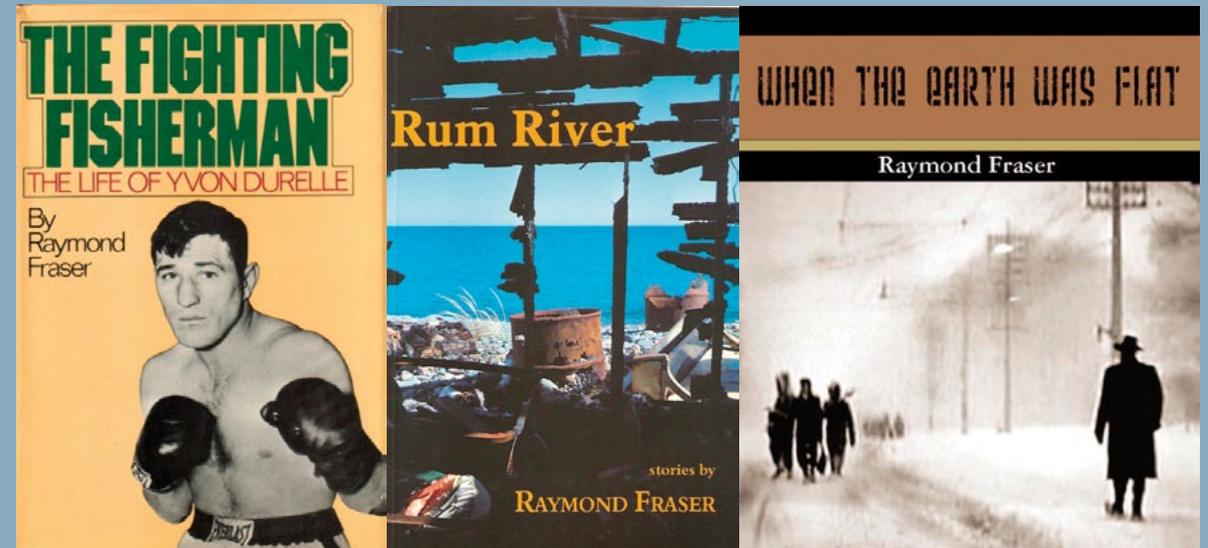
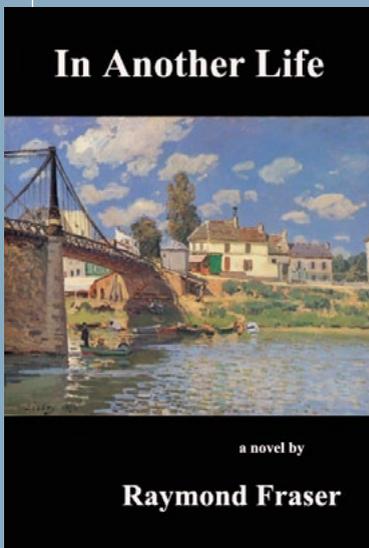
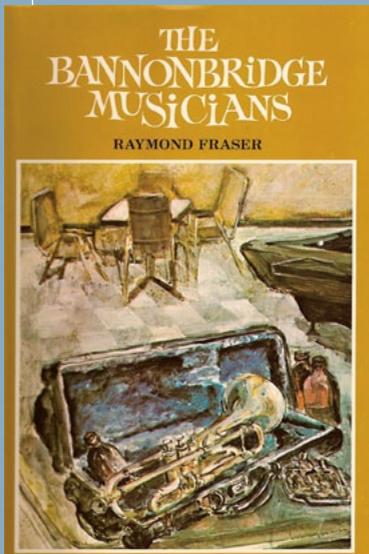
"I felt it in my bones quite early, the desire to be a writer. At 14 I decided maybe it would be too dull. Thought I'd live an exciting life for a while, and then write when I was older." However by the time the

Chatham boy turned 17, Fraser's mind was made up, and New Brunswick's cultural life is the richer for it.

In poetry, fiction, or non-fiction, Raymond Fraser possesses the rare talent of truth telling. Wielding his trademark dry wit, his keen ear for dialogue, and an ability to wring truth from every line, he is, as Farley Mowat has said, "the best literary voice to come belling out of the Maritimes in decades."

