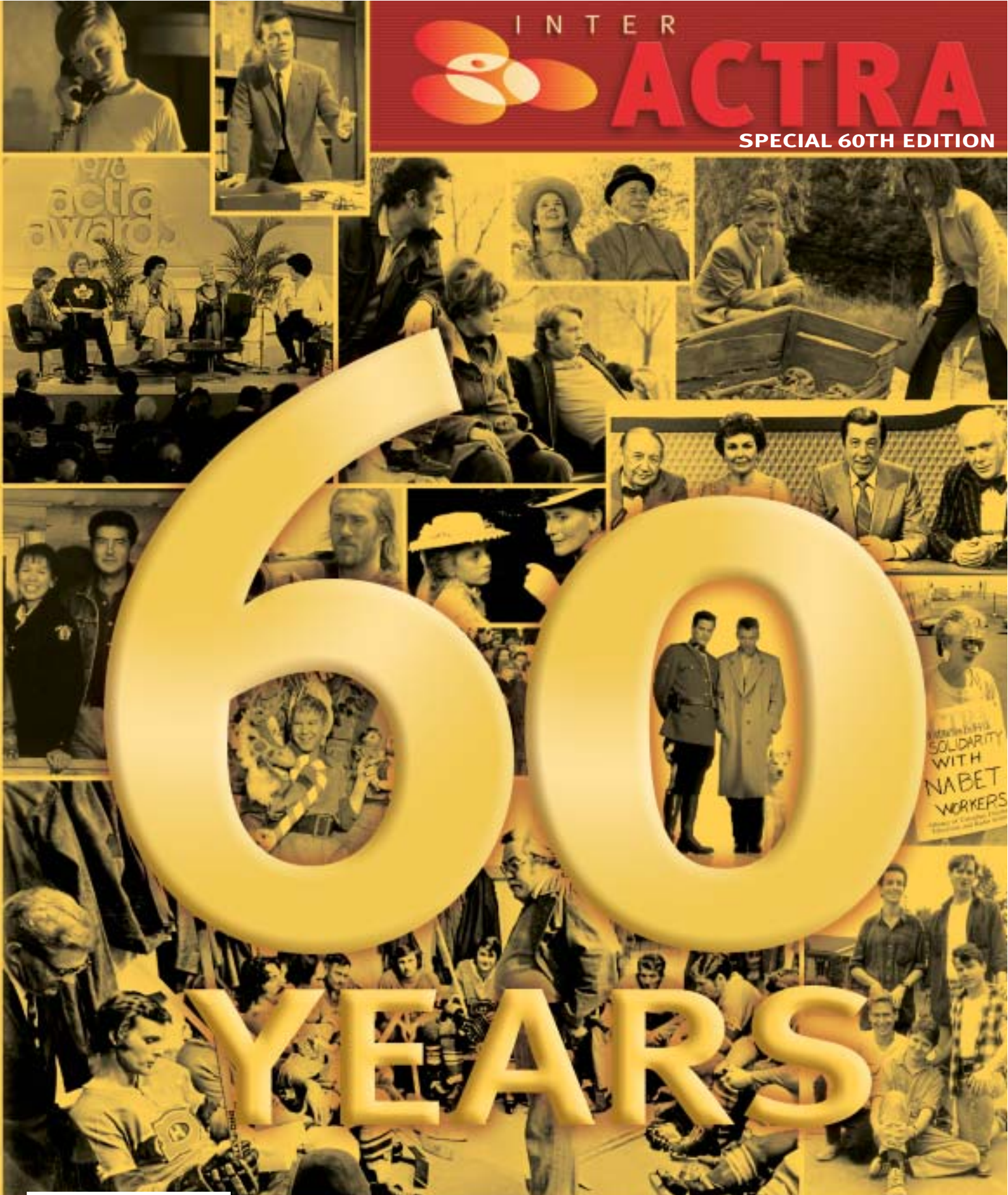




INTER

ACTRA

SPECIAL 60TH EDITION



\$4.67



Celebrating 60 years: THE ACTRA STORY This special issue of *InterACTRA* celebrates ACTRA's 60th Anniversary – 60 years of great performances, 60 years of fighting for Canadian culture, and 60 years of advances in protecting performers. From a handful of brave and determined radio performers in the '40s to a strong 21,000-member union today, this is our story.

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ACTRA SALUTES ACTRA

Congratulations from our
actors, broadcasters and
recording artists to yours.



The American Federation of Television and Radio Artists



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the ACTRA story

To all the members of ACTRA who, along with dedicated staff, worked to build this strong voice for Canada's artists; to those past pioneers whose six decades of self-sacrifice and steadfast adherence to principles of solidarity, fairness and artistic freedom are proudly presented and gratefully acknowledged herein; and to today's 'pioneers-in-training', whose present dedication and accomplishments will be viewed with similar pride and gratitude on our 100th Anniversary, this special issue of InterACTRA is dedicated.



THE GOVERNOR GENERAL
LA GOUVERNEURE GÉNÉRALE

RIDEAU HALL
OTTAWA

My warmest greetings to everyone celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists. Having been a long-standing member of ACTRA, I am proud to congratulate this organization for its championing of Canadian culture and home-grown productions.

Through the media, you are expanding people's understanding of the world and developing possibilities for our differing views of human affairs. Artists have a special obligation to reflect modern society. They provide a texture and description of the lives that we cannot live but know are lived around us. In this, ACTRA has served Canada well, and this is what we have come to expect of cinema, radio and television arts.

You must continue to pursue that which gives expression to the Canadian spirit, as well as that which gives to our dreams creativity, insight and relevance – for each and every one of us as Canadians.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adrienne Clarkson'.

Adrienne Clarkson

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Celebrating our ACTRA family

Throughout 2003, in meetings and celebrations across the country, I've spoken with dozens of members about our dear organization. The occasion of ACTRA's 60th Anniversary has brought a flood of reminiscences, and an outpouring of pride. Through the wonderful stories our members have told, and our extensive library of material in the form of newsletters, press clippings, collective agreements and recorded interviews with members, *The ACTRA Story* has emerged as an exciting narrative. For 60 years, Canadian artists have been the heroes of this story; it's a tale of passion and perseverance.

There were compelling reasons for performers to come together in a national organization way back in 1943. As you'll learn in these pages, we first united in the early '40s in local organizations that were destined to come together as one. Performers were brave and strong back then. They knew they had to stick together if they hoped to earn more than a couple of dollars a day. They had to organize their ranks one member at a time.

Notes from meetings six decades ago remark that members had to approach non-members at each radio recording session and ask them to join the society. If the non-member refused, our forebears had to approach the CBC producer and persuade him – producers were only 'hims' back then – not to hire said performer until he or she became a member of the society. Can any one of us imagine doing that today each time we report to set? That's why we have a union – the union does the organizing and protects our professional work environment for us. Still, our collective strength depends on the commitment of every individual member. And today, with over 21,000 members, ACTRA is more powerful and better resourced than ever before.



Thor Bishopric in his early days as an ACTRA member.

the
ACTRA
story

ACTRA has a dramatic history – one worth telling and remembering. How we got started is impressive – the fact that we're still at it is a triumph. We came together during World War II. We've weathered a string of acronyms, a long, drawn-out break-up with our writers and broadcast journalists, a break-up and a make-up with our British Columbia members, various internal scandals and lawsuits. But through it all, our members' passion and artistry have inspired ACTRA to adapt, just as we've adapted in our working lives.

Something feels special about ACTRA these days. I've been a member for over 30 years. Many of my friends and loved ones are members. While ACTRA has always felt like a family, this year it's especially so. There's a deeper sense of history, gratitude and pride. The pioneers who built our union and grew it into one of Canada's most distinguished institutions have given us a great gift. We must all foster and cherish it for at least the next 60 years. We owe it to them and we owe it to each other. Happy Anniversary ACTRA!



Thor Bishopric is serving his third term as ACTRA's National President.

Thor Bishopric
ACTRA's National President



**Congratulations to ACTRA
and its membership on
60 years of great productions**

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*Screen Actors Guild congratulates
ACTRA on their sixtieth anniversary.*

Congratulations ACTRA



NATIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Celebrating strength through unity

My first day at ACTRA. A dedicated band of people in a compact suite of offices. Bhoop Singh was there, as was Rita Ridgway, Natasha Gromoff and Margaret Collier. Also, the man who had recently successfully encouraged dramatic change in the organization's outlook, Paul Siren, was there. Paul's considerable trade union experience, breadth of vision, tireless efforts to reinstate fiscal responsibility, combined with patience and foresight, added spice to the ACTRA mix.

As his Assistant General Secretary, I learned much from Paul, especially how to conduct successful collective bargaining negotiations, and the importance of international ties in an industry growing more global. His contribution to the success of the International Federation of Actors (FIA), where he was instrumental in generating cordial relations between Cold War antagonists the USA and USSR, is legendary.

We weathered many challenges in a rapidly changing industry. ACTRA responded. From our first 'industrial action' in the 1970s, the *Goldrush Follies* dispute through the federal Capital Cost Allowance of the '70s and '80s, to the persistent pursuit of Use payments and strengthened payment structure and enforcement via collective bargaining, we demonstrated that a unified ACTRA membership could achieve significant goals.

After 12 years, I left to work for the Screen Actors Guild, returning, in 1992, to an ACTRA in turmoil. Many B.C. members had joined UBCP; ACTRA Writers Guild was separating to form the Writers' Guild of Canada; and our ACTRA Media Guild lost its jurisdiction at the CBC. The next four years were

tumultuous and difficult. In March 1993, the organization formally restructured as a federation of local unions, i.e. a decentralized national organization. The 1996 Kelleher Agreement provided a roadmap to resolving the ACTRA/UBCP conflict, allowing ACTRA to focus on furtherance of collective bargaining and public policy initiatives.

During the 1990s, with our focus concentrated on the improvement of terms and conditions in national collective agreements, ACTRA once again assumed its rightful leadership role in public policy advocacy – a role inadequately pursued over the previous 10 years. We've focused attention on the recognition of the film and television industry's significance, and our members' contribution to Canada's culture and economic prosperity. We fostered provisions ensuring roles for Canadian performers in Canadian production. In 1995, following approval of our first national strike mandate, we introduced 'Distributors' Gross Revenue' into the IPA to replace the 'net receipts' formula, a watershed achievement.

Together we can achieve anything. ACTRA's public policy initiatives – lobby activities in Ottawa, coalition-building in support of reinstatement of funding and a growing number of other political initiatives, demonstrate our commitment to achieving public and governmental support for the Canadian entertainment industry. ACTRA's unity of purpose – exemplified by strong strike mandates and a professional approach to collective bargaining – assures improvements in our collective agreements that continue to have a significant impact on the professional life of Canadian performers.

the
ACTRA
story



Stephen Waddell is ACTRA's National Executive Director.

