

Volume 14 • Issue 1

The magazine from ACTRA Toronto

performers

getting along famously

Tax Credit Victory!
See page 9 for details.

Introducing
Your New Toronto President

Runaway Production
and other oxymorons

Diary of a Blue Collar/Canadian Actor

The Evolution of a Political Actor • Voice Actors Speak-up

Feb. 18 - Your Next Conference & Awards Gala

Toronto's Mega Studio: CEO Ken Ferguson speaks



ACTRA
TORONTO PERFORMERS



**Introducing Your New
ACTRA Toronto president,
Karl Pruner**

President's Message pg. 3

Letters to the Editor pg. 4

ACTRA Toronto Council: Who's Who pg. 5

Who You Gonna Call?:
ACTRA Toronto Staff Listing pg. 5

Confessions of a Blue Collar/Canadian Actor
by Andrew Moodie pg. 6

Members' News:
What's happening in your world pg. 8

Hey, aren't you that voice guy?
by Adrian Truss pg. 14

Last Conference — Highlights pg. 16
— Keynote Speech pg. 19

FEATURE ARTICLE:

Getting Along Famously
by Colin Mochrie and Debra McGrath pg. 21

In Memoriam pg. 25

ACTRA: THEM OR US?
Becoming a Political Actor
by Karl Pruner (your new ACTRA Toronto president) pg. 26

Runaway Production and Other Oxymorons
by Christie MacFadyen pg. 28

Your Next Conference pg. 30



performers
The magazine from ACTRA Toronto

Winter 2005 • Volume 14 Issue 1

PUBLISHER
Heather Allin
hallin@council.actratontoronto.com

EDITOR
Brad Borbridge
editor@actratontoronto.com

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE
Heather Allin, Brad Borbridge, Richard Hardacre,
Dan Mackenzie, Carol Taverner, Brian Topp

DESIGN&LAYOUT
Erick Querci
creativeprocess@sympatico.ca

ADVERTISING SALES
Karen Covitz
kcovitz@rocketmail.com
416-461-4827


CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Heather Allin • Brad Borbridge • Richard Hardacre
Kim Hume • Debra McGrath • Colin Mochrie
Karl Pruner • Andrew Moodie • Christie MacFadyen
Adrian Truss

PLEASE ADDRESS EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO:
Performers Magazine
c/o ACTRA Toronto Performers
625 Church Street
Toronto, ON M4Y 2G1
Fax: (416) 928-2852
editor@actratontoronto.com

JOIN THE TEAM
If you're an ACTRA Toronto member or apprentice and want to write an article, contribute original cartoons, artwork or photos — we'd love to hear from you! Send us an email.

THE NEXT COPY DEADLINE IS
April 29, 2005
The magazine invites members to submit notices of births, marriages, obituaries, and letters to the editor. Article submissions **MUST** be sent via e-mail (editor@actratontoronto.com) or on disk with accompanying hard copy.

We reserve the right to edit or omit any material for length, style, content or possible legal ramifications.

 *Performers* magazine is published three times a year by ACTRA Toronto Performers. The views expressed in unsolicited and solicited articles are not necessarily the views of ACTRA Toronto Performers, its Council or this Committee.

www.actratontoronto.com



(l to r) Colin Mochrie, Debra McGrath and Patrick McKenna in the new comedy pilot: **Getting Along Famously**
Cover photography courtesy of CBC



WITH GUTS, IN UNISON

My term as Toronto President ends in January, and so this is my final report to you in this role.

It has been a great privilege to serve the performers of ACTRA Toronto through some truly challenging times.

Our elected leaders rack up long days and give up personal time when we decide to step up and serve the union. Frankly, I enjoy every hour. It gives me the opportunity to work with hundreds of the most creative and determined people I've ever met - all the members of this remarkable union of ours.

I don't have to convince anyone how grindingly tough it is to pursue the career of a professional actor. That's why it's such a remarkable achievement. As Gordon Pinsent told us when he received the Toronto Award of Excellence two years ago: We, and those who came before us, have come together over 60 years and built ourselves a home, "fantastic, talented actors have gone through, have built from the sticks and stones of our own home-grown character, a house for us all to live in"; a safe haven, a passionate advocate called ACTRA Toronto.

There are no other independent contractors in our economy with national collective agreements, pension plans, health and dental benefits, and union representatives on call to deal with workplace issues. No one chooses leaders who deliberate so thoroughly to craft the guiding principles that are the mortar for Gordon's stones and sticks to keep our home secure for years to come.

I'm proud to have played a role in moving forward this storied and now startlingly effective union of film and television performers. I give my word that this is



important to me and that I will continue in whatever capacity I'm needed. I will help keep our home solid and our voice clear, resonating with the essential substance of what English-speaking actors can provide to the character of Canada.

Let's remind each other that together we've built the single strongest cultural union in the country and the strongest voice for Canadian culture.

ACTRA Toronto, as part of the FilmOntario consortium, has dealt with the following issues: sorely needed cooperation over locations with City Hall (Mayor Miller has just created a streamlined film liaison within his own office); uncompetitive tax credits; Toronto-phobic policies pursued by the federal government; and unwanted attention from groups who have no role in Toronto's film and television industry. We have joined the struggle on every front.

I am proud that ACTRA Toronto is in good fiscal health. We've triggered a renaissance in indie production. We're on the road to cleaning up our membership rules. We've opened a dialogue to achieve a better ACTRA Fraternal. We're quietly and effectively tackling casting issues. We're bringing our young performers — the new blood — together to learn from

each other and to share with us their energies.

We have achieved some good collective agreements in these tough times. We re-launched the ACTRA Awards. We re-launched *Performers*, our magazine. We re-launched our member-training program. We set up a free studio for members' use.

Our organization is more agile, and more able to respond to its responsibilities. We put Canadian broadcasting and filmmaking on the public agenda. That is a gigantic feat! We must never be complacent until there's a proper schedule of Canadian drama in prime-time on Canadian television.

I'll conclude with a bit of advice: be part of the team that is working together so effectively to tackle these critical issues. Keep coming to our conferences. Join a committee. Stand for election to council. Be a forward-thinker. Be an actor that's part of the solution.

Look at all we've been able to do when we decide to move forward; with guts and in unison. Let's keep going. Let's go on with the work.

From deep within me I need to express my gratitude to all of you, my elected brothers and sisters, and my fellow members in this tremendous union of ours, for the chance you've given me to serve you.

Merci. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Hardacre". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being particularly prominent.

Richard Hardacre, President

Meet your new president, Karl Pruner, on page 26.

Letters to the Editor



Dear Editor,

I am sure that many actors will be able to relate to my experience on a commercial set.

We were shooting a commercial overnight. Which you all know is the most unpleasant time to work. After many hours outside in the cool summer air, the background performers were hosed with cold water during the commercial shoot.



Not once were we informed that we would be frequently hosed with cold water. Not once were we told we could use umbrella's to cover ourselves. Not once were we advised to not wear our expensive suits as our "business look". Not once did "they" thank us for our tolerance. Not once did "they" offer us dryers, heaters or even towels. It is almost like "they" did not address the fact that the situation may be unpleasant for the performers hoping that somehow this inconsiderate treatment would go unnoticed. Well, I noticed.

Yes, we are background performers but we too are teachers, grandmothers, musicians, mothers, firefighters, husbands, sons, principal actors, counselors, friends, colleagues and so much more.

Give us respect, for you automatically receive respect from us!

Wendy Lum

We welcome letters from readers. To allow for as many letters as possible, please limit your letter to 250 words or less. Letters may be edited. Please direct all editorial inquiries and letters to the editor: editor@actratoronto.com

The views expressed in the "Letters to the Editor" are not necessarily the views of ACTRA Toronto Performers, its Council or the Editorial Committee.

Dear Editor,

This letter is concerning disrespect toward actors when interacting with banker-folk.



I too, have had experience with this....Years ago, I had applied for a loan to buy a jeep, with not a lot of liquid or assets at my back (unless you would call an ancient Ford Tempo an asset). I tried to assure the man in the big, leather chair that I was not a credit liability...that I was a good girl, and paid my bills on time. It was a hard argument, since my income 'on-the-books', was so heavily-weighted toward certain seasons of the year.

I explained that the nature of my work was a rolling, seasonal hillside. I impatiently listed all the reasons why he should be working overtime to get me my loan, citing examples of my 'upstanding citizenship'.

Subsequent to that time and the bank's dismissal of my plea, I learned to be a lot more aggressive and a lot less smiley-faced.

Respectfully submitted to all those Fine Artists in the same boat on the River of Life,

Rhonda Lee Stephenson

Why do we not see what we have in the Canadian Film Industry?

Why has the climate of late been solely concentrated on what the Americans and Government are not giving us? What if they're not investing in us because we don't see our own value?

The first people on our "Walk of Fame" were people like Mike Myers and Jim Carey. Why not Sarah Polley or the late Al Waxman who have done so much in and for this industry? They are just a few of the many people who are so under celebrated. Americans are better than us at giving their storytellers value through the "star system" which we buy hook, line and sinker here too. Just goes to show how far a little pride goes.

Are American storytellers more valuable or different than our own? Why was "Cold Squad" taken off in order to make room for "Cold Case"? Canadian product is most often touted as multicultural based because that is what makes us different than Americans. Why do we want to differentiate ourselves only to devalue what we are?

What if we concentrate on telling our own stories that touch the heart, regardless of what people look like or believe in? What if we celebrate ourselves so that the Government will see us worth investing in? What if we believe that the States has nothing to give us, except an example of how far you can get by just knowing and believing in what you got?