As a boy, Fraser often hitchhiked from Chatham to Newcastle to borrow books from the library in the Old Manse. The adventures between the pages of those books helped to inspire his love of words, and his thirst for new horizons. He has lived in Montreal, Paris, and Spain. Yet during that time his literary gaze remained fixed on his home province. Eventually, Fraser returned to New Brunswick and now lives in Fredericton.

The Vancouver Sun has said Fraser is possessed of a "highly original voice that is occasionally sad, sometimes very comic. A real pleasure to read." Notable for its sheer diversity, Raymond Fraser's career spans 50 years, and counting. The list includes eight books of fiction, seven collections of poetry, two biographies and a memoir. His novel *The Bannanbridge Musicians* was a finalist for the Governor General's Award for Fiction. Numerous Canadian literary magazines have benefited from his insightful observations and his work is included in more than a dozen literary anthologies. Fraser's fiction and poetry have been broadcast and dramatized on CBC Radio and television.



Much of his work has focused largely on small town New Brunswick, in that two-decade span between the stultifying 1950s and the 1970s burgeoning optimism, a time when class structure and religious prejudice could define one for life. Fraser has captured moments in New Brunswick's cultural and social landscape that will never return, and has, with his lucid writer's eye, given a literary context to this history. Exploring the human condition through themes of alienation, loneliness, poverty, and escape — both geographic and in the bottom of a bottle — the significance of his contribution is found in his vividly portrayed characters, real and fictional. In *The Fighting Fisherman: The Life of Yvon Durelle*, he provided a voice for the renowned boxer and soft-spoken folk hero from Baie-Saint-Anne. His most recent novel, *In Another Life*, is a tragicomic portrayal of one man's rise to prominence in his community and his slow descent into alcoholism.

Fraser's letters, papers, and manuscripts have been archived at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton. The collection contains a precious correspondence, which spanned the better part of twenty years. The letters began in the early 1960s, when a young man wrote a fan letter to his literary hero. That hero was Alden Nowlan, one of Canada's greatest poets. Alden Nowlan answered that first letter with a friendly reply. The relationship grew over time, evolving from mentorship to a deep friendship. Of Raymond Fraser Nowlan declared: "He is one of the most gifted writers I know, and among his gifts are two that are all too rare: a zest for life and a sense of humour. He belongs to the timeless tradition of storytellers."

"From as far back as I can remember, writing has performed — and continues to perform — an important role in my life, as an outlet for my thoughts and emotions. . . . Each literary genre provides a different means of liberating myself from my overflow of ideas, images or emotions."

— Rino Morin Rossignol

"This book initiates a bittersweet reflection on time, youth and love. With delicate sensuality, it approaches these existential issues in dense and sumptuous language. The deft and graceful writing describes the passages that have shaped enchanted memories."

— Jury of the Governor General's Literary Award

RINO MORIN ROSSIGNOL

Lieutenant-Governor's Award
for High Achievement in
French Literary Arts



RINO MORIN ROSSIGNOL

Rino Morin Rossignol's educational background was in visual arts, but over the years he has worked in many different areas, as a non-fiction writer, poet, novelist, playwright, journalist, political strategist, translator and communications specialist.

In all of these activities, Rino Morin Rossignol's work is guided by his love of the French language.

A writer and an advocate for literature and language, he works energetically to encourage the use, quality, protection and promotion of the French language. He is also a fervent supporter of a strong Francophone identity in a world in which cultures are in constant evolution.

In recognition of his outstanding contribution to the promotion of the French language, he was honoured with the 125th anniversary medal of the Confederation of Canada in 1992 and the rank of *Chevalier de l'Ordre de la Pléiade*, the *Ordre de la Francophonie et du dialogue des cultures* awarded by the *Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie* in 1998.

Besides the unquestionable literary quality of his writing, one of Rino Morin Rossignol's fascinating qualities is his versatility. Over the last three decades, he has published works of theatre, four collections of poetry, a novel, and numerous essays. He is also a columnist with *L'Acadie Nouvelle*, the provincial French-language daily newspaper, and a much sought-after speaker. In both of these activities, he is admired for his articulate presentation of his vast knowledge.

"From as far back as I can remember, writing has performed — and continues to perform — an important role in my life, as an outlet for my thoughts and emotions," he states. "Essays allow me to express my logical thoughts, and poetry reflects my intuitive thought. Between these two poles, in theatre and fiction I can give free rein to my satirical and carnivalesque fantasy. Each literary genre provides a different means of liberating myself from my overflow of ideas, images or emotions."