Annie Leake



Happy 60th anniversary...

and many more successful years to an association that has proven to be a valuable and open-minded partner.





NATIONAL FILM BOARD
OF CANADA
OFFICE NATIONAL DU FILM
DU CANADA

THE ACTRA STORY

60 years of passion and perseverance

the
ACTRA
story

This is the story of ACTRA. It is a rolling tale of achievement by a remarkable group of people who, with a bred-in-the-bone Canadian independence and feistiness, insisted that the story of this land must be told of and by the people of this land. Bold words. But performers are for the most part, bold people, and it is the people of ACTRA whose volunteerism and commitment to their craft have made this union strong.

Sixty years is a long time in the history of any union, but perhaps the fact that this organization was built for and by performers makes it appear, at least at first glance, even more remarkable. As performers, we spend many of our days competing against one another. But when the auditions are over, we have proved ourselves to be a collective bunch, willing to sacrifice the good of the individual for the good of the whole. That ACTRA has endured is testimony to the perseverance of our members. While the players have changed, there has always been a new cast waiting in the wings, ready to lend their energy and vision to reinforcing and renewing our union.

“They must be more than a union.”

– Jim O’Neil,
Secretary-Treasurer
CAW (1994)

It hasn’t always been easy. The challenges that brought our founders together in 1943 are essentially the same ones we face in 2003: 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. As performers, we know there is always room for improvement and sometimes we have had to deliver again and again and again. But like the best performers – ACTRA’s delivery has only become stronger and more firmly rooted each time.



Photo courtesy CBC Still Photo Collection



Photo courtesy CBC Still Photo Collection, Toronto

- 1 Radio drama in the 1940s: John Drainie, Jack Mather and Frank Peddie in *Jake & The Kid*.
- 2 Tommy Tweed, one of our founding members.
- 3 Ken Dalziel, Blain Mathe, Jimmy Namaro, Joe Niosi, Eddie Allen, Lloyd Edwards, Les Foster, Barry Wood, Bert Niosi, Kathleen Stokes and Bobby Gimby in *The Happy Gang*.

Thank you Mum

Had the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation not existed in 1943, ACTRA would not be celebrating 60 years – and probably not exist in its present form. Our development followed Canada’s national broadcaster’s development. As ‘Mother Corp’ brought the wonders of radio, and later television, to all Canadians wherever they lived in this giant country of ours, ACTRA was there, establishing branches to serve the artists being nurtured, encouraged and fed by the CBC.

Our relationship, turbulent at times, has been more than symbiotic. We’re family! Like all families, we’ve had our squabbles but we support each other when the going gets tough. Some suggest Old Mum CBC should be privatized. We totally disagree, as do a growing majority of Canadians who believe in a strong public broadcasting system. With them, ACTRA members acknowledge the debt we owe the CBC and celebrate the legacy of excellence we continue to create together. Thanks Mum!



We're here and we're staying

Canadian performers were already household names when war broke out in 1939. Their voices were welcomed into living rooms across the country as CBC radio broadcast live, daily episodes of locally written, acted and produced drama. Attentive audiences lived through the latest heroic flight of a Lancaster bomber in *Calling "L" For Lankey*, laughed at the antics of *The Happy Gang* while bolting down lunch before returning to war work, worried along with *Jake and the Kid* about the problems of growing up on the Prairies, and commiserated on the latest baking success or failure of *Ma Perkins*.

As the war intensified, pioneering talents such as John Drainie, Bud Knapp, Jane Mallett, Tommy Tweed, Lorne Greene and Ruth Springford liberated the thirsty imaginations of audiences across a growing trans-Canada network. They wove stories that instilled pride and offered comfort during the anxious days of war, especially to those concerned for loved ones overseas.

As radio's reach grew during the '40s, so did the need for educational material for use in the classrooms of the nation through *The Schools Broadcasts*,

and to share know-how to farming communities through daily, local doses of *The Farm Broadcast*.

Work opportunities for performers and writers were exploding, but the paycheques didn't follow suit. The creators of this invaluable work lived a hand-to-mouth existence spending many hours, writing, performing and often directing these dramatic offerings, all for the princely sum of, perhaps, \$15 a show. Commercials were recorded in bulk, often 13 in a row at 50¢ apiece. Actors were lucky to see \$6.50 for two-and-a-half days work on a series of ads that often ran for as long as four years.

Determined to make a living with their creative gifts, several Toronto-based artists decided there should be a more professional approach to this acting business and organized the first 'union style' collective in 1941, the Radio Artists of Toronto Society (RATS). Meetings were held in secret, and the group was happy to officially adopt the term 'society', knowing well the panic that would ensue if the word 'union' made the rounds. Overcoming disbelief from CBC management and nervousness from some parts of the acting community, RATS persevered, winning

1943 -
1953

the
ACTRA
story

"We were all so very enthusiastic, and so very, very naïve."

– Jean Tweed,
Founding member

- 1 One of our founding members, Jean Tweed.
- 2 A RATS dinner in the '40s.



Photo courtesy Terry Tweed



1941 Radio Artists Societies formed in Montreal and Toronto.

1943 ACRA (Association of Canadian Radio Artists) formed when artists groups in Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver and Winnipeg form a loose national coalition.

1943 American Federation of Labour grants a charter to the Radio Artists Union

No. 23502.

1945/46 First collective agreement (one page) covering work in radio.

1951 Massey/Levesque Royal Commission on Arts and Sciences report released – leading to creation of Canada Council and NFB. One of Canada's most significant reports on Canadian culture.

1943 -
1953the
ACTRA
story

better fees and more civilized working conditions.

Radio singers had also formed a collective, and in 1943, they merged their group with RATS. The singers argued that there was little dignity in being affiliated with rodents, and so it was decided that they would move forward as the Association of Canadian Radio Artists (ACRA). While the actors and singers were very clear on what they wanted in terms of rates and working conditions, they were not confident about their ability to bargain collectively with engagers. So, following a raucous meeting that attracted every artist in town, ACRA members voted to become affiliated with the American Federation of Labour.

Meanwhile, performers across the country were setting up local AFL-affiliated groups and demanding better working conditions. There was the Radio Artists of Montreal Society (RAMS – mammals were popular in the '40s) as well as organizations in Winnipeg and Vancouver. As these independent groups began to swap information, it became clear that if there was strength in numbers, there would be greater strength in larger numbers. In 1943, the regional societies came together to form the first national council. Three years later, Len Peterson successfully convinced ACRA that radio writers

too, should join their ranks.

The growing coalition won progressively better wages and working conditions for the members throughout the decade, eventually drawing up the very first collective agreement covering performers in Canada. The agreement was one-page long, and was kept in place by members who were asked to take six-month stints as volunteer stewards. When they weren't busy with their own gigs, stewards would visit studios and check in with their colleagues to make sure they were getting the treatment due to them under the negotiated agreement.

This agreement represented the first efforts by creators to establish a distinctly Canadian approach and a national standard for working conditions and rates. A young Patrick Watson joined ACRA and saw his fee on the daily series, *Kootenay Kid*, tripled! The rise from \$1 per show to \$3 per episode finally enabled him to get that bike he had been hankering after.

The promotion, increase and protection of performers' and writers' rights in radio continued to be ACRA's mission into the '50s, when a new and different creature blustered onto the scene, changing the business, culture, and the nature of communications forever: television.



Photo courtesy CBC Still Photo Collection and the National Archives of Canada



Photo courtesy CBC Still Photo Collection, Toronto

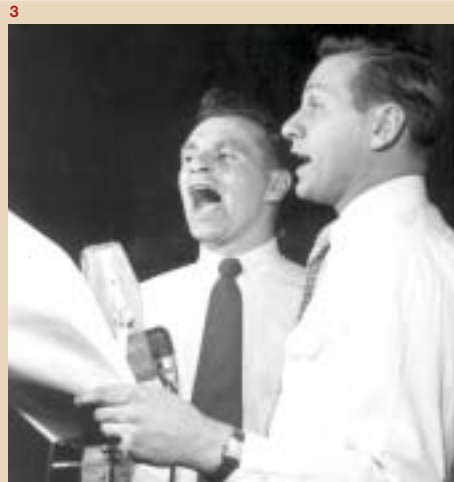


Photo courtesy CBC Still Photo Collection, Toronto

- 1 One of the early members of ACRA, and founder of The Actors' Fund, Jane Mallett.
- 2 One of our founding members, Lorne Greene, on radio in the 1940s.
- 3 Johnny Wayne and Frank Shuster's show started out on radio (1940s).



Photo courtesy CBC Still Photo Collection, Toronto

Johnny Wayne and Frank Shuster horsing around with a TV camera. The Wayne and Shuster Hour started on CBC television in 1954.

1952 ACRA members are the first faces on television when Canadian TV (CBC) is launched in Montreal and Toronto.

1952 ACRA withdraws from AFL – merges with UDA and writers to become Canadian Council of Authors and Artists (CCAA).

1957 The Actors' Fund of Canada started by five

prominent actors, each kicking in a one dollar bill: Jane Mallett, Donald Davis, Barbara Hamilton, Douglas Rain and Dennis Sweeting.

1958 Branch established in Ottawa.

1959 Producers' strike against CBC/Radio-Canada in Montreal. UDA leaves CCAA.

1959 Genesis of performers' insurance plan, that later becomes the Actra Fraternal Benefit Society (AFBS).

1959 Board of Broadcast Governors begins hearings on Canadian content regulations.

1960 CCAA battles CBC in fight for writers' agreement.

Hitting our marks in the new medium

Television didn't enter the scene timidly. It charged its way to the top in popular entertainment, terrifying some performers and spooking moviemakers who did their best to prevent this jerky, snow-filled, expensive medium from succeeding. But succeed it did and we were there from the start as our members faces were the first to flicker across the airwaves. Montreal's CBFT-TV sent out its first signals on September 6, 1952. Two days later, Toronto's station went on air, displaying a reversed CBC logo (the slide had been placed in backwards) followed by live weatherman Percy Saltzman.

Performers looked upon TV with a mix of awe and intimidation. While some ran for the familiarity of the stage and radio, most threw themselves into the creative challenges posed by the new medium.

The Biz was jumping and Canada was at the centre of the action. We became a world leader in television both technically and artistically. Canadian technicians devised revolutionary innovations, producing the best studio cameras and operators in the world. Performers were bolstered by worldwide

"We are very lucky to have among ourselves people who are willing to devote, some of them as much as half of their time to the interests of the artists for the only satisfaction of succeeding in organizing a strong union."

