

ACTRA

SUMMER 2013
magazine



**OUR UNION
EMPOWERING US
TO REACH NEW HEIGHTS!**

Inside your union magazine



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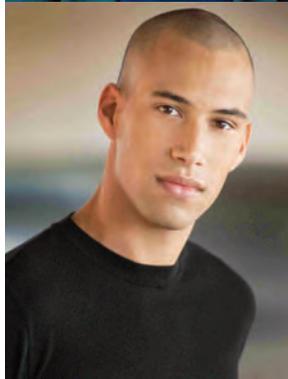
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*Fight
for what you believe in!!*

ACTRA magazine

Summer 2013 • Vol. 20, Issue 2

ACTRA magazine is the official publication of ACTRA (Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists), a Canadian union of performers affiliated to the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and the International Federation of Actors (FIA). ACTRA magazine is free of charge to all ACTRA members.

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Shannon Jardine
in the documentary series *Dust Up*.
Photo: Ryan Lalonde

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CORRECTION NOTICE:

Winter '13 "ACTRA magazine" page 33 - *The Beachcombers* article erroneously listed **Robert Clothier's** "character" name instead of his correct name. The Editorial Committee deeply regrets the error and extends our apologies to his family and friends.



ACTRA National President
Ferne Downey

President's Message

Political Action:
fighting for fairness and good public policy

Advocacy for artists' rights and sane Canadian cultural policies is a never-ending story involving a dizzying number of issues and initiatives. The challenges we face today bear an uncanny resemblance to those ACTRA's founders faced 70 years ago: ensuring Canadian performers have the opportunity to tell Canadian stories; fighting for creative empowerment and fair treatment; responding to the needs and aspirations of our diverse membership. Through victory and defeat ACTRA has been an active and effective advocate. Our tale of passion and perseverance continues.

We are coalition-builders. We work hand-in-hand with other like-minded groups and present unified perspectives in public policy advocacy that make it easier to get to "yes". We do our research well, we are constantly inspired by the vivid and articulate people who make a difference and we are determined to succeed. In recent times some central themes have dominated ACTRA's political and cultural advocacy: copyright, television and film policy as it affects production funding and broadcast regulation, a larger role in international issues and a growing solidarity with the labour movement in the 'together fairness works' campaign.

There have been wins and losses but the hard work continues. Together we have built our house of ACTRA on firm foundations. We will not be silent as evidence mounts that Conservative politicians and their allies are intent on weakening the voice of organized labour. Unions, including ACTRA, have found compelling reasons to criticize many current Conservative government policies and we will continue to do so. We are cast as champions of fairness, all 23,000 of us and we will prevail.

This is a chronology of key moments in our near past - beginning with the hard fought for Television Policy 2010 - and a look into our near future. We have some choices to make.



Getting culture on the election agenda

Media Conference, Toronto in April, 2011. We push to get culture on the federal election agenda. Members passionately urge citizens to vote for culture and fairness. L to R: **Art Hindle, Enrico Colantoni, Wendy Crewson, Rick Roberts, Fiona Reid and Raoul Bhaneja**. Photo Bernard Ramos





Artists are political

ACTRA's role in the public policy arena is essential. Our economic sector is misunderstood and under-valued by existing federal policy. We are leaders in advocacy for our industry and Canadian culture as a whole. ACTRA performers met with over 40 MPs, senators and cabinet ministers during the 2012 Ottawa lobby. Pictured here are NDP MP Andrew Cash and actors **Grace Lynn Kung** and **Tristan D. Lalla**. Photo Fred Chartrand

March 22, 2010: The CRTC relaxed Canadian content policy rules for private broadcasters back in 1999 and Canadian scripted drama and comedy dropped off prime-time schedules to be replaced by American shows and a glut of cheap reality programming. After ACTRA's decade-long fight for Canadian drama, the CRTC releases a new TV Policy 2010. In a nutshell, broadcasters are required to spend 30% of their gross revenues in their broadcast group on Canadian Programming and a minimum of 5% of their revenues must be earmarked for PNI - "Programs of National Interest" - scripted drama, comedy and awards shows. **AWIN!**

April 1, 2010: At Industry Committee hearings on foreign ownership and telecommunications, ACTRA argues that telecommunications and broadcasting are integrated and any relaxation of the rules regulating telecom ownership will impact broadcasting and threaten Canadian cultural sovereignty. Despite industry concerns, the Government overrules the CRTC and allows the purchase of wireless telecom Globalive by foreign interests. This will become an ongoing legal and policy battle.

April 19, 2010: ACTRA, Friends of Canadian Broadcasting and

the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP) release Harris/Decima poll showing 68% of Canadian are opposed to foreign control of Canadian broadcast and communications companies.

May 6, 2010: Canadian Copyright legislation has fallen far behind the technological revolution caused by the emergence of the internet and digital media. A new *Act* is in the works. As part of the Creators Copyright Coalition (CCC), ACTRA, WGC and others call for copyright reform that supports Canadian artists.

June 1, 2010: Canadian private broadcasters are on an L.A. spending spree. ACTRA organizes a rally outside Global TV's fall line-up party that reveals only one Canadian drama (*Shattered*) in their schedule.

June 2, 2010: Parliament tables Bill C-32, new Copyright legislation that would legalize format shifting and private copying without building on existing artist royalty systems. ACTRA accuses the Government of releasing 'half a bill' by leaving creators out in the cold.

July 11, 2010: Federal Court rules Internet Service Providers

(ISPs) are not broadcasters because they provide access to broadcasting over the internet but are not producing content. Because these services are "content neutral" they should not have to pay a content levy on their profits like those required by private broadcasters. This is a big loss for Canadian performers and producers and a big win for large integrated media conglomerates like Bell Media, Rogers and Shaw who own both commercial TV outlets and ISPs. Since the ruling they have begun to produce content that is available only online.

October, 2010: New Zealand actors attempt to negotiate a union contract for work on Peter Jackson's latest opus *The Hobbit*. U.S. producer Warner Brothers threatens to move the production to other locations, including Alberta. Union leaders face death threats. In response, the Kiwi Government passes anti-union legislation. Led by FIA unions around the world, joint action is taken. ACTRA performers stand in solidarity with New Zealand actors, announcing 'The Hobbit Can't Hide Here'. The act of co-ordinated international solidarity inspires ACTRA leadership.

November 15-16, 2010: ACTRA Lobby Day on Parliament Hill. ACTRA performers meet with 30 MPs and Senators from all parties.



We celebrate ACTRA

ACTRA/AFBS Members Conference in Los Angeles, January 2013. A rousing success; stimulating panels, a presentation from tax expert Fred Levy, conversations and a party with industry friends that was the talk of the town. L to R: **Erin Karpluk**, **Reagan Pasternak**, **Vinessa Antoine** and **Shannon Kook-Chun**. Photo Eric Charbonneau



Lobbying for government support

Alison Pill (pictured here) and ACTRA delegation Jay Baruchel, Ferne Downey, Peter Keleghan, Leah Pinsent and Stephen Waddell meet with The Right Honourable Stephen Harper in November, 2011, to speak about the need for continued stable government support to create jobs, generate investment and sell our Canadian stories to the world.

PMO photo: Jason Ransom



Artists unite for CanCon

CanCon rally outside Global TV's 'upfronts' launch in Toronto, June 2010. ACTRA didn't think their fall schedule, heavily dominated by simulcast US programming, was much cause for celebration.

L to R: **Drake** and National President **Ferne Downey**.

Photo Janesse Leung

Global solidarity among performers

FIA's 20th World Congress in Toronto, September 2012. The International Federation of Actors is the global voice for actors and champion of artists' rights. **Ferne Downey** was honoured to be elected FIA President and committed to deepening international solidarity among performers. L to R: **Jurre Schreuder**, Chairman of the Theatre Branch of Dutch affiliates FNV-Kiem and **Jennifer Ward-Lealand**, President of the New Zealand Actors Equity.

Photo Jag Gundu



January 11, 2011: ACTRA supports Bell Canada Enterprises (BCE) purchase of CTV but only if the process results in a greater contribution to the production of independently-produced Canadian television drama than is initially proposed by BCE. ACTRA flat-out rejects BCE's claims that it should not have to pay tangible benefits.

January 19, 2011: ACTRA, CEP and Friends of Canadian Broadcasting are granted Intervener status on the Federal Court of Canada case regarding foreign purchase of Globalive. Organizations renew argument that foreign ownership of telecoms is an important cultural issue.

February 4, 2011: The Federal Court rules the Conservative government unlawfully licensed Globalive, effectively restoring the foreign ownership restrictions of Canada's Telecommunications Act. **A WIN!**

March 7, 2011: CRTC approves BCE's purchase of CTV, but – at ACTRA's urging – sticks to their policy and orders them to pay 10% of the value of the transaction into public benefits, amounting to \$140 million in new programming. **A WIN!**

March 24, 2011: The Supreme Court agrees to ACTRA's appeal of the Federal Court's decision that Internet Service Providers (ISPs) do not act as 'broadcasting undertakings' when they provide access through the internet to audiovisual content.

March 25, 2011: The Conservative minority Government falls, launching a federal election campaign. Copyright Bill C-32 dies on the order paper.

April 8, 2011: CRTC Hearings. ACTRA performers **Tyrone**

Benskin and **Wendy Crewson** make the pitch for more Canadian Content at CRTC hearings to renew the licenses of private broadcasters. These are vital hearings and an important test of the new TV Policy rules.

April 20, 2011: ACTRA stars urge Canadians to vote for culture and jobs on the eve of the federal election. During the election campaign cultural issues have been sidelined by the refusal of The Conservative Party to engage in the issue. Conservative candidates refuse to attend debates on cultural issues. The Conservatives land a majority in the May 2 federal election, but with a large NDP Official Opposition. Among the newly-elected NDP MPs is former ACTRA Vice-President **Tyrone Benskin**.

May 13, 2011: The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) convention in Vancouver. ACTRA National President **Ferne Downey** and Toronto Councillor **Eli Goree** are elected as Vice President and Vice President, Young Workers respectively — a strong voice for performers in the 'House of Labour'.

Spring 2011: Conservative government initiates a series of pre-emptive back-to-work bills aimed at undermining the collective bargaining process. Workers at Air Canada, CP Rail and Canada Post are affected.

June 26, 2011: Conservatives table their first majority budget. ACTRA welcomes the commitment to ensure long-term, stable funding of the Canada Media Fund, one of our long-time asks. But the budget attacks Canadians by raising the eligibility age for Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement from 65 to 67. It repeals the Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act and amends the Pay Equity Act to avoid paying women equal pay for work of

equal value in the public sector. Low income workers, women and people with disabilities are left more vulnerable. The CLC speaks out against these regressive measures.

July 27, 2011: CRTC announces new license requirements for Bell, Corus and Shaw consistent with the CRTC's new TV Policy - 30% of their gross revenues must be spent on Canadian Programming. Rogers, a relative newcomer to national broadcasting, is given a different number - 23% is their mandatory minimum spend. The license renewals are **A WIN**, but unfortunately, there are no requirements to air programming in prime time.

August 22, 2011: Regulations regarding Canadian minority co-productions are an issue of growing concern with shows like *The Tudors* qualifying as Canadian content despite out of country production featuring a majority of non-ACTRA performers. ACTRA and WGC release the Nordicity Report showing majority TV co-productions create twice the number of high quality Canadian jobs as minority co-pros.

September 21, 2011: The CRTC releases a new Code of Conduct for vertically integrated companies, but leaves out online broadcasting. ACTRA has argued for symmetrical regulations between broadcasters' online and conventional arms. Broadcasting online remains completely unregulated so services like Netflix are not subject to Canadian content regulation. **A LOSS.**

September 29, 2011: Conservative government tables Bill C-11, a re-iteration of their flawed Copyright legislation. Despite months of testimony from creators arguing for improvements that would benefit all Canadians, the Bill will pass in The Commons without serious amendment.

In recent times some central themes have dominated ACTRA's political and cultural advocacy: copyright, television and film policy as it affects production funding and broadcast regulation,



Honouring our own heroes

ACTRA Toronto Awards, February 2013. **Shirley Douglas** and **Rick Mercer** stand up for what they believe in and have been honoured for their ongoing commitment to our union and industry-wide advocacy. Their vivid and articulate voices inspire us all and both are recipients of the ACTRA Toronto Award of Excellence.

Photo Jag Gundu.



October 24, 2011: Iranian actress **Marzieh Vafamehr** who had been sentenced to one year's imprisonment and 90 lashes for her performance in the film *My Tehran for Sale*, is released. Her release was in large part due to international pressure and exposure, including ACTRA and other FIA unions' efforts. **A WIN!**

November 2 and 3, 2011: ACTRA on The Hill. Members from across the country descend on Ottawa for two days of meetings with 46 MPs and Senators of all parties.

November 17, 2011: ACTRA delegation meets with Prime Minister Stephen Harper, urging him to make Canada's content creation industry a central part of his government's digital strategy. Prime Minister Harper suggests he might be open to income tax averaging for artists.

December 5, 2011: Conservative MP Russ Heibert introduces Private Members Bill C-377. If passed, the Bill will inflict onerous administrative costs on unions in the guise of 'transparency'. ACTRA is among groups, including the Canadian Bar Association, opposed to the legislation.

