



I N T E R

Spring 2006

ACTRA

The Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists

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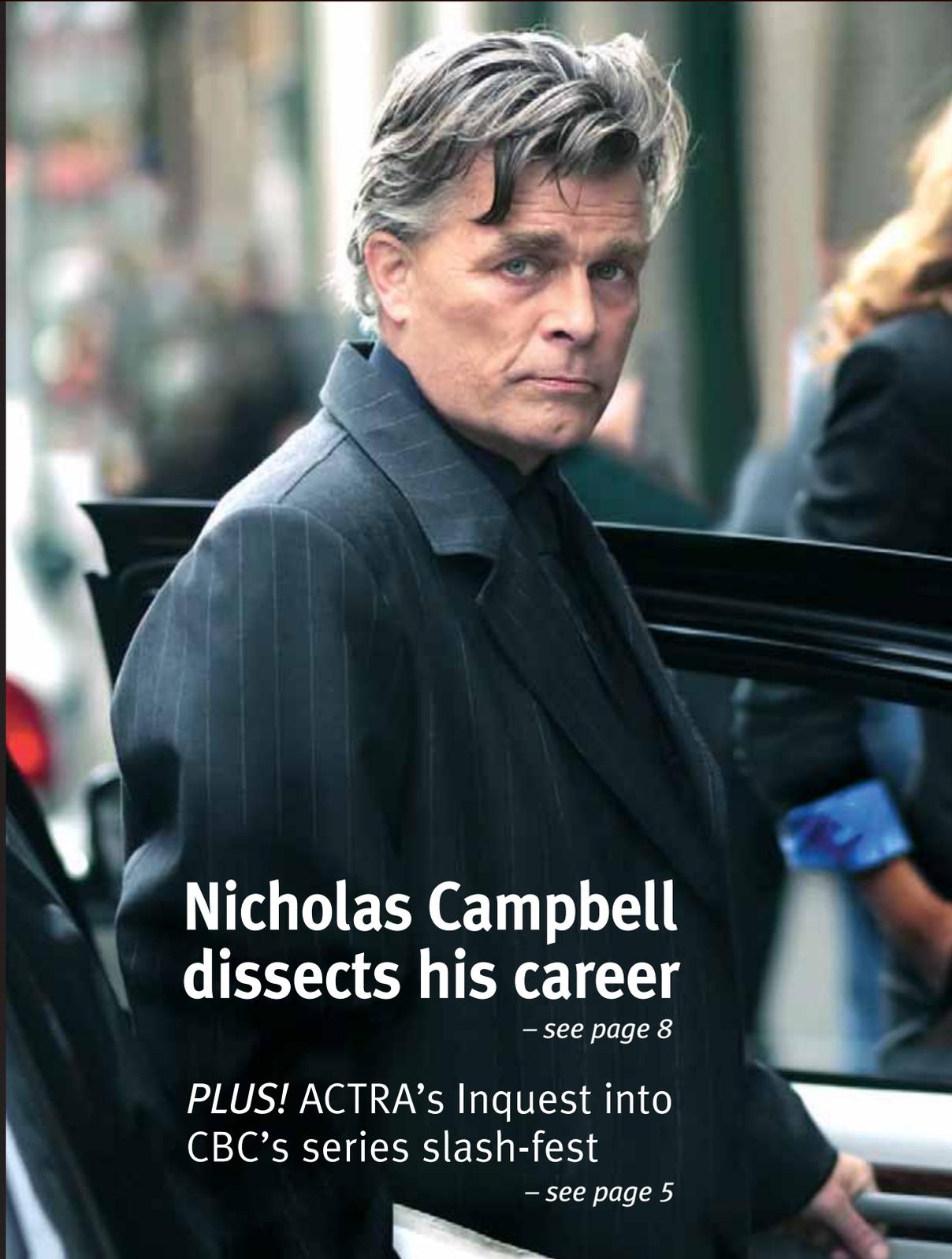
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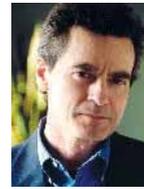


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by Richard Hardacre

Striving for the respect we deserve

We just saw a federal election campaign through which we hung in tough to put Canada's culture and the protection of our unique identity into the election planks of several parties. We did this from beginning to end with the concerted voices of our members, including some of our most prominent performers and our elected leaders. Our ongoing advocacy to make culture a priority for government and broadcasting is grinding work. But, thanks to all of you, we are having an impact... and we have no reason to stop.

With this experience we've offered proof again that our strength in unity gets results. This is the might and commitment we need now to back up the bargaining of the IPA, our big contract that, as I've written earlier in these pages, drives the engines of film and television production in so much of this country.

I want to assure you that our team of performers from across the country and our professional, seasoned negotiators working on this round of bargaining are committed to a clear theme – making respectful gains for all our members who seek and attain

work in independent film and television production. And we are determined that when it comes to performing or competing for roles in 'foreign' productions destined for the giant U.S. market – productions we can easily describe as 'full budget' – the members of this union will be regarded as second to none.

Thanks to all of you, we are having an impact... and we have no reason to stop

Our struggle in negotiations will certainly be an uphill battle pitched against the hired expertise of major studios. They have advised us that we'd better get used to the idea of accepting concessions and offering deals across the board. And this comes at a time when our American cousins were successful in achieving respectful gains! We have never been better prepared, and we will do our best to keep you informed of the progress of our bargaining. I urge all the members of ACTRA to be united and supportive behind our negotiations. Staying together and strong, the employers will have to pay attention to us all.

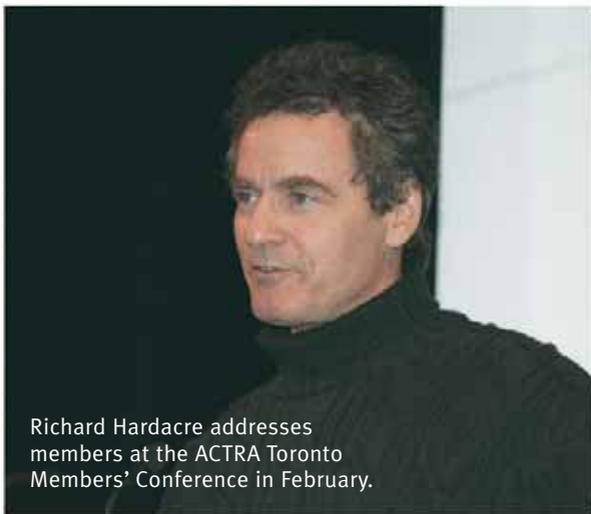
"What is my intention?" thinks an actor.

What strong and capable performers like us know how to do is to be clear about an intention, and then with full commitment, work to achieve it. Well, we are clear, we are passionate and determined, and we will achieve the respect that we merit.

In solidarity,



Richard Hardacre
National President, ACTRA



Richard Hardacre addresses members at the ACTRA Toronto Members' Conference in February.



Spring 2006

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The Stage Mom Survival Guide

for parents of young performers in the Canadian film and television industry, by **Robyne Ropell-Baruchel**, published by ACTRA.

The guide is free to ACTRA members (under 18), or \$15 (incl. GST) for adult members and non-members.



The **Stage Mom Survival Guide** is available at ACTRA branches across Canada or call **1-800-387-3516** for more info.



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ACTRA PRS: Do we have \$\$ for you?

Attention all performers who have earned royalties, residuals and use fees under an ACTRA agreement (film, TV, documentary or commercial production):

Have you moved and not kept a current address with ACTRA?

Are you holding on to an uncashed cheque from ACTRA Performers' Rights Society (ACTRA PRS)?

If you answered "Yes" to either of these questions, ACTRA PRS may be holding an unclaimed residual payment for you.

For info, please visit www.actra.ca, locate the ACTRA PRS section and find the list of performer names under "ACTRA PRS NKA Payments" to see if your name or a performer you know is listed. If it is, contact ACTRA PRS (contact details are on page 27). We'd be happy to hear from you and arrange for payment!

Seeing stars

Your article on Canada's Star System (*Winter 2006*) was of much interest to me. I found your position a little naive, and your choice of a columnist for advice a little disturbing. Especially when **Mr. Doyle** feels our greatest stars are: a hockey commentator, a former Prime Minister and a news anchor. I respectfully ask: what do they have to do with the star system in regards to performers? I mean, sure, **Don Cherry** is a celebrity because of his brash opinions, and **Jean Chrétien** is one because he led our country, but should we as actors be trying to follow their example?

You say, also, that we should not follow the U.S. model because we can't. We're too small. I suggest we can learn a lot from that system and pick the best parts, especially the media. Pretty much every other country with its own indigenous industry has a star system that is built on the ideas of the U.S. model, but with their own unique characteristics. We know we have huge talent in Canada but have to struggle with our own media to have it shown. Just look at the latest ruling by the CRTC on Canadian content and then look at what other countries do for their industry.

As always, I appreciate the thoughtful discussion about such topics and appreciate that I have an opportunity to respond and have my voice heard. Keep up the work. I look forward to hearing more on how we can have a true Canadian star system.

– *D. Neil Mark, Vancouver, B.C.*

Calling all scribes!

Interested in never-ending glory? Want to contribute content to *InterACTRA*? Please contact interactra@actra.ca

I especially appreciated the Winter 2006 edition of *InterACTRA*. It covered a topic particularly of interest to me; the so-called 'Star System' we seem to be lacking. It was most fortunate to have **Karen Nicole Smith** interviewing outspoken veteran actor **Wendy Crewson** on the subject.

I would like to comment that we share a much stronger link to the United Kingdom in training and criteria for what constitutes

a consummate actor, than what passes for 'stardom' in the U.S. Skill, intelligence and above all, versatility in acting range are what distinguishes us from the botoxed, lifted, stretched and starved entities that populate a fair portion (but not all, of course) of American cinema. It amazed me that a mere handful of American actors show as much versatility as many of our Canadian film and theatre actors.

Having worked in many facets of film, radio and some theatre over the past 30 years, I say the term 'Hollywood North' is nothing more than an insulting pejorative. All we need are more local film backers and would-be producers with deep pockets to take the plunge and have confidence in our writers, in the near future.

– *Rob Cardinal, Vancouver, B.C.*

Want to receive InterACTRA by email?

If you'd like *InterACTRA* in your e-mailbox instead of by mail, email us at interactra@actra.ca with your membership number.

Women at the helm

Thanks so much to **Meg Hogarth** for pointing out the importance of acknowledging the work of the ACTRA Women's Committee (*Letters, Winter 2006*), and a very big thanks for her leadership and courage. Let us all hope that she will not stand alone for too much longer as the only female at the ACTRA helm.

– *Suzie Payne, Vancouver, B.C.*

Meg Hogarth is right to chastise ACTRA for neglecting the "terrific contribution" of individual members. *InterACTRA's* publication of the *60th Anniversary Edition* in 2003 was an attempt to address that. In the main, it was successful.

First, a couple of explanatory points: Although **Ferne Downey** was on the Editorial Board and, like a number of members and staff, contributed mightily to the issue, I was the sole editor. All mistakes should therefore

fall on my balding head alone. Early on we decided to highlight 'performer group' accomplishments. No individuals in the narrative; with one exception, **Paul Siren**. I also accept her "pic of...Past Presidents" blame. I was Chair of the ACTRA Performers Guild in '92, when we were part of the old Alliance. I changed the title to 'President' in '93, and our leader has been so designated since. This presidency is different from 'President of the Alliance', however, a position in which Meg served valiantly. 'Performers Guild' was dropped and ACTRA evolved into an organization of performers only, calling itself, once again, ACTRA, but now meaning an alliance only of performers. Yes, it is confusing, but there is the explanation why we now have only four persons who have served as 'President' of the present ACTRA.

The omission of the ACTRA Women's Committee in the anniversary publication is more problematic. Its work was mentioned (by **Sonja Smits**, p.42, and *Timeline*, p.20), but a fuller treatment was warranted. It was the ACTRA's Women's Committee, for example, that initiated, and presented to the world, a Charter of Rights for Women Performers at the International Federation of Actors Congress in 1992. That no specific article was devoted to its work is unfortunate. I will say that many more articles were solicited that never saw the light of day. Much time was spent chasing writers, yet articles failed to materialize. This is not an excuse for my failure, but might explain how such a serious omission might occur.

