

The magazine from ACTRA Toronto

Volume 16 • Issue 3 • Fall 2007

# performers

## Megan Follows

speaks with Ann-Marie MacDonald

Display until January 2008 \$4.60

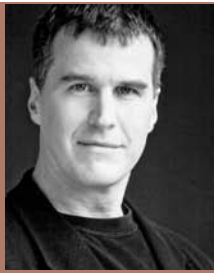


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Meet our Credit Union's CEO p. 16



ACTRA  
TORONTO PERFORMERS



# President's Message



## SHEDDING LIGHT ON COUNCIL ELECTION DAY

### Ladies and gentlemen,

Consider your magazine. Written for, about and (mostly) by ACTRA Toronto performers, *Performers Magazine* is all about YOU!

Check out the stories. Read the feature interview with **Megan Follows** by **Ann-Marie MacDonald**. Meet **Steven Mumford**, the CEO of our soon-to-be-launched credit union and get a peek at a future in which we get a financial institution that understands us. Follow **Caroline Hay** as she shines a spotlight on the incredible talent in the Toronto voice community working in animation. Get ready to work with our editor **Chris Owens** who talks to our colleagues and shares their worthwhile tips on *Surviving On Set*. Find out about some of the public policy issues that concern performers and the action we can take to get our message through to the lawmakers. And then take a moment to reflect on the passing of a Canadian icon as **Susan Coyne**, **Martha Henry**, **Tom McCamus**, **Michael Therriault** and **Peter Donaldson** invite us to pause and remember **William Hutt**.

And, while you're sampling this smorgasbord of news about our business, consider the work being done behind the scenes by your fellow members who have taken time away from their own careers and personal lives and are taking a turn at ACTRA, working for all of us. I mean your ACTRA Toronto Councillors. Not just the current bunch, although I think they did a pretty good job managing our first strike and launching a credit union! I mean all of the ACTRA Toronto members, past, present and future who step up and do the work that always needs to be done to protect us on the job and fight for more work opportunities. And when you've reflected on all the good things that your union does, consider this, it's election time again at ACTRA Toronto.

Soon you'll be getting your council election package. Ask yourself when you read the candidates' statements if you know as much as you should to make a good decision about where the union should go. If you have questions, visit the ACTRA Toronto website at [www.actratontoronto.com](http://www.actratontoronto.com) and get up to speed on what your union's been doing on your behalf and on what it plans to do. Then ask yourself who is best qualified to represent you for the next two years. Choose wisely. We all have to live with the decisions we make on election day. That's what our union democracy is all about.

What are the qualities that make an effective ACTRA Toronto Councillor? Here's my two cents' worth.

Councillors need to be fast learners. From the nuances of the contract to the complexities of public policy, there is a wealth of detail that needs to be understood if council is to make good decisions.

Councillors need to be clear thinkers who can digest all this information and find their way to the right decision. Weighing the union's history, staff's recommendations, other councillors' input, members' comments and your own gut feelings can be a challenge, especially when the stakes are high and the choices few.

Councillors need to be good listeners. This involves checking one's ego and assumptions at the door, staying open to other points of view, weighing alternatives and deciding where the greatest good lies.

Above all, ACTRA Toronto Councillors need to be team players with a desire to serve the whole membership. Taking your turn on council and doing your best for the members gives you the right to expect the same from every councillor that follows you.

Pick up the torch, hold it high and then pass it on. That way, it keeps giving light to everyone.

### In solidarity,

**Karl Pruner**  
**President**  
**ACTRA Toronto Performers**



**Karl Pruner and ACTRA members marching in the Labour Day Parade.**  
(L-R: Diane Gordon, Karl Pruner, Joanna Bennett, and Lyn Mason Green)  
Photo: Kim Hume



## Performers

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On the cover:  
Megan Follows  
photographed by  
Jag Gundu.

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Megan Follows photographed by Jag Gundu.

# SURVIVING ON SET

How to deal with the trials and tribulations of life on the set

by Chris Owens



Photo courtesy of Torstar Syndication Services. Photo: Peter Power

You've landed a job! Excellent. Congratulations. So, you take some time off from the restaurant and prepare yourself accordingly. You study the script, you learn your lines, and you breathe life into your part. And now you go to work. But how do you cope with being on set, the long hours, the distractions, the downtime, the cast and crew and the craft service table?

Here are a few thoughts on the subject, interspersed with observations from a handful of wonderful actors I spoke with over countless cups of coffee.

The first time I had a lead in a television show I wanted to do everything I could to stay focused. I took out a room at the YMCA, I wandered the streets in character and I always wore part of my costume, which in retrospect must have given the wardrobe department fits.

When I arrived on set on day one, I was ready to work. The scene I was going to shoot was a heated argument between my mother and me. I'd prepared myself. I was upset. I was angry. It was six a.m.

By the time we actually got to my scene, some five hours later, I was absolutely exhausted. Maintaining my fighting attitude had zapped me of all my strength. How did actors do this, I wondered? There must be another way. I had to figure out how to be ready when the time was right.

Now when I arrive on set, I check the call sheet to make sure I know the order of the scenes to be shot that day and I give myself enough time to prepare, depending on the demands of the scene. I like to socialize with other actors and the crew but sometimes I'll take advantage of downtime to rest or read or study my lines.

It can be physically challenging to be on a set, whether you're on location or in the studio. I once played a two-headed creature and spent seven hours in a single make-up session, having prosthetics applied to my face and over one eye. The other eye was fit with a darkened, over-size contact lens. I then waited another three hours to shoot my scene and when the director finally saw me his first words were: "Can you dance?"

For that shoot I had to conserve my energy and rest whenever I could. I meditated. I drank plenty of fluids. I befriended the ADs and PAs. And to pass the time and keep me in the right head space I read Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

Everyone on set has a job to do. Ultimately, it's your responsibility to be ready when needed. Use your time wisely.

Ever show up on set and discover that the scene is going to play out in an entirely different way than you'd envisioned? For me that would pretty much be every time I work. I'm always surprised. The location, the way it's being shot, even the props I'm using. In the beginning, this had a tendency to throw me off. Eventually, I embraced the idea that I must prepare myself and at the same time be willing to adapt.

*"I don't think you can go on set with a preconceived notion of what's going to happen, I really don't. It has been my experience that something always changes."* - **Phillip MacKenzie**



*"One day I'm running around with my Delta Force gun chasing a CGI monster and the next, I've got an expositional speech filled with scientific data and tongue twisters."*



*"The First Commandment is be ready to do the job. I check with the AD's to see how much time I have. It's up to you to pace yourself. When they call on you, you've got to be ready. You've got to find out what works best for you. It requires a kind of mental toughness."*

**- Tom Melissis**



*"It's all about the craft. You know, craft services. Don't eat all the candies when they bring'em out. Skip a tray now and then. It's all about discipline."*

**- Carlos Diaz**



*"We're paid to be available. 'Action' is galvanizing. It gets the adrenalin flowing."*

**- Gina Clayton**

What about last minute rewrites? I worked on a TV show during the summer and while I was sitting in the make-up chair one of the writers was busy dictating major changes to the next scene I was about to shoot. What I do at this point, after calming my initial panic, is to find a quiet spot on set or in my trailer and get to work learning the new dialogue. Sometimes, I'll enlist the help of another actor. I also practice cold reads between jobs to keep my muscles sharp.

*"We're Canadians so we never say, 'Hey can I have some quiet time I need to work!' But you also don't need to panic because you're going to get to set and they're going to run it three times before you shoot it and they're not going to shoot it in one piece, generally speaking. The director knows the lines are new and they're pretty good about it. Don't lose your head."*

**- Carlos Diaz**

Sometimes, oddly enough, last minute changes can have the opposite effect. Instead of making you panic, you might feel liberated. Under the circumstances, you have little choice but to 'boldly go where no one has gone before.'

*"On Sixth Grade Alien they would give me monologues at the last minute because I had a reputation for being able to do them. It's a weird kind of freedom because you can't expect it to be all genius. Then it turns out great because you don't have time to worry. I actually don't mind it."*

**- Gina Clayton**

A set is a world unto itself. News travels fast. I tend to steer clear of whiners because that kind of negative energy has a tendency to come back and bite you in the behind. The last thing I want to hear is some actor complaining about his early pick-up time when the driver has been on the clock for three hours already. Of course legitimate problems can always be addressed to the ACTRA Steward. I tend to think of everyone on set as a team. We work together and sometimes you're called on to tough it out.

One day I'm running around with my Delta Force gun chasing a CGI monster and the next, I've got an expositional speech filled with scientific data and tongue twisters. You can bet that I'm going to be a little different on set each day. The first day I'm likely to hang out and chat with everyone and the next day, I might pull that back a bit and allow myself to concentrate.

*"Everything's about the work, so you've got to take that into consideration first. If you feel like joking around will help the scene, I think that's fine. But sometimes, isolating yourself and conserving your energy could be fine as well. When all is said and done, the last thing that's going to be seen is what comes up on that screen and that's your work. You have to protect it, you have to guard it."*

**- Billy Otis**

Every set has a different feel to it. You might find yourself working in an exotic location or you might find yourself working in a familiar studio space. If I'm working on a feature, or a series, or as a day player, this might have some initial effect my comfort level. I try to recognize that and get on with the business at hand.

*"There is a hierarchy you must acknowledge on set and it shifts around. One day you're the focus and other days, you're supporting someone else. You've still got to do your work."*

**- Tom Melissis**

Each actor I spoke with told me that they make a point of communicating with the ADs when they're on set. If they step out for whatever reason, they always let somebody know. An AD can give you a heads up on how much time you might have between shots or wardrobe changes. This is valuable information! Treat them with respect and you will find they are very helpful.