Sarah Meltzer



ACTRA Toronto Council WHO'S WHO

PRESIDENT

Karl Pruner (1, 2) kpruner@council.actratortoronto.com, ext: 6750

VICE-PRESIDENT, COMMUNICATIONS

Heather Allen (1, 2) hallen@council.actratortoronto.com, ext: 6610

VICE-PRESIDENT, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Christie MacFadyen (1, 2) cmacfadyen@council.actratortoronto.com, ext: 6609

VICE-PRESIDENT, INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Elizabeth McCallum (2) emccallum@council.actratortoronto.com, ext: 6608

VICE-PRESIDENT, MEMBER SERVICES

Eric Murphy (2) emurphy@council.actratortoronto.com, ext: 6606

VICE-PRESIDENT, FINANCE

Austin Scharz (1, 2) ascharz@council.actratortoronto.com, ext: 6607

PAST PRESIDENT

Richard Hardacre (1, 2) rhardacre@actra.ca

Robert Collins (1, 2) rcollins@council.actratortoronto.com

Aidan Devine (1, 2) adevine@council.actratortoronto.com

Ferne Downey (1, 2) fdowney@council.actratortoronto.com

Toni Elward (2) telward@council.actratortoronto.com

Dom Fiore (2) dfiore@council.actratortoronto.com

Lyn Mason Green (1, 2) lmgreen@council.actratortoronto.com

Don Lamoreux (2) dlamoreux@council.actratortoronto.com

David Macneven (1, 2) dmacneven@council.actratortoronto.com

Julie McLeod (2) jmcleod@council.actratortoronto.com

Frank McNulty (2) fmcnulty@council.actratortoronto.com

Sean Mulcahy (1, 2)

Chris Owens (2) c Owens@council.actratortoronto.com

Stephen Graham Simpson (2) enochinc@rogers.com

Theresa Tova (1, 2) ttova@actratortoronto.com

Anne Marie Schaffler (2) amschaffler@council.actratortoronto.com

Rhonda Lee Stephenson (2) rstephenson@council.actratortoronto.com

Ron White (2) rwhite@council.actratortoronto.com

Legend: 1-ACTRA National Councillor;

2-ACTRA Toronto Councillor

Shereen Airth, ACTRA Apprentice Vice-Chair
sairth@actratortoronto.com, ext. 6621

Cheryl Hancock, ACTRA Apprentice Secretary
chancock@actratortoronto.com, ext. 6627

David Farquhar, Apprentice Executive Member-at-Large
dfarquhar@actratortoronto.com, ext. 6616

Wayne McMahon, ACTRA Extra Caucus Chair
wmcMahon@actratortoronto.com, ext. 6620

Katherine Bignell, ACTRA Extra Vice-Chair
kbignell@actratortoronto.com, ext. 6613

Imay Pascall, ACTRA Extra Secretary
ipascall@actratortoronto.com, ext. 6622

Philip Cairns, ACTRA Extra Member-at-Large
pcairns@actratortoronto.com, ext. 6625

David Riess, ACTRA Extra Member-at-Large
driess@actratortoronto.com, ext. 6627

Heather Thompson, ACTRA Extra Member-at-Large
hthompson@actratortoronto.com, ext. 6628

Theresa Tova, Children's Advocate
ttova@actratortoronto.com, ext. 6605

Priya Rao, Diversity Chair & Advocate
prio@actratortoronto.com, ext. 6618

Stephen Graham Simpson, Diversity Vice-Chair
enochinc@rogers.com

Lexa Levinson, Diversity Advocate
llevinson@actratortoronto.com, ext. 6619

Shawn Lawrence, Ombudsman
slawrence@actratortoronto.com, ext. 6604

Visit the ACTRA Toronto website at
www.actratortoronto.com!

GOT A QUESTION?

Who You Gonna Call?

ACTRA Toronto Staff

ACTRA TORONTO PERFORMERS

GENERAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Tel: 416-928-2278 or toll-free 1-877-913-2278
info@actratortoronto.com
www.actratortoronto.com
625 Church Street, 1st floor, Toronto, ON M4Y 2G1

COMMERCIAL AGREEMENT INTERPRETATIONS

Judy Barefoot (Manager)

Tel: 416-642-6704, jbarefoot@actratortoronto.com

Kelly Davis (Steward)

Tel: 416-642-6707, kdavis@actratortoronto.com

Cathy Wendt (Steward)

Tel: 416-642-6714, cwendt@actratortoronto.com

COMMERCIAL AUDITION CALLBACK INQUIRIES

Claudette Allen

Tel: 416-642-6713, callen@actratortoronto.com

COMMERCIAL CHECKOUT INQUIRIES

Brenda Blacoe (Examiner)

Tel: 416-642-6729, bblacoe@actratortoronto.com

Timmy Boyer (Examiner)

Tel: 416-642-6719, tboyer@actratortoronto.com

Lyn Franklin (Examiner)

Tel: 416-642-6730, lfranklin@actratortoronto.com

COMMERCIAL PAYMENT INQUIRIES

Patricia McCutcheon (Coordinator)

Tel: 416-642-6731, pmccutcheon@actratortoronto.com

Laura McKelvey (Coordinator)

Tel: 416-642-6728, lmckelvey@actratortoronto.com

COMMUNICATIONS AND ORGANIZING

Dan Mackenzie (Manager)

Tel: 416-644-1508, danmackenzie@actra.ca

Kim Hume (Public Relations Officer)

Tel: 416-642-6710, khume@actratortoronto.com

Carol Taverner (Public Relations Officer)

Tel: 416-642-6721, ctaverner@actratortoronto.com

Joy Corbin (Web Communications Coordinator)

Tel: 416-642-6747, web@actratortoronto.com

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Karen Ritson (Director)

GORDON PINSENT STUDIO BOOKINGS

Jennifer McLaren (Administrative Assistant)

Tel: 416-642-6733, jmclaren@actratortoronto.com



INDEPENDENT PRODUCTION AGREEMENT (IPA), CBC TV & RADIO, CTV, CITY-TV, GLOBAL & TVO AGREEMENTS

Eda Zimler (Manager)

Tel: 416-642-6717, ezimler@actratortoronto.com

Indra Escobar (Senior Advisor)

Tel: 416-642-6702, iescobar@actratortoronto.com

DJ Anderson (Steward, IPA & TVO)

Tel: 416-642-6708, djanderson@actratortoronto.com

Cor Hambleton (Steward, CBC & IPA)

Tel: 416-642-6711, chambleton@actratortoronto.com

Barbara Larose (Steward, IPA, Co-Rep, Student Films)

Tel: 416-642-6714, blarose@actratortoronto.com

Richard Todd (Steward, City TV, CTV, Global & IPA)

Tel: 416-642-6716, rtodd@actratortoronto.com

MEMBER TRAINING INTENSIVE

Jennifer McLaren (Administrative Assistant)

Tel: 416-642-6733, jmclaren@actratortoronto.com

MEMBERSHIP DEPARTMENT

DUES & PERMIT PAYMENTS

Contact: Membership Department

Tel: 416-928-2278

Dan Mackenzie (Manager)

TORONTO INDIE PRODUCTIONS (TIP)

Tasso Lukas (TIP Coordinator)

Tel: 416-642-6733, tip@actratortoronto.com

Confessions of a Blue Collar **Canadian** Actor

by Andrew Moodie



It's 6:00 a.m. My daughter is screaming. Usually she's up at 6:20 a.m. Not today. I stumble out of bed, change her diaper and get the idea that maybe if I bring her into bed with me, I can get another 20 minutes of sleep. Nope – she sits up on the pillow and smacks my cheek.

I have an audition today for the upcoming movie starring 50 cent. I'm auditioning for his manager and I have no idea what a hip hop manager wears. I just don't have any life experience that can connect me to him, so playing his manager is just one big blank slate for me. I assume that most other actors are gonna go dressed in hip hop clothes,
I decide to go the other way – suit and tie.

Sure. That'll work.

Some days I feel guilty dropping my daughter off at daycare. My audition is at 3:00 p.m. and will probably take, what? 20 minutes of my time? But I need to memorize the lines. I need to warm up the old voice, stretch the upper palate - all the stuff I do for auditions I really want to get.

Children don't care about my upper palate; they want to be fed; they want to be loved. I tell myself over and over, 'Hey, you went to work, nine to five; brought home the bacon. At least when you have time off you can spend it with your family.'

The thing is, when do we actors really have 'time off'? I moved here from Ottawa because this is the place you want to be for English language acting work in Canada. But you've got to hustle. You can't just sit on your ass waiting for the phone to ring.

So you wait on tables, you temp, you go to see plays, and you hang out afterwards and talk to other professionals and keep tabs on the industry.

When I was young I ate it up. I stayed up late. I worked in shitty dead end jobs and ran off to auditions with a twinkle in my eye; maybe this will be that acting gig that catapults me into another realm of existence. I'll get this movie/TV show/commercial and I will finally have made it.

I just hit 37 and suddenly reality sinks in: Lets say I get this audition. I assume they'll be shooting in February/March because the audition happened in December. Let's assume it's a 4 month shoot and they rush through post-production. The movie's out in August, September. By October I'm in LA, turning my 'Star Turn' as 50 cent's gruff street-wise manager into a green card and an agent. I stay in LA; I do pilot season; I get a lead role on some sitcom or drama that becomes a smash hit; and I've finally made it.

Well. By that time, I'm 39. Maybe 40. Is that what I want?

After spending the past 20 years as a professional actor in this country, I'm really sick and tired of the way the industry treats us.

If I threw a stone, I could hit 20 actors in this town who easily have the talent to become major stars. And they struggle to persist in a country that is killing off dramatic television.

So we Canadians leave, and we go to America, and some of us become MAJOR stars. I understand that having money, fame and power doesn't make you happy. But having people respect your work, having people think you're a good actor, isn't that what we all really want?

So why don't I go? I could go if I wanted.

I say to myself that it has to do with my family; I don't want to raise my daughter down there... but I have friends who go, and raise their children here.

Maybe I'm scared. Maybe I want to turn back the clock and spend a little less time chasing after a dream and spend more time with my friends and family. Maybe I don't want to make it anymore... maybe that's okay.

Maybe I should think about my life as an actor who hasn't made it. What would that look like?



I step out of the audition. Personally, I think I nailed it but I don't want to get too confident (that's bad luck). And I don't want to want it too much, cause if I don't get it - it will break my heart. So I start to think that there's no way in hell they'll hire me in a million years. But I hate being defeatist. So... I just try to put it out of my mind completely.

I hold my daughter in my arms as I walk out of daycare. My wife is home first, so she makes dinner. She asks about my audition. I tell her it went well and ask about her day. As she tells me about her boss and her customers, I think to myself (I know this sounds corny and cliché as hell), maybe I've already made it. Maybe anything more, after what I already have, is gravy.

By 8 pm, my daughter's been bathed and put to bed. My wife and I sit on the couch. We talk about her day and watch *Sex and the City*. (Damn that show's good. I'd love to get a role on a show like that.) As my wife and I put our heads on the pillow, all I can think is: I really hope my daughter sleeps 'til 6:20 p.m.

DIVERSITY NEWS

MAINSTREAM NOW!

ACTRA Toronto's Diversity Committee is excited to launch yet another venture designed to promote greater diversity in film and television production. Over 400 members have signed up to be part of MAINSTREAM NOW! — the new catalogue of visible minority members that will be circulated to casting directors and production companies throughout Toronto and beyond to encourage and help them make their productions better reflect the extraordinary diversity of the Canadian audience. Watch out for this fabulous book of talented performers in early 2005!

For more information on the Diversity Committee please go to www.actratoronto.com.

MEET-N-GREETS for ACTRA Toronto Members and Casting Directors

Vanessa Madden and Tiffany Deriveau at the "Go-see".



In an on-going effort to increase work opportunities for our members ACTRA Toronto hosted a late December "meet-n-greet" session for the purpose of casting two movies with large African-American roles. Performers who had not met with casting directors **Robin Cook** or **Stephanie Gorin** before this session were introduced to them along with U.S. casting director **Kim Harden**.