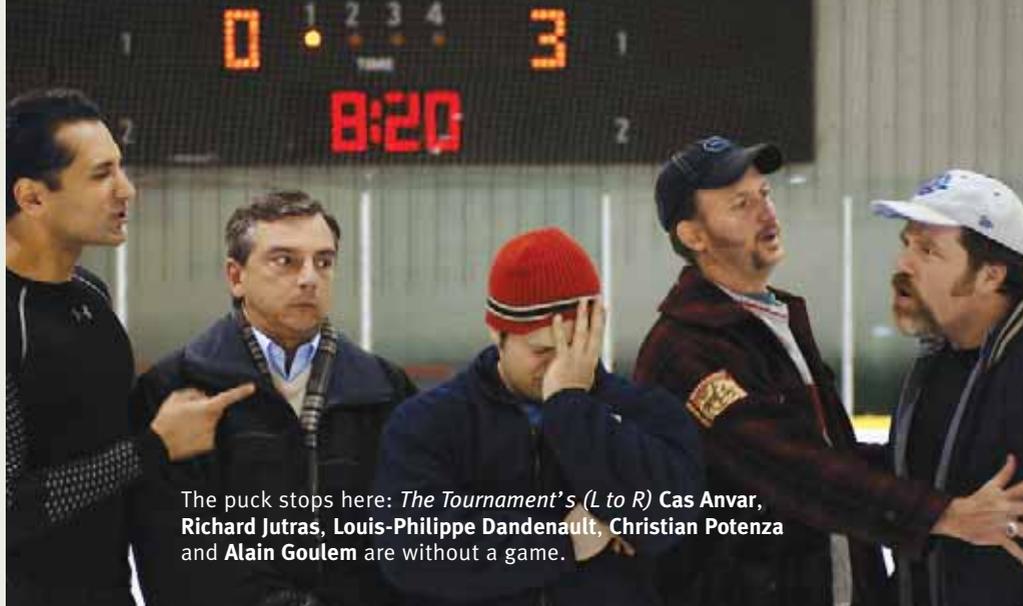
I was then, and still am, acutely aware of the necessity to know our past. I made recommendations. One was that an historical column be created for stories that 'cry out to be expanded'. Unfortunately, my recommendations were ignored. The Women's Committee would certainly have been one of those stories. It still should be.

– *Dan MacDonald, Toronto, ON*

Letters

InterACTRA welcomes letters and feedback. Submissions should be no longer than 200 words and may be edited for length. Please send submissions to: interactra@actra.ca

“If it’s made accessible to Canadians, in sufficient quantity and of high enough quality and shown at times when people are actually watching television, Canadian drama will attract audiences.”



The puck stops here: *The Tournament’s* (L to R) Cas Anvar, Richard Jutras, Louis-Philippe Dandenault, Christian Potenza and Alain Goulem are without a game.

An open letter to CBC management

We deserve more...

You would be forgiven for thinking that the above quote was ripped from an ACTRA press release. But it wasn’t. Those familiar words came from the mouth of your own CBC President, **Robert Rabinovitch** at a March speech to a business crowd luncheon. He went on to proclaim the need for the CBC to “take risks” and “remove bureaucracy that inhibits creativity”.

These are glorious statements, music to the ears of ACTRA members and their industry colleagues across the country. But instead of a deafening roar of applause, that sound you hear? Dumbfounded silence, broken only by occasional bouts of confusion-induced forehead rubbing, and mutterings of “What the...?”

Why has Mr. Rabinovitch chosen the eve of his retirement to ‘see the light’? What has he been doing for the past seven years of his presidency? The CBC hasn’t exactly been raising the bar on Canadian content as of late. In fact, it seems to have joined private broadcasters in a race to the bottom in terms of Canadian TV drama

When ACTRA launched its campaign for Canadian drama five years ago, our main target was the CRTC and its disastrous 1999 Television Policy. While frustrated, we aren’t fully surprised that our profit-hungry private broadcasters are giddily taking every advantage of the relaxed content regulation by filling their schedules with simulcast-driven

U.S. programming, squeezing out Canadian drama. We thought we could at least count on you, our national public broadcaster to uphold the *Broadcasting Act* and meet your unique mandate to nurture Canadian culture. We were naive.

Reality set in with your calculated lockout of 5,000 workers last August. The eight-week lockout demoralized the professional men and women who put the CBC on air every day, decimated audiences and continues to have a devastating impact on public broadcasting in Canada.

We thought we could at least count on you, our national public broadcaster to uphold the *Broadcasting Act* and meet your unique mandate to nurture Canadian culture. We were naive.

Next up was your abrupt cancellation of three critically acclaimed series: your two one-hour dramatic series, *This is Wonderland* and *Da Vinci’s City Hall*, and one comedy series, *The Tournament*. These shows are being punished for a decline in ratings, a decline clearly brought on by your own brutal decision to bring your network to its knees last fall with the lockout. Their cancellation appears to be the result of a startling

display of incompetence. Cancelling three critically acclaimed series, blaming ratings and not naming replacements – such short-sighted and possibly personal decisions have meant the loss of hundreds of jobs and cast even more doubt on the future of Canadian English-language TV drama.

Then came the revelation that between September 2003 and August 2005, CTV presented more Canadian dramatic series in primetime than you did – 219 hours on CTV, compared to only 122 hours by the CBC. During this period, you also aired a

shocking 392 hours of Hollywood movies.

It is not your job to compete with private broadcasters for ratings on imported U.S. programming. As the national public broadcaster, your obligation is to Canadian taxpayers and the mandate given to you to produce, promote and schedule programming that is ‘predominantly and distinctively Canadian’.

– continued on next page



Letter to CBC management

— continued from previous page

ACTRA's sole agenda is to ensure that Canada's creators (which includes our performer members) have the opportunity to tell Canadian stories, and that Canadian audiences have the choice of seeing those stories on our TV screens. We have called upon governments time and time again during our 60-year history to provide the CBC with the resources it needs to fill its mandate and raise the bar on Canadian content. During the recent federal election ACTRA argued for increased long-term funding for the CBC. This was one of the three key issues we pressed each of the federal parties on while asking them to commit to protection and promotion of Canadian culture and our cultural industry.

It's a national shame when we can't rely on you, our public broadcaster, to demonstrate a clear commitment to telling Canadian stories. Your senior management has, on several occasions, publicly acknowledged that it is CBC's job to increase the level of English-language dramatic programming. We anxiously await some evidence of that commitment.

Mr. Rabinovitch's recent revelations provide little hope, given both his record and his imminent departure. Unfortunately, **Richard Strusberg's** (your Vice-president of English Programming) recent presentation to Canada's independent producers at the close of the CFTPA's Prime Time conference, where he directed Canada's independent producers to bring him pilot television productions without committing to any script development or production financing, is not an auspicious beginning.

We expect more from you. And as taxpayers who care about protecting the ability to tell and hear our own stories, we deserve nothing less. It is more critical than ever that ACTRA and its 21,000 members remain steadfast in the fight for Canadian drama. You will be hearing more from us.

Bev Oda named Heritage Minister

Performers are looking to the new Minister of Canadian Heritage **Bev Oda** to seize the opportunity to signal to the CRTC that TV drama content and expenditure requirements must be imposed on Canada's private broadcasters.

ACTRA has developed a good relationship with Minister Oda, having met with her on numerous occasions during her previous assignment as the Conservative Heritage critic.

A former CTV executive and CRTC Commissioner, Minister Oda knows the broadcasting industry well. During the recent federal election campaign, Minister Oda was attributed in the media as saying that had she been a CRTC Commissioner in 1999, she would not have agreed with the 1999 Television Policy. ACTRA contends that the CRTC policy resulted in a steep



Bev Oda

decline in the production of Canadian English-language TV drama that should have been foreseen.

Despite being the only party that failed to respond to ACTRA's question-

naire on culture during the election, ACTRA hopes that Conservatives will act to preserve Canada's cultural sovereignty by committing to increased, long-term funding for the Canadian Television Fund, Telefilm and the CBC, and maintaining the current limits on foreign ownership of broadcasters and telecommunications companies.

You can be sure that the new Minister will be seeing and hearing a lot from ACTRA, especially since one of her constituents is none other than ACTRA's National President **Richard Hardacre!**



WIDC 2007 is now accepting Director and Actor applications for the 10th Anniversary Session online at www.creativewomenworkshops.com

For more info, contact:

Carol Whiteman, Producer, WIDC

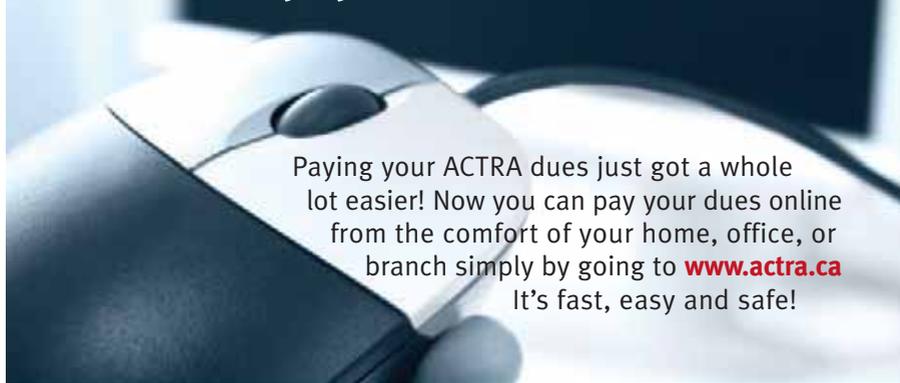
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Paying your ACTRA dues just got a whole lot easier! Now you can pay your dues online from the comfort of your home, office, or branch simply by going to www.actra.ca It's fast, easy and safe!

“We can now better focus on continuing to develop ways in which our cooperative approaches to public policy and collective bargaining will serve to enhance the livelihood of performers across the country.”

– Richard Hardacre

ACTRA and UBCP resolve arbitration

ACTRA and UBCP are pleased to report that a resolution has been reached regarding the arbitrations filed by ACTRA and UBCP under the 1996 Settlement Agreement. The resolution maintains UBCP’s autonomy as one of the branches of ACTRA while facilitating an improved relationship with the national organization.

“The issues giving rise to the arbitrations have been resolved to our mutual satisfaction,” said ACTRA’s National President **Richard Hardacre**. “We can now better focus on continuing to develop ways in which our cooperative approaches to public policy and collective bargaining will serve to enhance the livelihood of performers across the country.”

Howard Storey, President of UBCP, added, “We are pleased to be working closely with the national organization to promote the interests of Canadian performers engaged on audiovisual productions during our respective bargaining sessions. This resolution shows a renewed commitment to the well being of both our branch of ACTRA and ACTRA as a whole, and I am personally very pleased to support these efforts.”

New and improved Audio Code!

ACTRA has brought the Audio Code into the 21st century with significant gains for ACTRA performers. The long-awaited revisions were ratified earlier this year with the overwhelming support of eligible ACTRA members – 92% voted to support the revisions.

Last amended in 1978, the Audio Code

dictates minimum fees, wages and working conditions for audio recordings produced live or recorded. The revised Code increases rates and insurance and retirement contributions made by producers, introduces Use Fees for certain categories of performance and provides broader definitions to encompass changes in audio formats. For example, there is a section dedicated to ‘telephony’ (telephone voice prompts), and language that captures digital recording and audio compression technology, such as mp3 or MPEG1. The new Audio Code also mirrors the working conditions requirements in ACTRA’s other collective agreements – and it’s an important acknowledgement of how the industry has evolved.

The Audio Code will be printed and available in a searchable, online format soon. The revised Audio Code is a huge step forward for ACTRA performers and a leap into the 21st century.

Canadian Comedy Awards

Nominations for the 7th Annual CCA are now open! As a member of ACTRA, you are eligible to submit a nomination. Just go to www.canadiancomedyawards.ca, download the form and follow the guidelines.

We urge you to get nominations in on time to facilitate the committee review process to narrow the selection to the final five. The nomination review committee includes representatives from across Canada, from all the guilds (WGC, DGC, ACTRA) and the Comedy Association.

Questions? Visit the website or contact info@canadiancomedyawards.ca

Cheers

They always come back...

Early indications point to a boom year for foreign shoots in Canada. While tax credits are certainly a factor, word on the street is that American producers lured away by sexy tax incentives in U.S. states and abroad ended up facing aggravation and higher costs shooting in places without the experienced crews and extensive filmmaking infrastructure that they took for granted in Canada.

Jeers

The “Thanks, but it won’t pay the bills” award goes to the CBC for heaping praise on three series – as it cancelled them. “These are three programs that CBC believed in and attached significant resources to... It’s a shame because they’re terrific programs. It just doesn’t seem to be what Canadian viewers want to watch,” said CBC spokesperson **Ruth-Ellen Soles**.

So, either Canadians have lousy taste, or maybe they just didn’t know about these programs, due to, I dunno, say the obliteration of the CBC’s publicity department or the eight-week lockout that preceded the series’ season premieres.



In conversation with Nick Campbell

by Keith Martin Gordey

At the end of November 2005, over two days, I had the pleasure of interviewing **Nicholas Campbell**, the star of *Da Vinci's Inquest* and *Da Vinci's City Hall*. He was garrulous, frank, insightful and generous. He welcomed me to the set and made a point of introducing me around. A complete gentleman in every regard!

KEITH: So congratulations on your series *Da Vinci's City Hall*, it's great. It's got a very different energy to it.

NICK: Thank you. Yeah, it does, doesn't it?

What do you find different?

Well I got a lot more choices and things that I can think about, and he (*Da Vinci*) doesn't sort of just blend in anymore. He could sort of just sneak on. He wasn't anybody and that was a bit of his power. And now it's the total opposite where every movement is kind of watched and judged, with handlers and stuff. So it's been interesting. But what I'd drawn on is his cop background. And you know, right away it was like, find out who the rat was, and find out this and that about people. Trustworthiness and all that. Which is more cop instincts, sort of getting all that together, and then he's got his little spies running out and everything, and it's pretty interesting.