Originally from Saint-Basile in northwestern New Brunswick, Rino Morin Rossignol attended Collège Saint-Joseph in Memramcook. When the college closed in 1966, he returned to Edmundston to complete his Bachelor's degree in Visual Arts at Collège Saint-Louis, which is now the Edmundston Campus of the Université de Moncton.

Rino Morin Rossignol has been delicately honing his poetic practices for the past 35 years. He published his first poems in magazines, anthologies and textbooks. In 1988, his first collection of poetry, *Les boas ne touchent pas aux lettres d'amour*, was published by Éditions Perce-Neige, in Moncton. Two volumes of poetry followed: *La rupture des gestes* (Éditions d'Acadie, 1994) and *L'éclat du silence*, (Écrits des Forges, 1998).

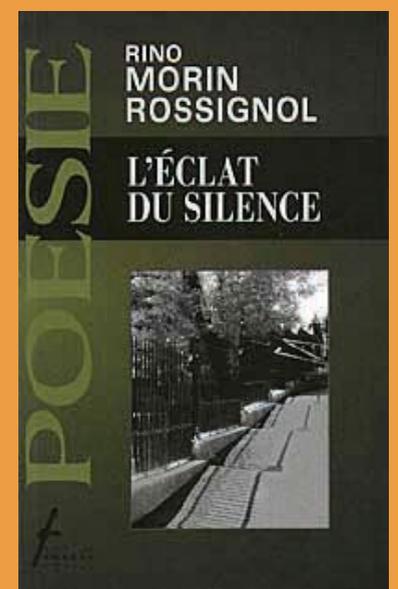
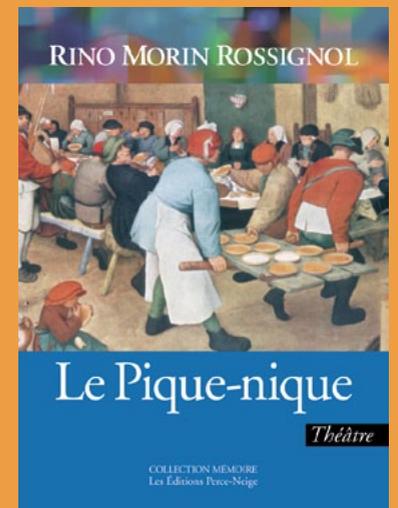
Each of his collections has received both critical and popular praise. In 2007, his most recent collection, entitled *Intifada du cœur*, was shortlisted for the Governor General's Literary Award.

The comments of the jury highlighted the extraordinary qualities of the book: "This book initiates a bittersweet reflection on time, youth and love. With delicate sensuality, it approaches these existential issues in dense and sumptuous language. The deft and graceful writing describes the passages that have shaped enchanted memories."

Published in 1982 and reprinted in 2001 by Éditions Perce-Neige, his play, *Le pique-nique*, has become one of the essential contributions to Acadian literary heritage. A sharp and keen satire on the social, linguistic and cultural differences in Acadie, this play is informed by a desire to eliminate intolerance and promote acceptance of the Other, of all others.

Rino Morin Rossignol is also responsible for reinvigorating the essay as a genre in Acadie. Anne-Marie Robichaud, professor emerita of the Université de Moncton, in her preface to his book *Rumeur publique*, published in 1991, wrote that "Morin Rossignol shows not only how well the literary essay lends itself to variety and flexibility; he also enriches and liberates Acadian literature a bit more, and this is undoubtedly its greatest quality."

Admired for his elegant style, his wit and dry humour, his scathing and lucid criticisms, this writer has patiently built a unique, unusual and timeless body of work, marked by its genuine and uncompromising quality.



"I strive to undermine the ease of painting
by embracing the appearance of awkwardness
of messiness that come from quickly applied paint
keeping the freshness of the work."