– CCAA President, Bernard Hogue, address to CCAA AGM, June 14, 1954

acclaim for their work at the new Stratford Festival, and earned a reputation for providing a perfect bridge between the classic British stiff-upper-lip and the Americanized let-it-all-hang-out Stanislavsky approach. Canadian actors were deservedly looked upon as second-to-none in handling any style of drama.

As thrilling as TV was, it was widely agreed that aggressive strategies would be required to tame this new beast. ACTRA withdrew from the AFL and banded together with their Francophone compatriots at

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ACTRA
story

1 Dan MacDonald and Iris Krangle in the NFB film *Island Romance* (1954).



Photo courtesy: Dan MacDonald

2 Beth Morris as Maggie and Jack Mathers as Mr. McGarrity in *Maggie Muggins*, a children's show first on radio, then TV from 1947 to 1962. Maggie Muggins was the creation of Fredericton-born teacher, writer and storyteller Mary Grannan.



Photo courtesy: CBC Still Photo Collection, Toronto

3 Laddie Dennis during rehearsal for live TV commercials for Westinghouse (1956).



Photo courtesy: Laddie Dennis. Photo: S.W. Caldwell

1960 CCAA withdraws Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) affiliation in protest over CLC's allowing French unions that had left CCAA to affiliate.

1963 ACTRA Branch established in Edmonton.

Gordon Pinsent in *Quentin Durgens, MP*, the '60s series shot in Ottawa and Toronto.

Photo courtesy: Gordon Pinsent

1963 CCAA becomes Association of Canadian Television and Radio

Artists (ACTRA). New constitution accepted.



ACTRA's 1963 Film Agreement



Copies of ACTRA's Newsmagazine from the 1960s.

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1963the
ACTRA
story

the Union des Artistes (UDA). Of course, what would another merger be without another name change? So it was that ACRA emerged as the Canadian Council of Authors and Artists (CCAA) in 1952. No longer tied to the AFL, the national organization was able to have one national agreement, and since Toronto's agreements were the most advanced at the time, they were adopted across the country.

Canada's position on top of the TV production world came under threat in the mid-'50s with the introduction of a newer and even more expensive technology: colour. It was clear that an injection of resources would be needed to keep pace with the new technological developments. Artists backed the CBC's pleas for more funding to help it maintain its pre-eminent position as a producer of world-quality programming. Ottawa hesitated, and finally, to general dismay, failed to provide the investment that was needed to stay at the fore. Reluctantly, many creators accepted foreign offers. Britain was the first in line – snapping up many talented performers, writers and directors who would become instrumental in expanding the BBC and creating the Independent Television Network (ITV).

Television had given artists a new avenue through which they could explore their creative passions. However, its arrival had also brought the seeds of a crop of challenges that would become familiar: the fight for Canadian programming on our airwaves, industrial and economic complications and internal rifts as we struggled to accommodate the creative and occupational demands of our increasingly diverse membership.

In 1959, the first of what would be a number of challenges to ACRA's solidarity reared its head during a strike by producers against the CBC/Radio-Canada in Quebec. Francophone members of the union supported the producers; English-speaking members did not. This split added to divisions that eventually led to the Francophone associations – Union des Artistes, Société des Auteurs, Société des Artistes – withdrawing from the CCAA.

In 1961, the Toronto branch refused to ratify the TV Commercial Schedule. This national/local division prompted a re-examination of the structure and constitution of the CCAA and ultimately, led to the formation of a new national organization in 1963: the Association of Canadian Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA). ACTRA was finally (re) born.



Photos courtesy CBC Still Photo Collection, Toronto



- 1 Bob Homme started out as *The Friendly Giant* on radio in 1953 in Madison, Wisconsin. Homme, Rusty the Rooster and Jerome the Giraffe, moved to Canada in 1958.
- 2 *Cross Canada Hit Parade* in the 1950s: Phyllis Marshall, Wally Koster and Joyce Hahn.
- 3 Another of the CBC *Farm Broadcasts* in the 1950s, *The Craigs*, with Frank Peddie, Alice Hill, Grace Webster and James Doohan.

1964 Political and financial crisis at ACTRA. Lawyer Bora Laskin, who later became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, brought in to investigate charges made against officers. Process prompts hiring of General Secretary Paul Siren to turn ACTRA around.

1964 Membership qualification system introduced via work permits.

1965 ACTRA branch formed in Newfoundland/Labrador.

1965 Americanization begins: *The World of Nature*, wildly popular Montreal show with English and French speaking actors is cancelled.

Replaced with *Wild Kingdom* from the U.S.

1966 ACTRA re-affiliates with CLC.

1966 Independent Producers' Association formed in order to negotiate with ACTRA.

1967 Canadian Film Development Corporation (now Telefilm) created.



Covers from ACTRA's member magazines in 1965 and 1967.

On with the show

Armed with collective agreements inherited from the CCAA, a brand new constitution, its own offices and experienced staff, ACTRA was ready to focus on its formidable external challenges.

First up, ACTRA had to negotiate new collective agreements with a growing field of players. A deal was negotiated with CBC, still almost the only game in town, and others put in place with the National Film Board and a few independent producers, such as Crawley Films in Ottawa. The Canadian Television Network (CTV) had come into existence and was taking tentative steps to produce television dramas, and educational television was gaining in importance nationwide.

Television's viewing hours were rapidly increasing to fill a demand and more independent filmmakers were stumbling toward production. However, promises by licence-seeking commercial TV operators to produce and air scads of Canadian content proved false as the number of imported programmes and imported stars exploded. For the first time, foreign programmes eclipsed Canadian content and

“We are not given a significant opportunity to express ourselves. We ask this not as a privilege, but as a right. We don't want hand outs, we want to be given an opportunity to contribute our talents to the benefit of our country.”

– Editorial, ACTRA newsmagazine, 1967

American performers increasingly usurped Canadian talent. Even Canadian producers were being sold on the idea that foreign ‘stars’ were necessary to promote foreign sales, the implication being that Canada could produce no stars of its own. Plus ça change! Something had to be done.

ACTRA celebrated New Year's Day, 1965, with the fortuitous acquisition of Paul Siren, a man with a strong labour union background, as General Secretary. With Paul's leadership and the active involvement of a membership eager to affirm its

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1973

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ACTRA
story

1 Gordon Sinclair, Betty Kennedy, Fred Davis and Pierre Berton on *Front Page Challenge*. Top: 1980s; bottom: 1960s.



Photos courtesy CBC Still Photo Collection, Toronto

2 A scene from CBC's General Motors Production of *Power of Proxy* (1961) with Laddie Dennis, Leslie Nielsen and Bud Knapp.



Photo courtesy Laddie Dennis

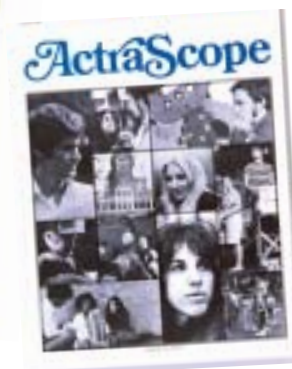


Photos courtesy CBC Still Photo Collection, Toronto

Casey and Finnegan (puppeteer, ACTRA member Judith Lawrence) and Mr. Dressup (Ernie Coombs), from *Mr. Dressup*. Mr. Dressup began pulling costumes out of the tickle trunk in 1967.



ACTRA's 1969 Commercial Radio agreement.



ACTRAscope, October 1969

1967 ACTRA branches established in Calgary and Saskatchewan.

1968 *Canadian Broadcasting Act* introduced, leading to CRTC's Canadian content rules.

1968 ACTRA's inaugural John Drainie Award presented to Esse Ljungh, W.O Mitchell, Jean Murray, Tommy Tweed.

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ACTRA
story

“ACTRA, my union... you hold a very dear place in my heart.”

– Adrienne Clarkson, 1982

position of importance in Canada’s cultural mosaic, ACTRA embarked on the expansion and consolidation of services to members and reached out to those interested in Canadianizing an industry that seemed to have no interest in being Canadian.

By the end of the ‘60s it seemed that ACTRA members were fighting a constant battle for professional respect with everyone from foreign producers, to their own media, “Talent – that’s what lacking,” blared a 1968 *Toronto Star* headline. Foreign programming dominated the TV schedules, the CBC was hiring American writers and ad agencies were using New York voices to sell Canadian beer. Sound familiar?

No matter. The Centennial and hugely successful Expo ‘67 in Montreal had whipped up a wave of confidence and pride that rippled through the artistic community from sea to sea to sea and ACTRA’s cultural sovereignty stance finally found a sympathetic ear when young upstart Pierre Elliot Trudeau succeeded Lester B. Pearson as Prime Minister in 1968. Funding for the arts increased, individual artists received encouragement, venues were constructed and an enlightened age of culture was, once again, anticipated.

In 1970, ACTRA members took matters into their own hands and proudly put their talents on display with *Face to Face*, the first catalogue of Canadian talent. The volume blew the horns of more than 1,100 members – a 400-page retort to producers who still bleated about not being able to find homegrown stars.

Canadian creators never wavered in their conviction that there was nothing we could not do, and do extremely well. Despite the frustrations and the challenges of being a professional performer, ACTRA’s ranks continued to swell. Performers didn’t let the obstacles chase them away from building careers as professional artists.

An impenetrable spirit of accomplishment and pride was palpable in 1972 when ACTRA held its first-annual awards night. The packed ballroom at Toronto’s Park Plaza Hotel tucked into a \$15-a-plate dinner and cheered as Graham Spry was presented with the John Drainie Award and emcee Pierre Berton took the Gordon Sinclair Award. Geneviève Bujold was filming *Kamouraska* and was unable to accept her Earle Grey Award in person. Stars? We had an entire constellation.



Photo courtesy: CBC Still Photo Collection, Toronto



Photo courtesy: Don Shebib



Photo courtesy: Gordon Pinsent

1 Adrienne Clarkson, host of the CBC’s *Take 30* in the 1960s.

2 Director Don Shebib going over the script of *Goin’ Down the Road* (l-r) Doug McGrath and Paul Bradley.

3 Linda Goranson and Gordon Pinsent in Gordon’s film *The Rowdyman* (1972).

1969 U.S.-based Famous Players proposes to skip around rules on foreign ownership by setting up ‘Canadian’ company.

1970 ACTRA meets with Federal Minister of Manpower and Immigration Allan MacEachen requesting Canadian authorities restrict entry of American performers working here equal

to those placed on Canadians working there.

