

Mitchell, Plamondon honoured

BY ELIZABETH RENZETTI
Arts Reporter

TORONTO — Six Canadian artists, including a couple of expatriates and one born in the United States, were honoured yesterday for their work on stage, screen and record.

Songwriters **Joni Mitchell** and Luc Plamondon, actress Martha Henry, costume designer François Barbeau, cinematographer and director Michel Brault and choreographer Grant Strate were named the recipients of the 1996 Governor-General's Performing Arts Awards yesterday in Toronto.

Pianist Jon Kimura Parker won the National Arts Centre Award for his "courage and humanity" for performing in Sarajevo with that battered city's orchestra early this year, and for his U.S. tour with the National Arts Centre Orchestra. The Ramon John Hnatyshyn Award for most diligent volunteer went to Martha Lou Henley, for her long-time service with the Vancouver Opera.

There was no recipient named in the opera/classical music category, while two were named in the pop-music category. The jury "may select two people from one category and no one from another category," said the award's co-chair, Peter Herrndorf. "But over a five-year period you'll see all of the categories represented equally."

Both Plamondon and Henry were present as their names were read at the Princess of Wales Theatre in Toronto. Henry, a veteran of many Canadian stages, is currently seen on the big screen in David Wellington's adaptation of the Stratford Festival hit, *Long Day's Journey into Night*.

Henry, who came to Canada from the United States in 1959, became a Canadian citizen in 1970. "I came here knowing that I was coming to a country that would look at your work, and look at it over a long period of time." Plamondon said, "I'm quite honoured to be on the same level as **Joni Mitchell**." Plamondon has written more than 500 songs and was recently honoured at a gala concert in Montreal. He has written for Celine Dion, and his songs are the subject of her French-language record, *Dion chante Plamondon*.

Plamondon says these awards are important in the way they bridge cultures. "They honour equally French-Canadian artists and English-Canadian artists for lifetime achievement."

The winners were chosen from a pool of 18 nominated by six juries of their peers.

The awards will be presented in Ottawa by Governor-General Roméo LeBlanc on Nov. 1. The following evening, all the recipients (including Mitchell, who lives in California, and Plamondon, who lives in Paris) will take part in a gala evening at the National Arts Centre, to be broadcast in December by the CBC.