More often than not, the order of scenes to be shot is dictated by location. I did an episodic series last year where essentially all of my dialogue took place in two rooms. We shot all of those scenes in one day. The other three days were just shots of me getting in and out of cars and running down alleyways. Learn your lines!

Surviving on set is a bit of a balancing act. You've got to be prepared but flexible, you're the centre of attention on 'action' but other times you're just in the way. You've got to focus on your task but acknowledge that you are just one part of a larger community.

I always find that this helps me: remember why you are there. A set can be exciting and distracting. It can be a ton of fun and it can be tedious. Through all this, you've got a job to do and when it all comes together, it can be one heck of an exhilarating experience.

I want to thank all the actors for their thoughts. I'm sure to come down from the coffee by the time my next gig rolls around.

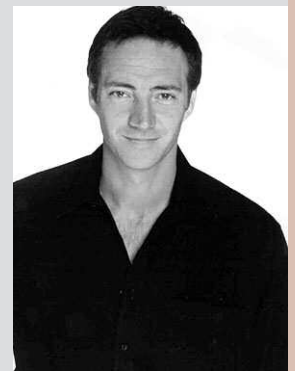
### Break a leg!



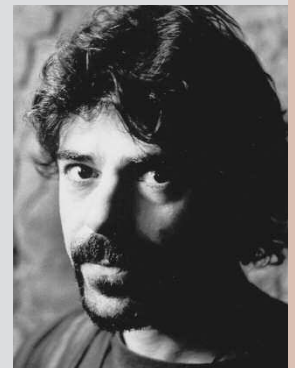
Chris Owens is editor of *Performers Magazine*. His recent credits include *The Incredible Hulk* and George Walker's *The Weight*. He plays hockey in Toronto.



*"Being an actor can be a lonely business, so it's something to celebrate, being on set, working together."*  
- **Agi Gallus**



*"The hardest thing is sustaining your energy. It's physically tiring to be on set. There's a kind of pressure that's always there saying 'you're about to go on' and it's exhausting. Then to have that sense of play at three in the morning is difficult."*  
- **Phillip MacKenzie**



*"If you need a nap, take it. Get your rest. If you need some energy, whatever, maybe it's time for honey land. Pace yourself. You want to be at your best to give your best."* - **Billy Otis**



*"It's a privilege to be on set. You want to enjoy it and get the most out of the experience."*  
- **Priya Rao**



# Megan Follows

**Ann-Marie MacDonald** talks with **Megan Follows** about her extraordinary cross border life on stage and screen after their successful Toronto run together in **Caryl Churchill's** *Top Girls* at Soulpepper Theatre.

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**AMM:** *What motivated you to become an actor?*

**MF:** Growing up around actors. Both of my parents were working all the time when I was growing up. One of the greatest gifts my parents gave us was an absolute love and passion for what they did, their passion for the world. That's very attractive, so I don't think it was ever a choice for me. Mom was actually at Stratford, doing *Anthony and Cleopatra* I think, when she was eight months pregnant with me.

**AMM:** *So when did you start working?*

**MF:** I was nine. My first professional job, playing mom's TV kid in a Bell Canada commercial. But I was doing stuff at school, so I was definitely a 'look at me, woo-hoo, over here' kind of kid.

**AMM:** *How did you make the transition into an adult career, or was it seamless?*

**MF:** Some of it I feel is luck. But I always really wanted to be an actor. It wasn't about being a kid in a candy store and not on a film set. Whoa, oh, no, no, no! There was too much at stake, time, pressure, too many people waiting. But I just loved the work time.

**AMM:** *So has growing up in a theatrical family taught you something about how to balance your own career with being a parent?*

**MF:** That's a hard one to do in this business. And I only have two kids. My parents had four! When I'm working a lot and I'm away, I'm totally away and that's very difficult. But when I'm not, I'm completely there with them. Sometimes I feel that I have the best of both worlds, so I feel pretty lucky.



*“We need to tell our stories  
because they’re ours and  
no one else’s.  
They have incredible value.”*  
- Megan Follows

# Megan Follows



Megan in her iconic role as Anne in *Anne of Green Gables*. Photo courtesy Sullivan Entertainment.



Megan plays a nurse who is a single mother in *Robson Arms*. Photo courtesy Omni Film Productions and CTV. Photo: Katie Yu

**AMM:** *You get up at 6 a.m. and you're involved in the day with a family, then you go to rehearsal and then do another show at night. How do you cope?*

**MF:** (Laughter) I'm a big believer in naps. I can't do it without earplugs now though. I've become a light sleeper. I think that is a parental thing.

**AMM:** *You are a leading lady, a magnificent actor, so a busy day is not unusual for you.*

**MF:** No. But that's what my parents did. The trickier part is balancing the family part with the actor's rush of adrenaline. Actors are sort of emotional athletes. It's a lot of wear and tear, an emotional war zone. But you can't take that home. The winding down used to be the cast drink at the bar after the show. Now it's about getting on my bike, having to move my body. It is like warming down, stretching out.

**AMM:** *Well, you do a lot of theatre but you also continue to do a lot of television and film. What's your first love? What's your abiding love?*

**MF:** I think my abiding love is a great character, and for me, that happened first in film and television. It was not in a theatre. I was thinking of *Boys and Girls*, an Alice Munro short story. It won an Academy Award® for Best Short Drama.

**AMM:** *So you've always been comfortable in front of the camera?*

**MF:** I have been. Yeah.

**AMM:** *Where is your sense of the audience when you are on camera?*

**MF:** I sort of think of the camera as the partner, or the other character in the room. I think of it as a being.

**AMM:** *But you can hear a live audience breathing, or unwrapping a candy, clapping, laughing.*

**MF:** It's true. You ride the wave of an audience in theatre so that's where there's a totally different technique. You sort of vaguely see shapes, almost as cells of your being, that each person there is a part of you. So, I think of them as a connection. They're part of the show.

**AMM:** *There are a lot of actors who are very powerful on stage and do not have that relationship with a camera.*

**MF:** That's interesting isn't it? A camera seems to seek out certain people, will like certain people. There are actors who are fantastic on stage but the camera may not like them – which is not about their acting or their talent. More like a chemistry... But that's very different from what you have to do in front of an audience.

**AMM:** *It seems to be the counterpart to stage presence. There are some people who walk out on stage and they shine before they've said anything, it's almost mercurial. That also takes a different craft, knowing how to be on stage... but I think it's about energy.*

**MF:** I do too.

**AMM:** *So L.A., how long have you been living there?*

**MF:** I first went down when I was 14. So L.A. is really more than half my life. It took me a long time to feel like it was a partial home, but Toronto's really home.

**AMM:** *Why? How are they different for you?*

**MF:** In L.A., I wanted something from L.A. It's a hardcore business town. Everyone's waiting for... the next someone. Maybe two years earlier, no one would give the time of day, but all of a sudden that same person, that same quality, is now marketable or recognized and it's (explosive sounds). Now, I have to say that I think all that same machinery is alive and well in Canada's industry. It's just, perhaps there's a different –

**AMM:** *A different scale?*

**MF:** That's it, you know you are not talking about multimillion dollar movies. But business is still business and that element exists. I think that industry elements and artistic elements sometimes conflict or collide, but sometimes it can be fantastic.

**AMM:** Was there ever a moment when you'd think ... 'Okay I'm either going to make L.A. my home, or I'm going to come back to Toronto.'

**MF:** Actually, in the last while I've done quite a bit of television here. I think there has been an exodus to L.A., because the feeling is that if you can get recognition there, it's going to help you here, in Canada. That's just the truth of the matter and it's unfortunate. You know Lucy Maud Montgomery could not get *Anne of Green Gables* published in Canada. It was published initially by the Boston Publishing Company.

**AMM:** Oh, my goodness!

**MF:** When I was reminded of that recently, it was rather chilling. I thought, 'Oh my God, what are we doing? Why is it still such a struggle, even now!?' It's extraordinarily admirable when actors commit to coming back to Canada. It takes a huge amount of effort.

**AMM:** When I wrote my novel (*Fall on Your Knees*), I found that Canadian literature had already been invented. You know I didn't have to help invent it.

**MF:** Canadian actors? I would say it's very different.

**AMM:** That's right. Theatre and especially the film industry is still so young in Canada.

**MF:** But we used to also have fantastic live television in CBC's heyday.

**AMM:** Why is that momentum not built upon? I think we all have opinions about why that is.

**MF:** We do. I have a lot of admiration for the artistry that I see come out of Quebec and the mix of those worlds, of the theatre and the film and the television. Of course it's an entity. The protection is in their culture and language. But in English Canada, we are bombarded by productions and influences from a culture to the South. It's harder to compete.

**AMM:** How do you see the future?

**MF:** I'm just fascinated to see where we're headed in our industry in Canada. The internet, that whole aspect is really at its birth. Of course, ACTRA has been quite active on that front. I'm grateful for the history of theatre. I think ultimately even when the venue or the medium through which the content is experienced is new, the content itself, you know, is about storytelling. And we need to have our stories told. We have to fight for that.

**AMM:** Do you think living on both sides of the border makes you value Canada, value telling our own stories, that much more?

**MF:** Absolutely. There are always elements of any story that bring us a commonality of human experience, but individual stories, our stories in Canada make them meaningful and unique. We need to tell our stories because they're ours and no one else's. They have incredible value.