February 9, 2012: Supreme Court of Canada upholds ruling that ISPs cannot be considered 'broadcasting undertakings'. **A LOSS.**

March 16, 2012: BCE announces merger deal with ASTRAL media, Quebec's largest media company. The merger is supported by ACTRA as long as the decision reflects our concerns about fair valuation, media consolidation and the structure of the benefits packages for Canadian programming.

March 29, 2012: New Federal austerity Budget is full of mixed messages. Funding for Canada Council for the Arts was main-

tained but cuts were made to Canada's public cultural institutions, including Telefilm Canada, the National Film Board and \$84-million from CBC English services. The Budget also includes major changes that affect millions of Canadians, including public service cuts and changes to the EI program that will force many unemployed and seasonal workers off EI. **A LOSS.**

Spring, 2012: ACTRA partners with industry unions to confront changes to the Government's Temporary Foreign Workers Program (TFWP). In the West, the hiring of American performers and production personnel has increased. The CLC meets with Conservative government to warn that the TFWP is open to abuse. They are accused of fear-mongering. Work on bringing flaws in the legislation to the attention of Canadians will continue until breakthroughs in 2013.

April 11, 2012: CBC cuts radio drama. A longstanding force in Canadian culture and a training ground for writers and performers dies due to cuts to CBC funding. **A LOSS.**

June 1, 2012: NDP MP Tyrone Benskin introduces The Income Tax Averaging Bill for Artists, bringing one of ACTRA's major policy objectives to the floor of the House of Commons. ACTRA and the Canadian Media Producers Association (CMPA) release a joint statement in support of Bill C-427.

June 18, 2012: Appointment of new CRTC Chair Jean-Pierre Blais comes into effect. Blais will serve for a five-year term.

June 19, 2012: ACTRA presents amendments to mitigate the destructive effects of the Copyright Modernization Act, Bill C-11, at the Senate.

June 26, 2012: The World Intellectual Property Organization's (WIPO) Diplomatic Conference convenes in China. ACTRA President **Ferne Downey** addresses the Conference on behalf of actors globally and ACTRA members, including **Eugene Levy**, participate in international video project arguing for an AV Treaty. The Beijing Treaty is passed; establishing new moral and economic rights in international law for performers who work in film, TV and digital media. The Canadian Government is absent in Beijing and has yet to ratify the Treaty in Canada.

June 29, 2012: The Conservatives' Copyright Bill passes un-amended in the Senate and becomes law despite extensive efforts by ACTRA to recommend amendments to protect creators' rights. **A LOSS.**

September 27 - 30, 2012: Performers from more than 75 countries, from Argentina to Zambia descend on Toronto for International Federation of Actors (FIA) World Congress co-hosted by ACTRA, CAEA and UdA. This marks only the second time in FIA's 61-year history that a Congress has met in North America. ACTRA President **Ferne Downey** is elected President of FIA, the first North American to hold the position.

October 15-16, 2012: ACTRA on The Hill. Members from across the country descend on Ottawa for their annual meetings with over 40 MPs and Senators of all parties.

October 18, 2012: CRTC rejects sale of Astral Media's broadcast assets to BCE in a decision that reflected ACTRA's reservations in hearings on the takeover.

October 30, 2012: Canadian Conference of the Arts, an important

a larger role in international issues and a growing solidarity with the labour movement in the 'together fairness works' campaign.



Connecting with the Canadian Labour Congress

CLC Convention in Vancouver, May 2011. ACTRA's National Council's attendance at this vital event marks our deepening engagement and alignment with the work of the CLC. Our values and policy goals lined up beautifully. L to R: ACTRA VP **Alvin Sanders** and President **Ferne Downey**.



Artists are activists

Michelle Thrush, star of APTN's hit show *Blackstone*, has had a spectacular year - both in her professional life and as a political activist. As her public profile has increased so has her commitment to advocate for change. We are grateful for her support in this year's IPA negotiations.

senior cultural advocacy organization, closes their doors after 67 years, unable to continue after funding is cut by the Conservative government. **A LOSS.**

November 6, 2012: ACTRA appears before the Heritage Committee appealing for government support for the videogame industry, a growing employer of our members.

November 7, 2012: Despite Prime Minister Harper's positive comments on incoming averaging for artists at his meeting with ACTRA, The Income Tax Averaging Bill for Artists is defeated. **A LOSS.**

November 26, 2012: CBC license renewal hearings at the CRTC. ACTRA urges that CBC devote more time to Canadian TV drama, children's and youth programming and revive radio drama. ACTRA also asks the CRTC to reject CBC's proposal to allow commercial messages on Radio 2.

December 12, 2012: Conservative Bill C-377 passes in The House of Commons by a narrow vote of 147 to 135. The bill imposes numerous red-tape requirements on unions and will cost millions of dollars to implement. This aggressive Bill that singles out unions, and no other professional associations, is currently before the Senate.

March 21, 2013: Conservative government presents 2013 Budget with no mention of the arts or cultural industries. And again, no digital strategy. ACTRA questions why the film and television production industry, an important engine of Canada's economy, is not anywhere on the Government's radar.

March 22-24, 2013: ACTRA members from across Canada attend CLC's Stand Up for Fairness Political Action Conference, and National Leaders Summit in Toronto, along with 1,500 other Canadian union activists.

April 7, 2013: CBC breaks news that RBC is replacing 45 employees with temporary foreign workers under the Conservative government's Temporary Foreign Workers Program. Pressure builds for changes as more stories emerge of abuse of the program by employers.

April 23, 2013: ACTRA, CAEA and other industry/cultural unions hit Parliament Hill to convince Government to make changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program.

April 29, 2013: Government announces changes to Temporary Foreign Worker Program and a national consultation. **A WIN!**

On the same day, Conservative government budget bill is introduced. It includes surprising changes in traditional arms' length relationships with Crown Corporations, including the CBC. The changes will allow the government to directly participate in management decisions at the CBC, including collective bargaining.

May 1, 2013: ACTRA condemns government attempt to assert more direct control over the CBC. Intervention in collective bargaining will threaten journalistic independence and content decisions.

May 6, 2013: ACTRA appears before the CRTC to provide opinion on BCE's revised proposal to purchase Astral Media's television and radio stations.

IN THE MONTHS AHEAD:

ACTRA is non-partisan – we will press all parties to promote and advance Canadian culture. And, we will work in concert with the union movement to push for fairness for all Canadians. As a constituent, you hold a greatly under-utilized power. Let your Member of Parliament know your thoughts about every subject that moves you. I'm serious – even a short email or tweet or phone call stakes out your territory. It's personal. The next federal election is in 2015. Either we convince the Conservatives to make better public policy – or we change the federal government.

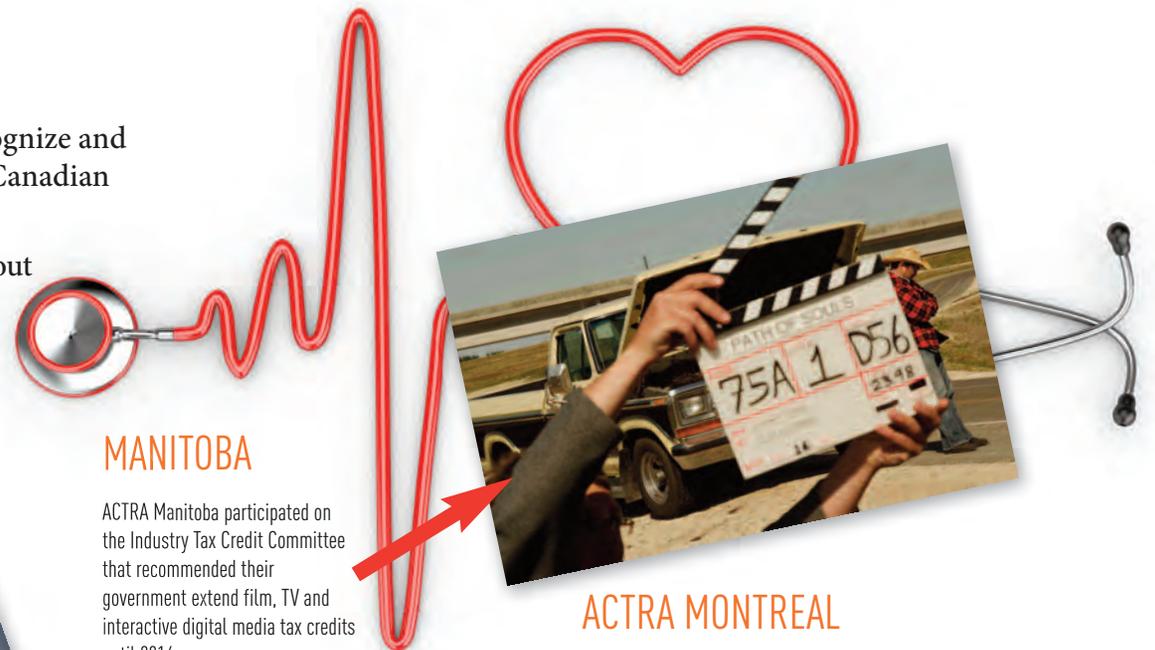


Ferne Downey
ACTRA National President

INDUSTRY WELLNESS METER

ACTRA continually lobbies the federal government to recognize and fuel our \$5-billion industry. Increasing investment in the Canadian film and TV industry stimulates the Canadian economy.

Province-by-province...it's a little more complicated. Check out our Wellness Thermometer to see just how hard ACTRA performers are working for a healthy industry in their neck of the woods. **Canadian performers never quit.**



BRITISH COLUMBIA

The B.C. Liberal government offered no additional tax incentives for film & TV and catapulted the industry into the critical zone. UBCP/ACTRA members unite, **Jackson Davies** chairs a town hall meeting attended by 5,000 film workers and the industry unions and guilds form SaveBCFilm.

The fight continues.



ALBERTA

ACTRA Alberta's \$20-million Alberta Multimedia Development Fund sees a slight boost in the 2013-2014 budget. Working together with Culture Minister Heather Klimchuk as part of the Alberta Film Advisory Council, ACTRA Alberta and IA212 joins forces to make recommendations to the province about increasing film production in Alberta. Two months prior to release of the budget, members write to their MLA's, Culture Minister and Premier asking the government to maintain the funding.



SASKATCHEWAN

ACTRA Saskatchewan has flat-lined. Tax credits have been ELIMINATED. All workers stepped up to defend their industry with petition drives and rallies. But Saskatchewan crews and performers are still out of work, changing jobs or leaving the province. This is OUR red flag from the darling industry that created *Corner Gas*. And it can GET WORSE... after gutting the Saskatchewan film and TV industry, the Conservative government is now gutting 100 years of labour progress in one fell swoop, proposing to end the 8 hour work day and introduce a special (lower) 'minimum' wage for young workers.

(left) **Kim Coates**, along with all Saskatchewan industry workers stepped up with petition drives and rallies to defend the industry.

(Top right image) Production shot from *Path of Souls*, starring **Adam Beach, Corey Sevier** and **Lorne Cardinal**.

MANITOBA

ACTRA Manitoba participated on the Industry Tax Credit Committee that recommended their government extend film, TV and interactive digital media tax credits until 2016.



ACTRA TORONTO

Ten years in the making, ACTRA Toronto is setting the stage for another record year in the screen-based industry. Union, guild and industry partners at FilmOntario lobby hard for tax credits and investments in infrastructure. The Respect the Artist campaign is designed to build support for policy initiatives that protect and support actors in Ontario.

ACTRA OTTAWA

ACTRA Ottawa production levels are rebounding thanks to generous provincial and regional tax credits. ACTRA members aren't letting their guard down and are launching the 2013 We Work Ottawa campaign to promote Ottawa talent.



Dan Aykroyd promotes production for the nation's Capital.

ACTRA MONTREAL

ACTRA Montreal helped establish the Quebec English-Language Production Council, composed of unions and production companies of all sizes, to lobby on behalf of the industry in Quebec. As a result of their efforts, the Canada Media Fund announced a special fund to support English-Language production in Quebec. Both the CRTC and CMF recognise English-Language production separately from the French-language industry in Quebec, thereby granting regional incentives to ACTRA Montreal productions. Montreal's production industry takes off with the help of regional incentives.

ACTRA MARITIMES

Lower budget features such as *The Disappeared*, *Blackbird* and *Cloudburst* are garnering much success, but ACTRA Maritimes members fear that Telefilm's new success index will mean features, such as these, will cease to be made in the region.

In Atlantic Canada *Haven* is in its fourth season.

Photo courtesy of Haven Productions



ACTRA NEWFOUNDLAND/LABRADOR

ACTRA Newfoundland/Labrador recently received good news. The provincial budget committed to more funding: For every \$1 the province invests in the film industry, the total gross domestic product (GDP) return to the province is \$2.86.

Strength in Leadership — Strength in Bargaining

By Stephen Waddell

National Executive Director & Chief Negotiator



Representing the stunt community L to R: **Kit Mallet** (Vancouver), ACTRA National President **Ferne Downey**, **Rick Skene** (Manitoba), **Guy Bews** (Alberta), **Shelley Cook** (Toronto), **Randy Boliver** (Maritimes) and **Mike Scherer** (Montreal) at ACTRA's National Stunt Committee meeting on January 10, 2013.