I watched *City Hall* last night. God, it was good!

Yeah, last night it just sort of kind of took a nice turn. Sure did a good job with that show. It's really a great script and everything, too.

The writing was outstanding.

The writing's dark. I remember thinking (episode) six was when it really started getting good. And now all the rest of them are kind of like that. We're thinking the old fashioned way of 22 episodes. For the first year, you can work out your kinks, right? And you pretty much have to have that worked out or you're not going to stay around. So, we're giving ourselves two seasons – 22 episodes and **Chris (Haddock, creator/producer)** just, you know, said, we're trying shit. I like that, that system worked great for the *Inquest* and I think he's gone a little quicker on this. I don't know another show that's made this kind of a transition.

It's an interesting position being the Mayor and you really don't have a sense of it, but this show seems to give you that.

And it's like a small corporation. That's all you have to look at. That's how it's run. And it's not a corporate sort of model. And then it all sort of dropped in, right, and then I had to figure out how the pecking order works. That's what I had to find out with the coroner, is like I didn't understand any of that either when I got here. And then I went on a couple of calls with Larry (Senator **Larry Campbell**, former Mayor and former Coroner of Vancouver, on whom the character of *Da Vinci* is based) and then I got the pecking order.

He was a pretty good boss. He used to work all the holidays, all the weekends and he would cover Vancouver. And give the guys their holidays off.

So, what was that like going out on a call? Was this the homicide or...?

This case it wasn't. Most of them are suicides. That's the bulk of it, suicides and overdoses. On a homicide I wouldn't have been really welcomed. It's not really getting in the way of the other cops. It's really a – just a – if the victim's family's there, then they really wonder why there's an actor observing and it could be insulting, you know. That's how Larry thinks. And that's what formed my characterization pretty much from the get go is, I was totally shocked at just how much they all give a shit, not just the coroner service but the cops that regularly attend, major crime unit or any of them.

How long have you been playing *Da Vinci* now?

Since '99 or '98. It's a while now.

What's it like as an actor, playing the same guy over and over again? Does it affect who you are, you know, as, actor Nick?

It has to. It has to – and just in little ways, you know? I maybe absorb some of the things that work him up, and stuff like that. They're things I probably share anyway, but now that people sort of expect me to have responses to things, they ask me, and so life's more interesting and it starts becoming a little bit more like, like what *Da Vinci's* might be. It's kind of made me a Canadian more than I've ever been – sort of celebrated here.

Well you're that rare thing, you're a Canadian and you're a star, there's not many of those.

No, I know, you have to be a hockey player or something.

How did you end up being an actor?

Well it started at university, I was a student at Queen's and I took a drama course, and then I ended up wanting to do that. But I had to go to England really to get the technical training that I would have wanted.

I don't think actors have the same problem now. No real necessity to go anywhere. I still think it might be a good idea to go away and spend, you know, two or three years, or five years or something in England or the States or something. It can't hurt – what you bring back here.



Nick with *Da Vinci's Inquest* co-stars **Stephen E. Miller** and **Leo Shannon**.

Courtesy: Haddock Entertainment

“Well, this is definitely the best. Pretty well the culmination of every Canadian’s dream is to not only be in something regularly, but something that’s made for Canadians and that’s so delicious, you know.”

I think it’s good as an actor anyway. It seems to open up a lot of more possibilities for you so that you can be hired in more than one locale, more than one country. As Canadians we sort of have a history of having to do that, and it’d be a shame to give that up just because we got our act together here.

So how do we get our act together?

Well I think we have to a large degree, I mean, it’s coming. The big problem is sort of, whetting the audience to what we’re doing. And so, you’re dealing with old prejudices that, if you’re working on something that’s Canadian for Canadians, the business mentality – “You’re outta your mind!” You can’t make any money at it, and the only way they’re going to do it is if there’s a gun put to their head. And that gun has to stay firmly there until we establish more things like *Da Vinci*.

It can only be looked at as an odd success at this point, because there’s nothing to go with it. And there’s little chance that there’ll be anything to go with it as long as they don’t schedule *The Eleventh Hour* or *Train 48*. They won’t schedule those and promote them like they do an episode of *Law and Order*. And we don’t really have much of a chance to compete. It’s already hard, even for some journalists to understand why there’s a big deal about *Da Vinci* with 700,000 and we’re on against *Amazing Race* with two million. And even I find myself thinking, so big deal, until I get two million then we can’t really celebrate too much.

What has been the best moment for you as an actor?

Well, this is definitely the best. Pretty well the culmination of every Canadian’s dream is to not only be in something regularly, but something that’s made for Canadians and that’s so delicious, you know. It’s not for me to say how good it is but it’s pretty good. And it’s very, very satisfying to play every day and we’ve instantly connected with the Canadian public. In a way that only really hockey has.

What’s been your darkest moment as an actor? Was there a moment when you said, “This is it. I’m packing it in. I give up.”

Early on in England, it was pretty freaky living over there and running out of money. I freaked out a few times and spent many days just staring, like my face in the rug and I had this thing where my agent called sometimes if I took a bath, because I had about 16 baths a day hoping the thing would ring. It got bad there for a while, eight,

nine-month periods where I haven’t had too much action, some I brought on by myself by, you know, making enemies everywhere. But it’s been pretty good.

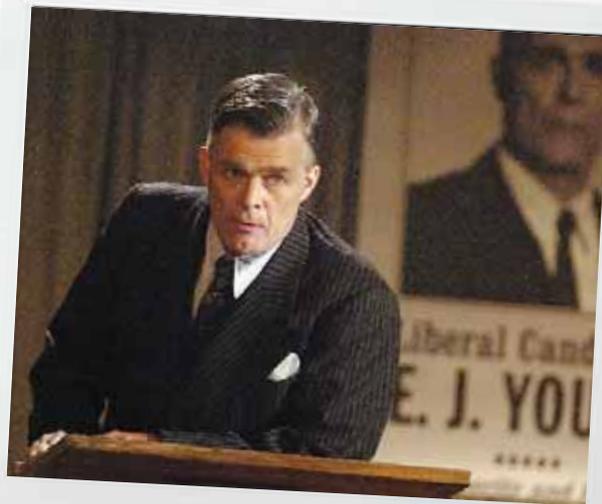
How do you make enemies?

I talk too much. I say too many things. So, I had to do my time on the island, you know, where nobody would use me. And even in this show, there was a lot of advice given to Chris from CBC and other places, that I may not be a good choice because I am such a fucking maniac.

You’re probably beyond the stage where you need to go in and audition for stuff, right?

Oh, yeah, you have to audition. Most things. I prefer to audition. I think it’s a strength rather than a test. It’s always a test. But if you go in for a meeting, which everybody angles for, when they – soon as they got a little bit of jam, now you better be that guy they want.

Don’t wear the costume or anything but you got to have that behaviour and all that because you’ll blow up yourself really quick. So, it’s much easier to not do any chit-chat. Come in there. If they want to start chit-chatting, don’t chit-chat. Just tell them look, you’re really ready to read. And everybody’s so relieved to hear that. They’re ready to get right down to business. If it didn’t go all that great, chit-chat. Or ask to do it again. It’s not even that good an idea to ask to do it again. Not if they feel they got somebody who’s going to take up a lot of time. “Can I do it again? Can I do it again? Can I do it again?” No, you got to have it the first time. Go in and nail it.



Nick in *Prairie Giant* as E.J. Young, a Liberal MP about to lose his seat to Tommy Douglas.

Ian Falldel, Courtesy: CBC Television

What do you want to be remembered for?

I don’t know. Am I going to die?

Well, at some point – at some point you are and so am I...

Nobody informed me of that. Holy shit!

I hope it’s not soon.

Me, too!

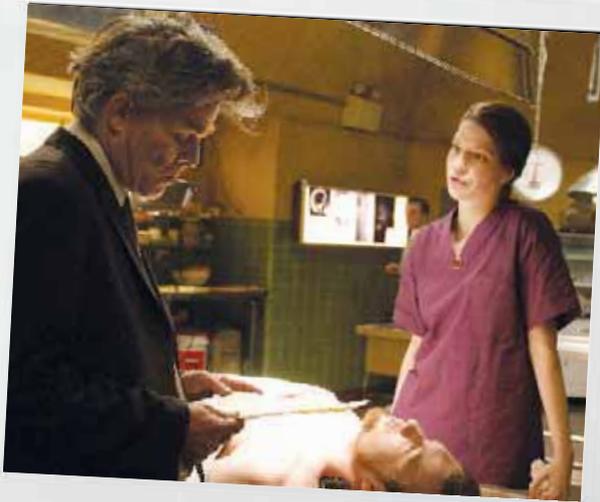
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Nick Campbell

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So, like 300 years from now?

I don't know. I guess the shows will still be around. So – that I went at it the right way. You know, I primarily got what I got by hard work and that talent quotient isn't that high on my side like some of the other guys I work with. It was a lot of hard work really.



Nick with *Da Vinci* co-star **Alisen Down** during an autopsy.

Courtesy Haddock Entertainment

You really feel that, that your talent doesn't match the people you work with?

Middling – I'd say I got middling. If I was in a cast of *Titus Andronicus*, you'd know immediately what I'm talking about. I've got to really work hard to where all the other actors I've worked with that I admire so much, they have a facility with it that I've always had to really struggle to get. That's why I did so many years of drama school. And then I had a speech impediment, too, when I was younger. I just talked so quickly that I couldn't even separate – I would just align syllables. And that just went away with age and growing up.

Now, you trained in England.

The school I actually went to was okay – the Drama Studio. But then once I got an Equity ticket, I went back to RADA (Royal Academy of Dramatic Art) and they had special professional classes at mid-day everyday. I did those for about four years. And that was really good.

(In England) they take the acting craft a lot more seriously than we do en masse. Individually there's not much difference between Canadian and British actors but, officially, in the way it's viewed in society and all that, it's a lot more important. It is considered an art form and we're still struggling with that a little bit. It's always been considered a bit of a hobby here. But in Canada, I was considering,

"You're going to be an actor, what are you here for? How can you take yourself seriously? How can anybody take you seriously? What does it say about your ambition if you live in Toronto?" Because living in Vancouver was completely insane. You really didn't want to be – you really didn't take yourself seriously as an actor and this is only going back 25 years.

Yeah, and now it's a whole different story.

Whole different story. But yeah, it could go away on us overnight.

In 2005 it was looking pretty grim.

Well, yeah, it can always do that but, you know, without any Canadian production then we're going to be really in trouble. If they (politicians) don't get their act together and take some kind of official stance into what our needs are. There's a lot of discussion in the papers about changing the schedule on the CBC Radio. I only wish that people were getting all upset about what they're doing on the television shows to the same degree as they are freaking out about the change in the radio.

So, what's the solution? How do we create more of our own? I mean, you're in something that's successful.

I think the same thing that Haddock's looking for and some of the other producers like those in *Wonderland* and is that you're trying to get something that's really going to appeal to Canadians in a visceral way, the way *The Sopranos* has done to the American audience. They opened up a new approach because drama was dying big time when that came along and they kind of took advantage of the DVD thing. I think we could do a lot better there.

I think up until this point, some of the choices have been kind of weird, you know. They look like copies of other things, like American shows. Pretty much everything that was being done here for a period of years was an eye to the foreign markets. There was too much acquiescence to the foreign market idea so Canadians looked at it, and said, "Ah, it's just a Canadian version of something and it's not as good."

Is that because it's safe? Is that because it's the pencil-pushers making the decision?

Oh, yeah, it's financing, totally. And, you know, to their credit on the other side of the ledger though, it's easy to criticize Telefilm but, geez, I'd like to know another government department that has managed to change its policy with the times as fast as they respond. Like they're having fun at it and all of a sudden, they've prioritized this. They've received something in a prioritized, say, distribution or they're going to just switch it all up and they're not – they're going to do these kind of films under \$2 million and then they said, "No, no more of those." I think that's to their credit. They should have more money to play with. Telefilm should be like double what it is. It should be at least what the sponsorship scandal was.

It's a major industry. It sells a lot of plane tickets around the world because a lot of our shows are seen – even **(David) Suzuki**. I mean (*The Nature of Things*) is watched in so many countries and he's so well-liked that people come to Canada because they think there's a bunch of Suzukis walking around over here. And, guess what? There is. And I think we've lost a bit of that identity, not just through our entertainment but through our political approach to life, the things that Canadians hold dear is part of the reason why *Da Vinci's* working.

It's because it does. The guy's definitely not American and he's not British or European or anything like that. He's definitely Canadian and he's got – there's certain things that trigger off a response.

“Canadian actors are really good. I mean they all know it down in L.A. The only place they haven’t noticed has been up here where they’ve really kind of diminished our contribution even in our own country over the years.”

I like this guy. Like **Don Cherry**’s got those, eh?