**AMM:** That seems like a good note to end on.



**Ann-Marie MacDonald** is an award winning author, actor and playwright. Her play *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* won the Governor General's Award for Drama. Her first novel, *Fall on Your Knees*, won the Commonwealth Writers Prize and was named to Oprah Winfrey's Book Club. She starred alongside **Megan Follows** in Souleppper's production of *Top Girls*. She is a member of ACTRA Toronto.



**Megan Follows**

Megan Follows  
Photo: Jag Gundu

selected credits

## Film & Television

*Booky and the Secret Santa*  
*Booky Makes Her Mark* (Gemini Nomination)  
*Shania: A Life in Eight Albums* (Gemini and ACTRA Award Nominations)  
*Robson Arms*  
*Open Heart* (Gemini Nomination)  
*CSI*  
*ER*  
*Cold Case*  
*Law and Order*  
*Made in Canada*  
*Reluctant Angel*  
*The Stork Derby*  
*Major Crime*  
*Termini Station* (Genie Nomination)  
*Anne of Green Gables: The Continuing Story*  
*Anne of Avonlea* (Gemini Award)  
*Anne of Green Gables* (Gemini Award)  
*Hockey Night* (ACTRA Award Nomination)  
*Boys and Girls* (Academy Award® for Best Short Film)

## Theatre

*Three Sisters*  
*Top Girls*  
*The Real Thing*  
*Fool for Love*  
*Uncle Vanya*  
*Othello*  
*The Seagull*  
*A Doll's House*  
*She Stoops To Conquer*  
*Amadeus*  
*Romeo and Juliet*

# Animated *Voices*

A look at  
voice work  
in Toronto

by Carolyn Hay



Poe, from *Ruby Gloom*, voiced by Adrian Truss.  
Image courtesy Corus Entertainment.

When asked to report on the Toronto animation voice scene, I have to admit I was a little reticent. I haven't been a full-time voiceover actor for a few years, working as story editor and writer for 40 eps of YTV's animated series *Ruby Gloom*. Sure I still venture out of the cave occasionally to record the odd gig, such as Pontifidora the Conquistadora, an alien bounty hunter in *Atomic Betty*, but really what did I know?

Then I thought about my experience on *Ruby Gloom*, and how the characters we developed early on didn't really come to life until the voice actors came on the scene. It was exciting to witness. An actor gives a slight nuance here, a unique take there, and all of a sudden, we have full-blown characters with lives of their own. My lines weren't just lines anymore. They were words that the characters spoke naturally. So I decided to sit down with a few *Ruby Gloom* cast members and the *Ruby Gloom* voice director to get an idea of what life was like on the other side of the glass. Okay, I said I'd venture out of the cave, I didn't say I'd go far.

"You can't do voice work. Your voices aren't likeable. It's really competitive out there so don't even bother." That's what **Stacey DePass'** former agent told her upon hearing her first demo tape. This, "At a time when I couldn't even get a job as a waitress in Little Italy because I had no wine knowledge."

Clearly, this agent got it wrong. Today, you could easily call Stacey the go-to girl for animation voice work in the city. She plays Iris, a hyperactive one-eyed adventure girl in *Ruby Gloom*, not to mention the dry-witted acerbic teenager, Nikki, in *6Teen* and a sweet young Indian boy, Sanjay, in *Captain Flamingo* just to name a few of her roles. I really hope that agent is reading this.

How did Stacey weather the discouragement way back when? Perseverance and a true love of her craft. "I love playing characters far away from me. I love getting to play." I asked her where she draws her inspiration from and she explained exuberantly: "Look around, the world is full of these great, wonderful characters!" and then she confided, "I'm a big eavesdropper."

The moral of the story is to work hard, hone your craft and don't listen to any negative advice from people who don't know what they're talking about. Toronto is a great animation scene with lots of opportunity. You just need to know where to find it and how to nail the job once you do.

**Merle Anne Ridley**, creative producer and voice director of *Ruby Gloom*, tells me: "There's a lot more production right now for animation than there was say, 10 years ago, because there are more shows. And the market's growing. More channels and more options mean they need more content and therefore more voice actors."

This is very encouraging news, and Merle Anne should know. She's been a producer, director, casting director and voice director on countless award-winning animated series in Canada. I'd listen to what she has to say and I'm not just saying that because she's my producer.

*"You can't do voice work. Your voices aren't likeable. It's really competitive out there so don't even bother." That's what Stacey DePass' former agent told her upon hearing her first demo tape.*



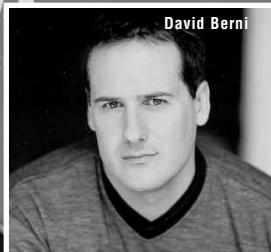
Stacey DePass



Iris, voiced by Stacey DePass. Image courtesy Corus Entertainment.



Frank and Len,  
voiced by David Berni  
and Jeremy Harris.  
Image courtesy Corus  
Entertainment.



So the market is growing, and as a result, the talent pool is expanding. That means voice work is, in fact, a very competitive field (sorry to mirror Stacey's deadbeat agent from before, but it's meant in a helpful way). Bottom line, how do you stand out in the crowd and nab that first gig?

I spoke with **Jeremy Harris**, who plays Len in *Ruby Gloom* and, like his wife Stacey, also has an impressive voice résumé, including the upcoming series *My Friend Rabbit* on NBC, and being the new voice of CBC Radio. He gave me some advice on the auditioning process:

"You have to make quick decisions. You constantly have to suss out the situation, have your radar on to feel the vibe on the other side. If they're open, you can take more risks."

This meaning, of course, be aware of what the clients want, but also be willing to put your own stamp on the character. When auditioning for the role of Len, a rock and roll dude who's attached to his brother Frank, Jeremy brought in a character that was based in Northern Ontario, was very loud with a big accent and, like Len, a rocker. It caught the ear of the producers and he got the gig. But interesting to note, his character was toned down for the series – no accent, not as loud, but still funny. Obviously it pays to take risks. Just show the producers you have comic timing and can bring something special to the role.

Perhaps no one knows this better than **Adrian Truss**, who plays Poe in *Ruby Gloom* and has logged many hours in the booth recording roles on practically every series made in Canada such as *Jane and the Dragon*, *Atomic Betty*, *Rolie Polie Olie*, *6Teen* and *Captain Flamingo*. At Adrian's final audition for Emmy-Award® winning *Rolie Polie Olie*, the author told him he wanted it to sound like his dad. Adrian said sure and asked if he had a tape of his father speaking. The author said no, but that he sort of sounded like Bing Crosby. Adrian "did Elvis without the twang and got the job."

### So, you have the gig. Now what?

Every actor seems to have their own process. For Stacey, it means taking on a bit of the physicality of the character. "I imagined I was jumping around in those spirogy shoes Iris wears." For Jeremy, it means adding punctuation that's missing (sorry about that) and adding breaks for breath. Regardless, one thing seems to be the same for everyone. The first step is always reading the full script, not just your lines, to get a sense of the story and how your characters fit into it.

Then you're ready to add nuances. For the part of Poe, Adrian knew that the character required some subtlety as the clients were concerned that his pompous character would come across as a braggart. Believe me, this was a note given often to us writers, so this was a challenge. Adrian was meticulous in his approach.

"I tried to infuse it with a sense of self-deprecation. In other words that even he didn't take himself too seriously with his bravado. To do this, I developed idiosyncratic laughs and

down-turn inflections that brought his overt personality to a more humble level.”

This detailed work reminds me of what Merle Anne said about finding something distinct about your character, even the smallest thing, and going with it.

“I like to let the actors improvise a bit and sometimes they come up with an ad lib that suits the character. Or sometimes there is a line that they do in such a unique way that it becomes a signature for them.”

There are many examples of this. Stacey had a way of doing really hyperactive gasps as Iris. They were so funny, we wrote more gasps in for her. **Emily Hampshire** who plays Misery, would only have to say ‘ow’ in her weird, Misery-esque way, and she had everyone in stitches. We kept writing more ‘ow’s into the script and it’s become a character trademark. **David Berni** plays Frank with a very funny hard-done-by frustration with his dumber brother Len. David would always have this very woe-begotten sigh in his lines that cracked me up. I wrote more ‘sighs’ in for him, because it was so perfect for Frank. This all goes to say, the slightest choice you make, especially if unique to your character, goes a long way.

One last piece of advice from Merle Anne?

“I think there is the misconception that you have to be the guy who does the zillion goofy cartoony voices and that is not the case. Good comedic sensibilities and strong story sense are the most important skills that any actor needs. So hone those skills and do a class on voice work. Some casting agents do open mics to meet new people. Seek that out. And practice your acting skills doing whatever work you can find. It all helps build your voice skills.”

So for all you veteran voice actors out there, thanks for making Canada’s animation scene the most successful in the world. For the voice actors breaking in, thanks in advance. Please keep at it. Because we’re going to need you in the booth. And as Stacey says, “It’s a great way to make a living.”



**Carolyn Hay** has been a voice actor for many years and now works as a creator, writer and story editor of several animated series, including *Jane and the Dragon*, *6Teen*, *Erky Perky*, *RoboRoach*, *Carl Squared* and of course, *Ruby Gloom*.

*Ruby Gloom* was recently nominated for a Gemini Award for Best Animated Series. It also stars ACTRA Toronto members **Sarah Gadon** as Ruby, **Scott McCord** as Skull Boy, **Peter Keleghan** as Scaredy Bat and **Stephanie Mills** As Venus.

*“I think there is the misconception that you have to be the guy who does the zillion goofy cartoony voices and that is not the case. Good comedic sensibilities and strong story sense are the most important skills that any actor needs.” - creative produce and voice director Merle Anne Ridley*



*Ruby Gloom's* title character is voiced by Toronto member Sarah Gadon.