Our collective agreements will help ensure more work opportunities with fair compensation, while our residuals standards remain high.

Film, television and digital media production across Canada has continued to grow at a steady pace year every year with the exception of 2008/09, when we felt the devastating effects of the global economic recession. ACTRA has always been a strong voice for our industry: a healthy industry is good for us and for the Canadian economy. Well-paying jobs, improved work opportunities and safe working conditions are, in turn, critical to maintaining a strong pool of professional talent – performers and crews – and growing production in Canada.

SMART COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

ACTRA's leadership in the industry stems largely from our commitment to smart collective bargaining. Did you know that the

Independent Production Agreement (IPA) now represents 80% of all ACTRA members' earnings? As such, the success of the recent re-negotiation of the 2013-2015 IPA with the Canadian Media Production Association (CMPA), the Association des producteurs de film et de télévision du Québec (APFTQ) and the U.S. studios represents a major step forward for our members and their interests. Highlights of the new IPA include a 6% increase in pay and improvements in working conditions, including strong protection against violence and harassment on set, enhanced equal opportunity clauses, improved provisions for minors and major gains for voice and stunt performers.

Our UBCP/ACTRA brothers and sisters also recently concluded re-negotiation of the British Columbia Master Production Agreement (BCMPA). UBCP/ACTRA members work under the BCMPA in B.C., and the IPA in other provinces. These negotiations took place in the midst of significant unhappiness in B.C. that the industry had been virtually abandoned by their provincial Liberal government. ACTRA and UBCP/ACTRA stood together – united as never before – facing down the concessionary demands of the studios in BCMPA negotiations. We had each other's

backs and were able to successfully stand up to the Hollywood studios to achieve a solid deal of 1.5% increases in each of the next two years.

In both agreements, we were able to negotiate some key gains for the stunt community, including ensuring that stunt coordinators will now receive residuals. We are also proud of the progress made on issues of dignity, respect and working conditions: issues related to prosthetics, exposure to adverse weather, hair and makeup issues, as well as more protection for performers appearing in nude and intimate scenes. And we're meeting with producers on a New Media subcommittee for some frank discussion about ways to foster increased digital production and performer work opportunities in Canada, while ensuring compensation and residuals standards remain high.

The Stunt community continued to build on their active presence at the bargaining table by convening a National Stunt Committee meeting in Toronto earlier this year. They are committed to meeting annually and to continue to work with ACTRA to improve the stunt and safety provisions in our agreements, ensuring better protection for all performers on set.

SERIOUS BACKBONE

Canadian performers have serious backbone. And that holds true during bargaining. I am proud of the leadership of this union. Our work over the past year propelled us forward with confidence. Our collective agreements will help ensure more work opportunities with fair compensation, while our residuals standards remain high.

As noted in your National President's feature story, we are a strong national union, and we have to continually fight for recognition and respect for our members. From Saskatchewan, the home of *Corner Gas*, came a huge red flag when the Government gutted the Saskatchewan film tax credit in 2012, drawing production in that province to a halt. It's a tough reminder that an unfriendly government can completely destroy our industry.

We are leaders in our field, in our industry, and we work well with leaders in this country and internationally. With a vibrant industry, and increasing work opportunities coast-to-coast, we will continue to improve our collective agreements and lobby government for increased support for the Canadian entertainment industry. Next up: National Commercial Agreement negotiations. Stay tuned! ★

THE ROLE OF A LIFETIME

On harnessing our superpowers and protecting our ecosystem

To the Honourable James Moore:

It was a pleasure to see you at the Canadian Screen Awards in Toronto on March 3rd. We were reminded of your visit to the *Flashpoint* set in 2009 and are heartened to see that you continue to share our pride in Canada's film and television industry.

Flashpoint episodes always start in a moment of high drama, and throw viewers into a rewind-flashback to where it all started. Standing in the fleeting spotlight of the privilege of winning an award that night, we couldn't help experiencing a flashback of our own.

Flashpoint was our first television series, but there's no overnight-success angle here. The experiences that made its creation possible were firmly grounded in the collaborative habits of thirty years of working as actors, writers and filmmakers – which in this country often means the proud, challenging and not-lavishly-funded tradition of workshoping homegrown material. We've learned how the boundaries between the stage and the screen, between cinema and TV, between highbrow and pop culture, are truly fluid: each medium's mission is story-telling, its oxygen is truth, and its artists are in a constant state of grassroots R&D.

When Mark and I met, we were performing in independent, self-produced plays at the Summerworks Theatre Festival, where an audience of twenty would have been considered a good night. *Flashpoint's* finale was seen by an audience of more than two million Canadians. The path from one to the other was paved by programs, grants and institutions supported by the government – the Canada Media Fund, the Ontario Media Development Corporation's Calling Card program, Telefilm Canada, the Canada Council, the Women in the Director's Chair master class, National Screen Institute, film festivals and theatres from the Fringe Festival to Stratford to a Modern Times production of *Macbeth* that toured in Iran. Every seemingly unconnected creative experience has, in fact, been fuel for the fire we've felt to tell our own Canadian stories.

The culture business here is a complex, teeming ecosystem where changes in one sphere can have ripple effects throughout. We're thrilled that established creative visionaries are rewarded with government support for their solid track records – it's an inspiring trickle-down model of leadership and success. We'd also like to draw your attention to this model's less celebrated counterpart: the 'trickle-up' economy already vigorously in place, driven by the thousands of creators who spend years pushing boulders up hills, often for free, in the hopes of a breakthrough. One would not exist without the other. Both flourish with support.

Flashpoint opened doors for us, here and across the border. Many people assume our next logical step is to move to Los Angeles. But Canada is home, not a stepping stone, and we will continue to write homegrown stories that speak to the rest of the world. Our next series is inspired by 'Camp X' and celebrates the ordinary Canadians who became extraordinary heroes during World War II.

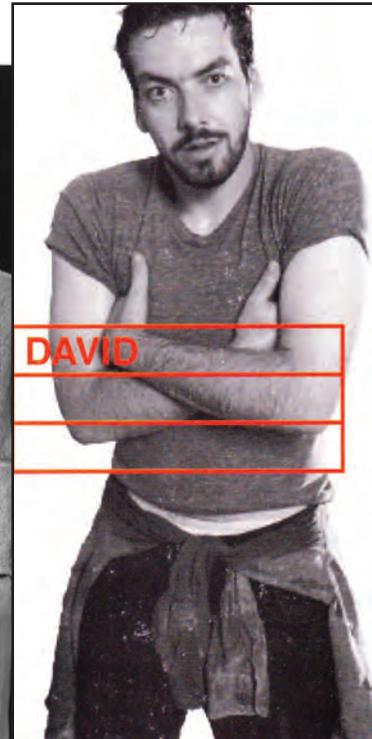
At this very moment there are culture creators all across Canada's coffee shops, defying the blank glare of their laptop screens to push their own proudly homegrown boulders up hills. We very much hope you and those you lead will consider the entire ecosystem when you forge the contours of culture in the coming years.

Yours truly,

Mark Ellis and Stephanie Morgenstern
Co-Creators, Executive Producers, *Flashpoint*

by Stephanie Morgenstern & Mark Ellis

In the vibrant Canadian theatre scene of Toronto two thespians met...



Sitting L to R: **Stephanie Morgenstern, Dixie Seattle**. Standing L to R: **Michael Caruana, Gary Reineke, Tom McCamus** in Factory Theatre's 1992 production of *Taking Liberties*, a play by Dave Carley, directed by **Stephen Ouimette**.

Mark Ellis in *Press'd* by Denis McGrath at the Summerworks Theatre Festival, 1996. *Press'd* was produced as a double bill with *River Lady*, written by David Widdicombe, directed by **Albert Schultz** and starring... **Stephanie Morgenstern**.



THE ROLE OF A LIFETIME



Some of you may have seen this open letter to Minister Moore already, as it got some circulation a while ago when we first released it. The impulse behind it came when we saw him in the audience at the Canadian Screen Awards, and wondered what we would say if we could turn to him on stage and – even briefly – hold his undivided attention. Of course the rising music would have drowned us out before we'd even got warmed up.

When we were asked to contribute to this magazine and follow up on the open letter we sent to our Heritage Ministry, it got us thinking. What could we say to a nation full of professional screen actors? We could earnestly reaffirm our faith in Canadian stories, we could protest the invisibility of culture in the most recent federal budget, we could argue passionately that the culture industry needs to be re-imagined by those in power as an engine of prosperity and quality of life, rather than a charity project... but you're not the ones who need convincing. We might all get a nice euphoric rush of solidarity, but then we'd get back to our busy lives and it wouldn't have changed a thing.

We've been on a very unexpected and educational journey in the last six years. Is there anything we've learned that we can share, that might actually spark a change?

We're in the privileged position of having not only endured the slings and arrows of an actor's fortune, but also having witnessed what goes on behind the closed doors of the Powers That Be – those who hold an actor's fortune in their hands. As actors, we know the frustration of getting 12 pages of sides late at night for an audition at 9 the next morning. We know the frustration of only getting one take at an audition, of coming close to a part – of being put on hold, of losing a part to a 'name,' of a role being cut from a script at the last minute. As actors, we spend an incredible amount of time feeling powerless.

However, as writers and producers, we've come to understand why these things happen. You should know, that for every person cast, there are often five more we want to give a part to. We share the frustration of last minute rewrites that lead to lines and characters being cut and last-minute auditions. We don't like writing characters that seem to exist only to deliver exposition, but they're usually only there because we ran out of time to do our job better, or we had to incorporate a network note. Writers, actors, producers, directors – we are all in the same boat. We're all trying to do a difficult job as best we can on an insanely tight timeline.

But we don't want actors to feel powerless. You are not simply a hired gun in a play or in a show. You have a big stake in the

success of a film or series. You have the power to make a project better and to give it truth. And you have the power, just as producers and writers and directors do, to be part of our nation's storytelling and contribute to the growth of our Canadian culture.

Your role goes beyond saying the words that other people write for you. Here's what we mean...

The Actor's Superpowers

Actors look around and see human inspiration everywhere. We're not afraid of research: it's what we do every day. Our minds are open: we know that in real life, there's no such thing as a stock character – which makes it pretty hard to hold a prejudice or believe in a stereotype. We know that even the most apparently sinister of fictional characters is driven by what they believe is right, as every human is. Without the power of empathic imagination, we wouldn't be playing the role truthfully.

Our profession tells us that every human has a rich and unexpected backstory, every Background Performer in one person's life is #1 on their own call sheet, and there's always more to a stranger than meets the eye... just as there's always more to a scene than the words on the page. It's our job to dig in there and discover it. This power of narrative insight is yours, it comes with the territory... and it's the ignition point of all good stories.

We have the courage, when duty demands, to go down the dark spiral steps of the soul into the vault of our most painful griefs, heartbreaks and humiliations – where few civilians would ever go by choice – then climb back into the light and boldly unleash this emotional truth when we hear 'Action!'

We are the lion tamers who confront our greatest fears and tragedies in the circus ring, wrangle them into submission, and redeem them into the entertainment of ordinary mortals. We (alongside writers) are the world's expert witnesses to the extremes of what's real, what's hilarious, what's horrific... what's imaginable. And once something's been imagined in fiction, it can't be dis-imagined again. It becomes possible in reality. Every insightful character choice changes the story, and every story witnessed by an audience changes that audience.

The Belief

To go further – and to misquote a familiar principle – with these superpowers come super-responsibilities. Our truth-seeking, courage and persuasion skills are often at the service of the massive industrial machinery of Make Believe. Whether working on an MOW or selling dish soap, your job is to help

make your audience believe something. So it makes sense to take responsibility, to some degree, for what that belief is.

This begs the question: what is the belief – the dream, the vision, the goal – your superpowers serve right now? Is there more than one? Are any of them your own? If not – whose permission are you waiting for?

Although your vocation gives you a huge head start in creating truthful characters, it may not be your desire to flip open a laptop and craft a story from scratch. But if you should feel that impulse, we urge you to obey it. Your superpowers demand it. That's your mythic Call to Action talking. You don't get to turn your back on it: you're the Protagonist, and that's how hero narratives work.

If you don't wish to write, then get to know a writer. Learn more about their job, their dreams, their obstacles. Talk to a producer or a director. Be direct. Ask questions. Everyone loves to talk about their own process. Understanding where we all fit into the big picture is invaluable.

Talent Pools

Musicians jam. Dancers keep up with classes. Athletes work out. But beyond the walls of skill-specific training institutions, and beyond skill-specific grassroots support groups, we don't seem to have a place to come out and play together, to experiment, to regularly take huge, dignity-threatening creative risks in a safe place... the kind of risks that pay off in fireworks when they're successful. Actors need the words. Writers need people to speak them. Directors need to direct, up close and hands-on.

A handful of you may remember an informal, word-of-mouth irregular gathering we called The Pool. (Thanks to Tony Nappo for coming up with the name.) A pool is a place where you come to work hard, or to play, or just to hang out on the deck and observe. A pool is also what you call a gathering of talent. We had an email list and used to send out group invites to directors, screenwriters and actors to work on a single scene on video. We'd shoot guerilla-style, anywhere, inspired by the Dogma movement from Denmark. Then we'd settle into a living room with food and drinks, screen the results, and talk about the work – or any other things on our minds. The Pool's been closed for a while due to other commitments. But what if it were re-opened, on a national scale?