And that’s why everybody may not have watched the hockey the last two or three years but they were watching at the end of the first period. And I think people are checking out with *Da Vinci* the same way. “I hate that bastard.” I get that all the time. I get a letter, “I hate – I hate you. I hate you. I only watch to see what you’re up to, you moron.”

Are you serious?

Oh, yeah. You know you’re working and getting something right when you get those kinds of responses. But more of it is people who like it because it’s Canadian. And I think that’s what we have to dedicate ourselves to. And I think that when some smart guy who could command some bucks realizes how to tap into that nationalism out there, they’ll be just fine. And I think Haddock maybe is that guy. If he gets *Intelligence* and *Da Vinci*’s *City Hall* either in the same slot but 26 weeks instead of 13, with two shows of that quality, I think we’re well on the way. Even if the numbers are only 5-600,000 or whatever they say they are – I don’t think those numbers are right —those are convenient for advertisers but I don’t think they really reflect how many people are watching. I think that we have censored ourselves before we’ve even been up to the plate on a lot of things that I’ve worked on. And they say, “Oh, you can’t do that on TV.” You know, “Well, who said that?” Like, they didn’t tell those guys down there in England or over in the *Sopranos* office. They went right ahead and now CTV puts it on with all the ‘fucks’ and everything in it. And we have to battle to – *Intelligence* was bleeped every second word.

Well, there was another story there. There are two versions Chris made. And I think they didn’t run the other version so they wouldn’t piss off Haddock. And so they went with it (laugh) and managed to piss him off anyway (laugh).

Did that piss him off that they bleeped out some of the language?

You always know what they’re saying anyway. Yeah, I kind of like it actually. At least they had the guts to do it.

He’s got the magic touch, old Chris I think.

Yeah, he’s flirting with genius. I don’t like using that word too much. I only met a couple in my life for sure. But I just think when looking at him, thinking the same, that’s what’s going on.

So, we need some more geniuses here.

There’s plenty. There’s plenty. There’s some really talented individuals here struggling around – guys who are at Vancouver Film School right now. There’s guys in Montreal at that drama school. There’s tons of them. There’s tons of them. There’s really some very resourceful actors here who have had to, by necessity look at producing their own stuff, especially in Vancouver, B.C. Almost every guy working here has, at some point or another, tried to get a film off the ground, part of a play, you wouldn’t find one out of 10 Americans that are in this spot, not until they get super, super successful and they’ve got money to throw around and deals. It’s just not quite that way down there.

You know I just worked on **Ron Howard**’s film (*Cinderella Man*) and all the really good actors there could have been Canadians. Canadian actors are really good. I mean they all know it down in L.A. The only place they haven’t noticed has been up here where they’ve really kind of diminished our contribution even in our own country over the years. There’s no real reason for it anymore. I think we’re doing a lot to change people’s minds anyway, people who have checked out some of the stuff they’re doing. I think *The Tournament* is really an exciting show. It’s not getting the numbers. I don’t know why. But it’s exciting stuff. Way beyond the pale in terms of what we were doing 10 years ago – five years ago, maybe. Down east there, the *Trailer Park Boys* and all of these kinds are fantastic – that’s making a connection with Canadians. It’s something to celebrate.



Nicholas Campbell on the set of *Da Vinci*’s *City Hall* with creator and executive producer **Chris Haddock**.

Courtesy: CBC Television

Three of the CBC’s successful Canadian television shows that Nicholas was most excited about, his own *Da Vinci*’s *City Hall* and *This is Wonderland* and *The Tournament*, have all been cancelled since this interview.

Keith Martin Gordey has been in the business for more than 25 years and continues to make his living as an actor. He serves on the Boards of UBCP/ACTRA, and PAL Vancouver.



Laszlo Barna

Laszlo Barna speaks to...



by David Sparrow

As the President and CEO of Barna Alper Productions, former CFTPA chair, and past board member of the Canadian Television Fund, **Laszlo Barna** is an outspoken champion of telling Canadian stories. As one of Canada's top independent producers, Barna is known for his critically acclaimed documentaries, TV series and MOWs including the *Da Vinci* series, *Blue Murder*, *Open Heart*, *Hard Times: The David Milgaard Story*, *At the End of the Day: The Sue Rodriguez Story*, *Turning Points of History* and *The Take*. I spoke to him about the present and future of our industry.

The U.S. money-drain

We've relied heavily on the regulatory system and subsidies to make sure we protect indigenous Canadian production, and I don't see that changing. The challenge facing us is that Canadian broadcasters spend close to \$500 million each year buying U.S. productions and dropping them into favoured primetime slots. So there's a drain of resources and dollars going out and less spent on Canadian programs. Until we can get to where we're actually spending more on indigenous programming, we're going to have a problem. It's sure not very good for actors and it's not very good for producers.

Public vs. private funding for Canadian films

Right now there's virtually no premium in the feature film industry and so it's attracting very few independent dollars. In the mid-'80s, if we were able to do one or two documentaries a year we considered ourselves lucky. Now we do 40 to 50 hours a year and they sell all over the world. We have moved from a very negative, limited scenario to one that's absolutely thriving and with less subsidies than we've ever had. But the key is that at the critical times when we were building talent or we were building infrastructure, the subsidies counted. So, while it is a disaster that we have to reach out and take subsidies, it's not inevitable that the system will always be subsidy-driven. Should that turn out to be the case, I think it's the best dollars that the government would ever spend.

Setting minimum requirements for TV drama

Being the former chair of the CFTPA, I know we fought very hard to get the CRTC to

consider reinstating the 1999 rules about the number of hours of drama that need to be on air. We tried to get through to the politicians, but it's an uphill battle. Maybe digital and downloading will change the situation, but the community that rules over our destinies and makes decisions on behalf of our nation is likely neither feature film goers nor television watchers, and, over the years, they have consistently behaved in such a fashion as to reflect that. If there were minimum requirements for Canadian drama, that would be fantastic and it would revitalize the system.

Our responsibility to the next generation

I'm very concerned that our younger generation gets its views about social systems, legal and political systems, and certain portrayals of morality from another country. And although I know politicians generally don't like to admit it, we are a viable industry protecting Canadian culture. Some make the argument, "The government puts in \$100 million a year and the cable industry puts in \$100 million, that ought to be enough." When you look at the actual budgets that we're working with, I would say that \$100 million to sustain a cultural voice in this country is not enough.

The state of series television in Canada is not good. **Richard Stursberg**, CBC Vice-president of English Programming, has told us, "I want five to six series on air." Will he meet this goal? I expect he will but he'll have to do it with a flat budget that seems to be quite vulnerable to Ottawa. So, the question is whether the CRTC's current system of incentivizing broadcasters to make dramas will work. But, if it doesn't, nothing will have been lost... and everything will have been lost.

Ratings and the axe

Look, there's no question that as producers we have an obligation to produce programs that are watched. It's not only a matter of pride, but if they're not watched then we make ourselves vulnerable. You can't have a cultural industry, if nobody is aware of it. So, any network, including the CBC, has the right to say, "I want 'X' number of eyeballs glued to the set or else I'm not going to pick you up."

Notwithstanding that, and I'm not talking about *Da Vinci* in particular, there's a conflict – U.S. shows are heavily promoted, not just on air, but cross-promoted in billboard campaigns and magazines, and this makes the shows visible. Historically, the CBC has been unable to afford the kind of support that nurtures success. And they have the additional problem of having no 'network drivers' (airing a strong U.S. show and delivering that audience to a Canadian show that follows it). CBC has no such mechanism, so how are they going to, with the resources they have, live up to their perceived obligations?

His company's new partnership with Blue Ice Capital and future plans

Well, the message to the community is that when a mid-size or leading independent production company being able to form a partnership that enhances it both creatively and financially is this: this industry is alive and has the possibility of growing and being even more successful.

Three or four years ago when a variety of larger companies announced that they were no longer going to play the production game, it looked very depressing for the entire industry. But, broadcasters have an ongoing problem –

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ACTRA's IPA bargaining team stands strong for performers

by Marit Stiles, Director of Research

It's spring. Birds are singing and ACTRA's Wages and Working Condition Committee is warming up for what promises to be a challenging round of bargaining with the producers. ACTRA's biggest collective agreement, the Independent Production Agreement (IPA) doesn't expire until December 31, 2006, but ACTRA will be going head to head to with the Canadian Film and Television Production Association (CFTPA) and l'Association des producteurs de films et de television du Quebec (APFTQ) as early as this spring.

As reported in the last issue of *InterACTRA*, ACTRA consulted members extensively last fall, holding discussion groups and town hall meetings across the country. Members sent a strong signal to our committee: they are tired of feeling like second-class citizens on sets where they work alongside performers working at SAG rates. They've had enough of producer incompetence. They have worked hard to lobby governments across the country to secure tax credits that fund producers and yet see no change in the rates they are being offered. Fewer performers are being offered above minimum rates in the IPA, making it increasingly important that we raise those rates and improve working conditions.

Many performers cited the 10% (over three years) increase received by SAG and AFTRA performers in their last round of bargaining. This is widely considered the 'industry standard' and ACTRA performers were clear that we should accept nothing less.

A stellar team

With these priorities in mind, our negotiating team and staff have been meeting regularly since January to develop a strong set of proposals. A great deal of work has taken place between meetings to pull together relevant research and develop strong, clear contract language.

A mix of seasoned pros and enthusiastic first-timers, our team is stellar. We have among us some of the most well-known and smartest performers in Canada. Chaired by ACTRA's National President **Richard Hardacre**, with Past President **Thor Bishopric** as Co-Chair, and headed up by National Executive Director **Stephen Waddell**, ACTRA's Chief Negotiator, our team boasts strong leadership and decades of negotiation experience. From Regina, we have **Wendy Anderson** (*Tideland, The Pedestrian*), and from Montreal, **Tyrone Benskin** (*Charlie Jade, Riverdale*) and **Matt Holland** (*Secret Window, Mambo Italiano*). From Toronto we are joined by **Alberta Watson** (*24, At the Hotel*), **Ron Lea** (*This is Wonderland, Blue Murder*), **Ron White** (*Sybil, Tom Stone*), **Karl Pruner** (*E.N.G., Total Recall 2070*) and **Maurice Dean Wint** (*Blue Murder, PSI Factor*). **Heather Allin** (*Stone Cold, Welcome to Mooseport*) and **Aidan Devine** (*A History of Violence, Prairie Giant*) are alternates.

"This being my first time at the table, I've been so impressed by the work the original team has accomplished to date," says Alberta. "This is no easy task, and it's been an education for me. It's time our Canadian performers receive the recognition and compensation for the excellence of their services... The arts in our country are not nurtured or recognized for the importance they truly hold. We need to be heard and ACTRA will be that voice in the upcoming negotiations."

News from the frontline

In the midst of our preparations, word came down from other industry guilds and unions of outrageous and unacceptable concessions being demanded by producers in their respective rounds of bargaining.

Most recently, UBCP kicked off bargaining with U.S. producers and the B.C. CFTPA in late February. UBCP put forward strong proposals that mirror many of those being

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Richard Hardacre



Stephen Waddell



Wendy Anderson



Aidan Devine



Ron Lea



Alberta Watson



Maurice Dean Wint



Thor Bishopric



Heather Allin



Tyrone Benskin



Matt Holland



Karl Pruner



Ron White

ACTRA's IPA bargaining team

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considered by ACTRA, and made the exciting – and indeed historic – proposal to have their agreement be co-terminus with ACTRA's IPA. ACTRA and UBCP have engaged in coordinated bargaining for the first time ever, and Stephen Waddell and Richard Hardacre were invited to attend UBCP's negotiations.

"Once again, the acumen around the ACTRA table is fiercely impressive. We are shored up by the solidarity of UBCP. It's an exciting time to be involved," said Wendy Anderson.

That's the good news. The bad news is that the requests put forward in the producers' proposals to UBCP were shocking. Producers are seeking to grossly discount performers' wages, at a time when UBCP is proposing to gain parity with ACTRA. The proposed cuts would mean that on some productions, performers would earn no more than the provincial minimum wage. In B.C., that would be \$8/hr. Or \$6/hr. for the first 500 hours of work a person carries out. (Imagine the effect on young performers for whom this could be their first job ever!)

"To start from a position of wanting actors to sell their craft for even less money than the minimums they can't negotiate beyond is reprehensible," says Tyrone Benskin. "In this country, we don't have an industry where actors are paid \$50 million a film. This is bread and butter territory. We work at the craft we love to feed ourselves and our families, not buy 25-room mansions. They wish to take the bread from our mouths... I say hell, no!" said Tyrone Benskin.

Members speak up

ACTRA members are bracing themselves for the producers to look for similar concessions when they meet us at the table. We went to our members with a national telephone survey to test their will to take on the producers, to reject major concessions, and to narrow the gap between ACTRA and SAG rates. In March, Viewpoints Research, a highly regarded professional public opinion research company based in Winnipeg, undertook a phone survey of ACTRA members across the country who had worked under the current IPA. This is the first time that ACTRA has

undertaken such a massive consultation with our membership in this way, and so we also took this opportunity to learn more about our membership, such as how they like to receive information and news about ACTRA. We asked for their honest opinions, and reassured members that their answers would not be singled out and that their identities would be kept confidential.