# UPDATE

## ACTRA TORONTO ENTERTAINMENT CREDIT UNION

by Austin Schatz

**AS:** *First let me welcome you to the ACTRA Toronto Entertainment Credit Union.*

**SM:** Thank You. I'm very excited to join the ACTRA family, and I'm looking forward to the opportunity of building a credit union that will directly benefit ACTRA members, and all those employed in the entertainment industry; a financial institution that I hope ultimately everyone employed in the entertainment industry will be comfortable dealing with, and will be proud to call his or her own.

**AS:** *Members I've spoken with are curious about your background.*

**SM:** I was born and raised in Sarnia, Ontario. As the seventh of eight children, I learned from an early age to appreciate the value of teamwork, hard work and the democratic process. I love sports, and I have been fortunate to excel at most, with the grand exception of golf. I have been married to my wife Natalie for 22 years, and we have two children; Johnathan age 16, and Zachary age 12. We currently reside in Waterloo, and we share our home with Spot, our 10-year-old Jack Russell terrier. Not a very original name, I know, but you see Spot was a present to Zach on his second birthday.

I began my career in financial services almost 30 years ago with Canada Trust in London when they started up their MasterCard division. These were back in the days of the Johnny Cash ATM machines. Not my idea! From there, I moved on to the credit union world, where I have spent the past 21 years, most recently as the General Manager of Rochdale Credit Union, which serves the residents of Oxford County through its three branches in Woodstock, Ingersoll and Norwich. I have enjoyed every aspect of my credit union career, but most importantly the opportunity to provide people with a high level of personalized service. Unlike traditional financial institutions, credit unions truly do put people first.

**AS:** *Launching a credit union from scratch is a challenging and daunting task. As you have a solid, secure position, why are you taking such a leap?*



Photos by Brian Topp

**SM:** To be totally honest, I thought long and hard about this opportunity before taking the leap. I was entirely happy with my position at Rochdale, the local economy is booming, and the credit union is enjoying a period of solid growth and profitability. I had an incredible team at Rochdale. Board and staff members were fully engaged, and I am very proud of what we have accomplished over the years. When this opportunity first presented itself, I have to say that I was initially very cautious. Who were these people? And why exactly do they want to start a credit union?

My thinking changed entirely when I first interviewed for the position with Karen Ritson, Austin Schatz and Brian Topp. I was very impressed. Not only with the particulars of the project, but also with the amount of passion that these individuals held for this initiative. I realized that these people were pursuing a well thought-out plan; one in which ACTRA and the Credit Union Task Force had already invested a tremendous amount of time and resources.

Ultimately, the opportunity to work with this passionate group, and to start a new credit union from the ground up held tremendous appeal to me. I realize that I will be faced with many challenges, and I relish the opportunity to meet these challenges head on. While I am very proud of my achievements during my time at Rochdale, I came to the rather sudden realization that it was time to move on, and that I couldn't possibly let this opportunity slip by. Having been with ACTRA for a very short time, I know that I have absolutely made the right decision. I am confident in my ability to lead this initiative, and along with the membership's support, to build a truly unique financial institution.

**AS:** *What would you see as the primary benefits a credit union could offer to those of us employed in the entertainment industry?*

**SM:** There are a number of principal benefits that I see. Wouldn't it be nice to deal with a financial institution where the fact that you are employed in the entertainment industry is the start of the conversation, not the end of it? Here's an opportunity to belong to a financial institution that specializes in providing financial services to those employed in



the entertainment industry, and one you can truly call your own. You own it!

Membership is the most distinctive feature of the credit union system. As a member, you share a common bond with your fellow credit union members.

Credit union members are also shareholders. The fundamental operating principle of credit unions is democratic ownership. One member, one vote, regardless of the amount of shareholdings or deposits. That means you have a voice, along with other members, in setting the credit union's direction at the local level, where services meet your needs. You can also share in the distribution of earnings and seek election to the credit union's board of directors. Furthermore, you could be elected to regional or national boards or committees.

The Credit Union will offer a full range of financial services – savings and chequing accounts, loans, lines of credit, mortgages and investment opportunities. These products and services will be tailored to meet your needs, and to helping you achieve your financial goals. We're providing a better alternative to traditional banking. A financial institution that quite simply, gets it.

**AS:** *So now what?*

**SM:** The first order of business is to raise start-up capital to fund operations and to sufficiently capitalize the credit union through its first few years of operation. The Ministry of Finance won't allow us to open for business until such time as we have raised sufficient capital. To this end, ACTRA members will be presented with an opportunity to purchase special Credit Union Investment Shares in denominations as low as \$250. These investment shares will pay dividends at a rate of .5% to 1.25% above the average 5 year GIC rate. We're looking to raise a total of \$2.5 million. This is an incredible opportunity to get in at the ground floor, and to help build something special. Investment Shareholders will be formally recognized as those individuals that played a major role in ensuring the dream of ACTRA Toronto Entertainment Credit Union becomes a reality.

Once we achieve a successful investment share offering, we will be positioned to begin accepting memberships in the credit union and to open the doors for business. I look forward to building a credit union that provides you with innovative products, and second-to-none service.

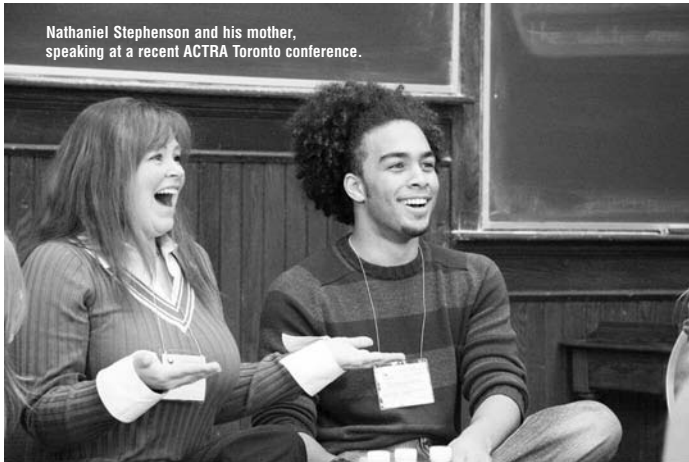
I hope that you will support the new credit union, and take advantage of the products and services we offer. I'm convinced that you'll be glad you did.



**Austin Schatz** is the Vice-Chair of ACTRA Toronto's Entertainment Credit Union. Some of his other occupations have included a decade-and-a-half on air in AM and FM radio, and TV; more than 60 stage plays; principal, actor, background, stand-in, OSLO in television and feature films; radio and TV commercials, local, national, international; councillor locally and nationally; Vice-President Internal and Vice-President Finance at ACTRA Toronto Performers.

We had the opportunity to have a brief chat with Steve Mumford, the CEO of our new Credit Union.

Nathaniel Stephenson and his mother, speaking at a recent ACTRA Toronto conference.



# Mark your calendar

learn • network • connect • act

ACTRA Toronto's Members' Conferences are free to ACTRA Toronto members who register. Conferences are held three times a year at Victoria College, University of Toronto.

Friday, February 22, 2008 • June, 2008

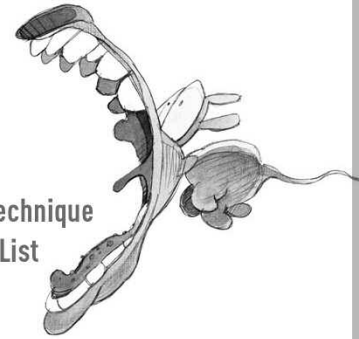
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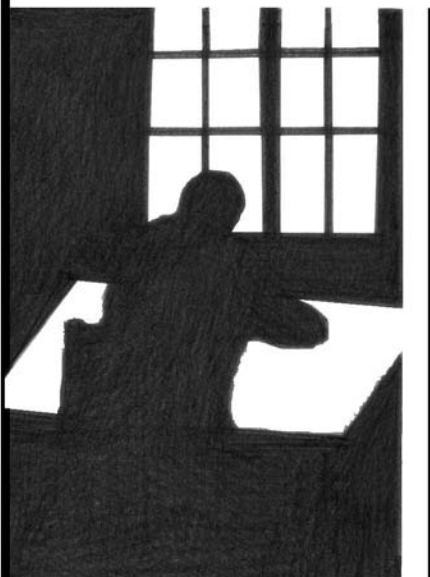
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## The Actors' Director: George Bloomfield

by Cayle Chermin

Director **George Bloomfield** joined actors **Teresa Pavlinek**, **Kate Trotter**, **Patricia Zentilli** and **Maury Chaykin** for a discussion on directing, and some performance and direction based on actual scripts, at June's members' conference.

### Some of Director George Bloomfield's insights:

- See how much more comes to the scene when the actor is free to improv a little.
- The director has to devise ways of convincing the actor that what he is doing totally belongs to him, it is most important that the actor gets possession of the character as soon as possible.
- There are 'shot' directors and actor's directors – it's not about the shots, it's about what dictates the shots. I like to work with an actor who has a sense of humour. If someone can make me laugh, they can make me cry. I don't know what it is that you strange people do, how you disappear into a character, but I know that I need to create the environment, the atmosphere for that to happen.

**Teresa Pavlinek**, eponymous Jane of *The Jane Show*, had some advice about selecting actors from the auditions for her show. "We looked for actors committed and connected to the character like Hardee T. Lineham."

**Kate Trotter** observed that, "You cannot be what you think someone else wants you to be." She also advised, "Once you have the role, don't spend the first three days auditioning... You want a director who says action to you in the tone of your first step."