Talk to your friends. Talk to friends of friends. If you don't know a writer or a director, find someone who does. Start a webpage or an email list that bridges the disciplines. Share profiles of yourselves that include what passions you're driven by, what films and TV you love, what you aspire to.



L-R: David Paetkau, Enrico Colantoni, Amy Jo Johnson, Stephanie Morgenstern, Hugh Dillon, Mark Ellis, Michael Cram and Sergio Di Zio. Photo: Jan Thijs

When you have an idea, send out a Call to Action describing what you want to try. You've never acted in a comedy? Maybe there's a drama series writer that wants to take a stab at writing a comic scene for you.

What would flow from this – if we dare dream big – is the kind of raw creative courage that can only emerge from having a safe place to play among peers. A place to be inspired by our colleagues' work, have our own new work discovered. No applying for grants. No waiting for network approval. No centralized authority, just someone willing to oversee a list or a database. Think of the Pool as an ongoing, freestyle, cross-country flashmob of story creation.

Beyond the Pool

We also invite you to consider how what affects one area of the cultural ecosystem can have ripple effects into another. We need to stay informed about what industrial struggles are on the table, not just from ACTRA's perspective, but also those of our writer and director brothers and sisters. We may find common themes, common causes worth fighting for. Engage on Twitter. Step up and help when a grant is cut to a theatre festival. Share an animation writer's outrage when she hasn't received a pay raise in twelve years.

Listen to your Union

Your ACTRA staff represents you. You guys are their boss. And as a boss, you need to know what your staff and council are up to. Read newsletters and email blasts. Every one of us has a responsibility to be engaged in our industry. To know what's happening — to stay nimble, responsive and aware.

Our point to the Honourable Mr. Moore was that the boundaries between the grassroots, the pop and the highbrow are fluid, and that support for one indirectly nourishes the others.

One small change (say, a funding cut) can trigger a huge, unintended chain reaction. Our point to you is that the boundaries between the creative disciplines within film and TV are fluid as well, and that the whole ecosystem can change in an unprecedented chain reaction if we, who Make audiences Believe, take charge of the world we believe in. ★



Stephanie Morgenstern and Mark Ellis, designated Showrunners of the Year by the Writers Guild of Canada, are the creators of the television series *Flashpoint* (CTV/CBS/Ion). The show won the 2013 Academy Board of Directors Tribute for Outstanding and Enduring Contribution to Canadian Television, as well as the 2013 Canadian Screen Award for Best Dramatic Series. *Flashpoint* is licensed in more than 100 territories and translated into 22 languages. Ellis and Morgenstern are both ACTRA members and WGC members. They are in development with two new television dramas for CBC and CTV.

A West Coast Action Plan

My inner kid

"I was born in Ontario, grew up in Saskatchewan, came of age in Winnipeg and have spent most of my adult life in Vancouver." – Ellie Harvie

I am a pretty casual person. I don't like details and red tape and protocol. I am after all, an actor. I like it that someone else talks about money for me and someone else does my taxes and someone else writes the words I say and someone else does my hair and makeup. Don't get me wrong, I delve into the work that is mine, memorizing lines, understanding what motivates the dialogue, focus and delivery, getting my props right for the editor, being professional so the crew can go home early and the producers make their day. I become consumed in the work that is mine, but details of the real world just aren't my *thing*... until that which is my *thing* gets taken away. Then I turn into the kick-ass little Prairie Girl that lurks within. You know, the one who will beat you up in the can for smiling at her boyfriend at a hockey game. Now, I confess, I have never actually done that, but I have looked on in awe at its unfolding. It is something.

In the summer of 2011 it was like the faucet had been turned off on my auditions. I didn't know if this was a sign of my age as I am begrudgingly over 40. By this time a few of my friends were working in Toronto. I went online and looked up what was shooting where and saw that there were 28 shows in Toronto and 8 in Vancouver. My first thought was, "what the f#*k is going on?" Two weeks later I received an email from the union looking for nominations for The Executive Board. That is when I thought, "well, I am going to find out what the f#*k is going on." Cue the Prairie Girl.

I was elected to the board of UBCP/ACTRA. There was a brief learning curve with a LOT of reading, but pretty soon I saw why Toronto was booming and drawing a lot of the work there. The Ontario arts community had organized and successfully educated

their government about the huge financial outreach of this industry by combining their interests with gaming, music and publishing – basically all the digital media. The screen-based industries had formed an industry-wide consortium in 2001, which then morphed into FilmOntario in 2003 so they could lobby the government with one voice. The provincial government had already founded the Ontario Media Development Corporation (OMDC) back in 2000, a government agency which ensures the industry cannot be ignored. FilmOntario successfully got their government to offer enticing tax credits and secured themselves as the strongest production centre in Canada. Smart, smart, smart. I was born there, you know.

Cut back to BC and our Liberal government whose stance is "no increase in tax credits" to compete with Ontario, Quebec, Louisiana, New York, Maryland, Manitoba – basically 38 states and 7 provinces. This Liberal party is pretty far to the right, not like any Liberal party I have voted for in the past. They have decided the benchmark for good government is a balanced budget. So the writing was on the wall for our Industry as more people shuffled off to Toronto, and who could blame them?

First of all, I don't know that a balanced budget is always possible, certainly not in the bad times. Most families have a line of credit and there are times when you have to dip into it – to send your child to university, to repair the roof, to get a root canal - all things that are necessary investments for your future livelihood. But the BC Liberals look at tax credits as a subsidy. Since they can't trace the tax revenue generated from the billion foreign dollars brought into our province's economy and plop it back into that same coffer the credit came from, they see the

Tax credits as a loss. Ontario looks at it as an investment, which it just is (did I mention I was born there) — like sending your child to university or fixing the roof or getting a root canal. The future will be better, more comfortable and you can chew.

So, I was left with the question, "do I pack up and go where the work is?" Toronto is a pretty fun town and I would be the new girl there, which is always kind of fun, even over 40. But something inside me said, "hey... the Liberals are smiling at your boyfriend!" and so I decided that this was my turn to stay and fight.

In January of 2013 it seemed like there was a communal awakening to the fight in the can. It all started when Liberal Premier Christy Clark introduced her Jobs Plan with no mention of the Film Industry. She asked for comments on her Facebook page and was inundated by disgruntled film workers wondering why they were left out. Hundreds of people were deleted and blocked from the page (not even for foul language or abuse). Several of these people created a Facebook page called Save BC Film. Within days it had 2000 followers and as of today has over 7000. A production manager named Wayne Bennett emerged as the natural leader of the cause and began doing media interviews. A wave of attention came to our Industry's cause.

Back-ass fight for our Industry (by a Prairie Girl.)

Save BC Film gathered more than 30,000 signatures on a petition to support better tax credits for the film industry. As a board member of the union I contacted Wayne Bennett right away and let him know that I would be of whatever help they needed.

Everyone at the union, and at all the unions and associations, and even the producers and the studios were very happy to have this grass roots movement because it gave strength and numbers to the lobbying that had been in effect for the previous 18 months. Suddenly MLA's and NDP candidates wanted to meet with us. It is an election year.

I saw what happened in Saskatchewan. I can't imagine all the Prairie guys and gals that went down swinging there. They lost their industry, just as it was really blossoming, because the government dropped their tax credits. They had such a solid footing with *Corner Gas*, and developed great crews and infrastructure. But some governments just can't see past a balanced budget. They lack the insight and bravery it takes to invest boldly in an industry that is not spending millions on their campaigns. I guess for them, there really is safety in number\$. The film industry and its cousins, video gaming and new media, are part of the High Tech Industry of the future. Yet many provinces can't see past selling resources abroad. It is tried and true and safe, oh, and killing our planet.

Well, I continue the fight, along with all our industry leaders. In the 26 years I have lived here I have never seen the Industry more united and cohesive. I see us pressing for and developing our own BCMDC. I am not going to sit back while these politicians, who are essentially owned by Big Oil, extol the virtues of investing in our future with pipelines and liquefied natural gas (which is freakin' fracking – if you don't know, Google it), while they neglect an industry that has every range of jobs – from blue collar to white collar to high tech, is culturally relevant and has minimal impact on our environment, and can roll into town tomorrow!

So these days I am not so casual. I can't be. I need to make a living. I am actually kind of a pain in the ass. These days I read a lot and write a lot and phone a lot and go to a lot of meetings. I tell everyone I talk to, from the gal at Tim Horton's who doesn't

speak English, to all my Facebook Friends (who have likely unsubscribed me by now) to every mom at my son's school (who glazes over two words into my spiel) about how valuable this industry is to our province and yes, to me. After all, I was once a little girl in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan who dared to dream of being an actress and who never imagined she could do it in her own country. We have built something wonderful here and we need to not only preserve it but grow it, because who know what things the next wave of Prairie girls will dream of being. ☆



Ellie Harvie has been nominated for four LEO's and has twice been a winner. She has received two Gemini Award nominations, one for Best Performance in a Comedy for *CBC's Improv Olympics* and one for Best Guest Star in a Dramatic Role for her performance on *Cold Squad*. Ellie starred as Morticia in *The New Addams Family* series and has had recurring guest star roles on such shows as *Stargate Atlantis*, *Terminal City* and *The L Word*. She has guest starred on *Smallville*, *Eureka* and *Stargate SG 1*. Her leading roles

in TV movies include *After All These Years*, *Restless Virgins* and *Holiday Heist*. Ellie holds a B.A. in Political Studies from the University of Manitoba and she is a graduate of the Vancouver Playhouse Acting School. Ellie serves on the Executive Board of UBCP/ACTRA.

Opening doors to great performances

WORKING WITH DEAF PERFORMERS

Interview with Catherine Joell MacKinnon
By Jani Lauzon

As professional actors we are always struggling to be seen, auditioned and cast. **Catherine Joell MacKinnon** is a deaf performer, filmmaker and producer who fights to open doors for deaf actors so they can give their best performance. She knows the key to opening those doors is through accessibility. Catherine is dedicated to ACTRA's diversity committee initiatives, and is always willing to help educate us, everyone, on what it's like to work with deaf actors. Catherine served as our consultant on ACTRA's "Practical TIPS for Auditioning Deaf Actors" handy new on-line guide. In my interview with her, she shares with us her thoughts and her experiences in our media industry.

Jani: *This myth, this idea that deaf people can't be good actors, where do you think that comes from?*

Catherine: I'm not sure where the myth comes from because I know a lot of very talented deaf performers. We've fought long and hard to be recognized as professional actors.

Jani: *What does a deaf actor bring to the skill set that a hearing actor can't?*

Catherine: We're highly visual, for instance, when it comes to continuity of a scene (props, movement, wardrobe, hair etc) we are more aware and can catch potential mistakes quickly. We are also great scene partners because of how we communicate.

Jani: *You are also a successful producer as well as an actor. Why both?*

Catherine: I never expected to become a producer. It happened by accident. A colleague, who is a director in L.A., asked me to be her producer so I moved there in 2007 and became involved with *The Hammer*, as well as other films. Why both? It's good to learn firsthand what the business is all about. I enjoy putting the shooting details together and making people happy on set! I would rather be a well-rounded artist. Sometimes producing is a thankless job but I'm glad I got into it. I'm still learning about the business all the time. I try to stay on top of the game.

Jani: *What do you think it will take in Canada for deaf actors to be included in mainstream casting?*

Catherine: We need more outreach to casting directors and agents. Of course that is ongoing education, something ACTRA is helping to do. The "Practical Tips for Auditioning Deaf Actors" postcard and on-line guide ACTRA produced is a great start!

Also, film/TV writers should think of using deaf actors in recurring roles for their storylines. You rarely see a deaf actor in Canada get a recurring role. If we are lucky, most deaf actors in Canada are cast in one episode of a show, and not very often. It's better in the US. NBC hired **Deanne Bray** for a recurring role on *Heroes*, and **Shoshannah Stern** has recurring roles on *Jericho* and *Weeds*. And now there is *Switched at Birth* on ABC where deaf actors play lead roles.

As for films, I think *Crazy Moon* in 1986 was

the last mainstream ACTRA film in English Canada to cast a deaf actor in a lead role. In that film **Vanessa Vaughan** starred alongside **Kiefer Sutherland**.

Jani: *What is one of the biggest challenges that deaf actors face in today's industry?*

Catherine: Accessibility. It's good to have an interpreter in the audition room and on set. And some private workshops won't provide an interpreter due to the costs so we don't have access to training. It's also a challenge getting together with other actors for a cold read. It can be a discouraging experience. I believe there's innovative ways to have an all inclusive environment.

Jani: *If you had the chance to play any character you wanted, who would that character be?*

Catherine: I would love to play a really intense character going through a dark moment in their life... in a dramatic film with a dark theme.

Jani: *What about hiring hearing actors to play deaf roles?*

Catherine: It depends on the director's vision of how the character should be portrayed, and the actor that you hire. In the Canadian film *It's All Gone Pete Tong* **Michael Dowse** used a hearing actor to play a character who is going deaf. That's a different scenario. But he also hired **Beatriz Batarda** to play his deaf girlfriend and even though everyone thinks she is deaf, she isn't. She learned Spanish sign language for the movie.