Walter Alza to receive Latin American Achievement AWARD

The Premio Somos Latin American Achievement Awards of Canada are presenting **Walter Alza** with the 2005 Canadian Hispanic Personality of the Year Award. The Latin American Achievement Awards were established in 1998 to recognize the outstanding contributions and accomplishments made by those within the Latin American community of Canada. Starring in *Metropia*, Walter is the first actor of Latin descent to play a lead character in a Canadian TV series. He speaks four languages and can incorporate numerous accents. His many credits include *Doc*, *Due South*, *PSI Factor*, *The Uncles* and the upcoming feature *Direct Action* with **Dolph Lungren** and **Polly Shannon**. Walter is a proud member of ACTRA Toronto's Diversity Committee. The ceremony will take place in September 2005 at Toronto's Roy Thomson Hall and will feature vibrant performances by local and international Latin artists.

For more information go to: www.premiosomos.com.



Diversity AWARD

Sandi Ross received the 2004 Diversity World Heritage Award for her outstanding contribution to Canadian theatre and for being a strong role model for women in arts and culture. She is among an eminent line-up



of professionals, statespersons, and political leaders representing many countries within the African diaspora who are given the recognition they deserve. Sandi is a former President of ACTRA Toronto.

DECEMBER 1, 2004

THE RALLY

A HUGE SUCCESS!

It was muddy and cold but the Dec. 1 Queen's Park rally was a huge success. Over a thousand actors, directors, film technicians, business owners and others working in the industry gathered to demand that **Premier Dalton McGuinty** fix Ontario's film and television tax credits – to keep the promises he made during the provincial election. More than 50 honey wagons and other film industry trucks drove in a ring around Queen's Park with horns blaring. Actors **Luba Goy** and **Wayne Robson** hosted the event, with speakers including **Brian Topp**, Executive Director of ACTRA Toronto, producer **Don Carmody**, director **Ken Girotti**, **Deborah Osbourne** who works in post-production, owner of Absolute Location Services **Paul Kenyon** and actor/activist **Shirley Douglas**.



Rally speaker
Shirley Douglas



Rally supporters Christie MacFadyen
and Peter Outerbridge



Event hosts Wayne Robson
and Luba Goy

DECEMBER 21, 2004

THE VICTORY

Ontario government delivers Film and Television tax credits

(for a complete report on this go to www.actratoronto.ca)

On December 21st, the Government of Ontario announced a significant increase in provincial tax credits for both domestic and foreign production.

For domestic Canadian production:

- Productions shot in the Greater Toronto Area will now qualify for a 30% tax credit (up from 20%).
- Productions shot outside of the GTA will qualify for a 40% tax credit (up from 30%).
- Certain caps built into the old tax credit system have been lifted, adding about 3% to both incentives.

For foreign service production:

- Productions shot anywhere in Ontario will now qualify for an 18% tax credit (up from 11% in the GTA and 14% outside of it).

IS EVERYTHING NOW SETTLED?

This announcement represents a very important signal about our industry and gives its financing a very significant boost.

There are still issues that need to be addressed – there probably always will be.

Here's a few for us all to work on in the months to come:

- In Toronto: Now that we have a new Film Board chaired by our Mayor, much remains to be done to make the City a film-friendly location. Centralized permitting would be a good start. Getting a competitive studio built is a key priority.
- In Ontario: Much still needs to be done to improve how Ontario is marketed as a film location (we've made a start with the joint Ontario/Toronto/FilmOntario L.A. office). The province's animation credits need to be more competitive. That feature film commitment needs to be implemented. The competitiveness of the service tax credit will need to be closely monitored as other jurisdictions react to Ontario's announcement.
- At the federal level: Anti-Toronto federal film policies need to be reversed. The mis-regulation of the broadcasting industry by the CRTC needs to be fixed. And the new CEO of Telefilm has his work cut out for him getting his agency back on track after several misguided years.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

A very good day indeed for Ontario's film and television industry.

This is Wonderland wins the Actors' Fund Charity Challenge

CBC's legal drama *This is Wonderland* has emerged as the winner of the Eleventh Hour Charity Challenge for the Actors' Fund of Canada. As part of the Fund's annual "More Than Applause" fundraising campaign, the Charity Challenge raised a total of over \$10,000 to help the Actors' Fund of Canada. Many thanks to shows who took up the challenge such as *Train 48*, *The Eleventh Hour* and *Sue Thomas, F.B. Eye*. For more information go to www.actorsfund.ca

ACTRA Toronto hosting new Casting Showcases

In collaboration with TAMAC and the CDC, ACTRA Toronto will be hosting a series of "go sees" for casting directors to see ACTRA members that they perhaps haven't seen before. On a rotational basis, agents will submit clients who will come prepared to participate in an audition setting and to meet with various casting people. These new Casting Showcases will happen on an ongoing basis.

Member Training Intensive

Launched in the summer of 2004, the Member Training Intensive is a weekend course for Apprentice and Full members that covers the business aspects of being an actor — audition protocols, an overview of ACTRA's collective agreements and how ACTRA works for you. The course costs \$200 and Apprentice members receive one credit toward full ACTRA membership.

Member Training Intensive grads Ric Garcia and Patricia Bazos.



You can get blood from a producer!

Congratulations to the brave CFTP, DGC, IATSE, NABET and WGC individuals who rolled up their sleeves during the ACTRA Toronto Blood Donor Challenge. All of our industry partners stood up to the challenge — including some first-time donors. The real winners are the 100 people who will benefit from our collective donations. BRAVO to all of us and we hope to make this an annual vent.



Now that's funny!

The 2004 Canadian Comedy Awards & Festival took place in London, Ontario with our very own **Scott Thompson** handing out the beavers. In the film category **Eugene Levy** was the Pretty Funny Male Performance Winner in *A Mighty Wind*, and **Deb McGrath**

was the Pretty Funny Female Performance Winner in *Expecting*. In the television category **Brent Butt** was the Pretty Funny TV Male in *Corner Gas* and **Mary Pat Farrell** was the Pretty Funny TV Female in *The Gavin Crawford Show*. For a complete list of winners go to: canadiancomedyawards.com

CAO hosting ACTRA execs Feb. 28!

CanadianActor Online members can talk to ACTRA's executive council and executive officers from across Canada on February 28 (7:30 p.m.) during CAO's National ACTRA Talkback. What's the outlook for 2005? What's up with our political activism? New membership policies? What's slated to shoot? Post your questions online at www.canadianactor.com. Don't miss it!!

And baby makes three!

Nathan Carlos Richard Libbey was born at 11:57 a.m. on September 4, 2004 to proud parents **Anne Marie Scheffler** and **David Libbey**. Nathan arrived a healthy 9 lbs. 5 oz., good-looking like his dad and dramatic like his mom, making him predisposed to a career in the biz.



Big Kudos to Sonja Smits and Fiona Reid for CRASHING CAB!

Canadian stars **Sonja Smits** and **Fiona Reid** were quick off the mark in responding to the CRTC announcement of new incentives for broadcasters, presented during the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' convention. ACTRA chastised the CRTC for not including regulations in the prescription for ailing drama, and Fiona and Sonja were right there to get that message through. Their remarks were picked up in all of the media stories, including the headlines of both *The Hollywood Reporter* and *Variety*.



Fiona Reid

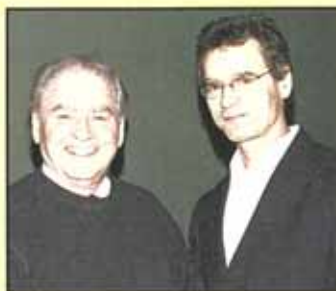


Sonja Smits

Who's doing what for you at ACTRA Toronto? To find comprehensive reports on the goings-on of ACTRA Toronto's committees go to actratoronto.com

...and the award goes to...

Bernard Cowan Award Presented to Dan MacDonald



This year the Bernard Cowan Award was presented to **Dan MacDonald** for his significant and lasting contribution to ACTRA. He was Chair of ACTRA Performers' Guild through the reorganization of ACTRA in the early '90s, and served as its first President from 1993-95. He is President of the

Performing Arts Lodge of Canada.

Above: Richard Hardacre (right) presenting Dan MacDonald with the Bernard Cowan Award.

Canadian Theatre Critics Association Award

David Gardner received the 2004 Herbert Whittaker/Drama Bench Award for Outstanding Contribution to Canadian Theatre. This award is chosen by members of the Canadian Theatre Critics Association and has been given annually since 1981 to some of Canada's most respected theatre practitioners and testifies to their longstanding dedication to their craft.

Gemini Awards



Earle Grey Award recipient
Graham Greene

Congrats to our Gemini Winners! At the 2004 Gemini Awards **Graham Greene** received The Earle Grey Award, a special Gemini honoring an outstanding body of work in his 20 years in the biz, and **George R. Robertson** received the Gemini Humanitarian Award for his work on behalf of underprivileged children. Winners include: best performance by an actor in a leading role in a dramatic program or miniseries: **Brent Carver** in *Elizabeth Rex*; best performance by an actress in a leading role in a dramatic program or miniseries: **Diane D'Aquila** in *Elizabeth Rex*; best performance by an actor in a continuing leading dramatic role: **Paul Gross**, *Slings & Arrows*; best performance by an actress in a continuing leading dramatic role: **Catherine Disher**, *Snakes & Ladders*; best individual performance in a comedy program or series: **Gavin Crawford**, *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* (Episode 4); best ensemble performance in a comedy program or series: **Rick Mercer**, **Peter Keleghan**, **Dan Lett**, **Leah Pinsent**,

Jackie Torrens, *Made In Canada*; best host or interviewer in a sports program or sportscast: **Ron MacLean**; best TV movie or dramatic miniseries: *Human Cargo*; best dramatic series: *Du Vinci's Inquest*; best comedy program or series: *Trailer Park Boys*. We congratulate all of our winners! For the complete list go to www.academy.ca.

Best Performance Gemini Winners **Diane D'Aquila** and **Brent Carver**, also the recipients of ACTRA Toronto's 2004 Awards for Outstanding Performances





**The Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television
is proud to honour
25 Award Winning Years of Performers**

**L'Académie canadienne du cinéma et de la télévision
est fière de souligner 25 années vouées
à la reconnaissance du talent de nos interprètes**

**JOIN US TO CELEBRATE THE 25th ANNUAL GENIE AWARDS
CÉLÉBRONS TOUS ENSEMBLE LES 25^e PRIX GÉNIE**

March 21, 2005 / Le 21 mars 2005



ACADEMY OF CANADIAN
CINEMA AND TELEVISION
ACADÉMIE CANADIENNE DU
CINÉMA ET DE LA TÉLÉVISION

www.genieawards.ca

Canadian star Paul Gross to receive ACTRA Toronto's 2005 Award of Excellence



Paul Gross in CBC's *H2O*



Paul Gross will be honoured with ACTRA Toronto's Award of Excellence on Friday, February 18, 2005 at The Carlu. All ACTRA

Toronto members are invited to the ceremony – see back cover for details. Two juried awards will also be presented for Outstanding Performance – male and female.