1970 First edition of ACTRA’s *Face To Face With Talent* catalogue.

1970 Canadian federal tax department brings in ruling defining actors as self-employed.

1970 ACTRA members get work on Canada’s

first educational channel, opened in Ontario, now known as TVOntario.

1970 Don Shebib’s seminal Canadian feature, *Goin’ Down the Road*, released.

1971 CBC’s epic *Jana* series underway.

1971 CTV airs first television series with *Famous Jury Trials*.

Johnny Wayne, Sylvia (“Julie, don’t go!”) Lennick and Frank Shuster in a scene from their television skit *Rinse the Blood Off My Toga*, their well-known satire of Julius Caesar.



Photo courtesy: CBC Still Photo Collection, Toronto

Telling our own stories

ACTRA continued to ride a wave of optimism into the '70s. Our union was stronger than ever. We now had our own nationally televised awards, 10 branch offices, a leading role in the International Federation of Actors (FIA) and membership was exploding. ACTRA entered the new decade swinging with its all-encompassing agenda, Policy for the '70s and strong collective agreements with the CBC, CTV and Global.

As Canada joined with others in signing the Helsinki Accord on human rights and freedoms, ACTRA was busy laying the groundwork for status of the artist legislation through our position of influence in FIA. It would be almost two decades longer before we could boot Ottawa into enacting legislation defining some legal status for artists engaged by federal institutions.

Unwavering in our belief in our talent, performers increased the number and intensity of meetings with government bigwigs, but in spite of our legitimate complaints, authorities continued to provide only more lip service. Performers again took control of the situation, devising a work permit system that vetted

“Canadian performers are not prepared to be treated as second class citizens – second class actors – in their own country, and specifically they will not accept this treatment by those in charge of Canada’s national broadcasting system... The members of ACTRA have decided to fight.”

– ACTRA Press Release, *The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*, December 30, 1976

non-Canadian artists entering Canada. While it got the nod from the government, it proved less than effective as producers creatively sidestepped its application. Performers found little support from the CBC who commissioned productions whose intent was to import foreigners for most leads, leaving Canadians to pick up the crumbs. All this while promoting their new slogan: ‘Bringing Canadians Together!’

1973 -
1983

the
ACTRA
story

- 1 Dan MacDonald and Paisley Maxwell in *Strange Paradise*.
- 2 *Don Messer’s Jubilee* out of CBC Halifax.



Photo courtesy Dan MacDonald



Photo courtesy CBC Still Photo Collection, Toronto



ACTRAscope reports on cuts to the CBC.

1971 Actors grapple with new technology – FIA holds first conference to discuss ‘cassette tape problem’.

1971 Long-running *Don Messer’s Jubilee* keeps gaining in popularity. Naturally, it’s cancelled.

1972 First ACTRA Awards held in Toronto: Geneviève Bujold wins Earle Grey Award,

Pierre Berton takes home Gordon Sinclair Award, Graham Spry receives John Drainie Award.

1973 CRTC announces a 100% Canadian quota for radio commercials. Bad luck that announcement was made on Friday 13th.

1973 ACTRA formulates all-encompassing *Policy for the Seventies*, “that work created, produced and

performed by Canadians, in all media, should become the regular and accustomed expectation of all Canadian audiences.”

1973 First collective agreement secured with CityTV.

1974 Agents file ‘restraint of trade’ charges against ACTRA under *The Combines Act*. RCMP seize documents from

ACTRA offices. No charges laid, files returned.



The NFB Agreement.

1973 -
1983the
ACTRA
story

“A policy was proclaimed announcing our determination to... tell our own stories, and in our own words.”

Patience was wearing thin, and ultimately, ran out when the CBC attempted to cast an American as suffragette Nellie McClung, a very Canadian hero. Performers blew their collective top, and for the first time – ACTRA refused to sign a work permit for the imported lead. With cries of outrage against ACTRA’s interference, the CBC cancelled the production. It was shortly resurrected and with our own brilliant Kate Reid in the lead, became an irrefutable hit. With Canadian talent and all!

However, it seemed the CBC still hadn’t balanced the equation: if they combined Canadian talent with Canadian stories, Canadians would watch. Instead, between 1974 and 1977, the CBC used imported talent to fill more than 28 principal roles. It wasn’t long before the CBC faced the ire of performers once again over their casting for a production called *Goldrush Follies*. ACTRA had readily agreed to the internationally renowned British entertainer Harry Secombe taking the lead, but the CBC wanted more, more non-Canadians. The overwhelming sense that this was make-or-break time pulled ACTRA members together in a display of collective force. Seventy-five ACTRA members walked off set, bringing the production to a halt. With the support of our sister unions, the ranks of protestors swelled. ACTRA won.

The experience gained in that intense struggle was a turning point in ACTRA’s evolving awareness that industrial action may be necessary at times. A strike or withdrawal of services is extreme but tends to concentrate attention. Members emerged from it with renewed confidence in our collective strength, our ability to change unfair, unacceptable policies and protect our cultural sovereignty. A policy was proclaimed announcing our determination to have the opportunity to tell our own stories, in our own words, and in our own way on our TV and movies screens. It carries on today.



Photo courtesy: Screenshoty/Pant Films



Photo courtesy: CBC Still Photo Collection, Toronto



Photo courtesy: Royal Canadian Air Force

- 1 Karen Black, Tom Berenger and Marilyn Lightstone in Robert Lantos’ *In Praise of Older Women* (1978).
- 2 Bruno Gerussi as Nick Adonidas in *The Beachcombers* (1972-1989).
- 3 *The Royal Canadian Air Farce* started out on radio. Roger Abbott, Dave Broadfoot, John Morgan, Don Ferguson and Luba Goy doing their thing in the 1970s.

1974 ACTRA influences introduction of CAVCO point system to determine ‘Canadianess’ of productions.

1974 Reciprocal agreement signed with Union des Artistes allows individual members to consolidate their retirement plans.

1975 First of destructive budget cuts at CBC.

1975 Secretary of State introduces federal government film incentive: Capital Cost Allowance. CCA allows wealthy investors to write off entire investment in film projects in one year – dentists, doctors and lawyers begin investing in movies – fortunately, few of them have been seen.

1975 Anger over increase in use of non-Canadian performers comes to a head. Work permit system proposed with permits to be approved by ACTRA.

1975 Actra Fraternal Benefit Society incorporated with Bhoop Singh as Secretary.

1975 ACTRA protests American lead for *Nellie McClung* production. CBC cancels show. Later revived to much success with Canadian Kate Reid in lead role.

1976 ACTRA membership reaches 4,500 – doubled in 10 years.

1977 Paul Siren appointed to UNESCO Committee on Status of the Artist –



ACTRA’s
Global Agreement.

process leads to 1980 UNESCO declaration.

ACTRA

ACTRA’s logo, 1970s.

ACTRA shuts it down: Goldrush Follies

During the mid-'70s, the membership became angered by a growing and insulting trend to import non-Canadian performers for productions on our television screens. Particularly in the case of the CBC, ACTRA saw no justification and protested that local actors were being disrespected and abused. More and more leads were being imported, with secondary roles often going to the imports as well, and ACTRA members being relegated to supporting and bit-player status. The CBC dismissed our protests out of hand.

ACTRA claimed the right to refuse to issue work permits to non-Canadian performers, and took the bold step of preventing a number of major stars from working in Canadian television. The likes of Kathleen Beddoes, Brian Bedford, Ian Cuthbertson, Melvin Douglas and Maggie Smith were among those affected by ACTRA's actions. A major confrontation was building to a head. It erupted in 1977 during a production called *The Goldrush Follies*.

This CBC musical/variety show headlined Welsh singer/comedian, Harry Secombe, who ACTRA had accepted (he was already a member of ACTRA Ottawa), along with

Canadians Maureen Forrester and magician Doug Henning. However, CBC insisted that other roles be given to non-Canadians. When ACTRA refused to issue any further permits, and suggested a boycott would ensue, CBC called our bluff and blatantly hired additional foreigners anyway.

A picket line was mounted and production was brought to a standstill. Meanwhile, negotiations to renew an agreement – already 16 months out of date – broke off. The membership was divided on the issue and solidarity became a concern. Anger and frustration had been building over a number of years as actors saw choice roles going to imported – and in some cases, questionable – talent.

The CBC finally did bend a little, undertaking to cast foreigners only if a Canadian performer was not available.

The *Goldrush* experience spurred ACTRA to renew our fight for the right of Canadian performers to play leading and challenging roles through the improved work permit provisions of our collective agreements. The production was a critical example of the disrespect that motivated ACTRA to fight producers for the right to establish a system of work permits now in all our collective agreements and a precursor to our highly-successful work opportunities project.

the
ACTRA
story

1 ACTRA member Mordecai Richler on the set of the film based on his novel, *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* (1974).



2 Ruth Springford with Kate Reid as Nellie McClung (1978). The show got off the ground after CBC agreed to cast Canadian Kate Reid in the leading role.



Photos courtesy CBC Still Photo Collection, Toronto

3 Bill Murray and Chris Makepeace in *Meatballs* (1979).



Song and Dance: 50 ACTRA performers, along with members from the DGC, Canadian Film Editors Guild, Association of Canadian Film Craftspeople and the Association des professionnels du cinéma du Québec volunteered their services for a film shot in Toronto to be shown at the Festival of Festivals' Trade Forum (1980).

1977 CBC hires more non-Canadians over ACTRA protests. Set of CBC's *Goldrush Follies* shut down. ACTRA's first-ever 'industrial action' and test of work-permit system. CBC collective agreement amended to provide ACTRA influence in engagement of non-Canadians.

1980 Knowledge Network established as British Columbia's public educational television service.

1983 ACTRA Performers' Rights Society incorporated to pursue Use Fees for performers.

Expansion of influence, membership, brings growing pains

1983 -
1993

the
ACTRA
story

The battle with the CBC had been won, but the war was far from over. Casting in CBC productions became a moot point as the Corp's output slowed to a trickle as massive cutbacks to funding continued to take their toll.

As the '80s unfolded, commercialization (Americanization), worried ACTRA, particularly with growing industry acceptance of the U.S. habit of considering us their domestic market. ACTRA members were increasingly marginalized, with smaller roles and fewer opportunities in their own country, now dubbed Hollywood North, exacerbating tensions between ACTRA and other craft unions and within ACTRA itself.

Unrest within the ACTRA ranks had surfaced as we struggled to support the passion and creative aspirations of our diverse membership. In a 1983 referendum, members voted for structural changes, launching the organization upon what Paul Siren referred to as a "new and bold experience." The 'Association' evolved into an 'Alliance' of three autonomous guilds: ACTRA Writers Guild, ACTRA Guild of Broadcast Journalists and Researchers and ACTRA

Performers Guild.