Some deaf performers can speak and sign, others use sign language only and some, who have lost their hearing later in life, may not sign at all. All of us should at least have the chance to audition!

Jani: *ACTRA has your back but what could we all be doing better to be more inclusive?*

Catherine: ACTRA has been great!! You always provide interpreters for workshops, conferences and meetings. We're thankful for that! I was proud to be a part of the new deaf performer postcard and online campaign. Plus the workshop you are presenting on children performers in the industry for the TIDFAF - the Toronto International Deaf Film and Arts Festival, is awesome.. There are several parents who have kids who are deaf or hard of hearing who want to get into the biz and have been ripped off by huge agency fees. They need our help. We're very grateful to have ACTRA's support for deaf actors!!

We need more allies to support us in positive ways and are willing to come up with creative solutions. I worked on one shoot in L.A where the crew took up ASL lessons just for me!! It blew me away. In a pinch we also use text messages to communicate with cast and crew on set. If people are willing we can find a way. ☆

The “Practical Tips for Auditioning Deaf Actors” postcard and on-line guide ACTRA produced is a great start!

L to R: Julie Brar, Catherine Joell MacKinnon, Joanna Bennett and Kerron Schullere.
Photo: Jag Gundu

Practical Tips for Auditioning Deaf Actors

brought to you by ACTRA's Diversity Committee



- Use a Sign Language Interpreter
- Speak directly with the Deaf Actor, not the Interpreter
- Treat the Interpreter as a professional
- Watch the lighting: the Deaf Actor must see the Interpreter
- Camera framing: the Deaf Actor's hands must be in frame so their language can be seen
- Sign Language Interpreter and Reader placement must be side-by-side, on the same side of the camera. The Deaf Actor can then see both Reader and Interpreter, and does not have to cross frame to do so.
- If Casting Directors are in attendance or viewing the audition later, following these tips will help the Deaf Actor give their best performance!



Jani Lauzon, Elizabeth Morris and Catherine Joell MacKinnon.
Photo: Carol Taverner



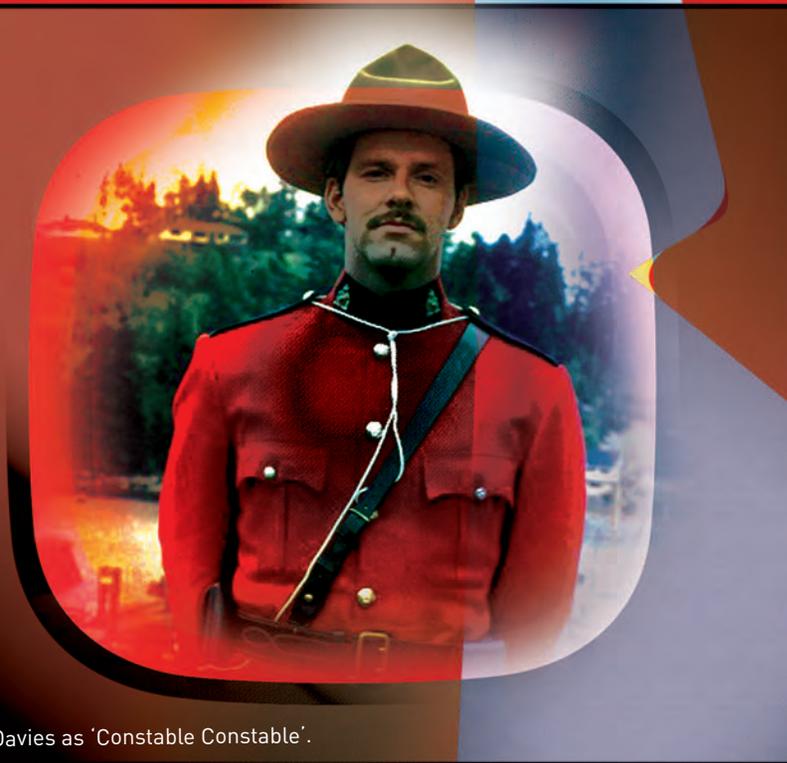
Jani Lauzon is an ACTRA National and ACTRA Toronto Councillor and Chair of the ACTRA National Diversity Committee. She is an award-winning screen actor, a Gemini Award-winning puppeteer and a Juno-nominated singer/songwriter



Catherine Joell MacKinnon was nominated for the Best Canadian Student Director for her short *I'm Not From Hear* at the Montreal World Film Festival in 2003. The film went on to win numerous awards in the UK, Finland, Russia and the United States. In 2009, she co-produced *The Hammer* which won eight film festival awards. Catherine performed live in the *Vagina Monologues* in Toronto with Vanessa Vaughan, Rachel McAdams and Shirley Douglas. Her screen credits include *Kenny Vs Spenny* and *Voices of Chernobyl*. Catherine is a Ryerson University graduate with a BFA in the School of Image Arts. She has been a proud ACTRA member since 2005.

CHECK OUT ACTRA's on-line “tips” for auditioning deaf performers at actra.ca!

Fighting for CanCon on our screens: building our industry & star system



Jackson Davies as 'Constable Constable'.

**What Bruno Gerussi and Robert Clothier
taught me about the responsibility
of being an actor in Canada**

by Jackson Davies

Ensnared on the couch behind a wobbly tin TV tray, I remember watching **Gordon Pinsent** playing RCMP officer "Sergeant Scott" in *The Forest Rangers* and at that moment wanting to become a Mountie (just a touch of foreshadowing at work here). I also knew in my heart that *Maggie Muggins* and *The Friendly Giant* were a lot more cool than *Captain Kangaroo*. And I was just as positive that *Wayne and Shuster* were far more clever than their American counterparts. After watching their Rinse The Blood Off My Toga sketch, "I told him Julie don't go" became my favourite phrase of all time. One of the actors in their company was **John Davies**, which was my real name, and it was very cool to see our names in the credits. Years later it was also the reason I had to change my professional name to **Jackson Davies**. On the romantic front, my first TV crush was on **Trudy Young** in *Razzle Dazzle*. She was "hot" before I knew what "hot" was. But my favourite show was *The Plouffe Family* because they gave me a place at their kitchen table to become part of their wonderful eclectic Québec family.

*The stories told in **The Beachcombers** dealt with conflict, danger, politics, Hollywood stars, international gun smuggling, death, biker gangs, high-speed police shootouts—and that's when the cameras weren't rolling.*

From "Bruno and The Beach: The Beachcombers at 40"
written by Marc Strange and Jackson Davies (blatant plug for book)

Watching TV was a lot simpler while I was growing up in the small town of Wetaskiwin, Alberta in the 50's. We had one television and two channels, one channel had some Canadian content and the other not so much, but for as long as I can remember, I've been drawn to Canadian programming.

So although the premise "A Greek Guy and his First Nations partner go out in a boat and collect logs for a living" didn't seem to have, as they say, "legs," I was quite excited as a young actor in 1973 to be auditioning for CBC's *The Beachcombers*. It's important to fit the part, but more so when auditioning for RCMP Officer Number Two. It wasn't so much my talent but that I was a 42 Tall, the same size as the only extra RCMP uniform that CBC Vancouver had, so I got the part! Thank God I was taller than Mr. Pinsent or he would have had the part.

Acting on *The Beachcombers* for 16 years was one of the highlights of my career. I had no formal training and, like a lot of the actors and crew, I learned on the fly. The incredibly talented lead actors **Bruno Gerussi** and **Robert Clothier** taught me a lot. Not only about acting; they also taught me about the responsibility that comes with being an actor in Canada. Bruno and Robert were world-class performers and could have worked anywhere in the world and become huge stars, but it was more important to them to stay in Canada and help build an industry and a star system, which up to then hadn't been encouraged. They also taught me that it's not about entitlement but about commitment.

The Beachcombers went on to become the longest running drama series in Canadian TV, but it wasn't all smooth boating.

Bruno was a fighter, whether it was to keep Pat John, who played Jessie, from being fired, fighting for scripts that stayed true to the show, against time slot changes moving us all over the schedule, or a rumoured plan to have the series relocate from the coast of B.C. to Lake Ontario, Bruno led the battle. I, on the other hand, like my character "Constable Constable," was a bit of a pacifist. I had only pulled my gun from my holster once

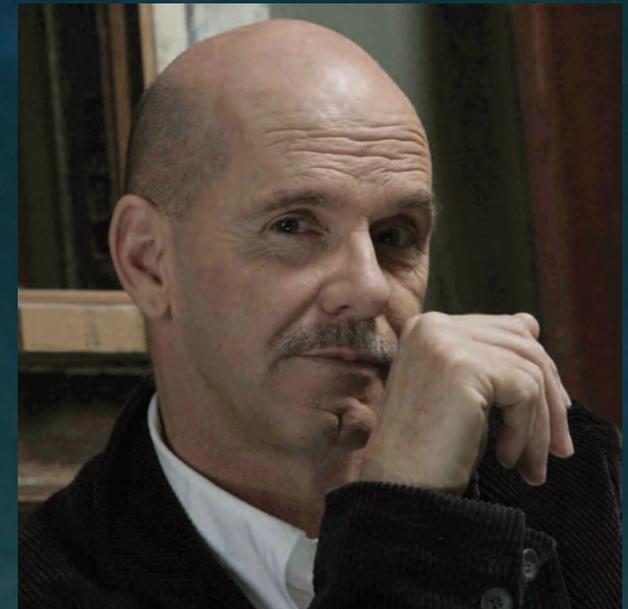
in the show's 16 years; I never fired or even pointed it at anyone. That all changed when we were cancelled.

We had an incredible run and thank goodness there is a CBC and a place for Canadian content. When *The Beachcombers* was cancelled in 1990, we were ok with it as it was probably time to pull the curtain. However, being replaced by an American sitcom that had already been cancelled felt strangely insulting, so that triggered me to support our Canadian production industry at every opportunity. *The Beachcombers* is part of our history, our heritage, and over these past 22 years, with tons of fan support we've tried to get *The Beachcombers* back on the air, to once again see those 275 episodes that haven't been aired since the series was cancelled.

*If given the opportunity, we can have a hit series in Canada, we can become stars in our own country; and yes, like **The Beachcombers** we can be seen in countries all around the world!*

The Beachcombers importance to Canadian culture was found both on-screen and behind-the-scenes. It was the training ground for the film and TV industry in B.C. Unlike the service industry, working on Canadian TV productions it's possible to move up the talent ladder: third AD's work their way up to first, first AD's become directors, writers become show runners and because the leads are Canadians, it's even mildly possible to make a living as an actor. So if given the opportunity, we can make a hit series in Canada, we can become stars in our own country, and yes, like *The Beachcombers* we can be seen in countries all around the world!

article continues on page 20



Jackson Davies is an actor/writer/producer/director and instructor at Capilano University theatre and film department (where his students can get extra marks by knowing the name of Nick's boat). Jackson is Vice President UBCP/ACTRA, Vice Chair of the BC Arts Council, RCMP Sergeant (honorary), a Vancouver Canuck Hockey Alumni (right wing) and co-author of the B.C. best seller, with nominations for two B.C. books awards, *Bruno and The Beach: The Beachcombers at 40* (come on, you knew I was going to plug it again).



Bruno and The Beach: The Beachcombers at 40, co-authored by Jackson Davies and Marc Strange, is available at bookstores across Canada and online at www.chapters.indigo.ca. (plug number three... sorry)



Fighting for CanCon on our screens

I'm sure that Molly's Reach is the world's most recognizable B.C. building. Fans from all over the world come to Gibsons, British Columbia to visit their Canadian TV memories. That's called film tourism, and is left out of the added value of Canadian TV. *The Beachcombers* was never an industry darling or a winner of a lot of awards. The people who seemed to like us were the ones who mattered the most - our audience. We averaged over a million viewers an episode all those 19 years. A *TV Guide* audience poll named *The Beachcombers* the most popular CBC show of all time and Canadian family show of all time. In 2002, on the CBC's 50th anniversary website, *The Beachcombers* was voted the show "most wanted to be seen again on the CBC" — it had more votes than all the other series combined.

This may sound way too maple syrupy, but to me it's really about the audience. Like that song from the 1970's B.C. rock group Chilliwack: "if there's no audience there just ain't no show." A lot of our audience stuck with us the whole run. They supported the CBC and *The Beachcombers* over all those years, so don't they deserve some payback?

Sometimes I get the feeling that fighting for Canadian content is a lot like learning to play the accordion, people are impressed that you're doing it, but don't always want to listen, but I have always felt that it was worth the fight.

When an actor does a theatre performance, they get immediate response from the audience. The response from a TV series used to be just numbers that came in after the airdate. However, with social media those numbers have now become Phil from Edmonton, Judy from Wasa, Kyle from Glace Bay and surprisingly Dianna from Seattle, Wolfgang from Hamburg, and Jeannette from Australia. Patrick, a fan from Winnipeg, sent up an online petition to ask CBC to air the series again and to make DVD's available. Thousands and thousands of *Beachcomber* fans from all over the world have discovered the petition at tvarchive.ca and are showing their passion to see the whole series again.

Just like that tree falling in a B.C. forest, if a Canadian show is honoured, but no one has the chance to see it, can you still hear the theme song?