The response was overwhelming. More than 800 surveys were completed in under three days. Not only did the members respond enthusiastically to our request for their opinions, but they sent a strong signal that they expect their bargaining committee to stand tough against any attempts by producers to squeeze out concessions in wages and working conditions.

Among our key findings:

- 79% of ACTRA members agree that ACTRA should seek at least the 9% (over three years) industry standard "even if Canadian producers fight hard against this."
- 88% support giving preferential rates to Canadian productions over U.S. feature films in order to support our indigenous industry.
- 82.5% agree ACTRA should seek to gradually increase rates for big budget U.S. feature films until ACTRA performers are earning the same rates as their SAG counterparts on set.

Our members are also willing to go to the line to get the increases they need and deserve. When given a choice between three possible actions ACTRA could take if producers demand wage and benefit rollbacks, 85.4% of members said they would take significant action against production or work under promulgated agreements if the producers and ACTRA can't reach a negotiated agreement. Members are overwhelmingly against accepting producers' demands to 'maintain stability in the industry,' with only 7% supporting that position.

Performers across this country are ready for change. They are tired of feeling like second-class citizens on set. They are not

going to be frightened off by producers' threats of industry instability. ACTRA performers understand what it takes to build a Canadian industry and are willing to use their skills and lend their voices to promote more production incentives and policies that benefit their industry. Consequently, they will not then accept the slap in the face that producers are wielding in the form of wage rollbacks and concessions.

"With the great gains we made by working together to boost tax credits across the country, you would think the producers would be ready to show us some respect and dignity going into these negotiations," said Ron Lea.

Performers give enough of themselves. Their commitment to Canadian culture and the Canadian television and film industry is strong. But they are second to no one, and they are prepared to stand up and fight for that recognition.

You spoke, we listened!

ACTRA's phone survey revealed:

- 10% of you currently rely on email for information about ACTRA but you would like that to change
- 53% of you said email would be the most effective way for ACTRA to communicate with you about IPA negotiations
- 27% of you prefer information via snail mail sent to your home
- 40% of you get your info on ACTRA from this very magazine
- 29% rely on www.actra.ca for your ACTRA news
- 34% of you have attended an ACTRA branch meeting or members' conference. Significantly more than most organizations and unions, but it still tells us we have to work harder to give you a reason to come and meet with your fellow ACTRA members!

ACTRA and AFBS: Straight talk



Lyn Mason Green
National Councillor
Toronto



Ferne Downey,
National Treasurer
& AFBS Governor

A flash fire of controversy has recently flickered across cyberspace with some pretty inflammatory conjecture. A few ACTRA members have raised an alarm over the rumoured ‘demise’ of the ACTRA Fraternal Benefit Society (AFBS) and accused ACTRA of taking equalization monies they believe belong to AFBS. This is not helpful, and more importantly, it is not true.

ACTRA’s leaders are members democratically elected by ACTRA members and are directly accountable to members for decisions made by ACTRA. Why on earth would ACTRA’s leaders want to cause the ‘demise’ of AFBS? AFBS was created by ACTRA to provide essential insurance and retirement services to ACTRA members on a not-for-profit basis. This flash fire is not about a disagreement between AFBS and ACTRA, nor is it supported by AFBS.

It is important for all members to understand the facts and, hopefully with new clarity, to support ACTRA and AFBS as we move forward into the future. To get to the facts, ACTRA National Councillor, **Lyn Mason Green** asked **Ferne Downey**, ACTRA’s sole appointee on the AFBS Board a few questions.

LYN: Right off the top, is ACTRA intending to ditch AFBS?

FERNE: Good heavens, no! ACTRA wants to play a positive role and work with AFBS to ensure that our members have superb insurance and retirement (I&R) benefits in our rapidly changing world. AFBS has embraced that collaboration. The ‘good old days’ of AFBS were based on the financial model of ‘80s service production and that is not the production reality of 2006. Let’s be clear, the number-one priority of the AFBS Board is a new insurance plan design that will serve members’ needs.

What is the relationship between ACTRA and AFBS?

ACTRA created AFBS in 1975 to provide I&R benefits for ACTRA members. (Prior to that time, members’ I&R benefits were handled in-house by ACTRA). AFBS has grown into a respected, federally regulated financial institution and ACTRA is a feisty union representing English-speaking Canadian performers in recorded media. It is a great arm’s-length relationship that is being questioned by a few members who fear that ACTRA intends to ditch or weaken AFBS. On the contrary!

What is each member’s relationship to AFBS?

You become a member of AFBS when you become a full member of ACTRA. AFBS provides insurance and retirement plan services as a core value of ACTRA membership.

What relationship do producers have with AFBS?

No direct relationship. Five engager reps serve on the 14-member AFBS Board but ACTRA alone negotiates all collective agreements, i.e. the Independent Production Agreement (IPA) and National Commercial Agreement (NCA) with producers. AFBS has absolutely no role in negotiating the IPA or NCA.

Who decides how members’ money will be delivered into our accounts at AFBS and how?

The collective agreements negotiated by ACTRA and the producers determine the amount of I&R contributions and how they are allocated.

The amount of money deposited into your account is a percentage of your gross pay: the NCA provides for a 4% engager contribution for insurance and the IPA provides for 5%. The RSP contribution is currently a total of 11% of your gross pay in the NCA and 9% in the IPA. Every penny contributed by you from your gross pay, and

by producers on your behalf, goes into your benefits. Whether it flows to ACTRA first (NCA) or AFBS first (IPA), it all ends up securely in your individual member account at AFBS.

What exactly is an ‘equalization payment’?

These are monies negotiated between ACTRA and producers in the collective agreements that are meant to ‘equalize’ the cost to producers of hiring non-ACTRA members. They are equivalent to the member I&R contributions made by a producer and ensure that it is never cheaper to hire a non-member than a member. It ‘equalizes’ the playing field so-to-speak and ensures there is no financial incentive for producers to hire non-members.

What happens to the monies collected from non-members?

Non-member monies or ‘equalization payments’ are shared between ACTRA and AFBS.

Prior to 1999, AFBS paid annual ‘service’ fees to ACTRA for the negotiation and enforcement of ACTRA’s collective agreements and administrative assistance in the areas of membership, data processing, etc. By 1999, that service contract was replaced by the current arrangement – amending ACTRA’s collective agreements to provide for a split in equalization payments. This split was initiated at the suggestion of the AFBS Board Chair at that time, knowledgeably considered and approved by the AFBS Board and management.

Since 1999, the lion’s share of equalization payments (i.e. 10 % of non-members gross pay) has flowed to AFBS – the balance has flowed to ACTRA. (In 1999 the total percentage of non-members’ gross pay to be split was 12% in the IPA; it is now 14%.)

Let’s be clear, *all* the participants – ACTRA, the engagers and AFBS – fully participated in approval of this change in allocation. History is being revised when some members attempt to portray this seven-year understanding as a ‘money grab’. Nothing could be further from the truth. The money is legally and appropriately ACTRA’s to share with AFBS.

Why does ACTRA need a share of the Equalization Payments at all?

Lest we forget, ACTRA went to the members in 2002 with a constitutional referendum for a dues increase. In that referendum ACTRA clearly articulated a vision for the future including a new research

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ACTRA and AFBS

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capability and a more active public policy and communications department. The members voted positively for that vision – as outlined in *The ACTRA Plan*, with pretty impressive results. The money that ACTRA receives as its total share of equalization payments helps to fund those departments.

ACTRA Equalization Receipts

Fiscal Year	Commercial	IPA	Other	Total
1999/00	273,582	516,117	0	789,699
2000/01	392,205	889,669	0	1,281,874
2001/02	419,204	862,838	2,044	1,284,086
2002/03	673,031	787,451	28,747	1,489,229
2003/04	436,087	545,730	22,694	1,004,511
2004/05	454,407	651,227	20,203	1,125,837
2005/2006*	450,841	645,551	19,604	1,115,996
Total	3,099,357	4,898,583	92,292	8,091,232

*For 2005/2006, amounts represent 12 months for 'Commercial' and 9 months for 'IPA & Other'

So can you show me the difference – what happened to the equalization payments before recent changes to the NCA and what happens now?

The Commercial Agreement before 2004:

Dues, session and residual payments flowed to ACTRA; I&R & equalization remittances and data were sent to AFBS.

Member:	Insurance 3%	Retirement 7% + 4% (deduction) = 14%
Non-Member:	Equalization 3%	Equalization 7% + 4% (deduction) = 14%

The Commercial Agreement after 2004:

All references to AFBS changed to ACTRA; All remittances and data are sent to ACTRA.

Member:	Insurance 4%	Retirement 7% + 4% (deduction) = 15%
Non-Member:	Equalization 4%	Equalization 7% + 4% (deduction) = 15%

What about the extra 1%?

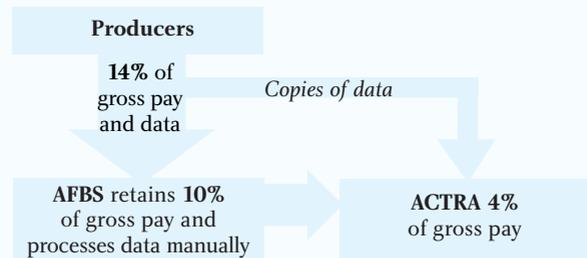
In the NCA negotiations, ACTRA won a 1% increase in the producers' contribution to members' I&R. In order to keep the payments by producers for members and non-members 'equal', ACTRA also negotiated a 1% increase in non-members equalization payments.

For members, the 1% went straight to their individual accounts. But for the non-members, the dollar amounts represented by that 1% gain meant approximately an extra \$65,000 to \$75,000 annually remained with ACTRA. The amount going to AFBS remains unchanged. That additional 1% would still have flowed from AFBS to ACTRA, even if the contract language wasn't changed.

So what has changed?

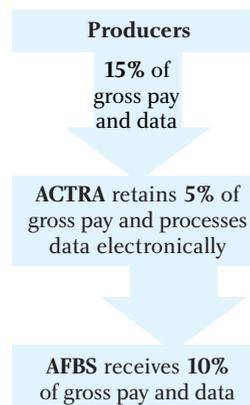
Only the *route* has changed – the equalization monies are routed to ACTRA and ACTRA sends AFBS' share of the money to AFBS. There is no change in the *amount* of equalization payment that goes to AFBS in the wake of the change to the NCA. AFBS still receives 10% of non-members' gross pay.

Flow of Non-Member Funds for NCA before 2004:



* Data = Actor work history and remittances

Flow of Non-Member Funds for NCA after 2004:



Did the change in the flow of funds have any relationship to changes in AFBS coverage?

No.

So why was mention of AFBS removed from the NCA?

Initially, this change happened because a producer at the bargaining table inappropriately tried to assert control of the flow of funds to AFBS. ACTRA's negotiating team rejected that assertion. Several legal opinions, requested by both sides, totally supported ACTRA's position: ACTRA has the legal right to amend the collective agreement. With that removal from the contract, ACTRA also embraced the future – ACTRA will assist in strengthening our health and retirement programs and play an increasingly active role in protecting and enhancing the welfare of ACTRA members across Canada.

If AFBS is no longer in the NCA contract, what assurance does AFBS have that they will get their 10% share?

After the change, ACTRA immediately sent a letter to AFBS confirming that the agreed split would continue to be respected. This issue is part of the current ACTRA/AFBS Service Agreement negotiations.

Bob Underwood (AFBS' Chief Executive Officer) and **Stephen Waddell**

(ACTRA's National Executive Director) concluded this vital negotiation in February. It now rests with a committee of the AFBS Board for review. Administratively, ACTRA now cuts weekly cheques to AFBS for their share of equalization money.

What does AFBS lose or gain?

AFBS loses nothing except the administrative burden of inputting data on commercial work histories. In fact, the resulting administrative efficiencies will save AFBS money in the long run.

Before, AFBS forwarded work history information to ACTRA after a period of approximately three months. Queries that came to ACTRA from members had to be addressed by going back to the filing cabinets and tracking paper copies.

What does ACTRA lose or gain?

Feedback from ACTRA staff has been extremely upbeat right across the board. ACTRA gains the responsibility of inputting all commercial work histories data. All information is input quickly and efficiently – any questionable remittances are taken up with the Commercial Department (in ACTRA Toronto & UBCP) or national staff and resolved immediately. Also, any problems with a payroll service company can be tackled by ACTRA. Member information is compared against the data in the ACTRA Membership System (AMS), ACTRA's sophisticated online database, and recorded accurately. In addition, ACTRA can record production company info, not just the payroll service company. The data immediately populates the members' AMS records, which makes it possible for ACTRA staff to provide excellent service to the members.

ACTRA absorbs \$165-\$175,000 annually in administration costs to take over this additional work under the NCA.

What do members lose or gain?

Members enjoy two big gains: an increase of 1% of gross pay goes directly into insurance benefits as a result of the increase ACTRA negotiated in the NCA, and members receive greatly enhanced service, especially in management of work history data.

Are my retirement funds at any risk or are they protected? Please explain.