While the organization devolved around creative lines, geographical cracks also appeared as talk of independence surfaced in Toronto and B.C. A break-away group was set on organizing a separate performer union in Vancouver, which eventually would morph into the Union of B.C. Performers. The stage was set for a major confrontation.

Since its inception, ACTRA had undergone serious restructuring every 10 years or so to accommodate our growth and members' needs. The overhaul that took place in the early '90s was the most serious yet. Bitterly fought battles from entrenched positions resulted in a fractious organization from St. John's to Vancouver. It was clear that members across the country wanted a more hands-on approach with their union. How political decisions were made, and by whom, were the crucial issues to be settled.

The silver lining on these dark clouds was the dramatic increase in member involvement. Everyone had an opinion (or two or three) and was given ample opportunity to express it. And express it they did: at town hall meetings, special restructuring meetings,



Photo courtesy: Second City Entertainment Inc.



Photo courtesy: Sullivan Entertainment. Photo: Rob McEwan

- 1 SCTV: (l-r) Joe Flaherty as Guy Caballero, John Candy as Johnny LaRue, Catherine O'Hara as Lola Heatherton, Juul Haalmeyer, Wardrobe Designer Extraordinaire, Andrea Martin as Edith Prickley, Eugene Levy as Gus Gustofferson and Martin Short as Ed Grimley.
- 2 Megan Follows as Anne Shirley and Richard Farnsworth as Matthew Cuthbert in *Anne of Green Gables*.

Coffee mug for ACTRA Award finalists in the 1980s.



ACTRA's CBC Agreement for television writers.

1984 ACTRA undergoes another restructuring. Changes name from 'Association' to 'Alliance' of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists. Divided into three guilds – Performers Guild, Writers Guild and Guild of Broadcast Journalists and Researchers.

1986 Paul Siren retires. Garry Neil becomes ACTRA's General Secretary.

1987 ACTRA and other arts organizations oppose Free Trade Agreement. FTA goes ahead anyway, but includes cultural exemption sought by arts groups.



ACTRA's late-'80s logo.

1988 ACTRA supports NABET in strike at CFTO-TV, CTV's flagship station in Toronto.

1988 Dale Goldhawk forced to resign ACTRA Presidency – CBC demands he stop opposing free trade in role as ACTRA President or give up job as journalist host of CBC's *Cross Country Checkup*. ACTRA fights back for freedom of speech,

“Canada is a country in the making. Canada is a song that must be sung by its talented artists. A nation that lacks the capacity to hear its own heartbeat or take its own pulse cannot know how sick it might be.”

– Harry Rasky, *ACTRAScope*, September 1985

small groups in private homes and in raucous gatherings in the stuffy boardrooms of ACTRA. Across the country, debate centred on the need to return control of the organization to the members. The mantra ‘member-run organization’ was adopted along with the image of the ‘upside-down pyramid’ to describe how decisions should emanate from the membership, not be imposed from the top. As a result, more and more performers rolled up their sleeves and dug in, injecting their energy and artistry into ACTRA’s activities.

A hard-fought referendum squeaked through, leading to a new constitution that diffused power to the branches, enabling them to respond to regional needs. Meanwhile, writers pursued their autonomy and set up the Writers Guild of Canada as a separate

organization in 1991, though it would take until 1995 to work out an arrangement for the ACTRA Writers Guild to leave the Alliance.

Throughout these changes, ACTRA’s members used their passion, imaginations, and flair for communicating to fight feverishly on a range of political issues that threatened to silence their creative voices: the looming menace of free trade, obscenity laws that endangered artistic freedom, outdated copyright laws, and devastating cuts to the CBC. ACTRA’s campaign against free trade became a personal fight in 1988 when the CBC forced journalist Dale Goldhawk to choose between his ACTRA Presidency and his day-job as host of *Cross Country Checkup*. The presidency became ‘vacant in protest’ as ACTRA took the matter to court in yet another political challenge, this time for freedom of speech. ACTRA emerged victorious seven years later with a Supreme Court ruling in our favour.

ACTRA’s vigilance played a role in two important cultural victories: *The Federal Status of the Artist Act* was finally passed in 1992 and our artists’ fight had achieved a cultural exemption in the Free Trade Agreement. These wins ensured that there would still be a thriving Canadian cultural community with artists at its vibrant heart.

1983 -
1993

the
ACTRA
story

- 1 Sarah Polley and Jackie Burroughs in *Road to Avonlea* (1989/90).
- 2 First a CBC award-winning movie (1986), *9B* was made into a series with Robert Wisden (*centre*), (l-r) Vincent Murray, Mishu Vellani, Chris Owens and Rachael Crawford.
- 3 *The Kids In The Hall*: (front): Scott Thompson, Dave Foley, Bruce McCulloch, (rear): Kevin MacDonald and Mark McKinney.



Photo courtesy: Sullivan Entertainment Photo by: Michaeline McDermott



Photo courtesy: CBC Still Photo Collection, Toronto

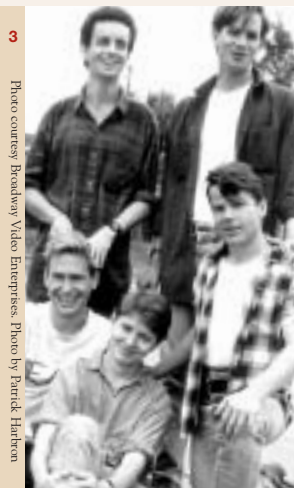


Photo courtesy: Broadway Video Enterprises, Photo by: Patrick Hartman

takes CBC to Canada Labour Relations Board.

1988 Push to amend Canada’s 65-year-old *Copyright Act* led by ACTRA, UDA and AFM.

1989 Performers’ Rights Day marked.

1989 Saskatchewan’s public educational and cultural broadcaster, Saskatchewan

Communications Network (SCN) Corporation created by government of Saskatchewan.

1989 Costly Price-Waterhouse Report suggests ACTRA’s structure is “convoluted and unwieldy.”

1990 ACTRA’s ‘diversity’ talent catalogue, *Into the Mainstream*, launched.



ACTRAScope, Summer 1989.

The Commercial Agreement, 1990-92.



1990 A group of B.C. performers vote to establish the Union of B.C. Performers, a union separate from ACTRA in B.C.

1991 Garry Neil resigns as General Secretary, to take effect January 1, 1992.

1991 ACTRA agrees to formation of Writers’ Guild of Canada within Alliance umbrella.

The Goldhawk Case: a union's right to free speech

by Paul Falzone

the ACTRA story

“No Canadian law has ever given freelancers the right to come together as a union, but that did not stop our pioneering ACTRA members.”

— Dale Goldhawk,
ACTRAScope, 1988

Political activism has been within ACTRA's DNA since its founding. One manifestation of this is the Dale Goldhawk case. The events, from the 1988 federal election to the hearing before the Supreme Court of Canada in 1994, demonstrate ACTRA's commitment to promoting government policies that benefit performing artists and to taking a firm stand against corrosive policies like free trade that threaten Canadian cultural interests.

ACTRA's policy regarding the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement (FTA) had been clearly set out by President Goldhawk in an article in a 1988 edition of *ACTRAScope*: that the terms of the FTA jeopardized the economic and social interests of artists who work in Canada's cultural industries. "Despite Communications Minister Flora MacDonald's brave words that 'Canada's right to determine our own culture would be respected in every degree' in a free trade deal... that will not happen..." since Canada would not be able to develop new cultural policies without the express approval of the U.S.

At the time, Goldhawk was the host of CBC's *Cross Country Checkup*. When columnist Charles Lynch lambasted Goldhawk for not disclosing his position with ACTRA and accused him of abusing his position as a CBC journalist, the *ACTRAScope* article and Goldhawk's presidency became controversial. The Lynch piece generated a wide-ranging debate about the nature and role of journalists and public broadcasters. Goldhawk's professionalism was never challenged, the performance of his journalistic duties never impugned.

The CBC felt that Goldhawk had violated its journalism policy which, among other things, required objectivity. Goldhawk was given an ultimatum: he could resign the ACTRA Presidency or resign as a CBC journalist. He

resigned his Presidency under protest.

ACTRA filed a complaint with the Canada Labour Relations Board (CLRB). The highlight of the ensuing lengthy hearing was the enlightening testimony of ACTRA's witnesses: the distinguished journalists Anne Medina and Robert Fulford. By a majority decision, issued on Dec. 20, 1990, the Board held that there was a violation of the Canada Labour Code when Goldhawk was forced to choose between his positions as CBC host and as President of ACTRA.

The Board specified that Goldhawk was engaged in lawful union activity. It found that the CBC's ultimatum constituted a violation of the Code.

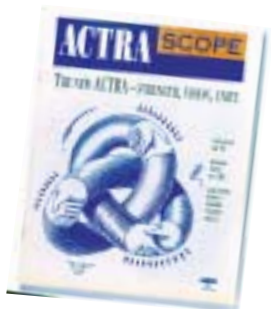
The CBC challenged this decision at the Federal Court of Appeal, but the Court upheld the rulings of the CLRB.

The CBC then appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada. By 1994, ACTRA no longer represented the freelance journalists at the CBC who were now included within the bargaining unit represented by the Canadian Media Guild (CMG). To its credit, the CMG agreed to work cooperatively with ACTRA.

ACTRA successfully defended the rulings made by the CLRB and the Court did not grant the CBC request that the CLRB decision be quashed. The Goldhawk case has become one of the leading cases cited when employers in the public sector seek to circumscribe statements by their employees.

— Paul Falzone is ACTRA's legal counsel. Since 1982 he has had the pleasure of working with the dedicated officers and administrators at ACTRA.

1991 Controversial restructuring referendum



ACTRAScope,
Winter/Spring 1993.

narrowly approved by national membership, paving way to local branch autonomy.

1992 Stephen Waddell returns to ACTRA from SAG as National Executive Director.

1992 ACTRA instrumental in having *Charter of Rights for Women Performers* adopted at FIA Congress in Montreal.

1992 Federal *Status of the Artist Act* passed by House of Commons.

1993 Members accept constitution and by-laws governing restructured organization. Branches become autonomous.

1993 Performing Arts Lodges of Canada opens first residence, Pal Place, in Toronto.



ACTRA t-shirt
from FIA
Congress in
Montreal, 1992.