**Maury Chaykin** suggested, "Take care of yourself on set, some directors don't know when to leave actors alone and when to be of some use. It's a crap shoot, when to listen and when not to." Finally, he noted that "Directors can have the same problem when dealing with stars."

Everyone agreed: "Only work for George Bloomfield!"

Teresa Pavlinek, Maury Chaykin and Patricia Zentilli workshop a script, under the direction of George Bloomfield, at the Members Conference.



## FilmPort: now under construction

**Ken Ferguson**, President of the now-under-construction FilmPort, as well as President of Toronto Film Studios, was the keynote speaker at ACTRA Toronto's summer conference.

Ken led the audience through a virtual tour of the development, the rationale and vision behind it, and where the project is at construction-wise.

FilmPort will be a 40-hectare film studio development at Commissioners St. and the Don Roadway in Toronto. It will be a sorely needed purpose-built studio. The first phase includes 260,000 square feet.

His vision is that FilmPort will be much more than a studio, and he outlined what he's calling the 'campus' idea – that the spaces both inside the studio gates and the public and office spaces outside will bring together a community.

Phase one includes three soundstages, the largest being 45,500 sq. ft. in size, 60' high and totally column-free. Phase one also has a 4-storey building for production offices, already under construction. The soundstages will be fully soundproof, fully air conditioned and all-concrete construction.

Ken, a professional engineer, explained that construction that close to the lake requires driving piles down in the ground every 25' to ensure the structure is stable. This work might explain why there isn't any evidence of construction lately. However, now with two recent construction industry strikes resolved, Ken says FilmPort is ready for the structural steel and precast concrete walls.

Ken is hoping nearby buildings will house other industry businesses such as lighting equipment and wardrobe companies.

In the question-and-answer period, Ken, who also runs Toronto Film Studios (TFS) at 629 Eastern which has been sold for redevelopment, confirmed that TFS will continue in operation until the new development, whatever that may be, gets underway. So in effect, he will be running two facilities. On FilmPort's accessibility to persons with disabilities, he explained that the construction will meet and exceed any barrier guidelines with automatic doors, elevators, level surfaces and visible and audio fire alarms.

Ken believes we can't do business the way we have in the past, relying on the low dollar and competitive tax credits alone. He wants to leverage our status as a film production centre into something fabulous. He says, "Frankly, I can't afford to build what we're building at FilmPort and have to undercut everybody else in town, and Mexico and Rhode Island. So what do you do? Well, we have the best talent in the world in every field going: performers, post-production, animation, writing, production crews – we're among the top in the world."



David Gale

## All-day stream: Actors' Boot Camp

Dear Mom & Dad,

Today was HOT at Actor's Boot Camp but luckily ACTRA provided water and we worked in the shade (mostly).

In the morning there was a great group physical/vocal warm-up. Counsellor Lynn Woodman says warming-up is tuning our "instrument," freeing our mind/body/voice of tensions that restrict us, allowing us to inhabit the world of a character. **Cool!**

Counsellor Doug Morency led some funny improv exercises like creating headlines and opening imaginary gift boxes. Did you know, to be successful in improv one must commit to the moment, make choices and trust those choices? **Amazing!**

Before lunch Head Counsellor David Gale gave us things to consider when preparing a scene:

1. What happened before the scene began?
2. What to get from and give to your partner?
3. What's the opposite?
4. Figure out the "F" words (hee, hee) friend/foe, fornicate/fight, fool/favour.

After lunch we were given scenes and partners. Jane Moffat and David Sparrow joined the counsellors and they took turns coaching us through our scenes. We even switched parts in the scene. Awesome! At the end of the day some scenes were presented in front of the whole camp. They didn't pick me. I learned about not getting the part too. **Love camp.**

SEND FOOD!  
XOXO  
Dave (a.k.a. David Gale)

## Sessions for kids and parents an October conference highlight

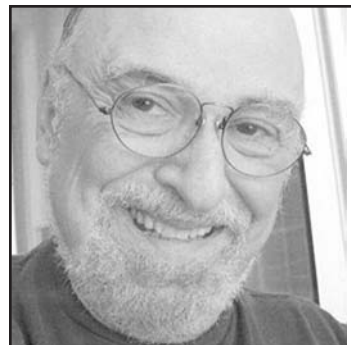
The fall edition of ACTRA Toronto's members' conference is usually held on a Saturday so that we can offer sessions for child performers and their parents. Kids got a chance to act out in an improv class with Second City performer **Katherine Ashby**, while parents had the opportunity to attend a mini version of ACTRA Toronto's membership training intensive course that focuses on the business side of being an actor. In our Scene on Camera workshop performers learnt how to transfer their best performances to camera with acting teacher **Mark Schoenberg**. Other workshops included Casting for TV, and an all-day Boot Camp for back-ground performers. **Linda Kash** (*Robson Arms*) got her closeup in the early-bird Breakfast with... session, interviewed by **Theresa Tova**.



Katherine Ashby



Linda Kash



Mark Schoenberg



ACTRA Toronto members enjoying the barbecue at our summer conference in June.  
Photo: Jag Gundu



Ken Ferguson, President of FilmPort, was our June conference keynote speaker, updating members on his vision for FilmPort film studios which is now under construction.  
Photo: Jag Gundu

# ACTRA Toronto Member Conferences



The Actors' Boot Camp got everyone involved in the warm-up portion outdoors in the Victoria College quadrangle. Photo: Jag Gundu



ACTRA members filled the Isabel Bader Theatre for the conference plenary session.  
Photo: Kim Hume



Participants in the all-day Actors' Boot Camp session, rehearsing sides for an 'audition'.  
Photo: Kim Hume



Actor and producer Priya Rao, FilmOntario Managing Director Sara Ker-Hornell and producer Jennifer Jonas on the Women in the Biz panel. Photo: Jag Gundu

# Stewards At Work



The Alan Lund Dancers on The Joan Fairfax Show, July 17, 1960.  
Photo courtesy CBC Still Photo Collection.

A stunt performer from a Canadian MOW was surprised to find himself booked for additional dialogue replacement. He contacted the Steward because he didn't think that dialogue was a part of the Stunt Performer category. It's not. As the dialogue was under 10 words, he was upgraded to Stunt Actor.

Three dancers, who were contracted as Special Skill Background Performers in one episode of a Canadian youth series, were surprised to find themselves scheduled for a rehearsal with the choreographer. The agent brought this to the attention of the Steward of the production and all the dancers were upgraded from Special Skill Background Performer to Group Dancer.

A performer was contracted to appear in two episodes of a Canadian comedy series to be block shot on the same day. The performer had less than six lines of dialogue in each of the episodes. However, once the producers had a look at the material, they moved some of his dialogue such that in one episode he had more than six lines. The performer brought this to the attention of the steward and as a result was consequently upgraded to Principal Performer for that episode.

## 91 CATEGORIES. 91 WINNERS TO STIFF WITH YOUR BAR BILL.

Congratulations to all of the Gemini Nominees.

The Gemini Awards in Regina. October 28, 2007.  
8:00pm ET on CBC.

[www.geminiawards.ca](http://www.geminiawards.ca)

The Gemini Award Statuette was created by Scott Thornley



# Another Provincial Election, Another Government, The Fight Continues

by Norm MacAskill

At press time, Ontario was in the midst of a provincial election. By the time you read this the results will be known and a new government will be ready to take the reins of power. And ACTRA is ready to work with them to get the best deal possible for our members, for our industry and for artists in general.

If history has shown us anything, it is that we can be sure our political action work cannot abate, no matter who is in power. Government policies and actions have a huge impact on our industry and our livelihoods and ACTRA (and you, the member) needs to be vigilant and pro-active to ensure we don't get forgotten or left behind.

Over the past couple of years, ACTRA members have lobbied Members of Parliament in Ottawa to fix the CRTC and invest in culture. We have met with Ontario MPPs to push for real **Status of the Artist** legislation. We worked hard to get increases to the Ontario Film and Television Tax Credit. We campaigned with our sisters and brothers in other unions through the Ontario Federation of Labour and in particular with our Alliance partners, the United Steelworkers.

Some of this work happens in small meetings with government officials and other leaders, but ACTRA is also noticed on the public stage as advocates for the cultural vitality of our community.

Whether we stage news conferences with some of our leading performers or organize major demonstrations to get our message across, ACTRA is recognized as a politically active force prepared to fight, not just for ourselves, but for Canada's cultural identity.

ACTRA members actively participated in the recent provincial election and ACTRA Toronto along with a number of other arts organizations co-sponsored The Great Arts Debate, challenging all parties on their cultural policies. ACTRA members told their local candidates what they expected from them if they were elected. Now we need to continue to hold them accountable. We need to make sure our elected representatives understand our industry and our lives. We need to push them forward or we will fall further behind.

ACTRA will continue to deliver an aggressive and focused political action strategy and all members are encouraged to take an active part in it.

Inform yourself on our issues – there's lots of information on our website at [www.actratoronto.com](http://www.actratoronto.com). Make sure you're receiving the email broadcasts from ACTRA. Participate in email or letter writing campaigns to our elected politicians and come out and support your union when we stage a rally or demonstration.