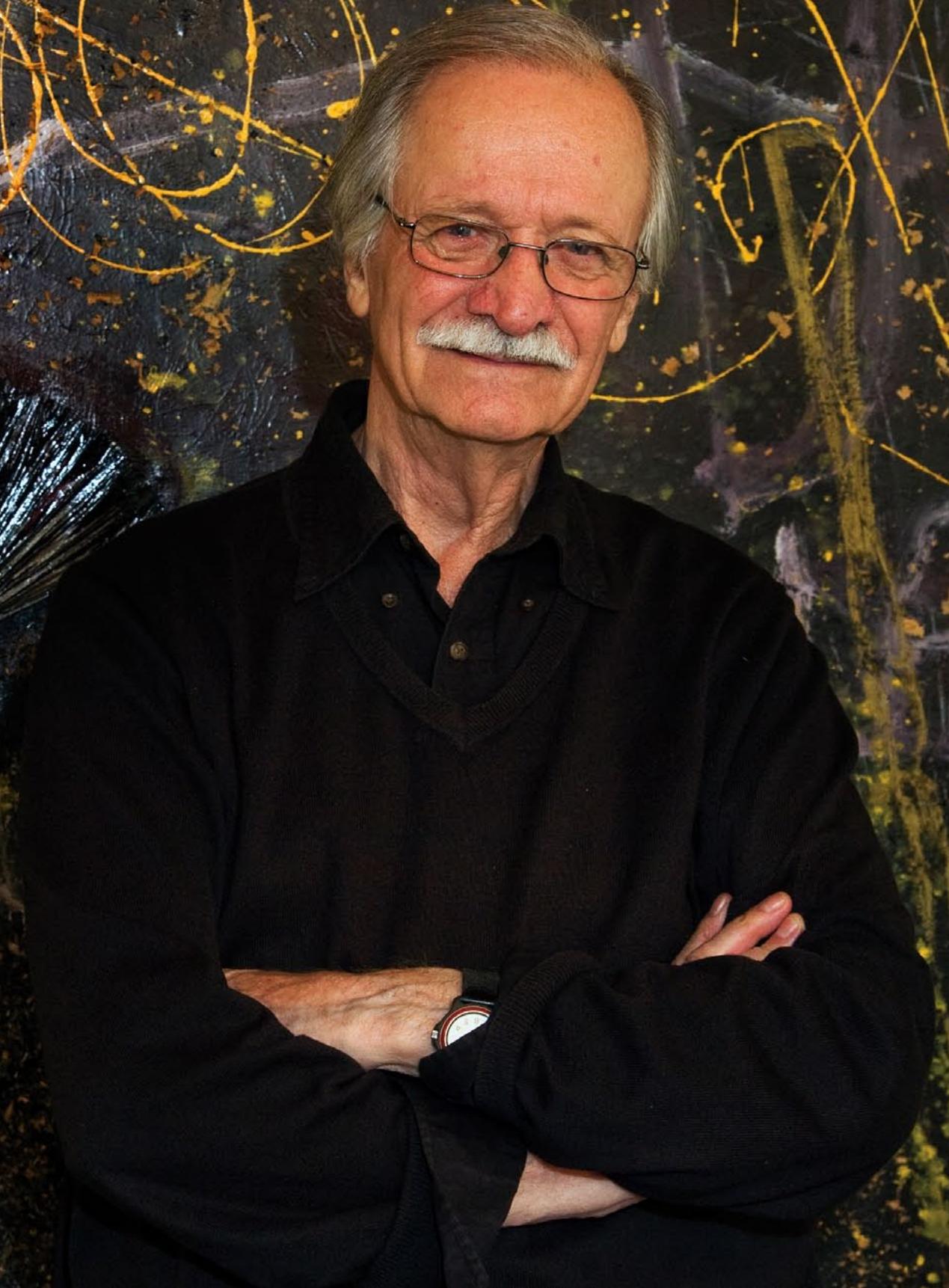
— Roméo Savoie
Trajets dispersés, Les Éditions d'Acadie, 1989

these words traced on the wall
travel across the length of time
across all vastness
across all recollections for ever.

— Roméo Savoie
L'eau brisée, Les Éditions d'Acadie, 1992

ROMÉO SAVOIE

Lieutenant-Governor's Award
for High Achievement
in Visual Arts



ROMÉO SAVOIE

Roméo Savoie is one of Acadie's most important visual artists. As one of the first wave of contemporary Acadian artists, he has made a significant contribution to creating a richer and more dynamic cultural climate not only in New Brunswick but throughout the Atlantic region.

So far, Romeo Savoie's artistic career has stretched over 45 years; during that time he has remained steadfastly committed to a highly personal exploration in his art, which is firmly rooted in contemporary art practices. Critics and art historians remind us that he is the first abstract painter in eastern Canada. A forerunner and mentor to several generations of younger artists, Savoie's groundbreaking work has been an inspiration to countless artists.