ACTRA re-invented as performer powerhouse

The restructuring of the '80s gave way to a stronger and more confident ACTRA, grounded in the guiding principles of 'Strength, Vision, and Unity'. Performers had created a more responsible and responsive organization that could focus on its *raison d'être*: the pursuit of collective actions designed to benefit all. At least that was the plan. Continued efforts to regain unity on the west coast would distract ACTRA for a while longer.

ACTRA and UBCP engaged in a tumultuous and costly five-year battle for jurisdiction over performers in B.C. Performers were caught in the middle as producers greedily rubbed their hands at the idea of performers fighting their way to the bottom of the fee scale.

In 1994 UBCP joined the Teamsters, letting the American international loose on ACTRA, disrupting Vancouver meetings and film sets, and attempting jurisdictional challenges in Alberta, Nova Scotia, Toronto and elsewhere. Anticipating such a move, ACTRA had struck up a friendship with the

"The past couple of years have been challenging... But we have not only survived these challenges, we have grown stronger as a result."

– Thor Bishopric, *InterACTRA*, December 2000

Canadian Auto Workers' Union, hoping for their clout if needed. The CAW was instrumental in convincing the Teamsters to back off attacks on our jurisdiction. After the signing of several agreements, accords and declarations that were ignored, UBCP and ACTRA sought out B.C. lawyer, Stephen Kelleher, to mediate a settlement. The Kelleher Agreement recommended that UBCP become the B.C. branch of ACTRA in 1996 and, finally, an uneasy peace was restored. Reconciling the collective agreement in B.C. with the nationally negotiated Independent Production Agreement (IPA) remains one of ACTRA's key objectives in healing the rift.

Relieved of internal strife, ACTRA stepped up the push for better contracts, especially under the most-used agreement, the IPA. We fought for a Distributors' Gross Revenue model of back-end

1993 -
2003

the
ACTRA
story

- 1 *The Associates:* (l to r) Tamara Hickey as Robyn Parsons, Jennie Raymond as Amy Kassan and Demore Barnes as Benjamin Hardaway.
- 2 David Cubitt as Jack Larkin, Sonja Smits as Sally Ross, Bruce Gray as Adam Cunningham in the series *Traders* (1996-2000).
- 3 Vik Sahay as Dala, and Jeanie Calleja as Mary-E in *Our Hero*.



Photo courtesy Alliance Advantis Communications Inc.

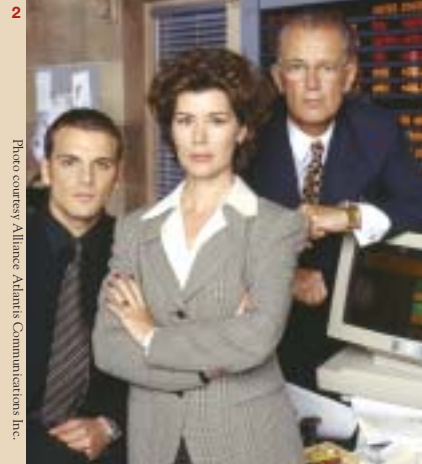


Photo courtesy Alliance Advantis Communications Inc.



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1993 UBCP creates General Welfare Trust, insurance and retirement plans for UBCP members.



The *Into the Mainstream* talent catalogue promotes non-traditional casting.

1993 CAW/ACTRA resolution regarding a comprehensive cultural policy for Canada adopted by CLC.

1994 UBCP affiliates with Teamsters Canada.

1994 Apprentice category added to membership.

1995 Reorganization of bargaining units at CBC leads to representation

vote. Canadian Wire Services Guild, now the Canadian Media Guild, takes over representation of ACTRA Media Guild members.

1995 ACTRA receives first-ever strike mandate from members and successfully negotiates watershed IPA.

1995 ACTRA wins 'Goldhawk vs. CBC'

case at Supreme Court of Canada.

1996 UBCP and ACTRA adopt Kelleher Agreement, requiring UBCP to drop Teamsters affiliation, ending West Coast hostilities. UBCP becomes UBCP/ACTRA.

1997 ACTRA's online talent catalogue, *Face-To-Face Online*, launched.

1997 Women in the Director's Chair Workshop founded with ACTRA's help.



Face to Face with Talent catalogue, 1997-98.

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2003

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monies, and many producers were shocked at the strength of the members' commitment. For the first time, national strike votes resulted in overwhelming endorsements of negotiating positions.

Issues affecting the creative needs of members continued to be paramount: innovative contracts were devised for entry-level filmmaking and the establishment of a distinctive Canadian film industry was encouraged. Talent catalogues went digital and eventually interactively onto the web. Contacts were fostered through international alliances and gatherings. In 1994, an Apprentice category was added to

ACTRA's membership; Extras would also get their own category in 2001.

In 1995, restructuring at the CBC led to a decision to consolidate the unions at Mother Corp. ACTRA put in a well-funded effort to keep jurisdiction of the journalists working at the CBC but the vote went against us.

So ACTRA was an Alliance of one – the ACTRA Performers Guild (APG). ACTRA had come full-circle, returning to its performing roots. Later the APG moniker would be dropped and ACTRA assumed the acronym we had been part of since 1963.



- 1 Greg Thomey, Cathy Jones, Mary Walsh and Rick Mercer of *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*.
- 2 *An American In Canada*: Rick Roberts as Jake with Sugith Varughese as Aftab, the spiritual owner of the donut shop where Jake finds bad coffee and profound wisdom (2003).
- 3 Gordon Tootoosis as Albert, Tracey Cook as Sarah, Tantoo Cardinal as Betty, Tina Keeper as Michelle and Tom Jackson as Peter in *North of 60*.
- 4 Jeff Douglas in Molson Breweries' *I AM CANADIAN* commercial.

1997 Nova Scotia commits to soundstage promotion at ACTRA's urging.

1998 Planning and Priorities Meeting defines Mission Statement and essential services to members.

1998 Aboriginal Committee established at ACTRA to study items of importance to First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples.

1998 Canada's Walk of Fame inaugurated in Toronto.

1999 ACTRA squelches SAG's move to tie FIA political power to amount of dues paid, at executive meeting in Budapest.

1999 Second strike mandate from members bolsters ACTRA's IPA negotiations. \$500-a-day performer rate threshold reached.

2000 Current ACTRA logo introduced.



ACTRA's logo, late '90s.



Current ACTRA logo.



InterACTRA, September 1999.



InterACTRA, Fall 2001.

Looking ahead

In our 60th year, we stand more powerful and unified than ever. ACTRA proudly marks this anniversary as a 21,000-strong sophisticated organization, anchored on solid financial footings. We have revived the ACTRA Awards and members right across the country have rallied to organize a variety of celebrations in every branch, pausing to recognize the creativity of our colleagues and honour those whose sacrifices have achieved this milestone.

A bold, confident strut is discernable in ACTRA's step these days as we lead a vigorous industry-wide fight for a distinct Canadian culture. There is also an increasing sense that the rest of the world is opening its eyes to what we've always known: our members are pound for pound, the best performers in the world. While many of these same battles have been fought before, it is reassuring to know that time and time again, we've won them, not only persevering, but emerging stronger.

While maintaining our preeminent position in all electronic media, we continue to break new ground in the digital world. Once again, ACTRA is at the fore, already having established itself as an authority on the protection of performers in digital media. Video games,

"We have weathered some wonderful years with this union. Most of those years and those efforts have been well spent – all of them well meant. And what a highway of fantastic, talented people have gone through; who have built from the sticks and stones of our own home-grown character a house for us all to live in."

– Gordon Pinsent, ACTRA Awards, Toronto, 2003

CD-ROMs, and the internet are new outlets through which we can share our art.

Ultimately, all of ACTRA's strength comes from, is because of, and is for, our fellow members. Thanks to the volunteerism, determination and collectivism of our members, ACTRA's house stands as the essential structure sheltering artists from the storms of an oft-ugly industry. Because of the activism of individuals, Canadian performers have the expectation of safe, conducive work opportunities with fair compensation and benefits.

ACTRA, in maintaining the security and protection of our rights, allows us the freedom to do what we do best: we perform.

2003 &
BEYOND

the
ACTRA
story

1 *Trailer Park Boys* stars Robb Wells, Mike Smith, John Paul Tremblay and Jonathan Torrens. Shot in Nova Scotia, it went into its third season in 2003.

2 Vancouver Coroner Dominic Da Vinci (Nicholas Campbell) examines a gravesite with Detective Rose Williams (Kim Hawthorne) on *Da Vinci's Inquest* (2002).



Photo courtesy Alliance Atlantis Communications Inc.



Photo © CBC 2002. All rights reserved.



ACTRA member Martin Short being inducted into Canada's Walk of Fame in 2000.

2000 Yonge Street headquarters sold. ACTRA moves to Church Street.

2001 ACTRA asserts jurisdiction for 'cash extras'. CAPPRT finds in favour of ACTRA over CMG. CMG withdraws.

2001 ACTRA Extra category established.

2001 Years of work leads to comprehensive roadmap for ACTRA's operations – the ACTRA Plan.

2001 Bold redesign of ACTRA's website launched, linking directly to ACTRA's online talent catalogue, *Face-to-Face Online*.

2002 ACTRA's first-ever policy conference reignites ACTRA's Canadian culture activism, launching Campaign for Canadian Programming.

2003 ACTRA's membership reaches 21,000.

2003 ACTRA celebrates 60th Anniversary 1943-2003.



ACTRA's Independent Production Agreement (IPA), 2002-2003.



Studio Director: Glenn Bang

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CONGRATULATIONS TO ACTRA AND ITS MEMBERS
ON 60 YEARS OF GREAT CANADIAN FILMS



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ACTRA NEWFOUNDLAND/LABRADOR

Rock solid

by John Holmes

the
ACTRA
story

John Holmes has been an ACTRA member since 1965.

ACTRA came to Newfoundland in 1964 when CBC's original television station, CBNT, first went to air in St. John's. In October, the ACTRA Office opened, run by Philomena Drodge who became a permanent fixture at any production in the new, but temporary television studio that started programming on October 4th. ACTRA was also present in the radio studio. School broadcasts, dramas, religious, and music programmes had been produced in radio for years, with token payments. But with CBNT telecasting and radio productions now covered by ACTRA contracts, our downtown office became familiar to dozens of performers, singers, actors, writers, and broadcast journalists applying for membership or work permits.