**We're stronger with your involvement.**



Norm MacAskill is an Organizer with ACTRA Toronto Performers. [nmacaskill@actratoronto.com](mailto:nmacaskill@actratoronto.com)



ACTRA Toronto members Molly Johnson and Wayne Robson flank Susan Swan as panelists putting questions to provincial party candidates at The Great Arts Debate. Photo: Jag Gundu

# Members' News



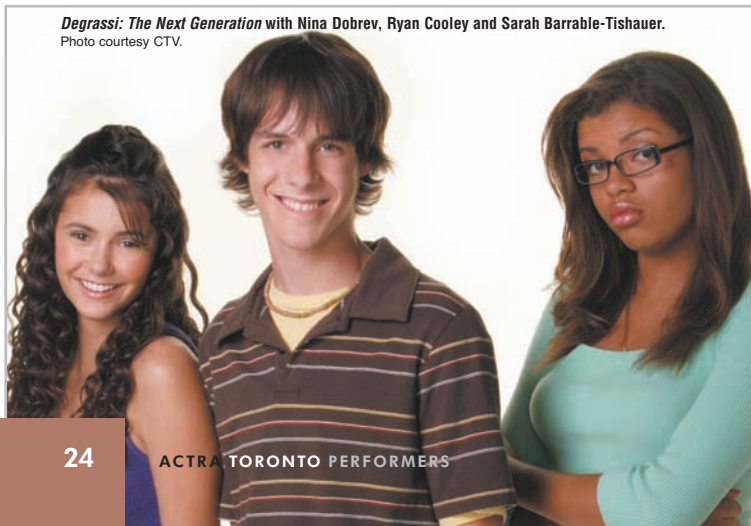
ACTRA Toronto President Karl Pruner and VP External Heather Allin during negotiations for a new National Commercial Agreement.  
Photo: Kim Hume



ACTRA Toronto members take to the streets for the annual Labour Day parade.  
Photo: Kim Hume



Carol Whiteman, producer of the Women in the Directors' Chair Workshop with WIDC alumna Rita Deverell, winner of the @Wallace Studios Award, with Nate Horowitz and Doug Pringle of Centennial College that is a new partner with @Wallace Studios.  
Photo: Kim Hume



Degrassi: The Next Generation with Nina Dobrev, Ryan Cooley and Sarah Barrable-Tishauer.  
Photo courtesy CTV.

## Renewal of National Commercial Agreement ratified by members

ACTRA members have voted in favour of extending the current National Commercial Agreement (NCA) for one year, with an increase of 3% in all rates and a 1% increase in insurance contributions. The NCA bargaining committee recommended accepting the extension of the agreement, and members ratified the extension in a referendum vote held in June. The new rates came into effect on July 1, 2007. ACTRA negotiates the NCA with the Institute of Communications and Advertising (ICA) and the Association of Canadian Advertisers (ACA). As part of the agreement extension, ACTRA and the ICA/ACA agreed to enter non-binding discussions on a shortlist of issues important to ACTRA and the industry associations.

## Labour Day parade a popular outing for ACTRA Toronto

Every year, ACTRA Toronto joins other union members from around the Toronto and York regions in the annual Labour Day Parade. On a sunny day in early September, 200 members convened on University Avenue for the march along Queen Street West all the way to the CNE through the Dufferin Gates. The annual parade is organized by the Labour Council of Toronto and York Region and draws thousands of union members in the march. Many Torontonians line the route to watch the floats and marchers. This year, ACTRA Toronto members distributed information to the crowds and other union members about raising arts and culture issues with candidates in the Ontario provincial election.

## ACTRA Toronto hosts WIDC alumnae reception

In August, ACTRA Toronto was pleased to host the annual Toronto reception for women who have attended the *Women in the Directors' Chair* workshop. **Carol Whiteman**, Executive Director of *Creative Women Workshops*, the organization that runs the annual *Women in the Directors' Chair* intensive, visits Toronto every summer to recruit applications from emerging women directors and to gather Toronto-based alumnae of the program. WIDC alumna and ACTRA Toronto member **Rita Deverell** was on hand to receive her @Wallace Studios Award. The WIDC workshop takes place January 18 to February 4, 2008. Acting ensemble (women and men) and crew applications are due October 31, 2007.

[www.creativewomenworkshops.com](http://www.creativewomenworkshops.com)

## ACTION! Toronto production scene bounces back

FilmPort, our new studio complex, is under construction, and actors and crew are busy working on projects such as *The Incredible Hulk*, **Don McKellar's** *Blindness* and Atom Egoyan's *Adoration*. A busy production season for ACTRA Toronto members is very welcome. Other shows shooting or set to start include *ReGenesis*, *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, *Degrassi: The Next Generation*, *Instant Star*, *Latest Buzz*, *Murdoch Mysteries* and *Life with Derek*. **Mike Myers' Love Guru** is on deck, along with a number of miniseries, TV movies, a handful of digital projects and more than 20 animation productions. Get the scoop on what's shooting at our website:

[www.actratortoronto.com/what/shooting.html](http://www.actratortoronto.com/what/shooting.html)

# Members' News

## Critical Incident puts them on target

There are two strategic aspects to working in film and television in Canada according to ACTRA members **Mark Ellis** (*The Shields Stories*) and **Stephanie Morgenstern** (*This Is Wonderland*) who have co-written *Critical Incident*, their first television effort. The first aspect says Mark is the "challenge to earn a living as an actor and pay a mortgage which motivates practically in terms of us branching out into areas of the industry, but beyond that, the ability to take more creative control in terms of our career is probably the driving force." This is not the first joint work for the Oakville couple. They co-wrote and starred in *Remembrance*, a 2001 short that won a Jutra Award and took top prize at the Toronto Worldwide Short Film Festival. *Critical Incident* has its roots in the Toronto Union Station hostage-taking incident of 2004. The ensemble cast includes ACTRA Toronto members **Hugh Dillon** and **Enrico Colantoni** and ACTRA/UBCP members **Ona Grauer** and **David Paetkau**.

• Larry Robertson

## Kiefer Sutherland honoured with ACTRA Award

ACTRA Toronto member **Kiefer Sutherland** was honoured in Los Angeles with an ACTRA Award of Excellence, which is presented by ACTRA National to an ACTRA member working in the U.S. Kiefer makes Canadians proud with his success, best known for his role as Jack Bauer in the hit series *24* that he also produces. The ACTRA Award recognizes as well that Kiefer lends his name and celebrity to the cause of protecting Canada's public health care system. The award was presented by ACTRA National President **Richard Hardacre** at the Canadian consular residence in Los Angeles on September 25.

## ACTRA women attend United Steelworkers Women of Steel Conference

A number of women from your ACTRA Toronto Council attended the 2007 United Steelworkers International Women's Conference. Held in Toronto at the end of September, the conference focused on skills enhancement, global solidarity and political action. ACTRA members **Wendy Crewson** and **Tonya Lee Williams** addressed the delegates to speak about our strategic alliance with the USW and the joint projects we have worked on together including the USW's support of ACTRA's strike, and our lobby efforts in Ottawa on issues important to both organizations.

## Actors' Fund celebrates 50 years of support

The Actors' Fund of Canada celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2008 and will take its place among the most connected, respected and supported charities serving members of Canada's entertainment industry with a year-long awareness and fundraising campaign. Actors' Fund Executive Director **David Hope** aims to reach all members of the entertainment industry with the campaign. Says Hope to culture industry members, "We will use this opportunity to show what we do on your behalf to bring vital assistance to your friends and colleagues who are in trouble." Plans for the many components of the fund's year-long 50th anniversary project will roll out in the coming weeks, with a focus on showing how the Actors' Fund can change lives and encouraging entertainment industry members to adopt the fund as their charity of choice. Further details will be announced on the fund's website at [www.actorsfund.ca](http://www.actorsfund.ca).

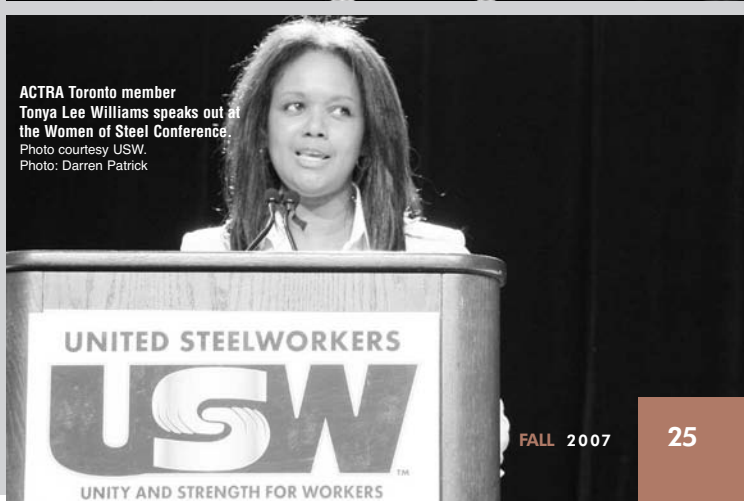
ACTRA Toronto member Hugh Dillon (as Ed Lane) and ACTRA/UBCP member Ona Grauer (as Kate Travers) play snipers in the pilot *Critical Incident*.  
Photo: Ian Watson



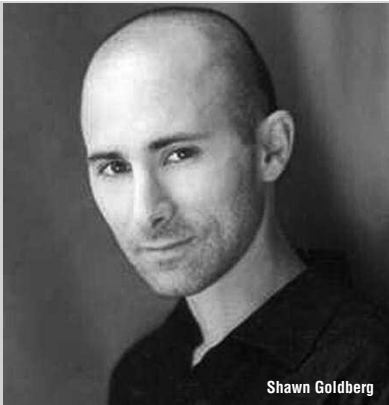
Kiefer Sutherland has been honoured by ACTRA National with an ACTRA Award of Excellence.  
Photo: Eric Charbonneau, WireImage



ACTRA Toronto member Tonya Lee Williams speaks out at the Women of Steel Conference.  
Photo courtesy USW.  
Photo: Darren Patrick



# Members' News



Shawn Goldberg



ACTRA Toronto member Leesa Levinson protests the lack of Canadian-made television at a recent demonstration.