Sonja Smits, who received this award in 2004, and **Gordon Pinsent**, who received the inaugural award in 2003, will co-present the award to Mr. Gross.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

James Arbeson
Michael Ryan Adams
Theo Anderson
Michael Andrew
Chris Arnold
Julie Arzoo
Michelle Arzoo
Priscilla Kalfay Asante
Justin Atkinson-Lindsay
Lara Azropardi
Tasha Barker
Dustin Barrocks
Ryan Barton
Patricia Basso
Tara Beagan
Shannon Beckner
Alex Bekasov
Ronald Benjamin
Carly Bentall
Joshua Timothy Birjot
Tom Black
Shannon Brodham
Angela Bortis
Will Seattle Bowes
Jeanne Brisson
Jean Broucier
Taylor Genesis Brooks
Lance Brown
Matthew Brown
Darrin Brown
Quincy Bullock
Cole Thomas Campbell
Cesar Carson
Renée Castle
Ella Chan
Eric Charbonneau
Elle Chong
Precious Chong
Stephens Christine
Anthony Cloutier

Lisa Clara
Paul Clancy
Paul Giles
Sheila Coggis
Billy Connell
Karin Coulter Mepherian
Georgina Craig
Eric Czang
Barrett Cullisley
Anna Cynn
Mista D
Alan D'Amico
Low David
Rebecca Davis
Shirley De Laog
Jon De Leon
Julia Desotto
Alan Dibworth
Darryl Dion
Stefanie Drummond
Jack Duncan
Jackie Dwyer
Marin Eladig
Catherine Emmanuel
Sandy Evans
Chris Farghar
Leslie Ferreira
Kevin Fry
Mark Fry
Dawn Furry
Monty Gagné
Tyler Gallagher
David Galpern
Steve Gendler
Peter Garzillo
Alana Glass
Natalya Gomez
Carlos A Gonzalez
Christopher Gorys
Mark Gorys

Ambera Grant
Michael Grasso
Ryan Sears Greene
Joe Ho
Babak Hafezy
Elijah Hamill
Jahrome Hamill
Martin Happer
Heath Hayes
Meghan Heis
John Henry
Nikki Henry
Ray Hogg
Bradley Dean Hopkins
Bruce Houtak
Martin Houtman
Olivia Howell
Martin Houtman
Jessica Hurst
Michael Hurst
Gino Injyan
Nasser Isen
Susana Jara
Natalie Johnson
Ranald J. Johnson
Sabina Kapil
Daniel Kasnik
Arben Karkanic
Jonathan Kelt
Matthew Kennedy
Vera Kim
Heidi King
Nathaniel Korlow
Jacob Kravner
Alexander Kumar
Jenny La
Oliver Lapierre
Heather Lawstevic
Jennifer Lawson
Jo-Anne Leach

Samantha Lee
Sonya Lee
Diana Lee
James Laji
Mark Lavin
Regina Libau
Imani Lindsay
Nia Lindsay
Sean Littlejohn
Abel Lukacek
Courtney Lutz
Eric Malin
Elma Mcmurray
Shannon Moxey
Dale R Miller
Jennifer Egan Modiba
Jacques Monfiston
Roe Monner
Peter Mooney
Candice Moore
Tyler Murray
Jeremy Naamith
Oaika Ndiwe
Joann Nolecky
Danh Nguyen
Matthew Norman
Phil Noruka
Lana Ogilvie
Greta Owington
Juliana Parks
Jennifer Parr
Alyssa Powlak
Michael Peng
Stephanie Phoenix
Allison Plamondon
Leanne Potier Greenfield
Liz Poonert
Dylan Ramsay
Louise Reynolds
Jeanine Richards

Aime Rank
Robert Rossie Rawlstonham
Michael Sage
Daniela Santos
Bonica Sattani
Caroline Seeley
Kerry Sevens
Kary Schmitt
Julia Schneider
Nicholas Sierra
Samantha Sloan
Alexandra Slater
Markus Sleghtbold
Gavin Sleghtbold
Neil Raymond Smith
Michael Spence
Kari Speckath
Kim Stockwood
Candice Strahl
Finty Swire
Dylan Taylor
Justin Tensen
Jeff Trazaime
Bronka Theris
David Tompa
Edward Tracy
Michelle Treloar
Chris Trussell
Sonja Van Halteren
Christine Van Halteren
Kristen Van Hagen
Allan Vekjian
Maureen Wellington
Reya Wirt
Neil Whitley
Aaron Wilts
Nanah Wilson
Jesse Wright
Bernadeta Wiclat



"It's Friday, November 19. We're in the studio recording *Jane and the Dragon* with **Tajja Isen** playing Jane and **Adrian Truss** playing the dragon. These are lines 148 to 159... take one!"

And with that another session of *Jane and The Dragon*, a co-production between Nelvana and **Peter Jackson's** Weta Studios in New Zealand, begins. Weta is the studio that produced, amongst other things, the Gollum animation in *Lord of the Rings*.

Why would a cutting-edge company like that come here for animation expertise? The same reasons production companies from all over the world come to Canada to co-manage animation. Canadian animators and producers are among the best in the business.

Canadian voice talent is the most sought-after in the English-speaking world.

I stare across the studio, trying to pick Tajja out amongst the sea of microphones and music stands, trying to make eye-contact to some degree. It's a little difficult because Tajja is only 13 and stands about five feet tall and I can just make out the top of her head over the stands. Still, we manage to both read from the page and somehow find each other visually to make some sort of actor-like connection.

Tajja, once a featured performer in *The Lion King* and currently starring as the lead in both *Jane & The Dragon* and the popular *Atomic Betty*, is an old hand at this. She's been at it since she was ten when she broke into the business as one of the voices on *Berenstein Bears*. She is quite amazing actually, taking direction smoothly and efficiently and rarely stumbling on her reads, all the while delivering a credible British accent. There are a number of young performers who can work at this level, which bodes well for the future of the talent pool in this field.

Animation, however, is just one of the areas in which Canadian voice performers, young and old, excel. Others are: radio and television advertising; radio drama; video game voice recording; cor-

porate video narration; and the old standby and ready source of income for many actors — ADR (Automated Dialogue Replacement or looping). This is the studio work required when individual actors or group scenes need to have vocals replaced either to enhance the overall soundscape or to replace dialogue because there was a last-minute script change or a technical snag in the original recording.

Generally speaking, when you go to the voice audition you are seeing the script for the first time. So the ability to quickly analyze what the writer's intent is and bring about some realization of that before you get into the audition studio is a must.

And that process usually has to happen in a room full of other actors trying their best to follow the protocol of doing their voice audition prep without actually saying anything.

HOW TO BREAK IN:

As a first step to breaking into the voice area, there are a number of qualified teachers and casting agents who hold introductory workshops from time to time. This can be extremely helpful in getting yourself a demo tape together and to give you a foot in the door. Also, many of the commercial recording studios such as Pirate Radio, hold open auditions from time to time as they seek out new voices. Try to find out when these are and give it a go. The studios are usually very receptive.

Jessie Thompson is a voice director who does a lot of her work through Nelvana but also conducts workshops. Jessie feels that Canada is popular because it has such a large talent pool. "I have a particular bias to theatre actors, and Canada has a mysterious monopoly on successful comedy performers and also on successful anima-

“Hey, aren't you that voice guy?” (and other lines you'll never hear)

by Adrian Truss

tion artists... I guess one thing feeds the other."

What does she look for in new talent? "I would have to say playfulness and a lack of self-consciousness... a sense of humour... and of course they have to be able to act."

Len Carlson, one of the better known voice actors, has been performing in the genre since 1969. Len worked on the original *Spider Man* animated series and was nominated this year for an Annie (the International Association of Animation Award) as Best Actor in a series (*Atomic Betty*). By the way... that famous cartoon *Spider Man* song? Written and sung by Canadians.

In the course of writing this article I had an opportunity to work with Len on the *Friends & Heroes* series. Even in the midst of recovering from an illness, he managed to give a great performance of half a dozen different characters. Watching Len work these bits under those circumstances underscored the fact that this form of performance is as specialized and demanding as any other.

Canadian-produced animation has won many international awards such as Emmys (*Rolie Polie Olie*) and the aforementioned Annies. Recent records for video sales by Nelvana were shattered when *The Care Bears Movie* sold over 250,000 DVD copies in the first week it was released and currently sits at nearly 500,000 copies.

In Toronto right now, there are over a dozen different animated series being recorded. Voice far outstrips other forms of broadcast television in terms of gainful employment.

That is why it is sometimes difficult to understand why there is so little recognition of it by the various associations connected with it. (Such as ACTRA and the WGC, neither of which include it in their awards programs.)

So here's to the Canadian Voice Performer, who may toil in relative anonymity, won't get pointed out on the street or in a restaurant (and for mystifying reasons isn't allowed to vie for a Gemini or a Genie.) but who does the country and the profession proud in ever-increasing numbers, both at home and abroad.



© 2004 WETA Workshop Ltd. and Nelvana Ltd.



Tajja Isen (top inset) creates the voices for Jane (left) of *Jane and the Dragon* and also the voice of Atomic Betty; Adrian Truss (middle inset) is the voice of the dragon in *Jane and the Dragon* and also the voice for Dirty Rat in *Ace Lightning*. Len Carlson (bottom inset).

ACTRA TORONTO'S MEMBERS' CONFERENCE A BIG SUCCESS!

ACTRA Toronto's Saturday November 13 Members Conference at U of T's Victoria College was a big success. Keynote speaker Ken Ferguson, president of Toronto Film Studios, spoke to a packed audience in the Isabel Bader Theatre on Toronto's new Mega-Studio complex. The morning and afternoon offered a variety of workshops, master classes and Kids in the Biz sessions. Panelists and participants included some of Canada's most eminent and respected actors, writers, casting directors, directors, DOPs, and producers.



We would like to honour and thank all of our members' conference volunteers for helping to make the day a big success. We couldn't do it without you! To volunteer for future conferences please email Heather Allin (hallin@actratoronto.com) or Eric Murphy (emurphy@actratoronto.com)

DIVERSITY: INTO THE MAINSTREAM

It was another heated discussion on the topic of diversity. The creative team behind the multicultural series, *Metropia* were a beacon, proving that diversity is not just a moral issue, it can be hot, sexy, entertaining and good business.

Some of the comments made at this session included those from actors of mixed heritage who felt they were penalized for not being 'white enough' but at the same time not being 'ethnic' enough – where, then, do they fit in?

