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Acadian artists honour talent

Showcase Chance to introduce some of the vibrant and creative people who call New Brunswick home

SHAWN BERRY
LEGISLATURE BUREAU

FREDERICTON • The best and brightest on the Acadian arts scene have gathered in Fredericton to honour their peers and showcase established and burgeoning talent.

"You always hear people say that there's nothing going on here, but there is plenty," Philippe Beaulieu said Friday as the technical crew working inside The Playhouse put the finishing touches on Saturday's Éloizes awards Gala.

Beaulieu, president of the Association acadienne des artistes professionnels du Nouveau-Brunswick that puts on the awards ceremony, says he hopes the event might even serve as an opportunity to introduce some to the vibrant and creative people who also call New Brunswick home.

"This is a golden opportunity to discover Acadian artists."

A total of 42 nominees are up for 14 awards in categories covering the spectrum of the Acadian arts scene.

Donat Lacroix, a Caraquet fisherman who has spent more than 50 years singing and penning songs about love and the sea, will be honoured for lifetime achievement.

Saturday night's awards gala will feature performances by Les Hay Babies and Lisa LeBlanc, New Brunswick artists who have earned critical acclaim.

As of midday Friday, there were still a number of tickets left for Saturday night's awards gala at the Fredericton Playhouse and he says it might be the perfect introduction for someone who wants to see more of the



Philippe Beaulieu, President of the Association acadienne des artistes professionnels du Nouveau-Brunswick poses for a photo at the Beaverbrook art gallery's exhibition by the finalists for the association's artist of the year award.

PHOTO: ANDREW MADEY/FOR THE DAILY GLEANER

Acadian arts scene.

"It would be a beautiful way to discover the artists. By seeing what is happening on stage and discovering artists as a spectator, we also discover ourselves," Beaulieu said of Saturday night's gala.

"It's not just an awards ceremony, it's a big show. For someone who lives in New Brunswick and is proud of New Brunswick, this is a great chance to see a quality show that is done here by people from here and that makes you proud to be a New Brunswicker."

Beaulieu notes some of the artists on the bill – like LeBlanc and Les Hay Babies – may not be so well-known across New Brunswick but are recognized names in Quebec and Europe. Radio Radio are also doing that.

"They're carving out an important place. Go to Zurich or a place like that and the room is packed for them," Beaulieu said.

Beaulieu said just as important to the event have been activities reaching out to the community.

"It's not just the gala. It's everything around it"

The gala is the high point of a week of events that included artists circles, film showings and community events.

A number of artists are also to perform at the Boyce Farmers Market on Saturday starting at 10 a.m.

Artists also visited students at District scolaire francohone sud schools in Fredericton, Oromocto, Saint John and Quispamsis involved about 2,300 students.

"We're showing that it was a worthwhile event and worth coming here to hold our festival," Beaulieu said.

Marie-Line Leblanc, a multidisciplinary artist who is among the nominees in this year's awards, spent part of Friday discovering Fredericton.

"It's an opportunity to meet. The whole

time I've been meeting people and I've sort of forgotten there's an awards ceremony," said the Acadian artist originally from Quebec's Iles-de-la-Madeleine.

"It's wonderful. You have access to more people," said Leblanc, who has a particular interest in the transmission of ideas, thoughts words.

A series of her paintings ton display at the Beaverbrook Art Gallery as part of the events around the Éloizes incorporate silkscreen of jetsam that washed up on the coast near her home.

"It's interesting that the words on them have come to us from the sea."

Her work, along with those of nominees Marie Hélène Allain, Luc A. Charette and Jocelyn Jean are on display until the middle of June.

The Éloizes awards promote the work of Acadian artists in the Atlantic provinces. They have been handed out every two years since 1998.