Photo: Brian Topp

Canadian English-language films made up only 1.7% of our domestic box office – not good enough!

## Co-op film *R.U.U.*

The stage play *What to do with Jack Perdue* was the basis for the *R.U.U.* screenplay by ACTRA Toronto's **Jeremy Harris** (writer/actor/lead) and co-writer **Marc Aubin**. It needed a director for its film adaptation for the On the Fly Film Festival in 2004. Jeremy approached ACTRA Toronto member **Shawn Goldberg** to direct and transport a first draft to a shooting script. ACTRA member **Toby Proctor** participated as cinematographer with a host of other ACTRA members in sound, make-up and in the cast. In eight days it went from script to film. The rules were simple: shoot, edit, and screen it and the movie had to be not more than 10 minutes, all in a 17-hour day. A 14-minute adaptation was produced after the festival to accommodate the material. It has played various festivals, small to mid-size, and won several awards, most notably at Round 2 of **Kevin Smith's** (*Clerks, Chasing Amy*) Online Movies Askew Film Festival for writing, film and audience. In February, 2007, it was licensed to The Movie Network and since by Movieola's The Short Film Channel. • *Larry Robertson*

## Get on the bus to Ottawa Nov. 5

ACTRA members from Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal will be taking part in a demonstration at the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) convention in Ottawa on Monday, November 5. Come join the fight for Canadian programming and meet hundreds of fellow performers heading to Ottawa to make sure Canada's broadcasters hear, about their obligations to properly fund and support Canadian drama on TV in primetime. Buses depart ACTRA Toronto at 7a.m. and return later that evening. Reserve your spot on the bus at [www.actratoronto.com/getonthebus/busform.htm](http://www.actratoronto.com/getonthebus/busform.htm)

## ACTRA Toronto Council elections are underway – please vote

Every two years in the fall, ACTRA Toronto holds elections for ACTRA Toronto Performers Council and for ACTRA Toronto Stuntpersons Committee. Elections for the 2008-2010 council are now underway. The 24 ACTRA Toronto Councillors serve as the elected representatives of our 13,000 members for a two-year term and provide steering decisions to guide ACTRA Toronto's managers and staff. As a member in good standing, you have a role to play in your union by taking an active part in choosing your next council, so please make sure you vote. Ballots are in the mail including statements by nominees. Ballots must be returned by November 16, 2007, to be eligible.

## ACTRA pushes theatre exhibitors to show more Canada

In 2006, Canadian English-language films made up only 1.7% of our domestic box office – not good enough! In September, right around the time of the Toronto International Film Festival, ACTRA started a campaign to push theatre exhibitors to show more Canadian films. There aren't any regulations in Canada forcing theatre chains to show Canadian films, so we are using public pressure to try to encourage these exhibitors to screen more Canadian films and keep them in the theatres longer. Postcards were distributed to the public, including film buffs in the festival lineups, urging people to go to ACTRA's website and send an email to the theatre chains. Canadians make great films, but blink, and you'll miss them. Join the campaign by going to [www.actratoronto.com](http://www.actratoronto.com) to send your email and take action to support Canadian films. Join the **First Weekend Club**, the organization that is boosting audience numbers on the crucial first weekend of a Canadian films' release. Go to [www.firstweekendclub.ca](http://www.firstweekendclub.ca) to sign up.

## ACTRA members make movies: Co-op Challenge

ACTRA Toronto is hitting cyberspace by posting some of the films entered in our Co-op Challenge on YouTube. This is the third co-op challenge we've run, asking members to make films about the need for Canadian drama, Canadian stars, and a cultural policy that protects and develops our film and television industry. ACTRA's Co-op film agreement is our ultra-low-budget agreement. When you make a film using ACTRA members, you get to take advantage of an agreement available only to members. All participants agree to share in any proceeds equally, should you achieve fame and fortune with your co-op film. Check out the fab films made by ACTRA members at:

[www.actratoronto.com/home/Co-opChallenge.htm](http://www.actratoronto.com/home/Co-opChallenge.htm).

# Members' News

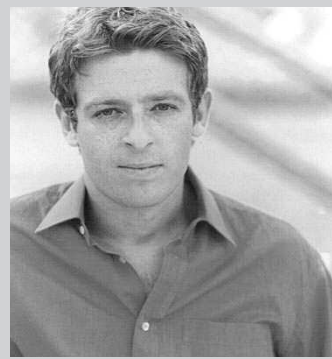
## Call for OSLOs

ACTRA Toronto is looking for members interested in working as On Set Liason Officers (OSLOs). OSLOs are members who are the eyes and ears for the steward on set. OSLOs get paid an honourarium for the days when they are asked to go to set. An OSLO should have great interpersonal skills, be assertive but non-confrontational, have a working knowledge of the Independent Production Agreement (IPA), especially working conditions and health and safety for film sets and be able to resolve immediate issues which often concern the working environment, minors and nudity. ACTRA Toronto prefers OSLOs to be Full members who have been members for at least four years. A training session is provided to a shortlist of interested members, after which ACTRA Toronto makes a final selection. If you are interested, please send a letter to Indra Escobar at [iescobar@actratoronto.com](mailto:iescobar@actratoronto.com), or in the mail to ACTRA Toronto, Call for OSLOs, 625 Church Street, Suite 200, Toronto, ON, M4Y 2G1. Please indicate your request to be an OSLO, include your membership number, type of productions you have worked on and whether you have a car as most sets are outside of the TTC area.

## Congratulations to all our Gemini Award nominees

ACTRA Toronto members shine in the performance categories for the Gemini Awards.

The 22nd Annual Gemini Awards, presented by the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television, celebrate excellence in Canada's English-language television. Toronto-area series earning multiple-nominations include *Slings & Arrows* (14), *ReGenesis* (12), *Degrassi: The Next Generation* (6), *The Jane Show* (4), *JOZI H* (4) and *Rent-A-Goalie* (3). The Gemini Awards will be handed out over four nights in October, with the broadcast gala aired by Global Television from Regina on Sunday, October 28. Best of luck to all nominees. ACTRA Toronto nominees in performance categories include: **Stephen Amell, Martha Burns, L. Scott Caldwell, Dmitry Chepovetsky, Susan Coyne, Wendy Crewson, Shawn Doyle, Megan Follows, Jeananne Goossen, Paul Gross, Geri Hall, Stuart Hughes, William Hutt, Linda Kash, Ingrid Kavelaars, Elvira Kurt, Chris Leavins, Brandy Ledford, Byron Mann, Yanna McIntosh, Don McKellar, Rick Mercer, Mayko Nguyen, Leslie Nielsen, Stephen Ouimette, Peter Outerbridge, Teresa Pavlinek, Sarah Polley, Kathleen Robertson, Michael Seater, Paul Soles, Joy Tanner, Mark Taylor, Kristopher Turner, Genelle Williams and Jean Yoon.**



Some of ACTRA Toronto's Gemini Award nominees  
Dmitry Chepovetsky, *ReGenesis*.  
Jeananne Goossen, *Falcon Beach*  
Yanna McIntosh, *Doomstown*

## FOR MORE NEWS

More news and ACTRA Toronto Committee reports at [www.actratoronto.com](http://www.actratoronto.com) and [www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca)

Canadian Comedy Awards winners [www.canadiancomedyawards.ca](http://www.canadiancomedyawards.ca)

ACTRA slams U.S. attempt to crack down on movies made in Canada [www.actra.ca/actra/control/press\\_news1?id=10599](http://www.actra.ca/actra/control/press_news1?id=10599)

ACTRA calls for new standards for broadcaster takeovers [www.actra.ca/actra/control/press\\_news1?id=10598](http://www.actra.ca/actra/control/press_news1?id=10598)

ACTRA Awards in Toronto [www.actratoronto.com/awards\\_in\\_toronto/main\\_new.htm](http://www.actratoronto.com/awards_in_toronto/main_new.htm)

ACTRA reaches agreement with producers on block shooting [www.actratoronto.com/home/good\\_news.html](http://www.actratoronto.com/home/good_news.html)

# ACTRA Toronto Council

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Visit the ACTRA Toronto website at [www.actratoronto.com](http://www.actratoronto.com)!

# ACTRA Toronto Staff is here for **YOU.**

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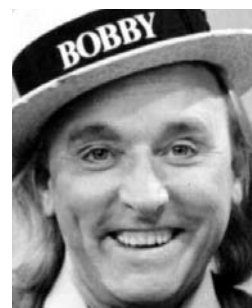
# In Memoriam

We share our sadness at the passing of our colleagues

Kam Ray Chan • Franz Fridal

## Robert Ash, 'Uncle Bobby' • 1924-2007

Actor Bobby Ash, who became a children's TV favourite as Uncle Bobby, passed away on May 20, 2007, at 82. Born in England, Mr. Ash came to Canada in 1959. Toronto's CFTO aired *The Uncle Bobby Show* from 1962 to 1979, which CTV then ran nationally as *Uncle Bobby and Friends*. Reruns continued on YTV into the 1990s. Devoted to children, he drove school buses, started three nursery schools and wrote children's books. *Staff*



Bobby Ash, pictured in 1973.  
Photo courtesy CTV.

## William Hutt • 1920-2007

"Bill was many things: kind, funny, irreverent and large of soul. He was also a superb craftsman, with an electrifying stage presence. He made me believe that being an actor was something a grownup might do with their life. That it was, after all and in spite of everything, worthwhile."