Issues surrounding the various needs of performers with disabilities, for example the need for translators in the audition room and on-set for deaf performers, were enlightening to many in the audience. Also astounding was the fact that only a handful of the 50 or so audition facilities in the city are fully accessible.

The main issue was the lack of roles for disabled and ethnic (please don't call us 'minority') actors. On a positive note, casting director Sharon Forrest stated that she brings in actors of all races regardless of whether or not the breakdown asks her to.

Perhaps the best practical advice came from Maurice Dean Wint who challenged us to be responsible for being excellent at our craft no matter what our skin colour and Jim Allodi, who humorously reiterated the need to create our own work as a vehicle for including ourselves on our own terms.

Producer Paula Smith predicted a bright future, saying that Canadian broadcasters are finally starting to realize that 'diversity' means 'all of us', and that the audience wants a more realistic reflection of Canadian society onscreen.

Casting into the Mainstream panelists - (L-R Back: Sandi Ross, Sharon Forrest, Jim Allodi. L-R Front: Priya Rao, Maurice Dean Wint, Andrew Moodie and Paula Smith.





KIDS IN THE BIZ

Keeping them Safe – a few salient points

trust your inner voice...
when something feels wrong, it is wrong

parents need to create privacy around
their children

parents **MUST** be aware and pro-active guardians

parents must know who their child is with and
where they are, 100% of the time (during the
shoot AND while doing post-production, publicity
and promotion)

no personal info on kid websites

child actors owe fans nothing more than politeness

children should **NOT** deal with fan mail

never answer fan e-mail from home, use a public
library or internet café if you must

emotional security is the foundation of a fulfilling
and productive life

work hard at balancing school and a busy work
schedule

children need to know that they are loved and
accepted — they must enjoy a certain degree of
success in their lives and need encouragement
and recognition

Kids in the Biz participants Murray Shukyn,
Theresa Tova, Nicole Hamilton, Mary Swinton,
Detective Sergeant Steve Irwin and Laurel Bresnahan.



Jerry Ciccoritti directs ACTRA Toronto member Matthew Finlason in a Master Class

CASTING FROM THE DIRECTOR'S POV

With directors
Jerry Ciccoritti,
Adrienne Mitchell,
and Anne Wheeler

Jerry is an eight-time Gemini Award-winner. He has directed more than 15 features and TV movies. Some of the features that he directed are *Boy Meets Girl*, *Paris, France*, *The Death and Life of Nancy Eaton*, *Blood* and the mini series *Lives of the Saints*.

Adrienne Mitchell has been in the business for 15 years. She has executive produced and co-created many seasons of episodic television in Canada, including *Bliss*, *Drop the Beat*, and *Straight Up*.

Anne Wheeler has directed numerous films, TV series and documentaries; most recently *Betrayed*, *Marine Life*, and *Better than Chocolate*. She worked on *Bye Bye Blues*, which is still adored and many episodes of *DaVinci's Inquest*. Currently, she is directing five episodes of *This is Wonderland*.

continued on next page





Anne Wheeler

Casting is part of a process, and while we might have a script in front of us, it's not really locked and it's going to be moulded to who we find in that casting exercise.

You have to come off-book.

I actually have asked casting directors to send me out to audition for parts, just so that I kind of get a sense of what it is like to be on that other side.

You have got to be ready to be really flexible and to be able to just go with the wind; you have to be able to just throw away what you've prepared and go for it from another direction.

If somebody comes in and does a great audition for me, I will make sure that I work with that actor sometime.

I think that a person who's an actor by trade will always bring something. Often you think, 'why are they sending this person in for this role'. But if you sit and watch, there is often something to be gained from it.

Adrienne Mitchell

What I look for is somebody who feels they can take risks in the audition; that they'll actually surprise me. It's just a spark, truth, reality. Just a moment of, you know, 'oh, this person is real'. Those people do shine and we call them back.

... it is very important to be off-book. I can't see you if you are buried in the script.

... there are these words on the page and it's all the stuff that's not on the page that you want to bring out.

Directors have a lot of power. There's a good reason for that because we don't want to work with somebody that we don't believe in.

As long as you're there and you do your best and give a good audition, you may get another role in another episode.

If you nailed even one part of the sides, I usually bring people back in.

You should ask for whatever you need to make it better for you.

You can go really wrong coming in with a costume. It can be kind of scary and it's hard to actually get past the costume.

I love working with challenging actors, if it's about the work; if it's about ego and you're just creating obstacles for the sake of obstacles, I probably would stay away from you.

Jerry Ciccoritti

If an actor comes in and they bring something that I find absolutely extraordinary, then I always would rather rewrite the part to get that actor on screen.

When somebody comes in and they are going to knock your socks off, there's a smell... something that just fills the room. You know, 'ok, this person is going to do something special' and I believe that comes from confidence. If they come in and they are just bad, you can also smell that.

I think the way casting is done, not just in this country but everywhere, I think it's corrupt and the least creative aspect of the business. I hate going into casting, because I know my heart's always going to be broken because the actors' hearts are always going to be broken.

There are very few, really good casting directors out there. Most of them, I think, are just funnelers of their flavours for the month, and I think a lot of them are lazy and lot of them keep out people who should be given a chance.

You've got to count on people who are lazy and preoccupied and they are just looking for somebody who'll just say the lines as written and look nice and sexy on screen.

The great casting directors are great, and they're real artists, but they are the minority.

I'm fine if a tape shows up at the production office and has gone around the casting director. I don't care. They can get to me any way they can.

CASTING FROM THE DIRECTOR'S POV with host Gina Clayton and directors Adrienne Mitchell, Anne Wheeler and Jerry Ciccoritti.



Remarks by Ken Ferguson to ACTRA – Nov. 13/04

Why does Business Suck?

(What are the challenges facing Toronto?)

- Rising Canadian dollar

– or more correctly stated, the plummeting U.S. dollar. This isn't going to change soon.

- Less attractive tax credits

– our provincial* and federal governments do not support the stability of Toronto's industry. Jurisdictions around the world and particularly in the U.S. are "buying" production. Places like Louisiana are so generous that one questions the economic rationale.

* Since Ken's speech, provincial tax credits have been revised — see Victory story on page 9.

- Change in product

– reality TV has replaced MOWs and dramatic series. That's a HUGE chunk of what we used to do.

- Arnold factor

– Arnold plays to his constituents in California who feel that it is their God-given right to be the sole provider of entertainment product. Although he can't offer financial help, his ability to apply peer pressure is unmatched.

- U.S. legislation

– American Jobs Creation Act takes direct aim at productions under \$20M. Forty-two U.S. states now have incentives to attract film production.

- NY/NY

– no one promotes their city better than New York. The efforts of the mayor and governor, and recent tax incentives have been rewarding, despite the fact that it is still the most expensive city in North America to film in. There is also the patriotism related to helping N.Y. recover from 9/11.

- The "Stay-home" factor

– this is a blend of 9/11, fear of flying, a nation at war, SARS in Toronto, blame-Canada, and patriotic efforts to keep jobs in America during hard times.

- Competition from other countries

– Australia, New Zealand, Czech Republic, Hungary, South Africa... there will be no end to this list.

- Other provinces that have tax credits in the 40% range

Why we're still a great place to shoot.

- Locations

– one of Toronto's top assets. *Cinderella Man* came for Maple Leaf Gardens and shot Queen Street, The Hudson's Bay and High Park. Our locations and seasons are so versatile that we can double for almost anywhere in the world.



Keynote speaker:

Ken Ferguson, President of Toronto Film Studios Inc., spoke on the state of our affairs.

- Credible and stable tax credits

Despite the fact that the Ontario tax credit needs to be raised, our tax credits have been stable, predictable, understandable and reasonably competitive. (For update see Victory story on page 9).

- Still cheaper

– especially cheaper than N.Y. & L.A.

- Safe, accessible and pleasant

– we're close to the U.S., we're a safe place, similar time zones, similar culture, same language, good restaurants and shopping, nice people, attractive city, privacy is respected...

- Exceptional crews

– we have good skills and bench strength. Big tax credits in places like Louisiana can easily be eaten up if the crews need to be flown in from L.A. and put up in hotels.

- Extensive, diverse, highly trained talent pool

– we can fill virtually any role with local talent.

- Agreeable labour unions.

– our unions are respectful and ready to work. This can't be said about all other jurisdictions.

- Film friendly city

– for the most part, business, residents and city council are supportive.

- Port Lands Studio Complex

– this will be a major factor. Other studios need to expand too. We've used converted warehouses for too long.

- Great educational programs

– schools like Sheridan College, George Brown (and many others), The Canadian Film Centre and in-house training programs by the unions.

- Recognized expertise in certain skills like animation

*The Artist's Choice for Income Tax
and Financial Planning*



brian bowes *cma cfp*

Call today, 416-640-7770 extension 61, to discuss
your investment planning & tax preparation
needs, or visit our web site at www.taxtime.to

A SENSIBLE APPROACH TO FINANCIAL AFFAIRS
SERVING THE ARTS COMMUNITY FOR OVER 10 YEARS



An intelligent, hip, urbane readership makes a great
consumer. Make sure to place your ad in the next
Performers Magazine.

ADVERTISING SALES

Karen Cowitz • kcowitz@rocketmail.com • 416-461-4627

Dr. Sandi Leibovici Cosmetic Dentistry



*A Smile
is Forever*

Dr. Leibovici has been serving the community
for 20 years, offering a friendly, relaxed
environment in the heart of the city.



416-489-2219

2401 Yonge Street Suite 201,
Toronto Ontario, M4P 3H1

YOU CAN HAVE CONTROL!

Visit our clinic to help you:

- Improve Performance
- Release Anxiety
- Release Phobias
- Release Stress

For more information call:

416-489-0333

www.ont-hypnosis-centre.com

Past Clients Recommend Us!

**Ontario Hypnosis Centre
School & Clinic**

(A government accredited education facility)

COLIN MOCHRIE
AND DEBRA MCGRATH
ARE...



GETTING
ALONG
famously
written by Debra McGrath and Colin Mochrie

Since finishing our pilot *Getting Along Famously*, which aired on January 10 on CBC, people have asked us "How do you put together a show that you can be proud of?" Uh... we don't really know. We tried to ask the same thing of Brent Butt following the success of *Corner Gas* but he wouldn't return our phone calls.

Here are twelve steps that we followed:

1 Marry someone you love deeply and hope they're talented.

Okay, this one sounds easy but it's actually the hardest step to accomplish.

2 Do an improvised movie together and bond with the director.

Deborah Day (henceforth known as Deb D.) hired us, Debra McGrath (now Deb M.) and Colin Mochrie, to be in *Expecting*, an improvised movie. Hiring a couple for a project can be a dangerous proposition. Remember *Gigli*? Working with a spouse 12 hours a day with the added stress of having to make up the dialogue could easily have been a living hell. It was just the opposite.