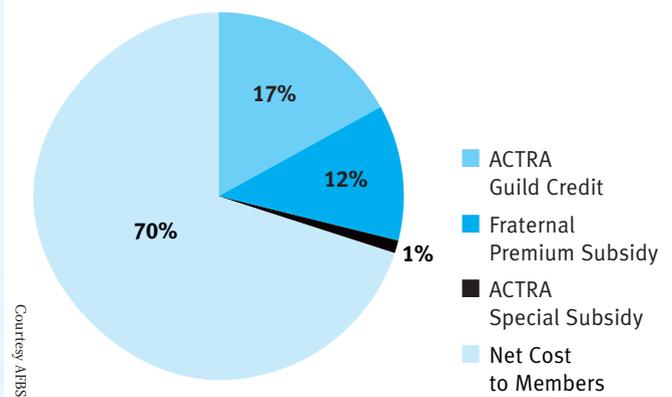
The retirement funds are at no risk. Au contraire, they are prospering on our collective behalf, exactly the same as before and doing rather nicely!

I can only guess that some of the brouhaha might be curiosity about RRIF (Registered Retirement Income Fund) holders. Currently, AFBS RRIF account holders do not pay any of the direct costs related to those funds whereas all other ACTRA members do. As RRIF-ers are fully subsidized by the equalization payments pool, that leaves less money available for insurance subsidy for the majority of ACTRA members.

Why then has my health coverage changed?

Your health insurance coverage has *not* changed. The amount you need to earn to pay for your gross health and dental insurance premium increases yearly as insurance costs rise. But the *gross* premium cost is always reduced by two factors: AFBS' operating surplus, which is always returned to members as a Fraternal subsidy; and the ACTRA Guild Credit, which is the amount left from the equalization payments after the costs of investing and managing RRSP assets is subtracted from the gross premium cost. The total premium subsidy this year is happily 30%, a very welcome improvement over recent years. And the subsidy this year included a special direct subsidy from ACTRA (\$87,000).

2006/2007 Premium Subsidies – Net Cost to Members



What's happening to improve my health coverage?

A new plan design is being created by a committee of the AFBS Board. The intention is to have a more affordable, sustainable and flexible insurance plan for our *next* benefit year.

Also, for the first time ever this year, AFBS will offer new ACTRA members the option of purchasing the introductory level of health and dental insurance. This is a considerable benefit and will help new members start their lifelong relationship with AFBS on a good footing.

Improvements have already been made on behalf of ACTRA's Apprentice members. Since March 2005, ACTRA Apprentices have received credit for RSP contributions made in the two years prior to achieving full ACTRA membership. This year, more than \$200,000 has flowed back to Apprentice members as RSP credits. Before that change, Apprentice members contributed substantially to the pool of equalization payments, yet derived little benefit.

Is AFBS making changes to improve the coverage of members over the course of their careers?

Yes! The new streamlined plan design hopes to accomplish the goal of putting the member more in the driver's seat of controlling their level of coverage. As it is now, we have a seven-tier 'Cadillac plan' that runs the future risk of becoming too expensive to be sustainable and potentially serving too few. Members tend to have higher earnings in their younger years, so earn the highest health and dental coverage when they need it least! The AFBS Board and ACTRA are both striving to provide the greatest possible member benefits for *all* ACTRA members throughout their careers.

As one example, ACTRA has long been championing the addition of on-set accident insurance for all performers (including non-members) while working on an ACTRA contract. This would be a great boon for everyone – including producers.

There is a whole fabulous new generation of performers that need to be supported and protected in our globalized industry. We are in this together. Strengthening ACTRA in AFBS will only help make the vision real.

I hope all this interest in the relationship between ACTRA and AFBS bears fruit! Please stay informed, stay active and if possible, join us at the **AFBS Annual General Meeting on Friday June 2, 2006**. And remember, you can contact me at any time at fdowney@actra.ca, or by phone at **416-489-1311/1-800-387-3516**.

ELECTION 2006

Performers call on politicians to take action

Canadian stars stood up and spoke out about the threat to Canada's cultural sovereignty during the federal election. And judging from the extensive media coverage, they were heard across the country. **Walter Alza, Wendy Crewson, Luba Goy, Richard Hardacre, Art Hindle, Dan Lett, Miriam McDonald, Colin Mochrie, Cara Pifko, Karl Pruner, Fiona Reid, Wayne Robson, Sonja Smits, Julie Stewart,** and **R.H. Thomson** turned out to ACTRA's news conference in Toronto to call on federal politicians to let Canadians know where they stand on Canada's cultural future.

The performers' passionate pleas sparked a flurry of media including supportive newspaper columns and editorials, and many minutes of TV news coverage.

"We are facing cultural integration with the U.S. and our next government needs to take immediate action. Our own broadcasters are more interested in simulcasting U.S. programming than they are in showing Canadian programs."

– **Wendy Crewson**

"We have to get the teeth back... We must not apologize for asking government to support our culture. We simply will not exist as a nation with any self-respect or message to the world if we do not safeguard, promote, and fight for our culture."

– **Fiona Reid**

"We are lucky that we have so much freedom in this country to say what we want. The only freedom we don't have is financial."

– **Colin Mochrie**

Canadian culture being drowned out!

"(Degrassi) is a perfect case in point of what all Canadian television has the capacity to do. I just think we need more opportunities to create Canadian television, to tell Canadian stories, and to develop a sense of pride in the Canadian public of Canadian performers."

– **Miriam McDonald**

"The arts fulfill many important roles in society. They help give us our national identity, enliven our cities and enrich our children's education. And, if that's not convincing, consider this: Canada's cultural industries generate \$26 billion in economic activity each year and employ 700,000 Canadians directly."

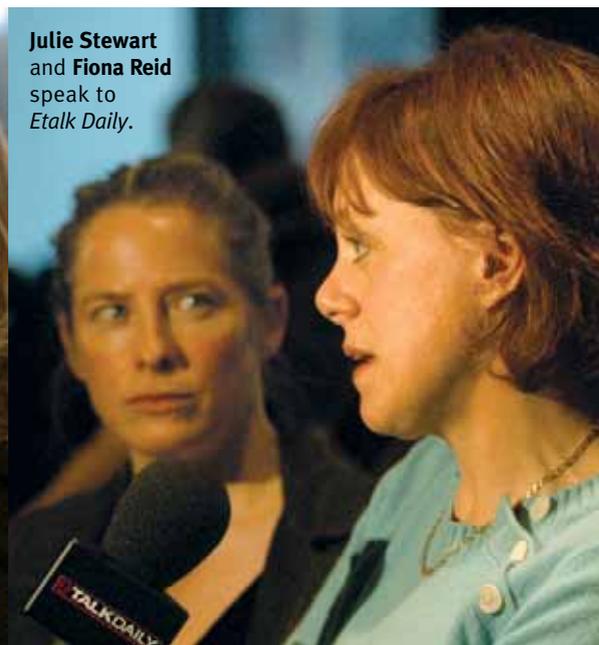
– Editorial: "Political actors overlook culture,"
Toronto Star, January 16, 2006



Wendy Crewson



Sonja Smits



Julie Stewart and Fiona Reid speak to *Talk Daily*.



What a cast!

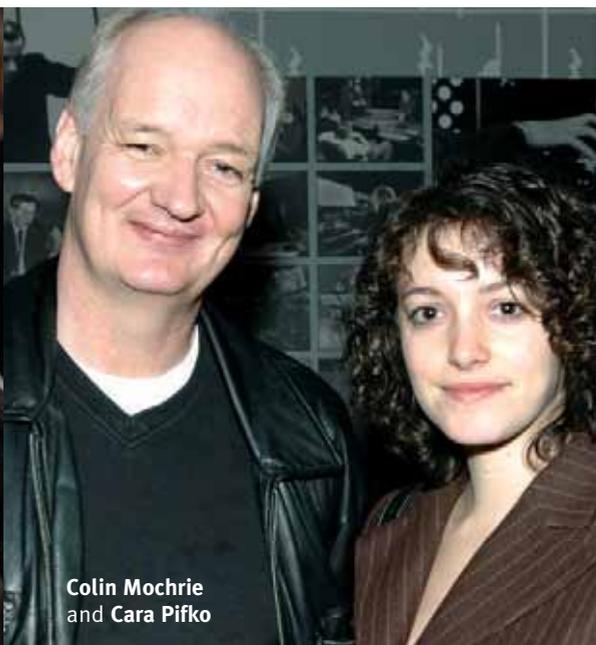
"I found myself at a press conference this week, my view of the podium blocked by a phalanx of bodies with cameras. I counted them. There were 15, both television cameramen and press photographers. By rights, not one of them should have been there. Their editors and producers had surely made some mistake – misunderstood the purpose of the gathering, or misjudged the nature of the news. After all, this was a press conference called by ACTRA, the actors'

union, to ask campaigning politicians to address cultural issues and, as any Canadian politician could tell you if he wasn't too busy slagging his opponent or counting hospital beds and daycare spaces, culture simply isn't on the election agenda."

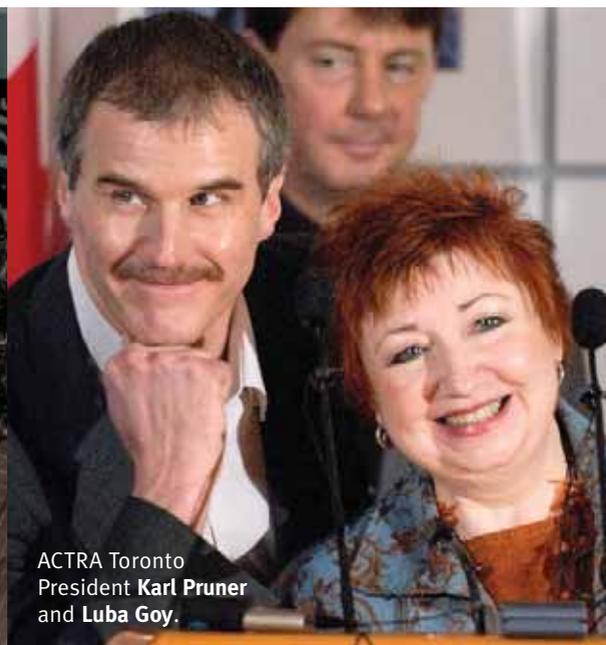
– **Kate Taylor**, "On the block? Culture's barely on the radar," *Globe and Mail*, January 14, 2006



Miriam McDonald

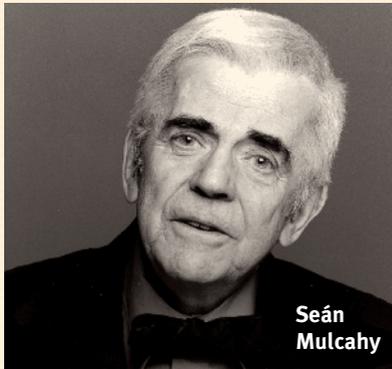


Colin Mochrie and Cara Pifko



ACTRA Toronto President Karl Pruner and Luba Goy.

applause



Seán Mulcahy: More than 45 years of union service

Seán Mulcahy. The name conjures up a dapper gentleman in a bow tie, a mellifluous tone of voice, a raconteur, director, actor and someone who is passionate about Canadian actors and Canadian culture.

Seán gave me my first acting work in Canada and many others their first job in theatre. In his illustrious career as an artistic director, he only once employed non-Canadian actors.

Seán has won ACTRA's Andrew Allan and Nellie awards. Not content with only being an actor and director, Sean gave back to the unions that protected him through the agreements, by serving on the councils of Equity and ACTRA.

Before his retirement from union politics this winter, Seán was active with ACTRA for more than 45 years. He was Vice-President in 1960-61; he became Chair of ACTRA Performers' Guild in 1978 and Vice-President again in 1988-89. He served as Acting National President in 1989 when **Dale Goldhawk** had to put his presidency in abeyance because of ACTRA's dispute with the CBC over freedom of speech. Seán has represented ACTRA Toronto on local and National Councils for more than 25 years and has also been a Governor of ACTRA Fraternal Benefit Society's board for more than 15 years. Seán's longstanding presence on ACTRA Toronto's Council was recognized on his retirement by the naming of the branch's boardroom in his honour, engraved plaque and all.

Seán has retired from active politics in ACTRA. His wisdom and wit will be missed by us all but I am sure his voice will not be silenced.

– Brian Gromoff



Eleanor Collins, Leonard Gibson, and Carol Whiteman.

Sam Payne Awards

UBCP/ACTRA presented three members with this year's Sam Payne Awards in March. Established in 1984, two years after **Sam Payne's** death, the awards honour one of Vancouver's well-loved and respected professional actors.

Carol Whiteman, an actor, writer, producer and advocate for women's issues, was named this year's recipient of the Sam Payne Award, which recognizes performers displaying humanity, artistic integrity and encouragement of new talent. Carol is the President and CEO of Women in the Director's Chair (WIDC) and co-creator of the WIDC Workshop, an acclaimed program founded in 1996 to encourage women of all ages to pursue their passion for creating films as directors.