The Beachcombers was honoured in 2005 as a Masterworks in Canadian Broadcasting by the Federal Government's Audio Visual Preservation Trust. It would be wonderful if those incredibly loyal fans of *The Beachcombers* could watch the whole series again and share it with a new generation of Canadians. So I'll keep working with the CBC to try to make that happen. If that doesn't work maybe I'll take up the accordion, and that's not going to be pretty. ★



Robert Clothier,
Jackson Davies and
Bruno Gerussi.

The Beachcombers photo
courtesy of CBC Still Photo Collection

As self-employed Canadians we are outside many safety nets that are readily available to full-time employees. We do not have automatic access to programs such as Employment Insurance and the Canada Pension Plan.

But did you know that our government introduced an Employment Insurance program that self-employed workers – like us – can opt into? With money on my horizon, as I had just been cast in a supporting lead role in a movie, last year I tried to enroll into self-employed EI.

Hoping I could get answers fast, I began my journey through the EI/Service Canada system. I was in the early months of pregnancy and wondered if I could receive benefits while taking time off to be with my baby? Or, if I didn't qualify for these benefits now, would it still make sense for me to enroll? What other benefits in this new plan would be useful for me in the future? I also wanted to know whether I could combine earnings from employee work with self-employed income for maternity/parental benefits. I spent weeks trying to find these answers.

It's no surprise that less than 0.5% of Canada's self-employed have opted to enlist in this program. Many don't even know about it... and that's too bad.

ACTRA has lobbied for years to have benefits like parental leave extended to self-employed people. From my experience the implementation of the current system and criteria for joining might need some tweaking.

DELAYS AND PITFALLS

After endless hours unable to get through to the EI line for employees, I finally got a voice on the other end of the line. I was then told that my questions were 'too technical', and was given another number to call. Finally, I did get through to a representative that explained to me that my accountant couldn't just pay into EI based on my earnings. First, I needed to sign up online for an access code. Once I receive it in the mail, I then sign an agreement with the government; and then could start paying into the program. As the movie I was working on would be over by the time I received the access code in the mail, I offered to pay for a courier but was told it could only be sent to me by regular mail.

On hold with Service Canada

My Self-Employed EI benefits story

By Shannon Jardine

FLAWED BUT USEFUL

From my understanding, the kind of benefits that the self-employed are entitled to include: up to 15 weeks for Maternity benefits — up to 35 weeks for biological or adoptive Parental benefits — up to 15 weeks for sickness or injury; and up to six weeks for Compassionate care benefits.

CONSIDERATIONS

As a self-employed worker if your business generates income it will reduce the amount of benefits you get and could outweigh any advantage of opting into the program. Unlike regular employees, the self-employed must pay into the program for at least 12 months before making a claim. And here's the biggie that almost scared me off -- once you make an EI claim, you cannot opt out of the program. You must continue to pay premiums for as long as you are self-employed.

Government agencies need to get staff up to speed on the benefit details and the program itself still needs to be 'tweaked' to make it more useful to us. If we can see the advantage in paying into EI, more of us will!

Many of the delays I encountered were due to cutbacks that mean there are fewer staff to deal with our questions about these complex programs. They cost me unnecessary headaches and possibly the parental leave. If I hadn't gone through all that rigamarole, I am pretty sure that I would have qualified sooner for some Parental Leave.

But I'm a glass half-full kind of person. For the first time, self-employed people can access some of the same benefits that 'employees' have had for years. That's something ACTRA lobbies for, and we got it. And, I did finally complete the sign-up process with Service Canada! Unfortunately, I made my claim too late to be eligible for maternity leave as I was not eligible for the required 12 months of premium payments before needing the benefits. But I would have qualified if I hadn't had such difficulties getting answers to my questions.

My advice for performers who may be interested in the program is to start the process as early as you can. If you are thinking of starting a family, look into it now. And down the road, you may need to take advantage of other benefits when caring for a sick loved one. Also, don't forget to check with Actra Fraternal Benefit Society, the Member Benefits Trust or review your Insurance Statement to find out whether you qualify for benefits.

And now I am yet again on hold, but not with 1-800-0-Canada. I'm on hold to see if it's a boy or a girl. ☆



Shannon Jardine's film and TV credits include *Step Dogs*, *Ferocious*, *13 Eerie*, *Hard Core Logo 2*, *Chained*, *My Lupine Life*, *InSecurity* and *Endgame*. Shannon has served on ACTRA Saskatchewan's Council for five years and has served as an ACTRA National Councillor for four years. She is Vice-Chair of the ACTRA National Women's Committee.

Did you know?

Women at the Gold or Silver Benefit Level with AFBS may be eligible for a short period of presumptive post-natal disability coverage after giving birth. Check your benefit eligibility on your Insurance Statement in the Members' section of afbs.ca.

The voluntary EI program allows eligible self-employed Canadian workers access to what are known as "special benefits", which cover time off work for maternity and paternity leave, illness and compassionate-care obligations. For more information visit the Service Canada website www.servicecanada.gc.ca

Contact your MP to let them know that you are happy that they have introduced an Employment Insurance program for self-employed workers, but the Government needs to fix the many kinks in the program.

Princess Warrior Mary Walsh Dances with Rage and Fearfulness

INTERVIEW by Theresa Tova

The ACTRA National Women's Committee this year shines the spotlight on **Mary Walsh** – ACTRA's 2013 Woman of the Year. The honour was presented to Mary on-stage by **Theresa Tova** following the opening night of Mary's one-woman show *Dancing with Rage* at the Panasonic Theatre in Toronto. The previous recipients of this honour, **Shirley Douglas**, **Tantoo Cardinal** and **Sandi Ross** were all in attendance.

Among her many awards and doctorates, Mary has been awarded the Order of Canada, ACTRA's Award of Excellence in Newfoundland, 18 Gemini Awards and in 2012 she received a Governor General's Performing Arts Award. Despite her busy work schedule, Mary puts her energy into a number of charitable campaigns and is a passionate supporter and spokesperson for Oxfam. She is also a spokesperson for the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) and is vocal about mental disorders and addictions— both issues that have touched her family. Mary is an ambassador for ACTRA's IworkACTRA campaign.

Theresa: You took exception to being called "fearless" when we presented you with this award in front of your opening night audience. You made the audience laugh with your anti-fearless rant, but did that statement really not sit well with you?

Mary: Well, you can't let yourself be called fearless when you know how much fear you operate from. I just know that there's an awful lot of fear in my life — more "fear", with "fearfulness" as more of a marker.



Theresa: But, like the Joker in the Tarot, you're ready to step off into the unknown?

Mary: Stupid I guess, fearful and stupid. But fear is something that has driven me forward all my life. I would prefer to be driven by something else, say, love, but sometimes you know you can't do what you can't do. Some people cower in the corner and some people find themselves driving forward to whatever lies ahead. But it is still fear, whichever way you look at it. Our family motto is "We aren't backing down— tonight."

Theresa: Your new live show *Dancing with Rage* seems unabashedly autobiographical.

Mary: Yes, well I am sixty and I sometimes think it all comes down to genetics. They say that being an actor means you suffer from some kind of mild form of Tourette's —we just blurt out whatever's on our minds.

Theresa: We are so proud of how you keep going, bravely out there in the faces of great and not-so-great politicians. You are a fighter, an activist and a self-professed warrior. What are you fighting for Mary?

Mary: What we are all fighting for social justice. And I suppose we are fighting for that ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor to stop widening. My generation of women has been fighting all our lives and yet things seem to get worse. There was a time when we felt that things were getting better, doors were opening, and glass ceilings were shattering. But now we see all that being pushed back. Not just for women and not just in the Western world. We're going back hundreds of years, turning into oligarchies. How did it get turned around? Change happened incrementally. And now we're talking about torturing people, getting rid of the Geneva Convention, internal probes, abortions becoming illegal again and people being forced back into hunger. We're not talking about that happening to anybody who's got money. We're only talking about that happening to poor people.



Theresa: Which means women and the middle-classes.

Mary: When I was a girl in my teens, I read Shulamith Firestone, an early second wave feminist, in New York and Chicago in 1966-67. She and other women realized that there were just no voices of women out there. They started to have women's meetings, and it is outrageous to think that people were upset that they were having these meetings. She had such a profound effect on the world, and on me. Maybe that's all we have to do. Get together again and say, "this is not it... this has got to be changed".

Theresa: Growing up in Calgary, I felt that feminism was for my older sister. I used to say that by the time I became of age I didn't even own a bra to burn. Even at ACTRA our women's committee lay fallow for years. We reinvigorated it after we formed an alliance with the Steelworkers where we met the Women of Steel — the women on the shop floor. We started to look again at workers who are suffering because of the ceiling you're talking about — the inequalities we all know such as equal pay for work of equal value.

Mary: Now is the time to come back together again and try to make a change. The fact that you're not allowed to say that Margaret Thatcher embraced Pinochet and said that he introduced democracy in Chile. Her Conservative speak is just lies! She called Nelson Mandela a terrorist?! They say, "Have respect for Margaret Thatcher". Well, have respect for her victims such as the coal miners. Have respect for the people that have suffered and continue to suffer because of Margaret Thatcher and the fact that the "great Western Movement" has actually taken away our voice.

Theresa: And this is why you are our fourth recipient of the ACTRA Woman of the Year Award. We need to honour the women who are

giving us a voice as activists making a difference in the world. Women like you understand the game and help us fight for a place on the board. And how exactly did an actor become so political?

Mary: I wasn't one of those people who always wanted to be an actor. Until I was about 26 I really wanted to be a journalist. *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* was the perfect job for me. I'm not really a journalist but I get to play one on TV — it's better really!

Theresa: Do you write alone? How does that work?

Mary: I'm a comedian so writing alone is a grim prospect. I hire someone to come in and listen to me, type it all up, and then I read it and change it so it's better. As a comedian you really do need to be with others. Comedy needs a crowd.

Theresa: What do you think about the Arts in general these days? And what are examples of what you think we do best?

Mary: We still have a lot of freedom in the theatre. On TV, I loved *Durham County*. It was impossible for me to watch as I was too scared by it. But it was about taking chances. It seems to me we've been doing all this cop stuff and you know they say that life imitates art. So it makes me very nervous... because there's too many cop shows and too many god damned cops! And where are the women? When you think of the CBC you think of **Kevin O'Leary**. It's all day O'Leary! Once upon a time you'd think of **Barbara Frum** or **Pamela Wallen**. There used to be women — not just men! And all those men in suits — all those guys on late-night TV in black suits, ties and shirts! I find their points of view really interesting, but isn't it time to hear from somebody else who doesn't have a suit on?

Theresa: The only place women rule the roost at all is in day-time talk shows.

Mary: Yeah, in the day-time ghetto where there are no advertisers and no money.

Theresa: You were successful pitching your TV series *Hatching*, *Matching*, and *Dispatching*. How was that experience — being a producer and a writer?

Mary: Oh it was great but it didn't last. We had seven shows I think. It was devastating really, because it was the favourite thing of my favourite things that I've ever done. But you can't really complain about TV because what is TV about really? It's about selling soap.

Theresa: What's next for you?

Mary: I'm still touring in Ontario with *Dancing with Rage* and I'm in the midst of writing a novel for Harper and Collins called *Crying for the Moon*. It's something I've wanted to do since I was 14 but never had the guts. When you're presenting things to people, you can be there with them. When they're reading it you have no control.

Theresa: I wish you continued fearfulness with all your projects.

Mary: Thank you very much for being there to present the award, Theresa. I loved it.

I'm really proud of you guys for starting the Women's Committee at ACTRA. It's time again. Freedom requires vigilance. That's fantastic! ☆

Theresa Tova's career spans film, TV, the Broadway musical stage and jazz concerts around the world. She is Treasurer of ACTRA National and ACTRA PRS and ACTRA Toronto Vice-President.



Theresa Tova, Mary Walsh, previous recipients of this honour Tantoo Cardinal, Shirley Douglas and Sandi Ross, in the lobby of the Panasonic Theatre after Mary's performance. Photos: Jag Gundu

Mary Walsh on-stage following her one-woman show *Dancing with Rage* at the Panasonic Theatre in Toronto, March 6.

ACTRA National Treasurer Theresa Tova and ACTRA Women's Committee Co-Chair Shannon Jardine presented the award to Mary. Photos: Jag Gundu



WE CAN'T BE, WHAT WE CAN'T SEE

FOCUS
ON
WOMEN
2013

Gender Report 2013

by **Marit Stiles**

ACTRA National Director of
Public Policy and Communications

Two young girls are talking about which character they want to be when they grow up: The girlfriend?; The woman talking about her boyfriend?; or The girl whose top fell off while she was being chased by the guy with the knife?

This is the "Get Women Working" video that is spreading online like wildfire.

"The goal of our Get Women Working video is to reinvigorate the presence of the female voice. Our Toronto Women's Committee toolkit sessions are set up to help women's stories be told, seen and heard. We are also looking to create more work for our members."