Colin: *I admit I was a little nervous. What if we had no chemistry together? We were playing ex-lovers who might still have feelings for each other. What if what we had in our real life didn't transfer? Luckily it worked out. In fact the two Debs and I had such a good working experience that we decided to collaborate on something else.*

3 Form a company and make certain that at least one of you has drive.

Every once in a while, we would see breakdowns for movies being cast in Toronto. On the script would be the words: "All ethnicities welcome" and just below that: "No Canadian Accents!" Canadian Accents would be the name of our company. Now all we needed was a project. We brainstormed over morning coffee and teas and canoodled over evening wine. Finally we came up with a concept that all three of us felt good about. Then Deb D. made us go to Banff to do a pitch session at the conference. In case you haven't picked up on it, she's the one with the drive.

I don't mind telling you that we cursed her from here to next Tuesday over

4 Always go with your second idea!

The main problem with our original concept was that by the time we got to Banff, it just didn't inspire us.

Colin: *As soon as we were confirmed to pitch Bab's Way, our original idea, Deb M. came up with a show about the most famous Canadians in the world who host a CBC variety series in 1964. I immediately fell in love with it and knew that that was the show I'd want to pitch.*

Colin and I love that era. I thought; wouldn't it be fun if we were a showbiz, married couple! A Richard Burton/Elizabeth Taylor dynamic with musical

talent. We could do behind the scenes like Larry Sanders and have full out variety numbers in the show within the show. We picked 1964 because it was the time where "ring a ding ding" met "Yeah Yeah Yeah!"

But *Bab's Way* was green-lit as our pitch and we weren't allowed to change. So pitch it we did and, although there was interest, we had already become too excited about the possibilities of *Getting Along Famously*. We went to CBC to pitch our new and improved idea to George Anthony, who very sweetly said, "Thanks for not pitching this one at Banff."

5 Have a man named George Anthony on your side.

We told George the concept in a couple of sentences and he almost immediately gave us a green light that very day to go into development. He also felt that to get the style across, an hour pilot would



serve the project better. While we waited for official approvals, we rented a grown-up office and painted it and everything. Eighteen trips to IKEA, 40 computer glitches and several signed CBC documents later, we were ready to write. This is where it got hard.

6 Have someone join the team that will do all the stuff that gives you hives.

Before we got into negotiations we had to have a lawyer and all round businessperson. Enter Kathy Avrich-Johnson. God bless her. She did all things that we couldn't and, quite frankly, didn't want to do: negotiations, contracts and the like.

The team was now in place. Now it was time to get a pilot together.

7 Friends are for your own personal use.

Colin: *At this point, for some reason that escapes me now, I volunteered to write the pilot. Looking back I can only think it was the insane reasoning of someone who doesn't know better or the insane reasoning of someone who actually is insane. I despised every minute of it. Coming from an improv background where you just said whatever popped into your head and making sense was not mandatory, having to create something that had structure and had to make sense was hell. Two things helped me get through it. Alex Galatis had joined us as story editor and his tips on structure helped immeasurably. My other saving grace was when I envisioned our dream cast, I started to get a grip on the characters.*

For the role of Lyle Delp, Ruby's assistant, we wanted Bob Martin, who had been with the sketch group Skippy's Rangers. He is a friend and a much sought after actor-writer. The only problem with getting Bob was that he is a much sought after actor-writer. In addition to co-writing *Slings and Arrows* for TMN, working on *Puppets who Kill* and other projects too numerous to mention it seemed likely that he would not be able to do it. Doing any kind of project requires a bit of luck, and for *Getting*

Along Famously fortune smiled upon us. Not only was he able to do the pilot but he helped shape it during a two-hour meeting he had with Deb D. and Colin.

Colin: *The writing actually became easier, especially now that we had our dream cast. Besides Bob, we had Patrick McKenna, one of our best friends and a comedy genius, to play Littleman; Ed Sabely with whom I had been in Second City, was Ed, the director of the show within the show; Cheryl MacInnis, Deb M.'s best friend since Ryerson College days was cast as Phyllis "the hair woman" and as her sister; Barbara Radecki, with whom we did *Expecting*. The cast filled out nicely with the addition of Robin Duke as the head writer of It's Ruby and Kip (the show within the show).*

The smartest thing we did, (when I say "we", I mean the other members of Canadian Accents), was making the decision to have a read-through with the cast at each new draft. I was having trouble with the character of Littleman and it was really bothering me. Here we had one of the most talented comic performers in the country, a close personal friend; and I had written a part for him that was just... not... funny! Until the read through. I still don't know what he did exactly, but in that room at the CBC as we all stumbled through the script Patrick made gold out of crap (gold out of crap... this is why I'm not comfortable writing). In fact everyone went

above and beyond the call of duty and even characters that I thought were fully developed went into directions I hadn't foreseen. It was incredible to watch these people, our friends, make those words come alive.

8 There is no problem that can't be solved after initial panic.

Almost immediately problems arose. We didn't get the funding we counted on, the popularity of our cast was causing scheduling problems and our offices weren't close to any Starbucks. Of course, all was solved in the end (even the Starbucks). The CBC really came to the rescue by upping their contribution to the pilot and giving us a studio to shoot in and a crew to work with. Debbie Bernstein at CBC was instrumental in this part of the story. She understood the show from the very first reading and stayed with us. She was nothing but supportive and really brought us to our pilot funding scenario. Which brings us to rule number 9.





9 Make sure your crew is equal to the brilliance of your cast.

We lucked out in every department on the crew side. From our D.O.P., the amazing Gerald Packer, to our hair and makeup department Sue Upton and Lucy Walsh, we had a crew that was not only working on a very tight budget, but a crew that was giving 110%.

Our wardrobe mistress Kim Gibson went to the wall for us, searching for clothes that fit our characters to a tee; literally and figuratively. Through her, we utilized the extensive wardrobe at the CBC. Kim was bringing in her family's jewels for me to wear and in fact many of the crew in set decoration and props raided family treasures to adorn our set.

My favourite day was when we shot the big production numbers. The whole studio was transformed into a 1964 variety show and the crew had a best-dressed 60's contest.

All of the crew were very supportive of the project and were easy laughers, something that is invaluable to all neurotic actors, directors, producers and writers.

10 Let the cast do what they do.

The beauty of hiring friends who are talented is that you trust them to fix whatever problems may be in the script. Add to that Deb D., a director who gives you the freedom to try out even the most bizarre ideas. Although in complete control, Deb D. gave the set a collaborative feel. Everyone had input into his or her characters and scenes and, without fail, everyone improved what was on paper. Then there were the dance numbers.

We had the beautiful, talented Donna Feore as our choreographer who nailed the style and made the production days the most fun I have ever had on a set. Every time she would come up with a step idea, she and the dancers would laugh and then do it to perfection. As cheesy as the steps were in that era, they had to be performed well. This was to be an homage to the era rather than a parody. Donna also knew that my character Ruby had to act like a star of that time: let the dancers sweat; the star just glows.

Colin: *The only problem working with these people is that they all set the bar so high I felt enormous pressure not to suck. Having worked with Patrick at Second City for years I was ecstatic to see that we fell happily into our old rhythms and our scenes together were some of*

my favourites. He has a moment in the show that seems so effortless that the technical difficulty is completely obscured. In our scene we are walking down a hallway discussing a major plot point. The status of our character changes back and forth. I get the upper hand, then he does and so on. Background performers (once again all of them perfect) are going in and out of the shot and as I set up Patrick's joke, he is handed a form to sign. Somehow, and I'm not really sure how he did it, in the span of three seconds, he savors getting the upper hand, signs the form, waits until the background performer passes us and delivers the punch without any time being wasted — I hate him.

(There is no rule eleven but twelve steps sounds better.)

11

12 Hope for the best and mention the air date as often as possible.

We are all very proud of what we ended up with. The shoot went off with minimum fuss. It was the most fun we've ever had on a production and it has led to other projects for Canadian Accents; a feature film with Patrick and Colin and a series with Chas Lawther. We hope you watched and enjoyed *Getting Along Famously*. It aired on the CBC, January 10.

We share our sadness at the passing of the following ACTRA Toronto members

Lloyd Malenfant • John Morgan • Jimmy Tapp • Michael Richard • Tony van Bridge • Rob Wilson



Dahné Michèle Gamblin
1965 – 2004

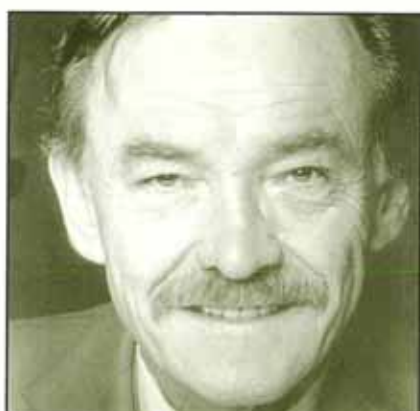
With deepest sadness we say goodbye to a true free spirit. Dahné touched so many lives in so many ways – friend, teacher, wife, aunt. She loved movies, books, hats, her three cats and of course her husband, Tom, and all her friends. Dahné was there with a shoulder when you needed it, an open door when you had nowhere else and an open heart. She sang with absolute feeling and emotion, often causing a shiver or two down the spine with the purity of her voice. Of all the things that can be said about Dahné, first and foremost is that it was a privilege to have known her. She will be truly missed. *Photos by Nadia Robinson*



Robert Jeffrey
1934-2004

Robert (Bob) Jeffrey's vocal talent was appreciated at an early age. His singing led to guest spots on CBC Radio's *Sunday: School of the Air*. By the time his voice changed and he was an up-and-coming tenor, Robert became a regular on CBC variety shows broadcast from his home town. He later worked with Fred Rogers and Ernie Coombs on a new show, *Mister Rogers' Neighbourhood* followed by *Butternut Square*, and guest spots on *Mr. Dress Up* and TVO's *Polka Dot Door*. In the 1970's he appeared often in the productions of CBC variety producers Neil Andrews, Franz Kramer and Bob Gibbons, starring in Gibbons' *The Popcorn Man* in 1979. Robert died of heart failure on Sept. 17, 2004. He was loved and will be missed.