Eleanor Collins and **Len Gibson** were presented with the Sam Payne Lifetime Achievement Award, first presented in 1995 to recognize a member's body of work. This is the first year two members have received the award. Jazz-pop inspirational singer Eleanor Collins was the first variety show performer in Canada to have a national, weekly TV show named for her – *The Eleanor Show* – in the early '50s. Eleanor enjoyed a long career with the CBC and received numerous awards for her contribution to the arts. At 86, she is still performing. African-Canadian dance artist **Len Gibson** has danced, choreographed and taught across Canada, the U.S. and Britain. He created *Bamboula: a Day in the West Indies*, Vancouver's first live musical variety series produced in Vancouver and one of the first TV shows to feature an interracial cast. He danced in the film classic *Cleopatra*, starring **Elizabeth Taylor** and **Richard Burton**, and starred in many musicals.

Walter Borden reaps rewards

ACTRA Maritimes member **Walter Borden** has been named a Member of the Order of Canada and has won the Portia White Prize, a \$25,000 prize from the Nova Scotia Arts Council. Walter has been a tremendous cultural force in Halifax and across the country over the past 40 years. Borden, who has appeared on TV in *Lexx* and *Feast of All Saints*, is primarily a stage actor and has just begun his fourth season with the Stratford Festival. ACTRA Maritimes bestowed Life membership on Walter in 1998.



SAG Awards

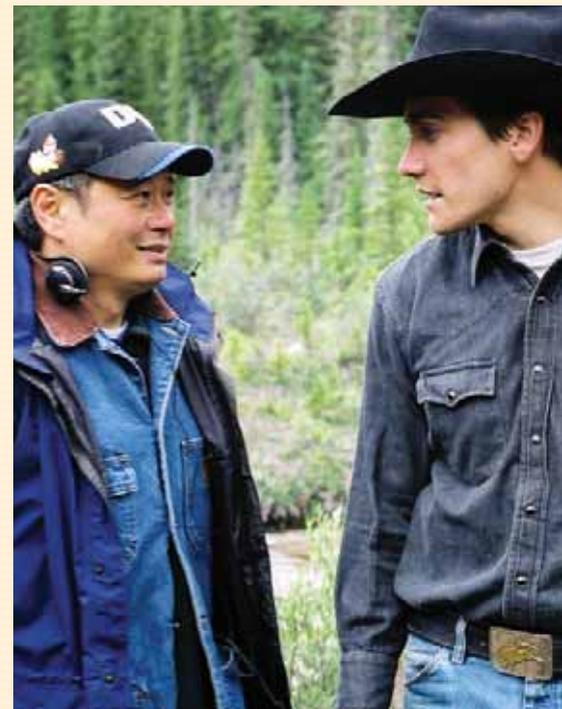
Two ACTRA members snatched up big wins south of the border at the Screen Actors Guild Awards in February. **Sandra Oh** won for her work in *Grey's Anatomy* and **Kiefer Sutherland** took home an award for his work in *24*.

applause

Oscars 2006: Canada shines

While many were disappointed that Canada's *C.R.A.Z.Y.* was overlooked in the Oscar's Foreign Film category, Canada's performers and crew got a little well-deserved recognition for their world-class abilities in the form of a stack of Oscar nominations and wins for *Brokeback Mountain* and *Capote*. *Brokeback Mountain*, shot in southern Alberta led the Oscar race with eight nominations, while *Capote*, shot in Manitoba, was up for five. Vancouver's Infinity Features was responsible for financing the U.S.\$75-million feature for MGM/United Artists/Sony Pictures Classics, with Infinity's **William Vince**, **Michael Ohoven** and **Dave Valleau** sharing producer credit. Canadian director **David Cronenberg's** *A History of Violence*, shot in Ontario, was nominated for **William Hurt** for supporting actor and adapted screenplay.

An extra 'congratulations' to London, Ontario native **Paul Haggis**, director of the six-time nominated film *Crash*. Haggis took home two Oscars for Best Picture and Best Original Screenplay.



Director **Ang Lee** and actor **Jake Gyllenhaal** on the southern Alberta set of *Brokeback Mountain*.

– continued on next page



Adam Butcher



Rebecca Gibson

Blizzard Awards

Congratulations to the winners of the 2006 Blizzard Awards, celebrating the best in Manitoba film and TV.

Lead Actress: Wendy Crewson, *The Many Trials of One Jane Doe*

Lead Actor: Kevin Pollak, *Seven Times Lucky*

Supporting Actress: Rebecca Gibson, *Murdoch Mysteries: Except The Dying*

Supporting Actor: Ross McMillan, *The Saddest Music In The World*

2006 Genies: Celebrating Canadian Film

The 2006 Genies were handed out at a star-studded television gala in Toronto on March 13. Congratulations to all who were nominated for outstanding performances.

Actress in a Leading Role

- Macha Grenon**, *Familia*
- Sylvie Moreau**, *Familia*
- Arsinée Khanjian**, *Sabah – A Love Story*
- Gina Chiarelli**, *See Grace Fly*
- ★ **Seema Biswas**, *Water*

Actor in a Leading Role

- ★ **Michel Côté**, *C.R.A.Z.Y.*
- Marc-André Grondin**, *C.R.A.Z.Y.*
- Paul Kaye**, *It's All Gone Pete Tong*
- Luc Picard**, *L'Audition*
- Adam Butcher**, *Saint Ralph*

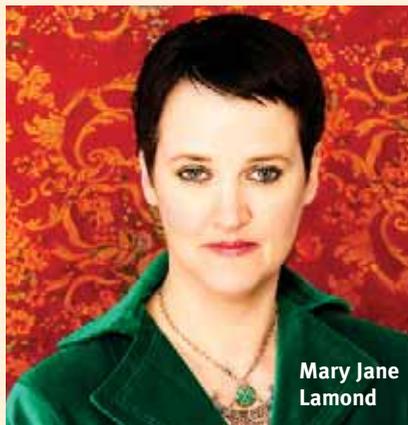
Actress in a Supporting Role

- Marianne Fortier**, *Aurore*
- ★ **Danielle Proulx**, *C.R.A.Z.Y.*
- Micheline Lanctôt**, *Familia*
- Suzanne Clément**, *L'Audition*
- Babz Chula**, *Seven Times Lucky*

Actor in a Supporting Role

- Rémy Girard**, *Aurore*
- Bernard Starlight**, *Hank Williams First Nation*
- ★ **Denis Bernard**, *L'Audition*
- Campbell Scott**, *Saint Ralph*
- Gordon Pinsent**, *Saint Ralph*

★ Indicates award winner



Mary Jane Lamond

East Coast Music Awards

ACTRA Maritimes member **Mary Jane Lamond** took home the East Coast Music Awards for *Female Artist of the Year* and *Roots/Traditional Solo Recording of the Year* at March's celebration in Charlottetown. ACTRA Member **Aselin Debison** was nominated for *Female Artist of the Year*, *Single of the Year* and *Pop Recording of the Year*. The awards were handed out in March at a gala celebration in Charlottetown hosted by members **J.P. Tremblay**, **Robb Wells** and **Mike Smith** – otherwise known as *The Trailer Park Boys*.

applause

Prix Jutra

A number of stellar performances were recognized with nominations for the 2006 Prix Jutra, honouring the best in Quebec cinema. Winners were announced at the March 17 gala.

Best Actress

Hélène Bourgeois-Leclerc, *Aurore*
Suzanne Clément, *L'Audition*
★ **Élise Guilbault**, *La Neuvaïne*
Julie Le Breton, *Maurice Richard*

Best Actor

Patrick Drolet, *La Neuvaïne*
Roy Dupuis, *Maurice Richard*
★ **Marc-André Grondin**, *C.R.A.Z.Y.*
Luc Picard, *L'Audition*

Best Supporting Actress

Anne-Marie Cadieux, *Maman Last Call*
Diane Lavallée, *Maurice Richard*
★ **Danielle Proulx**, *C.R.A.Z.Y.*
Catherine Trudeau, *Le Survenant*

Best Supporting Actor

Denis Bernard, *L'Audition*
Pierre-Luc Brillant, *C.R.A.Z.Y.*
★ **Michel Côté**, *C.R.A.Z.Y.*
Alexis Martin, *L'Audition*

★ Indicates award winner



Roy Dupuis

Young Artist Awards

Canadian stars lit up the 27th Annual Young Artist Awards, presented in L.A. in March. For the second year in a row, **Tajja Isen** took home the award for Best Performance in a Voice-Over Role for her work in *Atomic Betty*.

Brandon Craggs and his *Bad News Bears* cast-mates won for Best Performance in a Feature Film, Ensemble.

Congratulations to all ACTRA members who were nominated for their superb, internationally-recognized performances!



Tajja Isen



Brandon Craggs

Individual Performance Nominees

Spencer Achtymichuk, *Dead Zone*
Katie Boland, *The Man Who Lost Himself*
Adam Butcher, *Saint Ralph*
Marc Donato, *Pom Poko*
Heidi Hayes, *A History of Violence*
Cole Heppell, *Dead Zone*
Michael Kanev, *Saint Ralph*
Hannah Lochner, *Child of Mine*
Jake Scott, *Cyber Seduction: His Secret Life*
Benjamin B. Smith, *Bob The Butler*
Brittney Wilson, *Chasing Christmas*
Calum Worthy, *When Jesse Was Born*

Ensemble Performance Nominees

Darcey's Wild Life: **Andrew Chalmers**,
Kerry Michael Saxena, **Melanie Leishman**,
Demetrius Joyette

De Grassi TNG: **Dalmar Abuzeid**, **Sarah Barrable-Tishauer**, **John Bregar**, **Deanna Casalupe**, **Daniel Clark**, **Lauren Collins**, **Ryan Cooley**, **Jake Epstein**, **Stacey Farber**, **Aubrey Graham**, **Jake Goldsbie**, **Shenae Grimes**, **Jamie Johnston**, **Shane Kippel**, **Andrea Lewis**, **Mike Lobel**, **Miriam McDonald**, **Melissa McIntyre**, **Daniel Morrison**, **Adamo Ruggiero**, **Cassie Steele**

Life With Derek: **Ashley Leggat**, **Daniel Magder**, **Michael Seater**, **Jordan Todosey**, **Ariel Waller**



Thea Gill

PFLAG Honours Thea Gill

Thea Gill (*Queer as Folk*) was presented with the PFLAG Spotlight Award at the Metro D.C. PFLAG Honors Gala in March. The award celebrates outstanding contribution by a straight ally towards ending discrimination against gays and lesbians, helping change perceptions, and helping keep families together. Former recipients include singer-songwriter **Cyndi Lauper** and actress **Sharon Gless**.

PFLAG (*Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays*) hailed Thea as an accomplished actor, singer, and champion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered rights whose "dedication goes beyond the character she plays on television."

"Being an actor is one thing, but being someone who is making a mark on someone else's life is another. *Queer as Folk* has given me a wonderful purpose in life and it's a great feeling," said Thea.



Welcome!

ACTRA Toronto members **Kathryn Rose** and National Councillor **David Macniven** are euphoric with joy over the birth of their daughter **Miranda Rose Macniven**. Her proud grandparents, who include Toronto member **Alan Rose**, are celebrating their first grandchild. Miranda arrived at Toronto East General Hospital on March 11, 2006 at 9:58 p.m., weighing 7 lbs. 12 oz.

Laszlo Barna

– continued from page 12

they actually have to put something on the air. There is a market need for programs and our new partnership can capitalize on these opportunities.

We're now doing a feature film, **Roméo Dallaire**. It's a huge project. We've opened a feature division. We're diversifying into comedy and into program areas we have never even dreamed of. We are now forging relationships, largely in documentaries and fact-based programming, with large international companies and broadcasters able to bring value into Canada.

There is a star system... even those people who never watch television are quite aware that Mary Walsh, Rick Mercer or R.H. Thomson are people to contend with.

Producing, distribution, broadcasting – what's the focus?

It's all part of the same pie. You cannot be an effective feature producer, fact producer without being involved in distribution to some extent. The creative vision of the company is to produce both Canadian and international stories. There's no reason that we can't be making documentaries about world events that interest us. And now we can dream up projects that were unimaginable before because we have some financial power and because we look at the whole thing holistically. Still the primary commitment with the partners and myself is to make programs about Canada.

Canadian stories that represent the world

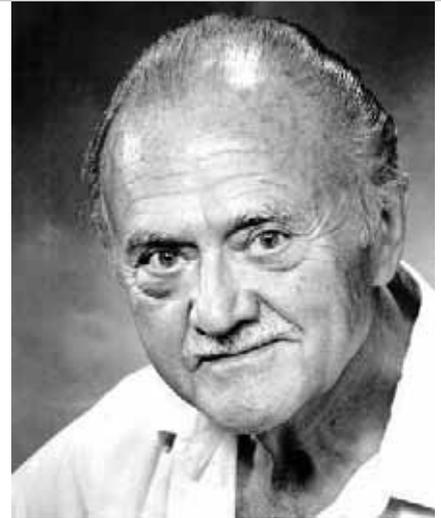
Local stories are the best universal stories. The CBC bought the notion that *Da Vinci* would be a geographically specific story focusing on the downtown east side of Vancouver. But the speculation was, "It's so Canadian it'll never sell abroad." The vindication has been that it sold in over 80 territories around the world and even the toughest market, the uncrackable market (the U.S.), has actually opened up and now there is not a major city you can go to where there isn't a *Da Vinci* on in primetime.