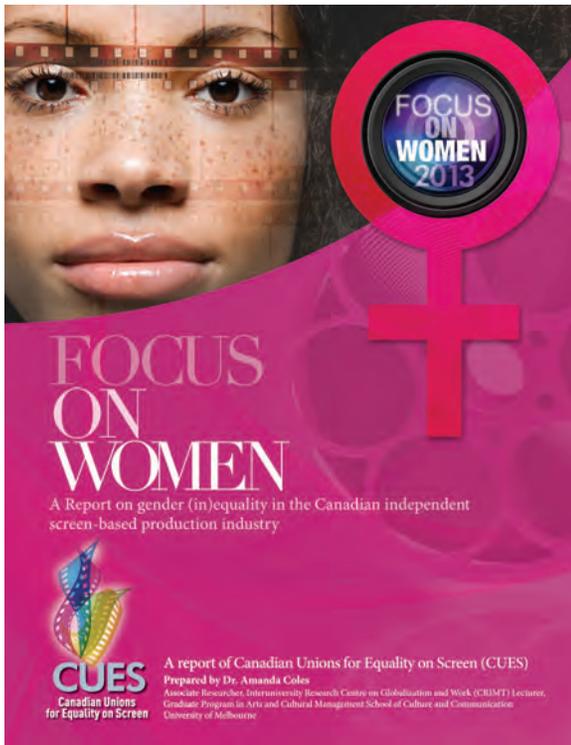
- Nicole St. Martin, ACTRA Toronto Women's Committee Co-Chair

Women in this industry have been trying to address the inequality of women, both behind and in front of the camera, for a couple of generations. We know that in order to get our stories onto the screen, it helps to have more women working at all levels of production. And we also know that the stories we tell have enormous influence on how young women, in particular, see themselves and their opportunities.

In March 2013, ACTRA National Treasurer **Theresa Tova** spoke at the International Women of Steel Conference in Pittsburgh before more than 1,000 women from around the world. She talked about the Bechdel Test as a way to better understand how women are being portrayed on screen. **Alison Bechdel** is a comic book artist, and one of her characters says that she only watches a film if it meets the following criteria: 1) It has to have at least two (named) women in it; 2) Who talk to each other; and 3) About something besides a man. "Try it," Theresa challenged, "Then think about how we can change that! You may be surprised at how much work we still have to do to be seen and heard!"

You may ask if this kind of thing really makes a difference in the big picture. What exactly are we fighting for? Haven't we – us Canadian women – already fought and won the important battles for women's rights? We've certainly made massive gains over the last few generations. But some important issues still do exist.

Did you know, for example, that on average Canadian women still earn 32% less than men? And for ethno-culturally diverse women, that plummets to a mere 43 cents to every dollar a man earns.



Focus on Women 2013 is a groundbreaking report that shines a light on where women are, and aren't, working in the Canadian screen industry—by the numbers!

comprised of representatives from industry guilds and unions including ACTRA, DGC, IATSE, NABET 700 CEP, WGC and UDA. Working in collaboration with Rina Fraticelli, founder of Women in View, and Canadian academic Dr. Amanda Coles, an IATSE member from the Interuniversity Research Centre on Globalization and Work (CRIMT), we struck a working group in 2010 to start looking at the hard numbers and asking the difficult questions.

In 2010, ACTRA President **Ferne Downey** and ACTRA National Women's Committee Chair **Christine Willes** were inspired at the 2010 three-day international conference, **SexMoneyMedia**, that they had attended in Vancouver. The conference was prompted by research commissioned by an (now-defunct) organization of media professionals which was conducting research on the employment of women in B.C.'s independent and service sectors. Fraticelli had been brought in to help analyze the results and recommend some next steps, after leaving her position as the head of the NFB's Pacific and Yukon studio. The data was staggering. And the international gathering of media artists, scholars, government and the entertainment industry had been a critical first step in addressing the situation... but this was clearly just the beginning.

ACTRA women came away inspired to do more. It wasn't enough to talk about the problem. Organizations in various countries have really tackled the issue head on... such as Sweden where a 'gender equality checklist' has been introduced. They heard about the research and education initiatives spearheaded by the Geena Davis Institute on Gender and the Media -- whose motto is, 'If she can see it, she can be it'. And the 'Celluloid Ceiling' report from the Centre for the Study of Women in Television and Film in the U.S. Our Women's Committee decided that the time had come to make a real difference in our own backyard.

ACTRA already had a re-energized Women's Committee, but to make a real difference we reached out more broadly to other industry unions and guilds that have unique access to information about who is working in what capacity in our industry. We've pooled that information and decided to issue a report that would act as a marker, from which point we can measure the success of any future initiatives.

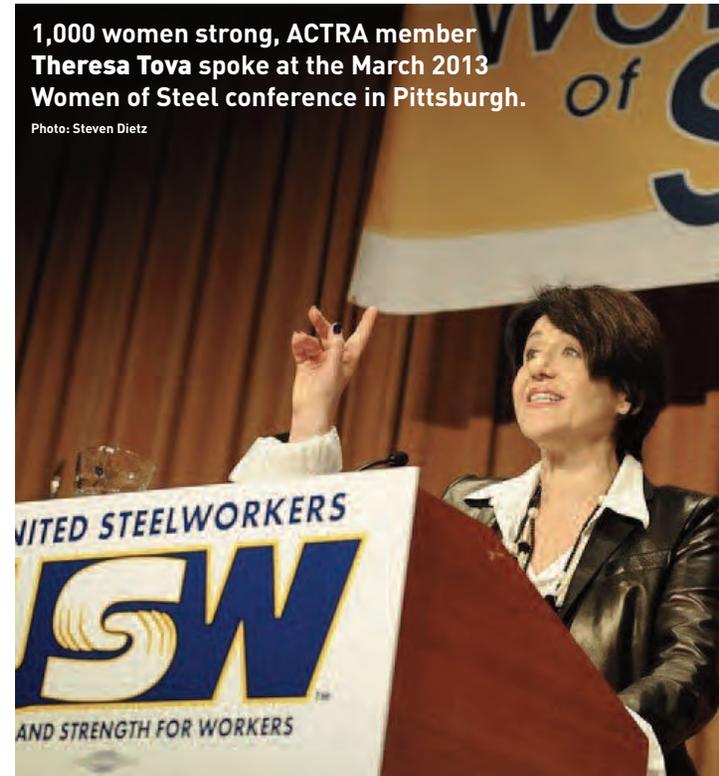
While we're sending more women to undergrad programs in our universities (in many programs, they now outnumber male students), their prospects once they graduate just aren't the same.

Hey, I'm a mother to two girls. And I worry that no matter what kind of role models they are surrounded by, their aspirations are shaped in part by the media's portrayal of women. Spend a morning perusing 'tween tv' and try to find something that involves girls NOT just worrying about boys, and I'll show you a unicorn. A big shiny one. Yup.

At ACTRA this issue links directly to women's work opportunities. In my eight years at ACTRA I've heard from many women about their frustration finding work, any work, after a 'certain age'. Many of them have been busting out, creating their own vehicles, trying to tear down the barriers to create good, meaty roles for women. But notwithstanding this, it's sometimes hard to convince folks that we still have a big hill to climb. Our job isn't done.

ACTRA and a heap of other industry unions and guilds are stepping up to the plate, offering a glimpse into how women in the 'screen-based' industries are faring, by the numbers.

Focus on Women 2013 is the product of the efforts of the Canadian Unions for Equality On Screen (CUES) which is



1,000 women strong, ACTRA member Theresa Tova spoke at the March 2013 Women of Steel conference in Pittsburgh.

Photo: Steven Dietz

Nicole St. Martin and ACTRA Women's Committee Chair Christine Willes.

Photo: Steven Dietz



article continues on page 26



**Here are some facts and figures from our first Gender Report:
Focus on Women 2013, to be released in June 2013:**

- From production coordinators, grips, camera technicians and hairstylists to writers, directors and actors, women are underrepresented in nearly all production job categories.
- The gender split sharply favours men: as their career ladders progress up, so too do their decision making levels and income brackets. This is particularly evident in some of the key creative positions that define Canadian content (i.e. directors and cinematographers).
- Women in 'actor' roles under ACTRA agreements are earning on average between 83-89% of what their male counterparts earn in a year.
- Principal performers earn less than male counterparts and have fewer opportunities.
- While female performers' earnings climb through their twenties and peak at about 30 years of age, their male performer counterparts see their earnings increase until they peak at about 50 years of age, and then dramatically decline.
- Male screenwriters hit their peak earnings potential between 35-55, with 35% of the top income earners in this age range. Earning potentials for women peak between 35-45, with 48% of the top female wage earners in this age bracket. Disturbingly, only 24% of women reached the top income bracket in the 45-55 age range.

It's a familiar tale. And we know that some things HAVE changed in our industry. But there's still work to be done. That's why initiatives such as the TAWC toolkit sessions and our support of Women in the Directors' Chair are so important.

ACTRA members across the country are working together at their branches and are embarking on their own initiatives. CUES is going to keep looking at, and reporting on, the stats so we can identify where change is happening. We are giving producers a 'checklist' to help them consider how women are being employed on their projects, both behind and on the screen.

In another ten years, we want those little girls in the TAWC video to be our producers, cinematographers, directors and stars: to break down barriers and create roles that show women, in all our diversity and complexity, to be industry decision-makers and strong role models. We are ready for "action"!

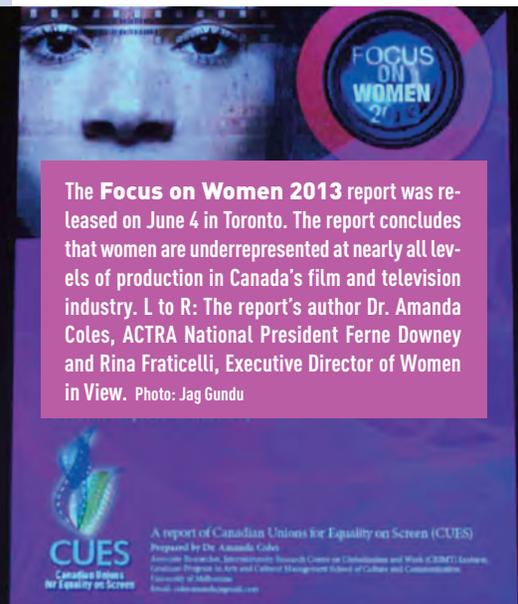
Bring it on. ☆



Get Women Working video
by ACTRA Toronto Women's
Committee (TAWC).

Pictured here L to R:
Reiya Downs and Riele Downs

**Check it out
at actratoronto.com.**



The **Focus on Women 2013** report was released on June 4 in Toronto. The report concludes that women are underrepresented at nearly all levels of production in Canada's film and television industry. L to R: The report's author Dr. Amanda Coles, ACTRA National President Ferne Downey and Rina Fraticelli, Executive Director of Women in View. Photo: Jag Gundu



A report of Canadian Unions for Equality on Screen (CUES)
Prepared by Dr. Amanda Coles
Associate Professor, International Research Centre on Unemployment and Work (IRCU) Eastern
Canadian Program in Arts and Cultural Management School of Culture and Communication,
University of Melbourne
Email: andamand@unimelb.edu.au



**Check out ACTRA's Women's
Committee at actra.ca and go
to www.cueonscreen.ca for
the Focus on Women 2013
Report.**



Our Hard-hitting-Hip Hop Union Message!

Solidarity: for real

by Luc Roderique

When Michael Rouse came to me with the idea to film a short hip-hop music video, I knew that I wanted to be a part of the project. He planned to offer up a hard-hitting, yet positive message, which would get across all of his views on unions, and the current situations and propaganda plaguing them.

My being cast for this video happened quite by coincidence, as it often does in our line of work: my friend contacted me after a party at his house. A friend of his, who had attended the same party mentioned looking for a rapper to be a part of a short video and my friend suggested me.

I'm by no means a professional rapper, but my friend knew that I have some rhyming skills and hip-hop has always been one of my deepest loves — second to acting. I got in contact with Michael to find out that the project would be submitted into a contest created by the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC). The theme of this *One Minute Message Contest* is to educate the public on the need for unions.

The timing for this was great. I had recently performed at Alberta Theatre Projects in a Greenthumb Theatre co-pro stage production of Canada's first full-length hip-hop musical *Ash Rizin*, taking on the role of the politically conscious rapper and hip-hop producer Dee Skillz. It had always been a dream of mine to be able to tell a relevant story by combining my two loves: acting and performing music (specifically hip-hop). How better than through our art can we possibly bring a positive message to people? And one that would be memorable!

Remembering the joy I felt being able to fulfill this dream on stage, I knew I wanted to experience it again. I truly believe that film, music and storytelling are the most powerful ways to reach people with messages that you would like to remain in their hearts and minds.

After my short meeting with Michael (in which I spit a few rhymes) he decided that we would make a good team. The whole production process was very quick: I took some time to edit the preliminary rhyme that he had written; we had a rehearsal or two; and we recorded the audio track at a friend's home studio (literally in his living room). We shot the video a

few days later with help from a few of Michael's close friends at a small studio at Simon Fraser University, he then edited the footage and entered it into the CLC contest on time. Soon, we were to find out that we had made it to the top five video picks and the winner would be decided by public votes.

We won!

Upon hearing that our video won the CLC contest, I reflected back upon the experience, and was quite pleased. To think that our small group of like-minded, yet differently-focused artists, who had been complete strangers only a few weeks earlier, had together created a winning video that people enjoyed. It just may, in some small way, help further our union movement and inspire fellow artists to stick together—and to not settle for less than what we deserve.