Born in Moncton, he holds a Master's in Fine Arts from the Université du Québec à Montréal, a Bachelor's degree in Architecture from the École des beaux-arts de Montréal, and a B.A. from Saint-Joseph College, in Memramcook.

Trained first as an architect, Savoie realized during a trip to Europe in 1964 that he wanted to become a painter, and created his first watercolours in Spain. In 1970, he abandoned architecture and has since dedicated himself entirely to painting. "I gave up architecture the way you leave an apartment," he writes in one of his poems — for this artist, well-known beyond the province's borders, is also one of Acadie's leading poets and has published six collections of poetry.

Essentially an action painter, Savoie transmits his great energy and specific symbolism to his artwork, using themes he has also elaborated in his literary work. His work seeks to delve more deeply into emotions, feelings, and existential themes. Experiencing one of Roméo Savoie's paintings is a journey into a universe of signs, words and forms that range from pure abstraction to figurative modes. Over the years, his creative approach has remained constant and consistent, and he has produced a unified body of work that never strays from a primordial attention to beauty. For this artist, the world is a site of wonder and wanderings.

Roméo Savoie is one of the most eloquent and passionate supporters of Acadian culture and contemporary art. Known for his generosity of spirit, he is always willing to share his knowledge and contribute to the growth of his community. He has



Totémique 3, 1992
76 x 81 x 12.7 cm

been actively involved in the arts community, taking part in the establishment of arts organizations and galleries that have made it possible for more Acadians to exhibit their work. Among them are Galerie Sans Nom and Galerie 12, both located in Moncton's Aberdeen Cultural Centre of which he was a founding member.

For the past four decades, the fruits of his labour have been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions, and his paintings are included in important public and private collections in the Atlantic provinces, Québec, and France.

A prolific artist, Savoie received the Miller Brittain Excellence Award and the Strathbutler Award, recognizing excellence in the visual arts. He also won the Éloize prize, awarded by the *Académie des arts et des lettres de l'Atlantique*, for Visual Artist of the Year in 1998.

In 1999, the Université de Moncton awarded him an honorary doctorate in visual arts, as a tribute to his highly successful career as a painter.

Ghislain Clermont, art critic and historian, summarized the artist's approach succinctly in the catalogue of his *Retrospective 1964-2004* exhibition, organized by the Galerie d'art Louise-et-Reuben-Cohen: "Roméo Savoie has avoided the mistake of trying to *please*; as soon as he began to work at his art, he understood that it is commendable and a manifestation of artistic excellence to *conquer* instead."

Roméo Savoie lives in Grand Barachois, in south-eastern New Brunswick, where he pursues his artistic explorations, and his experiments on creating beauty lead to fascinating inventions.





MARCEL-ROMAIN THÉRIAULT

Lieutenant-Governor's Award
for High Achievement
in Theatre

"With *Le filet*, Marcel-Romain Thériault has succeeded in writing a masterful work."

— *Voir*

"*Disponibles en librairie* confirms Marcel-Romain Thériault's strong presence as a playwright."

— David Lonergan

"Clearly, this major work (*Le filet*) shares the qualities of other important works: it is not simply a chance occurrence, but the result of an ongoing artistic and social reflection and the culmination of a long professional career."

— Andrei Zaharia

Chair, Department of Theatre Arts

Université de Moncton

Preface to *Le filet*

MARCEL-ROMAIN THÉRIAULT

Originally from Bertrand in the Acadian Peninsula, Marcel-Romain Thériault works in theatre, dividing his time and his professional activities among acting, directing, teaching and writing. For over 30 years, he has been taking part in numerous productions, first as an actor, then as a director, and more recently as a playwright.

Audiences have watched him perform in approximately ten plays produced by the Théâtre populaire d'Acadie (TPA), where he also directed a number of productions. In 1989, he directed a play for Viola Léger's theatre company, and in 1994 he directed *Louis Mailloux*, a musical, during the first Acadian World Congress held in Moncton.

Marcel-Romain Thériault holds a Bachelor's degree in Theatre from the Université de Moncton, and a Master's from the École supérieure de théâtre at the Université du Québec à Montréal. He has also completed courses in directing at the École de théâtre du Canada and has had the privilege of studying with the celebrated French director Ariane Mnouchkine.