ACTRA's role in getting the message out

A few years ago the federal government was going to cut the CTF. ACTRA sent a delegation to a fundraiser the Finance Minister was to attend, surrounded him and began singing *O Canada*. And two days later he withdrew his threat and made good on his promise of funding. It was a great action. It was a direct action.

ACTRA has the power of **Paul Gross** and **Nicholas Campbell**. There is a star system. There is a **Gordie Pinsent**, a **Sonja Smits**. People give them standing ovations when they appear in the House of Commons. They can get into the rooms because, even those people who never watch television are quite aware that **Mary Walsh**, **Rick Mercer** or **R.H. Thomson** are people to contend with. When people say "there ain't no stars in this country" they're wrong. Just look at the leading actors and the kind of doors they can open up. I would be very surprised if Paul Gross could not be in **Stephen Harper's** office in an hour... he may not want to be. But he could.

ACTRA has contributed hugely in keeping the cultural agenda very prominent. Sometimes with very quiet lobbying and sometimes by being vociferous and guerilla-like... tactics that are necessary when you're fighting for your life. I just hope that sort of streak stays alive.



JACK GOTH
1923-2006

Jack, a Calgary acting and directing legend who helped build Calgary's entertainment scene, passed away in February.

Jack made his debut in show business at the age of three. In Bolton, England, as a youth he played piano in his family's *Joy Boys* travelling concert party. During WWII he served as a pilot in the RAF, and while doing pilot training in Manitoba, he met his future wife Peggy. They married in England in 1949 and moved to Calgary in 1950.

Jack became actively involved in drama and musical theatre in Calgary and received a Best Supporting Actor Award at the Dominion Drama Festival. He was active in CBC radio drama and also appeared in several TV movies and features

In 1966, because of increasing work opportunities, ACTRA Calgary was formed and Jack was one of the founding members. Jack became very involved in the 'business' side of ACTRA and was President of the Calgary branch, later became the National Councillor and National Treasurer. One of Jack's fondest memories was working all night long reworking ACTRA's constitution with Victor Knight while the rest of Canada was watching Pierre Trudeau invoke the War Measures Act.

He is survived by wife Peggy, who was Calgary Branch Rep for 20 years, and sons Richard, Bob, Randy and daughter Jacquie.

– Dennis Corrie



IAN BLACK
1950-2005

Ian died last December after a courageous battle with cancer. He was a leader in the Saskatchewan arts community since the '70s. He was a singer, musician, puppeteer, director, board member and actor. He performed in theatres from coast to coast including a critically acclaimed run in *Tamara* in Toronto in the early '80s. He also acted in film, television and radio. In 2005, Ian, was extremely proud to play the role of Tommy's father in the television movie, *A Prairie Giant: The Tommy Douglas Story*. For the past 11 years he resided exclusively in Saskatchewan, his home and heart being with his family in Regina. At the time of his death he was the Artistic Coordinator at Common Weal Community Arts. Ian was a president and National Councillor of ACTRA Saskatchewan and also served as National Treasurer.

Ian leaves his partner of 18 years Marie

Degenstein, and their children Madeleine, 15, and Jamie, 12. He also leaves his brothers Alan and Paul and his adopted daughter, Erica. Ian will also be missed by his extended family, including his mother-in-law Lil, brothers and sisters-in-law, nieces, nephews, and many friends.

Ian was well loved and respected by the many people he worked with, mentored and encouraged throughout the years. At the celebration of Ian's life in Regina, many of Ian's good friends shared stories, memories, songs and poems. It was an event that would have put a big smile on the big guy's face. He was fond of saying 'It's a great life ain't it?' His friends and family all agree.

A trust fund has been set up for Ian's children in care of Marie's sister, Leslie Perreaux, 79 Knowles Crescent, Regina S4S 4P3.

– Mike Burns, Branch Rep, ACTRA Saskatchewan



WALTER MARSH
1923-2005

A thorough professional, meticulously organized and prepared for every engagement, Walter had to accommodate mortality September 17, 2005 in the South Granville Park Lodge, Vancouver, following several months of declining health and hospitalizations.

Walter was a well-loved journeyman actor whose work in radio, TV, film and stage won him the respect and love of everyone in the entertainment industry who had the privilege of working with him over his long career. Walter worked for many years at the Crane Library at UBC where he recorded all manner of books for the disabled. His recorded performances and his work at the Crane will live on. Countless acquaintances and friends met in the theatre of life will recall memorable breakfast gatherings at the local Denny's.

A memorial party for Walter was held in November where many people exchanged recollections and paid him tribute. These words by master-of-ceremonies, Bruce MacLeod, nicely sum up our thoughts: "There was only one Walter Marsh! If you did not know him, no one could describe him to you and do his memory justice, you just had to know him. We worked together on the stage, on radio and in television and film for many years; we became friends and he spent time in my home and became close to my family. When Walter passed away he joined an amazing group of old friends in the Green Room and I am sure it was one hell of a wrap party. I read somewhere that a good friend is hard to find, difficult to leave, and impossible to forget. Goodbye, Walter."

RAE NICHOLAS
1970-2005

My sadness at news of the passing of **Rae Nicholas** (Marina Rae Nicholas) this past January is overwhelming. I knew Rae when she was eight years old in Thunder Bay, Ontario, where we grew up together. As a young girl she had a zest for life that always had me a little in awe. We

reconnected in Toronto as adults while we both pursued acting careers. As an assistant to Stephanie Gorin, I got to see her occasionally when we called her in for auditions. Her joy in the world around her never dimmed and the memory of her easy and often wicked laugh will remain with me always. The loss is great and I will always treasure having had her touch my life.

– Edie Inksetter-Lardy

We share our sadness at the passing of the following members and colleagues:

Len Carlson
Arthur Hives
James Allan Lancaster
Jack Mather
Harvey Miller
Darcia Nolan
Don Robinson
Lee Royce

ACTRA Manitoba

In Manitoba we are still chanting the mantra “into the future cautiously but optimistically.” We should finish the current fiscal year with a modest surplus, not the deficit we anticipated. Production was concentrated in the months of summer with June, July and August white hot. Adding to the heat was a new TV series, *Falcon Beach*, a miniseries, *Category 7: The End of the World* and an HBO pilot, *sexLIFE*. We also had four smaller features and an Aboriginal TV puppet series in its third season, which just wrapped.

But the really good news is we began this year’s production season earlier. A lower budget feature started photography and two larger features started in March – and more are lining up. It is a significant change from last year and we cannot help but feel optimistic about at least the next 10 months.

The most significant event last year in the life of ACTRA Manitoba was the changing of the guard. In June we acclaimed a new president, **Sharon Bajer**. Sharon is a sought-after actress in both theatre and film. And we have five new Members-At-Large on our

council. When we make changes – we make changes!

Our Political Action Committee was active throughout the federal election campaign. Our Chair, **Rea Kavanagh**, attended all-candidates’ meetings and asked questions of the parties, and we did outreach to our members about the parties’ positions on cultural issues. One of our more prominent members, **Tina Keeper**, was elected to Parliament from the riding of Churchill. We expect Tina to be a strong and effective voice on culture.



Tina Keeper in her Gemini-winning role as RCMP officer Michelle Kenidi in *North of 60*.

Our other initiatives around training and the establishment of a PAL branch are ongoing. Our membership continues to grow. And we look forward cautiously but optimistically.



Wayne Nicklas
National Councillor,
ACTRA Manitoba



ACTRA Montreal member **Andy Bradshaw** as Sgt. Sharp in *Recon: 2020*.

ACTRA Montreal

ACTRA Montreal continues to weather challenges into 2006. After a disappointing and difficult year, fraught with production downturns and industry strife, we find ourselves in a precarious position in terms of work opportunities for our members. While it’s true that the winter months have typically been lean ones, we can usually rely on one or two big U.S. shoots to tide us over until the funding agencies dole out the financial support to indigenous Canadian producers in the late spring. But this year the Americans are staying away, likely due to an unstable work atmosphere brought on by a jurisdictional invasion of the Quebec Technicians’ Union (AQTIS) by the North American Technicians’ Union, IATSE. IATSE opened an office in Montreal last summer and began signing up AQTIS members with a view towards certifying a U.S. shoot sometime in the fall or winter. While this has yet to come to pass, the whiff of potential instability has been sniffed south of the border and Montreal performers find themselves, once again, at the mercy of outside forces that can’t (or won’t) get it together for the common good of the industry.

Our saving grace appears to be the burgeoning low-budget scene. Recent Montreal-based projects such as *The Festival*, *Pure*, *Hero by Nature* and *Recon 2020* have garnered acclaim both here and abroad. While they may not be paying all the bills for our members, they do offer an opportunity to stay sharp creatively and showcase our work at film festivals, awards shows and on cable networks. The total number of MIP, AIP and CIPIP productions shot in 2005 was an impressive 34, compared with only 14 Canadian and nine U.S. medium and big-budget shoots in the same year.

We will be looking to the inauguration of the new Quebec Film and Television Promotion Office for a little hope on the horizon of a currently forbidding production landscape and we’ll be monitoring ACTRA’s upcoming IPA negotiations with producers to see if we can’t improve our meagre fortunes, or at least break the prevalence of working at minimum or discounted rates.



In solidarity,
Matt Holland
Branch President,
ACTRA Montreal

Introducing your new National Council

The following ACTRA members are your elected representatives on ACTRA's National Council. This group of dedicated members is made up of professional performers who volunteer their time and energy to work on your behalf. They are elected from ACTRA branches across the country, and they are your direct link to your union. Please don't hesitate to contact them to share your thoughts or your thanks – national@actra.ca.



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National
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Jamie Bradley*
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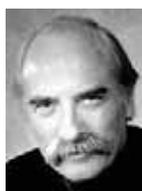
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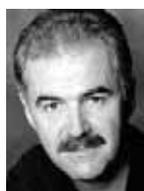
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*Member of ACTRA's National Executive

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ACTRA Awards in Toronto: *Glitz Patrol*



by
Karen
Ivany

Maybe it's because I finally got to SIT DOWN this year, but my naturally overflowing fashion cattiness was swept away at the sparkling 2006 ACTRA Awards in Toronto. Our gorgeous members filled the beautiful Carlu up to the upper balcony, and proved to the cluster of media cameras present that Toronto actors are red carpet savvy and ready for close-ups! Even the loud Komodo drummers, heralding us into the theatre (and pulverizing my brain cells) didn't diminish my post-cocktail high!

If we ever replace our perfect host, **Peter Keleghan**, I will shed rivers of tears all over my little black dress. No pressure Peter, but please don't ever leave us. Mr. Keleghan effortlessly worked **Adrian Truss'** consistently clever script with a pace that tickled in all the right places. (Meow.) And who wasn't impressed by the elegant songstress **Tabarah Johnson**? So commanding, and talented, she took the stage with water bottle and original lyrics in hand, and cradled us with her bluesy lamentation for the untimely death of CBC's *Wonderland*. Thanks, baby.

Continuing the Toronto tradition of not being available to pick up their Outstanding Performance Award, was Missing-In-Winnipeg **Tom McCamus**. (He was *working*, you bitter, bitter people!) No matter how sincere and eloquently represented by **Chick Reid** in his place, Mr. McCamus' acceptance speech could not overshadow the puckish presence of **Samantha Weinstein** behind the podium (barely).

(Barely behind the podium, that is.) Not only was Ms. Weinstein this year's Outstanding Performer (Female), she was the cutest.

Now, all tongue-in-cheekiness stops here. I'm about to talk about **Sarah Polley**, whose acceptance as our Award of Excellence recipient deserves a sincere moment of reflection. We all owe this passionate artist and assertive activist a huge debt. Ms. Polley has spoken out and demanded that politicians do more to support our culture and industry. She's encouraged us all to do the same and has made a real difference in the way actors are treated in this country.

And, may I add, she was the most beautiful woman in the *city*, that night? (Apologies to super-talented nominees **Paula Boudreau**, **Wendy Crewson**, **Megan Follows**, **Victoria Snow**, and many others almost as ravishing.)

Congrats to all the other outstanding male performers who caught the jury's attention this year: **Shawn Ashmore**, **Michael Miranda**, **Joe Pingue**, and **Dov Tiefenback**. You are all fabulous!

Yes, it's true, there were too many Beautiful People to count this year, so I'll just wrap it up with this: could someone, anyone, please look into booking **Gordon Pinsent** as host of the Canadian Comedy Awards? You wouldn't need to hire writers, it would get televised again, and, he'd KILL!

Ta, darlings.



(From left to right): *Degrassi's* **Miriam McDonald** and **Sarah Barrable-Tishauer**, nominees **Megan Follows** and **Paula Boudreau**, and **Sarah Polley** and **Samantha Weinstein**

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