My fellow collaborators are union members and artists. Michael is a member of IATSE Local 891 and I'm both a UBCP/ACTRA and Canadian Actors' Equity Association member. We understand the need for a proactive stance when it comes to fighting for the rights for decent wages and working conditions for artistic professionals. This is an issue that affects us all. And we should never be silent about it. ☆

Over 10,000 views !

Check out the video: <http://m.youtube.com/#/watch?v=To1110a3J4>

Luc Roderique is a professional actor and UBCP/ACTRA member working in theatre, film and television. He hails from Ottawa and now calls Vancouver his home. Selected film credits include *Supernatural*, *Fairly Legal*, *Caprica* and *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*. Upcoming are Legendary Pictures' *The Seventh Son* and *Godzilla*.

Luc Roderique

Glamorous. Talented. Canadian.



Meg Tilly

George Stroumboulopoulos

Kristin Lehman

Sandra Oh

SAVE THE DATE: MARCH 9, 2014



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YEAA makes a big splash at ReelWorld



Two sold out screenings marked another victory for YEAA at the ReelWorld Film Festival. YEAA is the Young Emerging Actors Assembly, a community for young actors at ACTRA Toronto.

In step with ReelWorld's mandate "to promote and foster racially and culturally diverse artists within the film industry," YEAA filmmakers **Sarah Booth, Sam Coyle, Kristina Esposito, Imogen Grace, Ryan Kotack, Brian Mifsud, Clara Pasieka, Philip Stonhouse** and **Richard Young** produced nine new short films. The films: *The Haircut, Bejide, Audition Day, Get Away Car, The Change, A Man is a Man is a Man, The Sound That Broke the Silence, The New Domain,* and *To Hell With Love* were screened together on April 14 at the Famous Players Canada Square in Toronto.

In 2012, YEAA screened six short films directed, produced by and starring YEAA members at ReelWorld. Some of these films found further life at Cannes, TIFF, Reel Asian Film Festival and CBC.

YEAA is a committee of ACTRA Toronto performers who play under 30. The committee is a community for networking, sharing resources and promoting Toronto and Canada's rising stars.

Email YEAA@actratoronto.com and follow @YEAAToronto on Twitter.

ACTRA Montreal's new YEAA committee held their first event called "Mega-Apprentice-Casting-Fest-A-Palooza" on May 4. Apprentice members had the opportunity to strut their stuff to Montreal's top casting directors.

Follow YEAA MTL on Facebook or email yeaaml@gmail.com to get involved.

YEAA

young emerging actors assembly



To Hell, With Love is the tale of a man (**Shawn Baichoo**) desperate to prove the existence of an afterlife. Unfortunately for one feisty prostitute (**Sarah Booth**), his obsession becomes her nightmare in a battle for survival.



Bejide stars **Clara Pasieka** and **Raven Dauda**. Set in St. James Town, Toronto in the fall of 1995, a young, white school teacher and a Rwandan refugee must find a way to see eye to eye while the fate of a seven year old boy hangs in the balance.



APPLAUSE

From Coast to Coast Your Efforts WERE Noticed

APPLAUSE

ACTRA Awards in Toronto

Tatiana Maslany and **Shawn Doyle** have won awards for best outstanding female and male performances, respectively, presented at the 11th annual ACTRA Awards in Toronto, on February 23. Tatiana for *Picture Day's* and Shawn for *The Disappeared*. **Shannon Kook-Chun** won the outstanding voice performance award for her work in **Jonathan Ng's** animated short *Requiem for Romance*.

Shirley Douglas, received ACTRA Toronto's 2013 Award of Excellence, presented by **Rick Mercer**. Perhaps best known to Canadian audiences for playing May Bailey in *Wind at My Back*, the award recognizes Shirley's accomplished career and her industry advocacy.

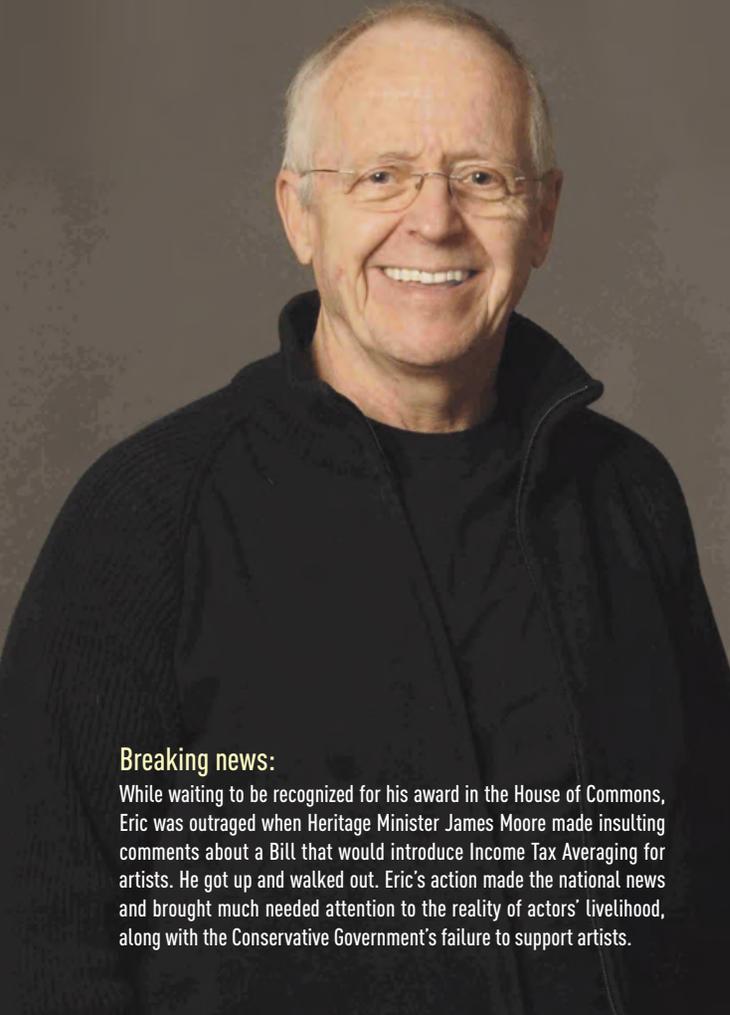
Shawn Doyle, ACTRA Toronto President **David Sparrow**, award host **Elvira Kurt**, **Shirley Douglas** and **Shannon Kook-Chun**. Photo Jag Gundu



Eric Peterson Honoured

Eric Peterson has been honoured with a Governor General's Performing Arts Award for Lifetime Achievement. His list of honours and awards includes his appointment to The Order of Canada, ACTRA Toronto's 2008 Award of Excellence, the 2009 Earle Grey Award and five Gemini Awards.

Known for his television roles on *Corner Gas* and *Street Legal*, said Eric on receiving this honour, "It's been important to me to remain in this country and work here... I've been really lucky and I've had a lot of fun and a lot of success doing it." Photo Jag Gundu



Breaking news:

While waiting to be recognized for his award in the House of Commons, Eric was outraged when Heritage Minister James Moore made insulting comments about a Bill that would introduce Income Tax Averaging for artists. He got up and walked out. Eric's action made the national news and brought much needed attention to the reality of actors' livelihood, along with the Conservative Government's failure to support artists.

Alan Bratt Honoured

ACTRA Saskatchewan President **Alan Bratt** received the Distinguished Alumni award from the University of Regina Theatre Department. The Award was presented by department head **Kathleen Irwin** at the end of the production of Aristophanes' *The Birds*. Photo Allison Roynon



THE NEW CANADIAN SCREEN AWARDS!

The Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television's new Canadian Screen Awards for TV and digital media, with the Genies for film. Canada's new awards show was hosted by **Martin Short** at Toronto's Sony Centre and broadcast nationally on the CBC.

In the film category, **James Cromwell** won best actor in Michael McGowan's *Still Mine*. For TV, CTV's *Flashpoint* won best drama and best actor for **Enrico Colantoni**. *Less than Kind*, the black comedy shot in Winnipeg that airs on HBO Canada and TMN/Movie Central in the U.S., won best comedy and best comic actress for **Wendel Meldrum**. **Meg Tilly** won best dramatic actress for Global's wartime drama *Bomb Girls* and **Gerry Dee** won best comic actor for the CBC comedy *Mr. Dee*. **Amber Marshall** of *Heartland* was named Canada's Favourite Screen Star by her fans.

This year the Academy honoured ACTRA member **Kim Cattrall** for outstanding film and television artistic contribution.

For the full list of winners go to academy.ca.

From top clockwise: **Gerry Dee**, **Amber Marshall**, **James Cromwell** and **Wendel Meldrum**



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Passings



Rita MacNeil

1944 – 2013

Rita's powerful voice explored genres from gospel to folk to country. As a singer and songwriter she recorded 24 albums and sold millions of records. Her Christmas TV specials became a Canadian holiday tradition, and it was those shows which saw the singer become an ACTRA member.

I was fortunate enough to work with Rita at the Mental Health Foundation fundraiser in Nova Scotia just weeks before her death. Her appearance was a closely-guarded secret. As Rita entered the stage, to a standing ovation, she found the time to tease me about the silly costume I was wearing. Many in the crowd were moved to tears. The 75 Nova Scotia businessmen whom she sang with were stunned and honoured to share her stage and sing the mining anthem, "Working Man".

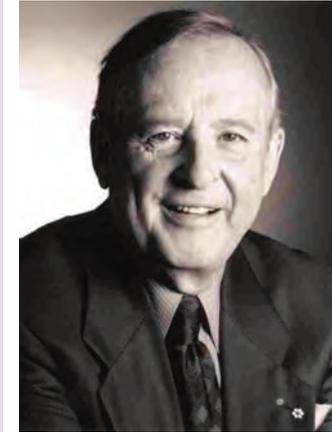
The infamous, irreverent *Trailer Park Boys* welcomed Rita to their fold when she appeared as herself in a special episode. The plot involved her tour bus being hijacked by the boys, resulting in Rita MacNeil harvesting a crop of pot!

Her funeral took place in her beloved hometown of Big Pond. Canada mourns the loss of our beloved Rita.

• [Jeremy Webb](#)

Laurier La Pierre

1929 – 2012



He loved this country! The Canadian flag flying outside his home was huge!

As my husband very aptly put it, "He had a great kick at the can!" When you look at what this man achieved in his 83 years, it is quite 'astounding' (a word Laurier used often). A writer, broadcaster, professor, Officer of the Order of Canada,

Senator... the acronyms at the end of his name astound.

Laurier entered 'The House of ACTRA' as Host of *This Hour Has Seven Days*, followed by numerous TV shows in Montreal, then Vancouver. His opinions were strong and he was not afraid to voice them. I had the pleasure of being my father-in-law's "date" at many events when he was Chairman of Telefilm Canada. We enjoyed ourselves tremendously. The Public Laurier gave himself to his beloved Canada. The Private Laurier gave himself to his friends. He threw THE best parties and delightfully stole the Stage.

Laurier is missed by his two sons, Thomas and Dominic, five amazing grandchildren, his partner Harvey, two daughters-in-law and countless friends! His home had enough rooms for us all!

Farewell, Dad, Grandpapa, Laurier! As you always said, "Vive le Canada!"

• [Cary Lawrence](#)

Daphne Goldrick

1930 - 2012

Daphne Goldrick was a powerhouse of talent, determination, intelligence and wit. Her extensive career took her from the early days of CBC Radio drama, to voice-over work for animated series. In between, along with her work in film and TV, she shone in countless theatre productions for Totem Theatre, Vancouver Playhouse, City Stage, Arts Club Theatre and Green Thumb. In addition to her performing skills Daphne was an accomplished lyricist and her satirical revues (including "Only In Vancouver" with music by **Bruce Kellett**) were hugely popular.

Daphne was also a fearless advocate for her fellow artists, volunteering tirelessly for both CAEA (receiving the Larry McCance Award in 2007) and ACTRA. While on the board of Actra Fraternal she strove to enhance insurance benefits for senior artists.

In 1998 Daphne was inducted into the B.C. Entertainment Hall of Fame.

She is deeply missed, loved and celebrated by her family, friends and colleagues across the country.

- Gabrielle Jones



Stompin' Tom Connors

1936 - 2013

Stompin' Tom Connors was a true Canadian folk legend, and story-teller. Songs like *Canada Day*, *Up Canada Way*, *The Hockey Song*, *Bud the Spud* and *Sudbury Saturday Night* have come to be regarded as national anthems that embrace all things Canadiana.

Born **Thomas Charles Connors** in Saint John, New Brunswick, his life of poverty, orphanages, hitchhiking and playing bars would eventually turn into a life of hit songs. Due to his unwavering love for promoting his home country, he received many accolades including his very own postage stamp. He was an Officer of the Order of Canada, received the Governor General's Performing Arts Award, was the recipient of both the Queen's Gold and Diamond Jubilee Medals and earned three honorary doctorate degrees (Saint Thomas University in Fredericton, New Brunswick; "Laws", University of Toronto; "Laws", and the University of P.E.I.; "Letters").

Tom is survived by his wife Lena, two sons, two daughters and several grandchildren.

Passings

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