• **Susan Coyne**

"Some years back, Bill asked me what was the greatest thing I had learned during my time at Stratford. I answered that **Stephen Ouimette** had told me, 'When you shine a light on another actor by giving them focus and attention, you shine an equally bright light on yourself.' At this, Bill threw his head back and broke into a big belly laugh. He said, 'That's what I love about the theatre. Years ago while running the young company at the Grand, I told a young Stephen Ouimette that very same thing.' I was fortunate enough to speak with Bill on the phone during the last weeks before his passing and he constantly asked me, 'But are you having FUN?' It reminded me that that is an integral part of what we do and probably one of the most important."

• **Michael Therriault**

"Bill gave me my first job out of theatre school. He taught me timing, how to make Shakespeare sound natural, how to not care what others think, how to enjoy a cocktail, loyalty, how to laugh in rehearsal, how to laugh on set, confidence, how to make naturalism sound natural, the joys of grandness, how to breathe, how to take a pause and how to finish your life with dignity."

• **Tom McCamus**

"I first met Bill Hutt in 1962, when I played Miranda to his first Prospero. I told him frequently that it was hardly fair that I started out playing his daughter, then his nurse (*All's Well*), his sister (*Little Foxes*), his wife (*Long Day's Journey*) and that eventually I would be playing his mother, while he never seemed to really age at all. He inspired me when I was young and did the same when I became the artistic director of The Grand in London, a job that he had held before me. No one could have been more generous (he came and worked for us for very little money and made extensive contributions to the theatre) or supportive (he came to board meetings and explained to them what I was doing; they listened to him). During one's personal crises, Bill was the first there – with comfort, strength and several doses of wise,

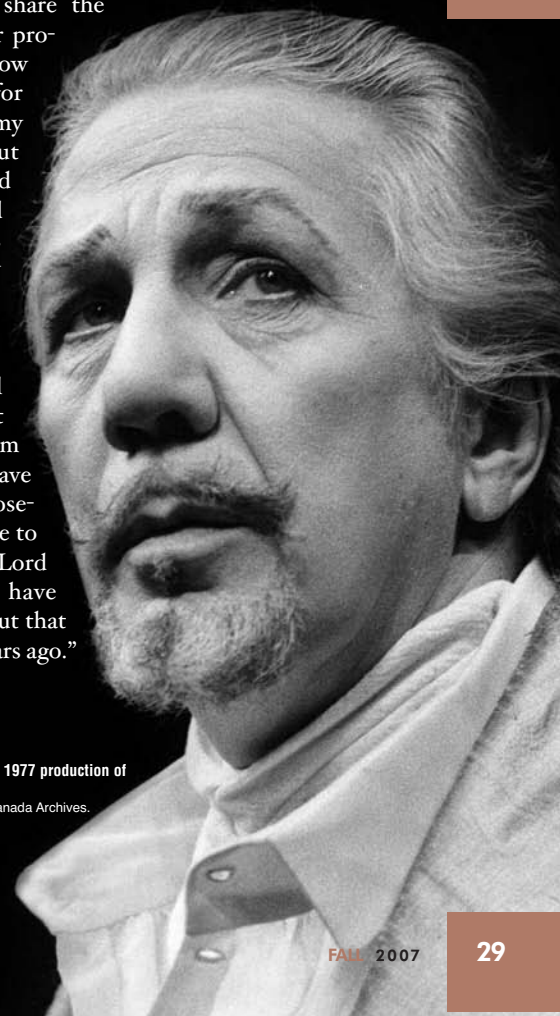
cryptic humour. And I, not a funny woman, could always make him laugh. What greater generosity could you ask of a friend?"

• **Martha Henry**

"I had the great good luck to be able to audition for Bill and **Urjo Kareda** at the festival theatre. I can't remember which piece I used to audition, but I will never forget that it made Bill laugh. I remain convinced that that little laugh launched me on my professional career and started a 30-year friendship with Bill. I will forever be in Bill's debt not only for that friendship but for every opportunity I have had to share a stage with him. If you just had the sense to listen and pay attention while you were out there with him, he would share the greatest secrets of our profession with you. I know Bill was a champion for me and for many of my colleagues throughout the years. He loved and was immensely proud of all of us. He was always desperately interested in what we were doing not only in our professional lives but in our personal lives. He was a great good man and I am proud to not only have worked with him so closely but to have been able to call him my friend. Lord knows what would have happened to me without that little laugh so many years ago."

• **Peter Donaldson**

William Hutt in Stratford Festival's 1977 production of *All's Well That Ends Well*.  
Photo courtesy Stratford Festival of Canada Archives.  
Photo: Robert C. Ragsdale



# Announcements



(L - R) Koebe, Nissae, holding baby Bria-Jenee, Tajja and Joshua

ACTRA members **Tajja**, **Nissae** and **Joshua Isen** and their younger sibling **Koebe** are proud to share the news of their new baby sister, **Bria-Jenee**. She was born on August 18 weighing 9lb. 14oz. With so many ACTRA sibs, **Bria-Jenee** will have just as many scripts read to her as books!



Riley Gilbert Moreau



Gary Eisler and Maegan Rose Eisler

ACTRA member **Marty Moreau** and his wife **Tina**, an Apprentice member, joyfully announce the birth of their son **Riley Gilbert Moreau** on April 18, weighing 7lb. 8 oz.

ACTRA member **Gary Eisler** and his wife **Lori** are thrilled to announce the arrival of their baby girl, **Maegan Rose Eisler**, on June 24. Gary no longer needs an alarm clock for his early call times.

## Welcome new members!

Laura Albino  
 Ryan Allen  
 Michael John Alonzo  
 Rebecca Amare  
 Jade Anderson  
 Camden Angelis  
 London Angelis  
 Jaclyn Ashton  
 Dorothy A Atabong  
 Stefany Basic  
 Jake Beale  
 Rick Berry  
 Trevor Boris  
 Jesse Bostick  
 Briana Buckmaster  
 Julie Burns  
 Celina Cabral  
 Sarah Calder  
 Raffaele Carniato  
 Jan Caruana  
 Adam Cawley  
 Enrico Colantoni  
 Sarah Commisso  
 William Cuddy  
 Steve D'Angelo

Roy Daye  
 Cosette Derome  
 Jaiden Dockery  
 Karrenga Edwards  
 Jessica Embro  
 Jack Epplett  
 Margaret Evans  
 Morgonn Ewen  
 Olympia Farmakidis  
 Jaclyn Forbes  
 Chris Gilchrist  
 Jeff Giles  
 Amanda Gryniewski  
 Kayla Harris  
 Ricky Hegarty  
 Diavon Henningham  
 Sami Hill  
 Renee Holford  
 Matthew Hong  
 Aziam Howes  
 Ricardo Hoyos  
 Jesse Ryder Hughes  
 Robin Hutton  
 John Illingworth  
 Christian Ismodes

M.J. Johnson  
 Anthony Johnston  
 Sean Jordan  
 Adam Kennedy  
 Cameron Kennedy  
 Drea Kidd  
 Jennifer M. Kim  
 Sophia Le Fevre  
 Lisa Li  
 Neil Paul Mackay  
 Colin Martinborough  
 Shaun Mc Comb  
 Chanel Michaels  
 Jane Milman  
 Wesley Morgan  
 Christopher Morris  
 Melina Nacos  
 Christian Ng  
 Jeen O'Brien  
 Joy Olimpo  
 Maja Pamic  
 Cindy Persad  
 Brook Peters  
 Andrew Prashad  
 Alana Randall

Georgina Reilly  
 Jessica Romano  
 Jenna Scott  
 Shahram Shahbazi  
 Garth Sheriff  
 Jaclyn Angela Smith  
 Dru Soo  
 Jamie Spilchuk  
 Kibwe Thomas  
 Max Topplin  
 Max Toulich  
 Lois Tucker  
 Megan Vincent  
 Graham Wagner  
 Adam Waxman  
 Evan Williams  
 Erin Witherspoon  
 Courtney Wright  
 Tara Yelland  
 William Yong  
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 Natty Zavitz  
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# The ACTRA Awards in Toronto 2008

Friday, February 22, 2008 • The Carlu



The ACTRA Awards in Toronto honour outstanding performances by ACTRA Toronto members. Now in our sixth year since the awards were re-instituted for ACTRA's 60th Anniversary, the ACTRA Awards in Toronto is a fabulous party that shines a light on our stars and our industry.

All ACTRA Toronto members are invited to submit performances for consideration for three awards:

**The ACTRA Award for Outstanding Performance** – voice

**The ACTRA Award for Outstanding Performance** – female

**The ACTRA Award for Outstanding Performance** – male

#### ACTRA Awards criteria

The performance must be by an ACTRA Toronto member in good standing. The production must be ACTRA-signatory and must have had its first broadcast between December 1, 2006 and November 30, 2007, to be eligible. You must be an ACTRA Toronto member in good standing (Full, Apprentice or Additional Background Performer) to make a submission.

**ACTRA Awards submissions are now open until November 30, 2007, at [www.actratoronto.com](http://www.actratoronto.com).**

#### Voice

Nominated Performer can be either male or female. Performance must be an original characterization in animation, radio drama/ comedy or dramatic narration.

#### Male/Female

Lead or supporting performances only. Production can be in any genre (TV series, TV movie, feature film, short film, digital media).



From left clockwise: 2007 ACTRA Award winners Maria Del Mar, Gordon Pinsent and Wendy Crewson; Rick Mercer and Shirley Douglas attending the ACTRA Awards; ACTRA member and singer Amanda Martinez performing as part of the show; ACTRA Award voice nominee Ellen-Ray Hennessy; and Wayne Robson with ACTRA Awards host Patrick McKenna.



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