Passing his knowledge and skills on to future generations has been one of his ongoing commitments. He has been invited as a guest lecturer several times by the

Theatre department at the Université de Moncton.

His first play, *Le filet — une tragédie maritime* was met with enthusiastic success, receiving ovations not only in New Brunswick but also in Ontario and Quebec, confirming that Thériault is a major talent and that his writing has universal relevance. This bold play is based on the crab crisis that occurred in Shippagan in 2003. According to the Executive and Artistic Director of the TPA,



(from left to right) Bertrand Dugas, Éric Butler, Alex Gravel in *Le filet — une tragédie maritime*. Théâtre Populaire d'Acadie production, 2005. Directed by Michel Monty.

Above: (from top to bottom) Mario Mercier and Marcel-Romain Thériault in *Murmures* by Emma Haché. Théâtre Populaire d'Acadie production, 2005. Directed by Jean-Stéphane Roy.

Maurice Arsenault, no other play produced by the company was as thought-provoking for the audience.

Le filet was also presented as a major Canadian premiere, closing the Festival zones théâtrales at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa in 2007. Last June, at the first edition of the Gala des Cochons d'or in Montréal, the play was awarded the Noble Cochon prize for the play with the greatest current relevance and social impact.

The play has recently been published by Prise de parole publishing house in Sudbury. In the preface, the Chair of the Theatre Department at the Université de Moncton, Andrei Zaharia, explains that *Le filet* marks a turning point in the history of Acadian theatre. "For the first time, an author dares to bring to the state, in front of an audience directly affected by the events, a violent episode in the very recent past that ripped open the conscience of the population of Acadie."

The English translation, *The Net, A Tragedy of The Sea*, by Maureen Labonté and Don Hannah, was produced by the Great Canadian Theatre Company in Ottawa, during the spring of 2009.

Marcel-Romain Thériault's second play, *Disponibles en librairie*, was also warmly received by New Brunswick audiences. The English translation of the play, by Jo-Anne Elder, *On and Off The Shelf, A Hopelessly Romantic Comedy*, was also staged by the Notable Acts company in Fredericton in July 2008.

Marcel-Romain Thériault has now finished writing his newest play, *La persistance du sable*. There were play-readings of this work at the Festival à haute voix at Moncton's Théâtre l'Escaouette, at the Dramaturgies en dialogue at the Centre des auteurs dramatique and in Ottawa during the Zones théâtrales event.

Certainly his writing is at the centre of Marcel-Romain Thériault's work now, but the audience will have the pleasure of seeing him on stage in the winter of 2010, when he will perform in the *3 farces de Tchekhov* production by the TPA. The Chekhov play will tour the province.



artsnb is the brand name now used by the New Brunswick Arts Board to administer its funding programs for professional artists. The Arts Board was established as an advisory board in 1989. With the revised New Brunswick Arts Board Act in 1999, it became an arm's length Crown agency governed by a board composed of twelve volunteer members from various backgrounds and regions. The voting majority is practicing professional artists. The Arts Board's mandate is:

- To facilitate and promote the creation of art;
- To facilitate the enjoyment, awareness, and understanding of the arts;
- To advise the government on arts policy;
- To administer project and travel funding for professional artists and arts organizations.

The professional juried funding programs of **artsnb** are essential components in the funding of the arts in New Brunswick. **artsnb** offers a continuum of developmental support to professional artists, from arts scholarships supporting post-secondary study and professional development, to creation and documentation grants for aboriginal, emerging, and established artists, as well as annual arts awards for artistic achievement.

The Lieutenant-Governor's Awards for High Achievement in the Arts is a program designed to recognize the outstanding contribution of certain individuals to the arts. This program was previously called the Excellence Awards Program.

Objectives:

To recognize and reward people who have distinguished themselves by the excellence of their achievements and their contribution to the literary arts, performing arts (music, theatre and dance), and visual arts (media arts, photography and craft);

To establish standards of artistic excellence for New Brunswick residents.

Text: Colleen Kitts and Suzanne Cyr

Translation: Jo-Anne Elder

Design: Julie Scriver, Goose Lane

Portraits: Karen Ruet (Ray Fraser, Marcel-Romain Thériault, and Roméo Savoie)
and Mathieu Léger (Rino Morin Rossignol)