This early period was probably the most productive for CBC Television and of course for ACTRA in its 40-year history in Newfoundland. When the new CBC state-of-the-art television facility opened in 1965 the number of local productions remained high. Ted Russell's *Pigeon Inlet*, *Up at Ours*, *The Root Cellar*, *The Wonderful Grand Band*, *Skipper & Co.*, *Terra Nova Theatre* and other variety and dramatic series filled the television screens and radio speakers of the province, providing a good source of work for local actors and writers. In addition, there were contributions to network series. But as budget cuts slowly whittled away production to almost nothing but news and public affairs, many members dropped out of ACTRA. What had seemed the promise of regular work became very fitful. Members just stopped paying their dues. Phil Drodge did her best to persuade them

to withdraw, so they could come back into the fold without paying initiation fees again. She also pointed out the tremendous benefits to be had from Actra Fraternal, then run by the late lamented Bhoop Singh. Some stayed, including the now famous *Codco* group and the crew of *The Great Eastern*, some sought greener pastures. Those involved with *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* and *Made in Canada* moved to more lucrative production centres.

Many early members are retired now but they are still benefiting from their membership in ACTRA. Independent filmmakers moved into the vacuum created by the lack of CBC production. They began producing feature films, television drama, and variety specials. Newfoundland films and filmmakers have been flourishing with ACTRA members, now of top professional stature. Many supported visiting screen stars. The earliest films such as *Finding Mary March* and *Secret Nation* to *The Shipping News* and *Rare Birds*, have been made under ACTRA contracts, greatly improved over the years.

Only two branch reps served the St. John's ACTRA in its history: the late Philomena Drodge, who left the province upon retirement, and Marlene Cahill, who took her place and has continued to be always ready and willing to help her ACTRA flock with problems that may arise.

Newfoundland has also made its contribution to the national ACTRA scene through the singular representation of our branch and our province by the likes of Austin Davis, Mack Furlong, and Glenn Downey.

1



Photo: John Holmes

2



Photo by Justin Hall, courtesy: Pope Productions

3



Photo courtesy: CBC St. John's

4



Photo by Justin Hall, courtesy: Passage Films

- 1 Shirley Newhook in the *Today Show*, CBC St. John's (1965).
- 2 Andy Jones and William Hurt in *Rare Birds* (2001).
- 3 Janis Spence, Mary Walsh and Kevin Noble in *Up At Ours*, on CBC St. John's (1980).
- 4 Daniel Payne in *Random Passage* (2002).

ACTRA MARITIMES

From squeaky floors to soundstages, and still growing

by Deborah Allen

The tiny office on Birmingham Street, with just enough room for a desk and a place to sit and pay your dues, stands in contrast to the modern premises and operation of today's ACTRA Maritimes. First staffed by Helen Golding, then Helen Roberts, it progressed through Blowers to Spring Garden Road under Reps Bill Fulton, Deborah Murray and Ed Frenette, serving writers and broadcast journalists as well as performers. Under the presidencies of David Renton, Joan Gregson, Doug Huskison, Sudsy Clark and Gary Vermeir, now our present Branch Rep, the office expanded as its responsibilities increased.

Legendary CBC figures Hector MacFadyen and Peter Donkin produced live shows out of a studio atop The Nova Scotia Hotel on the Halifax waterfront. Stories abound of radio listeners, country-wide, treated to unusual, unexplained sounds of dock activities. At the climactic moment of one tense, live radio show whose characters were about to expire from lack of water, a large ocean liner slipped her lines with much whistle hooting bringing even the cast to a shocked silence! Faith Ward particularly remembers lots of radio drama in the mid-'60s, and fondly recalls the 'Herschorn Hall' perils, where members performed network dramas and popular series like *Rum Runners*. The squeaky floor required absolute stillness, the tiniest movement ruining a take. Although radio drama production continued into the late '80s, it gradually declined to occasional series like *Clean Sweep* and *In the Blood*, and *Between the Covers*, or small projects for Maritime broadcast.

In the '50s, members kept busy on series for educational TV and on national CBC-TV programmes

such as *The Don Messer Show* and *Singalong Jubilee* as well as almost weekly live dramatic presentations out of a former schoolroom. Later came *Switchback* and *Street Cents*, the latter launching the career of Councillor Jamie Bradley.

The burgeoning independent production industry confirmed ACTRA's tremendous talent pool, now numbering over 500. Members successfully lobbied government to create a film office, and were instrumental in the *Roll 'Em* study outlining the tremendous potential for success, given adequate government support, for local producers. The resulting system of tax incentives and investment created employment for hundreds of industry craftspeople. Then came the soundstages – one in a former military base, which became home to *Black Harbour*; another in an abandoned downtown power plant; another in Dartmouth.

From the earliest days of Salter Street Productions, to series like *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* and *Pit Pony*; hosting big features like *The Shipping News* and *K19: The Widowmaker* and countless smaller U.S. productions; leavened by plenty of award-winning home-grown features like *The Hanging Garden* and *Marion Bridge*, it has been an amazing progression.

Through long-time ACTRA godfather David Renton's efforts, we've added a PAL Halifax Chapter to our list of accomplishments. With a great posse at his side, our next big birthday party might just happen at our new lodge!

A very special thank you to the tireless staff in Halifax who do so much for our membership in all three provinces: Gary Vermeir, Richard Hadley, Jeannine Huczel and Sandra Larson.

the
ACTRA
story

Deborah Allen is a long-time member of ACTRA Maritimes, Branch Councillor and former Branch President. Her career spans more than 30 years as a performer on stage, radio, television and film including the Emmy-nominated *Homeless* to Harvard and CBC's *Mystery Project* radio series *Clean Sweep*.

1 ACTRA demonstrating against a non-union production in New Brunswick, 2000. Then Branch President Andrew MacVicar and his wife, member Sherry Devanney, in foreground. Bill Forbes, Larry Lefebvre, National Organizer Dan Mackenzie, Monetta James, Clarissa Hurley and Sebastian MacLean in the background.



Photo courtesy: CBC

2 *Coast Guard*, a radio drama from CBC Halifax Studio H in the 1980s. (l to r): John Fulton, Bill Carr, the late Ed McCurdy and the late John Burke.



Photo courtesy: CBC/Sudsy Clark

3 Anne Murray and friends in the 1970s.



the ACTRA story

“The first CBC radio station, first television outlet and the first forays into radio drama in this country took place here.”

ACTRA MONTREAL

A series of firsts

by current ACTRA Montreal President Matt Holland with Gary Plaxton, Victor Knight, Walter Massey, Griffith Brewer, Kelly Ricard and Howard Ryshpan.

The 60-year history of ACTRA in Montreal records a series of firsts, beginning with the invention of radio itself by Montrealer Reginald Fessenden. The first CBC radio station, created for broadcast to the Eastern Townships, first television outlet (CBMT Montreal in 1952) and the first forays into radio drama and dubbing in this country took place here.

The Radio Actors of Montreal Society (RAMS), a counterpart to Toronto's RATS, was born in 1941 by actors who also wrote their own material. In 1943, it banded together with other artists in Vancouver and Winnipeg as the Association of Canadian Radio Artists (ACRA).

In the early '50s, a busy actor's salary was \$35 a week, and the pay scale for script work was roughly \$26 for a half-hour radio drama, \$47 for an hour and \$15 for a soap. And everything was directed by Rupert Caplan; actor, writer, producer, director and staunch ACTRA member, who, along with Tyrone Guthrie, was instrumental in 'inventing' radio drama in this country. Never afraid to take a chance on new talent, or champion underdogs, Caplan was rewarded with premiere rights to three posthumous Eugene O'Neill plays, including *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, first heard across Canada and the northern U.S. on the CBC. It sparked an O'Neill revival that cemented the playwright's place in the dramatic canon.

In those heady days, artists gainfully employed on numerous television and radio shows, experienced an unparalleled harmony with their confreres in the

Union des Artistes. Radio-Canada/CBC joint television used both French and English actors in their casts. Rupert Caplan also produced a daily radio soap, *Laura Limited*, and a weekend Bible show, *In His Service*. By the middle of the decade, Montreal was contributing 18 hours a week of original dramatic and musical programming to the network.

But the glory days clouded over when the radio and TV producers staged a lengthy strike against Radio-Canada/CBC in the late '50s and early '60s. The subsequent restructuring saw a lot of English work relocate to Toronto, and the separate paths taken by ACTRA and UDA became more clearly defined.

The coming decades ushered in the development of the feature film industry in Canada – beginning with the National Film Board, whose head office is located here – then, with the introduction of significant tax credits, the arrival of more and more foreign productions. ACTRA Montreal's reputation for quality performers was established across the continent and the globe, while contributing to the burgeoning industry here at home. The tradition continues today.

ACTRA Montreal members increasingly work in film, television, radio and the ever-expanding digital media. The union is strong. *The ACTRA Plan* is in place. Organizing efforts get results, our bargaining positions are solid and services to members have never been better.

ACTRA Montreal members recognize just how important it is to cultivate and bolster a vital, indigenous industry that can fly in the face of culture-weakening public policies and political infighting that erodes the foundation of what we've built over these last six decades. Their creativity knows no bounds, for they take pride and a wealth of inspiration from the hard-working and talented men, women and children who've gone before them.

Happy Birthday ACTRA!



Photo courtesy Gary Plaxton



1 (l-r) ACTRA Montreal members Ian Devoy, Don Scanlan and Walter Massey in *Compassion Circuit* (1971).

2 (l-r) ACTRA Montreal members Gary Plaxton, Ovila Légaré, Peter Kastner and Meredith McRae with Veronica Lake in *Footsteps in the Snow* (1966).



Photo courtesy Gary Plaxton



3 ACTRA Montreal staff (l-r) Steward Claire Martell, Assistant Branch Representative Micheline Russo, Assistant Branch Representative-Commercials, Daintry Dalton, former Branch Representative Arden Ryshpan, former Branch Representative Judith Harvey, former Branch Representative Virginia Ryshpan, Steward Carmela Algeri (1996).

4 (l-r) Current Montreal Branch President Matt Holland, Brad Garrett, ACTRA Montreal member Richard Jutras in CBS' *Gleason* (2002).

ACTRA OTTAWA

45 years and counting

by Bill Luxton

What do Alex Trebek, Lloyd Robertson, Rich Little, Margaret Trudeau, Peter Jennings and the Galloping Gourmet have in common? All were members of ACTRA Ottawa early in their careers.

While ACTRA National celebrates its 60th Anniversary, the Ottawa branch can look back to its creation in 1958. Long-time members Les Lye, Maggie Morris, Eddie Nunn and Bruce Rogers recall meeting at the Beacon Arms Hotel to organize the Ottawa chapter.

Employers at that time included CBC, the National Film Board and Crawley Films, which had won international recognition with *The Loon's Necklace* and the Oscar winner *The Man Who Skied Down Everest*.