Grant Cowan



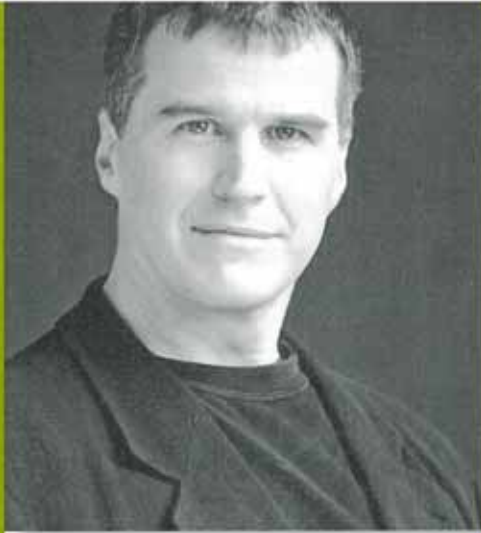
Jon Granik
1929 - 2003

Jon was a CBC Radio drama performer for over 35 years and appeared with praise in both film and television roles. He was twice nominated best actor in this field. His professional theatre work at Stratford started in 1954. His distinctive baritone voice carried him easily into the field of documentary narration and commercial voice-over work. A Toronto newspaper once profiled him as "the wealthiest actor in Toronto that no one had ever heard of." He graduated from the University of Alberta with majors in modern languages and drama and did post-graduate work on a scholarship at Fordham University in New York City. Jon was a member of ACTRA, Equity and UBCP. He leaves behind his two daughters, Lisa and Ilona.



Canadian cultural icon Pierre Berton has passed away

Pierre Berton dominated print and broadcast media in Canada. He had at least 12 honorary degrees, three Governor General's Literary Awards for non-fiction, two National Newspaper Awards, two ACTRA Nellys and ACTRA's John Drainie Award for his work in broadcasting and he was a Companion of the Order of Canada and Chancellor of Yukon College. This voice of Canada will be sadly missed.



INTRODUCING Your

ACTRA: THEM OR US?



What does it take for a working actor to get involved with the union?

by **Karl Pruner**

New ACTRA Toronto President

Karl Pruner is your new president and a busy actor. He also represents Toronto on ACTRA National Council, where he chairs two committees: the ACTRA AFBS Working Group and the IPA Committee of Enquiry into Casting Directors and the Casting Process.

There are probably as many different answers to these questions as there are involved ACTRA members. Maybe it's a sudden catastrophic downturn in the business cycle that reminds us of the strength that lies in numbers. Maybe it's the realization that in these days of tightening budgets and diminishing work opportunities, ACTRA not only establishes the minimum standards of safety and dignity for working performers but also (with an increasing number of productions paying scale) negotiates our basic salary.

Maybe it's waking up one day and understanding that ACTRA is what we call ourselves when we decide to stand together. Maybe it's realizing that ACTRA isn't them. It's us.

I had been working as an actor in Toronto for 20 years when I was invited to a special ACTRA meeting in the early summer of 1999. At that time, I had little connection with ACTRA. After all, ACTRA's agreements were mainly for the protection of beginners – weren't they? It had been some time since I had last worked for scale, and if I had a problem I either called my agent or spoke to the producers directly. ACTRA was the squabbling, divided and perennially dysfunctional family that I joked about, took for granted, and generally ignored.

The special meeting was for series regulars. The union was asking the membership for a strike mandate and the room was full of well-known working actors who knew that a strike might threaten their shows' survival and their own hard won jobs. The kind of jobs that have never been easy to come by in Canada. The kind of jobs that can't be counted on to come back if you walk away from them. The actors gathered in that room had a lot to lose, and they asked some tough questions. I was in the same boat, but, as we talked, I thought about how lucky I was to have a starring role in what was then my third TV series.

I suddenly understood that all these opportunities had been made possible by other actors who had come before us; who had put their jobs on the line; and who had stood up for a better deal. It seemed just as clear to me that our turn had come. It was up to us. We were it. So I stood up and spoke.

It seemed to me our members were more accustomed to going without work for long periods than the producers were. Consequently, we were better able to face a strike. If we didn't give our negotiating committee the mandate they were seeking, we would be robbing them of the power to achieve anything meaningful for us at the bargaining table.

When I finished speaking there was no roar of applause, but I could see some heads nodding in approval and I could tell that I had expressed what a lot of us were already thinking. In the end, we voted to give the committee its strike mandate. I left feeling satisfied that we had taken the right decision and that I had made some small contribution.

Outside the hall, I was approached by Thor Bishopric (actor and president ACTRA National), Stephen Waddell (executive director of ACTRA National) and Richard Hardacre (actor and president of ACTRA Toronto). Apparently the notion of a special meeting for series regulars had been greeted with some suspicion by the general membership, and the perception had grown that decisions were being taken behind closed doors without proper consultation. Would I consider attending the general members' meeting and making the same points?

At the members' meeting, I heard the anger and suspicion expressed and I realized how easy it is for us to become isolated from each other in a highly competitive and very uncertain business. I told everybody about the worry and indecision that was so obvious at the meeting of so-called elite "high-profile" members; how we had dithered and wavered before daring to risk our precious jobs. I repeated that I thought our real strength has always been rooted in the ability of the average member to somehow survive the endless dry spells between jobs. That because of this our ability to face a strike is always greater than that of the engagers. That we should never be afraid when our elected leaders ask us for the authority to call a strike. That such a vote puts a weapon in their hands that the engagers genuinely fear and immediately brings everyone to the table with maximum focus.

continued on next page



Sometimes the obvious needs to be said out loud.

Once the members understood the issues and realized no decisions had been taken without their consent, they were quick to approve the strike mandate and the negotiating committee went on to improve conditions for all of us that work under the IPA. I felt again that I had done something to help.

Not long after that, the highly successful program of members' conferences began in Toronto. I attended the first meeting and, along with many other participants, was delighted and impressed. Though still occasionally fractious, the meeting was business-like and well-run. I had an odd feeling as I listened to the members debate: pride.

I was proud to be an ACTRA member. Imagine that!

In the evening there was a wonderful party and we got dressed up and ate and drank and danced, and I had never felt so at home at a show business function. We were all together having fun, instead of looking through each other as we sometimes tend to do at the larger award shows. Somehow, in my mind at least, we had become us.

In March of 2003, Richard Hardacre called and asked Ron White and me if we would be part of a new IPA negotiating committee.

I began to realize the huge amount of work that is done on our behalf and the tremendous competence that exists "behind the curtains" at ACTRA.

I can remember sharing stricken glances with Ron as we listened to the engagers roll out the reasons we should gut our contracts and make one concession after another. Everything they said seemed so plausible; so grounded in fact, beyond all hope of refutation.

Then our team responded.

Patiently, firmly, passionately and relentlessly they rebutted the engagers' case, point by point. And, point by point, they presented ours.

Slowly at first, but with increasing enthusiasm, Ron and I joined in. After many setbacks, a few months later the producers settled, and on terms substantially more favourable to our members than might have been expected. We had held the engagers to a four-year period for the use fee, when they desperately wanted a fifth year. We had achieved a small increase in rates, when other jurisdictions had settled for nothing. And members would enjoy a 25 per cent increase in employers' contributions to their insurance and retirement funds. It didn't matter how long you'd been in ACTRA or what level of the business you were at, there was something real and tangible for you in the deal. It was a victory in difficult times and we celebrated it!

The good feeling of that effort at the bargaining table stayed with me, along with the knowledge that what ACTRA does, matters. We are more organized and effective now than at any time in my memory, and we're steered by a dedicated team of elected representatives who do their best to make decisions in our name and for our benefit. When I took a seat on Toronto Council in January, 2004, it was because of what I had learned over the last few years.

ACTRA is what we make of it. ACTRA is us.

Runaway



We in the film and television industry have been putting up with a ton of Canada bashing lately and it hurts, especially coming from the hulking movie star Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

The worst moment in the whole "Blame Canada" song and dance came for me when Robert Duvall – an actor admired and beloved by many of us, said that the actors here in Canada were substandard... I'll never forgive him for that callous remark directed at his fellow artists.

The runaway production lobby began in earnest in 1998 with a group called FTAC. The Film and Television Action Committee was started by an unemployed production designer and was eventually supported by the Directors Guild, the Screen Actors Guild and a big crew of Hollywood movie stars like Ben Affleck. They commissioned a report in 2000 by the Monitor Company whose central searing statistic was that foreign-produced American production drained more than 10 billion dollars in 1998 – mostly to Canada of course. It also said we had unfair tax incentives, and that we are stealing jobs from Americans.

This destructive FTAC lobby flew into town at a time when our domestic industry was already suffering a thousand blows. In 1999 the CRTC deregulated our broadcasters and most of our home-made dramatic series were dumped in favour of American programming. The rest of the story you know too well; SARS, 9/11, unequal provincial tax credit competition, the decline of the MOW, the emergence of the reality genre and lack of big studio space in Toronto all contrived to blow our once thriving industry to smithereens. And, oh yes – the dollar. Our Canadian dollar is rising in value and it's killing us.

Recently, the United States Congress passed a bill which finally awarded the FTAC lobby with a large federal tax subsidy signed by George W. Bush himself – a reward I presume for Arnold's support for Bush in the last election, which I'm pretty sure he did while holding his nose or perhaps other body parts since he claimed his wife (one of the Kennedy clan) refused to sleep with him for two weeks afterwards.

Production

and Other Oxymorons.

By Christie MacFadyen

The reality is this whole 'Runaway Production' theory is a bunch of booeey.

ACTRA, along with our industry partners have responded to this attack with a study of our own entitled *Setting the Record Straight About U.S. 'Runaway Production'*. Our study proves that the data used in the Monitor Report is wildly inflated and unsubstantiated.

To wit: The total economic impact of foreign production on the U.S. industry is \$1.7 billion. Not \$10.3. Employment in film and TV in the U.S. has INCREASED by 6.6% since 1998. As for tax incentives, lots of states offer them and there is nothing unethical about them – and don't forget, the experienced crews and great talent that we offer in Canada are also worth money. Just in case you were feeling sorry for our fellow actors in the U.S., their earnings reached an all time high of \$1.5 billion in 2003. Most importantly, the cultural trade deficit between Canada and the U.S. between 1998 and 2003 was 1 billion dollars (U.S.). That's money that you and I spend on American film and TV and related products, and we deserve our share of that business.

The truth is, those working in Hollywood hate it when production goes anywhere outside of California. The film industry contributed almost \$30 billion to the state in 2002. They don't really give a damn about the rest of America; Canada was just a convenient beard for FTAC's bogus nationalism. American producers and the Motion Picture Association of America feel quite differently; producers make decisions on where to shoot based on one thing, – money. Valenti (who has retired, thank heavens) and the MPAA never took this runaway production lobby seriously because they believe producers should

shoot movies wherever they want to and they don't give a damn about the rank and file unless it's politically expedient. What the MPAA really cares about is maintaining the Hollywood entertainment industry's hold on the cinema and television screens of the planet – and in Canada they have been very successful. With the help of our government, we are their sixth biggest foreign market and that's something the MPAA will continue to fight for, Jack or no Jack.

We cannot rely on the fickle and selfish interests of the American service industry for our financial well being. It's foolish. We must have a healthy industry of our own.

The CRTC's 1999 ruling destroyed 20 years of hard work building English dramatic television, and they show no willingness to go back to the Canadian content requirements that built it. Instead, they recently rewarded the broadcasters yet again, with a ruling that gives them more advertising time if they make more Canadian drama. Instead of making them contribute a portion of their huge profits to creating Canadian shows, they are continuing to let them pour more Canadian money into Hollywood to purchase American programming. The CRTC says they don't think drama should be an obligation the broadcasters resent fulfilling. Or perhaps what they really mean is, they don't want to impose an obligation that makes our private broadcasters less appealing to foreign investors. It remains to be seen if this new incentive will work; it all depends on that bottom line the broadcasters live by.

Drama a burden? That's strange; I know a lot of people who think making great drama is the best job in the world.



Hey! Did you know?

Canadian broadcasters:

- spent four times more on U.S. and foreign drama than on Canadian drama (\$362 million and \$93 million respectively)
- allocate 17% of all spending to Canadian drama
- spend more on foreign product than broadcasters in the U.S., U.K., and Australia
- pay the lowest licensing fees to Canadian producers (they cover 18% of production costs - American broadcasters cover at least 81%)
- cut spending on Canadian drama by 20% between 1998 and 2002
- doubled their profits last year

Other notable statistics:

- foreign produced films represent 85% of the revenues from film distribution
- 95% of screen time in Canadian theatres goes to mostly American movies
- 75% of all TV shows watched by Canadians are foreign - usually American

ACTRA TORONTO'S MEMBERS' CONFERENCE

Free to ACTRA Toronto members who register.

Registration and Breakfast 9:00 a.m. at Victoria College, U of T (building foyer behind Isabel Bader Theatre, 93 Charles St. W)

WORKSHOPS

Learn from others in a large-class lecture format. These workshops are with a number of panelists who will discuss the topic at hand.

MASTER CLASS SESSION FORMAT

We're now offering a series of more intensive MASTER CLASSES that give selected ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS the chance to work with an industry professional. AUDITORS can watch from the audience. A selected number of participants as per the class specs, will be chosen from applications submitted.

Participants apply at www.actratratoronto.com with your photo and résumé and any other requirements for that particular master class.



FACE TO FACE ONLINE

A Face to Face workstation will be set up throughout the day for demos and assistance. Bring your photos and résumé for addition to your Face to Face portfolio. Forgot your password? Don't have one? Staff will be available to help you out.



Friday, February 18
7:30 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.

THE CARLU
College Park, 7th floor

hors d'oeuvres
awards presentation
an intimate event

**FREE to ACTRA Toronto
members who register!**

Morning Workshops (pick one) 10:00 a.m. to 11:45 p.m.

1 WORKSHOP

Diversity Committee Round Table Forum

Meet your ACTRA Toronto Diversity Committee. Find out what's new, what they're doing for you and let them know what YOU want. This is your chance to give feedback, offer suggestions, and find out what you can do yourself.

With **Priya Rao**, **Sandi Ross**, **Jani Lauzon** and **Stephen Graham Simpson**.

Moderated by **Leesa Levinson**.



2 MASTER CLASS with a Director

An established director will give individual direction to participants in a scene, and comment on how to build a professional working relationship with a director on set. The participating director will be posted at www.actratratoronto.com.

Hosted by **Christina Collins**.

LIMIT of 6 PARTICIPANTS.

Audience limit: 80.

See MASTER CLASS details on this page for how to be chosen as a participant. You will be required to come with your sides prepared and ready to shoot as if you'd been cast.

3 WORKSHOP SET-IQUETTE: Ready for Set, Go!

Ever feel like you don't always get what's happening around you on set? Ever feel like an outsider in your chosen profession? Why not come and listen to some experienced fellow performers as they share the tips and techniques that they use to avoid that "Fear & Loathing in Honeyland" feeling and make the most of their time on set. With actors **Tom Melissis**, **Dianna Reis**, **Siu Tu**, **Chris Owens**.

Topics include:

- Packing for work checklist;
- Who's who on set;
- Basic walkie-talkie lingo;
- Keeping on top of continuity;
- When should I ad-lib?;
- Helping the crew help you...
- and many, many more tips!

11:45 p.m. to 12:45 p.m. LUNCH

All ACTRA members registered for the conference are invited to lunch. Courtesy of ACTRA Toronto Performers

1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

PLENARY:

Inaugural Report from your new ACTRA Toronto President Karl Pruner

Presentation of 2005/06 Plan and Budget • *Special performance by the Bonnie Brett Quartet*

Afternoon Workshops (pick one) 3:15 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

7 WORKSHOP

Casting Commercials

Join casting directors **Brian Levy** and **Steven Mann**, director **Martin Shewchuk**, and agent **Donna Trimble** (Characters) for a candid discussion on the casting of commercials. Hear the inside stories on who calls you in, why you are called back, and how you are booked.

Moderated by **Marcia Johnson**.

8 WORKSHOP

Auditioning for African-American Roles

African-American film and television roles can have a myriad of specific regional accent requirements. As requested by our members, here is a workshop that offers more than just a general accent study. Led by **David Smulder** and **Stefanie Samuels**, this workshop will cover script and vocal preparation work, and the process of selecting the appropriate societal voice and specific dialect variations.

Moderated by **Marium Carvell**.

9 MASTER CLASS

with Director Shawn Thompson

SPECIAL FOCUS ON PERFORMERS WITH DISABILITIES!

Join **Shawn Thompson**, one of Canada's top directors, in a practical discussion on building a professional working relationship with a director on set. Three scenes will be performed, each with one performer with a disability paired with an able-bodied actor. Special focus on the working relationships between all parties.

Hosted by **Priya Rao**.

LIMIT of 6 PARTICIPANTS.

3 performers with disabilities, and 3 able actors. Audience limit: 80.

See MASTER CLASS details on this page for how to be chosen as a participant. You will be required to come with your sides prepared and ready to shoot as if you'd been cast.

10 WORKSHOP

Stunts and the Actor

What is a stunt and what isn't? Why do producers sometimes want an actor to do a stunt and sometimes not? When should you agree and when should you refuse? Experienced actors/stunt performers, **Russell Yuen** and **Nathalie Girard** can show you when, where and how to draw the line. This will be a seminar with a Q & A so leave your stunt gear at home and bring your notebooks.

Moderated by **John Nelles**.



Friday, Feb. 18, 2005

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

4 MASTER CLASS

Taking Control of Your Career With Jeff Seymour

Stop waiting for the phone to ring. **Jeff Seymour**, star of *The Eleventh Hour*, gives an enlightening and inspirational seminar on how to get things moving in your career. This practical Master Class format with selected participants and detailed information covers everything from finding and getting the right agent to nailing the audition. Project the winning attitude that tells the room you're the one. Hosted by **John Bourgeois**.

LIMIT of 6 PARTICIPANTS.

Audience limit: 50.

See MASTER CLASS details on this page for how to be chosen as a participant.

5 WORKSHOP

Our Union Finances

ACTRA Toronto Performers' new budget will be available at the Conference. Join VP Finance, **Austin Schatz**, Executive Director, **Brian Topp** and our Director of Finance, **Karen Ritson** in an open forum to discuss ACTRA Toronto's finances.

6 TIP SCREENINGS

The Performer as a Producer - Director - Writer

This round of TIP films focuses on the performer who is also the director and/or a producer. As is well known, new production technologies have made it easier for above-the-line personnel to multi-task. Screenings will be followed by a discussion of "how to" make a TIP film.

Screenings:

The Stronger

8 min., Debra Feldrad (Producer - Performer)

Human Kazoo

5 min., Fabrizio Filippo (Performer - Writer - Director)

Rolling Longaniza

8 min., Caroline Margosic (Producer - Performer)

Sohni Sapna...

10 min., Jasbir "Jaz" Mann (Producer - Performer)

Presented by **Tasso Lakas**, TIP Coordinator.

Your chance to share and build on the experiences of fellow professional **actors**

HOW TO REGISTER

* the fastest way to register is online: www.actratoronto.com

* by fax (416) 928-0699

* or drop off your workshop choices to ACTRA Toronto, 625 Church St., 2nd floor

To register, we require your name, membership and telephone numbers, email address and the workshops you would like to attend. To qualify to attend, please have your dues up-to-date and bring your member card.

All workshops and master classes are subject to change. Check for conference updates at www.actratoronto.com. Conference free to ACTRA Toronto members who register.

Please register by **February 15, 2005**.

Master Class participants must apply by February 10, 2005.



Meet your new ACTRA Toronto President!

Karl Pruner



Bonnie Brett Quartet



11 WORKSHOP

From Stage to (Small) Screen

Could your one-person play be a pilot for a TV series? Is your solo show such a dynamite piece that you can work it onto the screen? Do you want to turn your theatrical masterpiece into a TV special or film? Speak to those who have done just that, find out how they did it, and see what's next for them. With **Alex Dallas**, **Chris Earle**, **Brigitte Gall**, **Teresa Pavlinek** and **Shoshana Sperling**. Moderated by **Anne Marie Scheffler**.



12 WORKSHOP

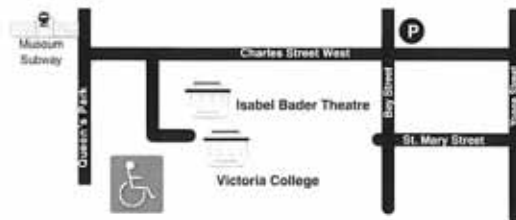
ACTRA Performers' Rights Society - "The Nuts and Bolts of Your Use Fees"

Join **Mercedes Watson**, Director of ACTRA PRS, as she takes you through a negotiated performer contract in order to help you better understand the unique nature of every performers' Use Fees (Royalties). Mercedes will share with you answers to the top 10 questions asked by performers across the country and provide insight into the challenges, successes and procedures inherent in collecting your Use Fees, Royalties and Residuals.

Getting there

Victoria College, U of T

(building behind Isabel Bader Theatre, 93 Charles St. W.)



Plenary Prize — Win a gift certificate for Focaccia Restaurant

(to qualify for the draw you must be in attendance at the afternoon plenary session)



ACTRA AWARDS IN TORONTO 2005!



ACTRA
AWARDS
TORONTO
2005

We're having a party!

(NO GIFTS REQUIRED)

Friday, February 18, 2005

7:30 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. • THE CARLU – College Park, 7th floor

hors d'oeuvres reception • awards presentation • an intimate event, FREE to ACTRA Toronto members who register

Join us at the daylong members' conference and plenary

9:00 a.m. registration and breakfast • Victoria College - 93 Charles St. W.

Lots of workshops to choose from — see page 30 for details **Remember to RSVP!**



ACTRA Toronto Performers
625 Church Street, 2nd floor
Toronto, ON
M4Y 2G1

Canada Post Corporation
Publication Mail Agreement No.
40069134