Bruce Rogers hosted a CBC radio series called *Carte Blanche* with a young announcer just down from Winnipeg, named Lloyd Robertson. On CBOT, Maggie Morris, Les Lye and Emmet O'Grady hosted a magazine show *Contact* from 1958 to 1960.

Private television arrived in 1961, with CJOH TV. Managed by former CBC executives Ernie Bushnell and Stuart Griffiths, the original announce staff included Peter Jennings, Dave Patrick, Jerry O'Flanagan and me.

While ACTRA was unrecognized by CJOH early on, CBC radio and TV provided work for members with radio drama and outdoor concerts at Camp Fortune. Then, on CBOT, award-winning puppeteer Noreen Young produced *Pencil Box, Hi Diddle Day*, and for the Disney Channel, *Under the Umbrella Tree*. More work came our way with national productions such as *Quentin Durgens, MP*, starring Gordon Pinsent, Pierre

Berton's *The National Dream*, and Crawley Films' *The Luck of Ginger Coffey* and the RCMP series.

In 1966, CJOH became an ACTRA signatory to produce a Harry Elton late-night soap opera called *Milk and Honey*. Set in a small town diner, it featured Elsa Pickthorne, Bernie McManus, Flo Fancott, Aline van Dine, Bobby Dermer and Cayla Belin. Other CJOH productions followed, including *The Galloping Gourmet*, *Celebrity Cooks* with Bruno Gerussi, *The Amazing Kreskin*, *Anything You Can Do*, starring Don Harron, and *Willy & Floyd*. *You Can't Do That On Television* featured a teenaged Alanis Morissette.

With the guidance of a series of hard-working Branch Representatives, Ottawa's membership grew substantially in the '70s and '80s with more work from government agencies, production houses and animation studios.

In 1978, ACTRA Ottawa launched its own ACTRA Awards, and for 15 years, members gathered for a glittering evening of presentations in a wide variety of categories covering radio, TV and film.

Although far smaller than Toronto, Montreal or Vancouver, we have been able to attract movie production to the nation's capital and hope there is much more to come. Local companies such as Distinct Features and Sound Venture have employed many members in leading roles.

We celebrate 45 years, and we build for the future. With so many talented young actors entering the profession, an Apprenticeship programme and a series of professional development workshops have been established to ensure a vital presence of Ottawa in that future.

the
ACTRA
story

Life Member Bill Luxton is writing a history of ACTRA Ottawa on its 45th Anniversary.

1 *Willy & Floyd* in 1987 (Les Lye and Bill Luxton).

2 Bill Luxton and Margaret Trudeau, *Morning Magazine* (1982).

3 Holly Larocque and puppets in *Under the Umbrella Tree*.

4 Maggie Morris



Photos courtesy: CJOH Television (CTV), Ottawa



ACTRA TORONTO

Fueled by actor activists

by Ferne Downey

the
ACTRA
story

“I’m proud of the ACTRA we’ve become – strong, vibrant, responsive and most importantly, member-driven.”

Canada is an impossible country – a federation where regional concerns seem in perpetual conflict with national interests. Yet many things bind us together – hating Toronto, for instance. Toronto has always been seen as too big, too rich, too powerful and too smug. Similar sentiments have percolated within ACTRA. Yet our organization was created by artists from all over the country who came to Hogtown in search of work. We started out as a bunch of RATS.

Toronto 1941. The CBC had set up English headquarters in the city and locally produced radio series like *The Happy Gang*, *Those Halladay Girls* and *At Home With the Lennicks* were changing the landscape of the country.

Founder Jean Tweed remembers, “The amount paid to artists... was an appallingly small sum. The amount paid for scripts was equally picayune... A group of us got together and decided maybe we could do something.” The solution was the Radio Artists of Toronto Society (RATS).

It began with a talented pool of Toronto performers: Alan King, Tommy and Jean Tweed, Roxana Bond and her husband Lee, Bud Knapp and Jane Mallett to honour but a few, and by 1943 had become a national union, ACRA. But because Toronto was the centre of radio and TV production in English Canada, Toronto was inevitably the largest, most influential branch.

Because of this, Toronto was often in the forefront of ACTRA’s campaigns and the economic force fueling the national organization. However, by the early ‘90s, the country had changed. Independent production, industry growth and the downsizing of the all-powerful

CBC led to stronger branches all across the country and dissatisfaction with what many saw as Toronto’s bureaucratic stranglehold on the association. Rebellion was in the wind, and ironically, Toronto members were ready to help lead the charge: Barry Flatman and David Ferry led the drive to restructure and re-invigorate ACTRA.

“More working actors wanted to know how decisions were being made, who was making them,” David said. Once elected as Toronto members on the Performers Guild National Executive, Barry and David convened an historic national meeting of 30 elected performer councillors. Barry affectionately called it ‘the human computer’. “We made our ship right again, and whole again,” said Flatman. “I’m proud of the ACTRA we’ve become – strong, vibrant, responsive and most importantly, member-driven.”

ACTRA Toronto remains as keenly committed to securing work opportunities as our founders and is facing new pressures with united action. Production downturn. Funding cutbacks. CRTC bungling. SARS. Aggressive competition for service productions. The collapse of Canadian TV drama. We are fighting back.

We helped launch a new industry consortium, Film Ontario, which is hard at work marketing Ontario as a production centre. We put our industry on the agenda in provincial and civic elections. Working with ACTRA National and other branches, ACTRA Toronto initiated the Campaign for Canadian Programming and we are making progress. We’ve received a commitment from Paul Martin to refund the Canadian Television Fund and a commitment from the CRTC to revisit its broadcast regulations, but there is still much to achieve. As in ACTRA’s first 60 years, ACTRA Toronto continues to use its muscle to benefit the whole union and dedicated members fight for all Canadian performers. It is our worthy cause.



- 1 Ben Lennick, Director of Toronto Performers (1984).
- 2 Proud current and former ACTRA Toronto Presidents and former National Executive member David Ferry embrace Paul Siren in 2000. (Clockwise from left): Seán Mulcahy, Ferne Downey, Paul, Bob Collins, Sandi Ross, Barry Flatman, David and current President Richard Hardacre.
- 3 Paul Bradley, Jayne Eastwood and Doug McGrath in the Canadian classic *Goin' Down The Road* (1970).
- 4 John Vernon and Carl Banas in *Wojcek*.

Photo courtesy: CBC Still Photo Collection

Photo courtesy: Don Steinhilber

ACTRA MANITOBA

They still need a hook to get us off the stage

by Alice Poyser

Evelyn Anderson recalls that when ACTRA was chartered in Manitoba in 1958, “There were about a dozen of us, mostly from Little Theatre. It was a shoestring operation, run out of a lawyer-member’s office. The CBC did three dramas a week, so I always had lots of work. So did the musicians and dancers. The school broadcasts sweetened the money pot.”

Radio buffs still get the warm fuzzies at mention of *The Jacksons*, *The Eatons Good Deed Show*, and even *Northern Messenger*. Broadcast every Friday night, it beamed messages to the north in English, French and Inuktituk. It was popular with listeners in the south too. Like eavesdropping on a party line.

TV came to Winnipeg in 1955 and John Hirsch directed the first drama, Chekhov’s *The Anniversary*. With five actors all new to camera and a budget too skimpy for enough rehearsal time, he had secret sessions in his basement. ACTRA never knew.

Ollie Alto remembers the perils of live TV. The *Community Chest Show* was a one-off extravaganza with stars such as Robert Goulet and Juliette sticking to their allotted times. But the young Dave Broadfoot, determined to finish his act, ignored the apoplectic producer. “A hook. I need a hook. I can’t get him off. That son of a gun will never work for the CBC again.”

The advent of tape didn’t take care of everything. Vic Cowie hosted a Department of Education series on Shakespeare. The set was a replica of London’s Globe Theatre. He opened the trap door to explain

its uses. He expected the actor below – with his fire pot and bellows – to waft billows of smoke onto the stage. The actor had set his clothes on fire and was captured on the overhead camera making frantic attempts to douse the fire in his Elizabethan cloak.

Hymm Sing was a phenomenon. Within its first six weeks, it gathered an audience of a million, stayed on the air for 30 years, and averaged 500 fan letters a week. Viewers took a proprietary interest in the show. When host Don Brown changed his hairstyle, viewers combed the Bible for verses to justify their condemnation of the ‘Elvis’ look.

Don Williams was asked to do a choir show. He opted for the variety look rather than the traditional church thing. He cast ‘wholesome’ young people. That some of these apple-cheeked girls stole the false eyelashes from the makeup room was a closely guarded secret.

Jeff Sutton is a 13-year-old ACTRA Apprentice. When he was 11, a friend said acting was an easy way to make a lot of money. He went to an audition and got the lead role in *The Nature of Nicholas*. His performance won Manitoba’s 1993 Blizzard Best Actor Award. Some debut. Asked where he saw himself in 10 years, he said, “Hollywood.”

Mariam Bernstein says, “For the first time since I graduated from the National Theatre School 10 years ago, I have a sense of momentum: 10 days’ work from May to October this year. Used to be lucky to get two or three days a year. Now if the Canadian funding and the Americans keep coming...”

the
ACTRA
story

Alice Poyser is a writer and long-time member of ACTRA Manitoba.

1 Jeff Sutton as Nicholas in *The Nature of Nicholas* (2003).

2 Stu Phillips and Peggy Neville in *Red River Jamboree*.

3 Winnipeg ACTRA reception for members and engagers – four members looking through the local talent catalogue: Janis Dunning (standing), (l-r) Jacques LeMay, Sherry Theobald, Alixe Duncan (1980).

4 Victor Cowie

5 Mariam Bernstein

6 Evelyne Anderson

7 Olie Alto



Photo: Allen Fraser; Photo courtesy: Domino Film and Television International Ltd.

Photo courtesy: CBC Still Photo Collection.

ACTRA SASKATCHEWAN

Making strides for local artists

by Sheila Roberts

On a freezing January evening in 1967, a brave group of performers and writers – Jean Freeman (membership #01), Steve Arsenych, Sue and Ken Kramer (founders of the Globe Theatre), John Buller, Pat Steel, Beattie Martin, Walter Mills, Les Crossman, Ken Mitchell, and others (including Hilda Allen first Director), Rhena Howard and John Chamberlain – met to form the last ACTRA Branch. They consisted of CBC Radio's *The Schools Broadcasts* performers, and arts reviewers working on *That's Entertainment*, a popular CBC programme. One contributor remembers Christmas morning shows being bolstered by Bloody Mary eye-openers to enliven the broadcast... at least for the participants.

Originally serviced by Winnipeg's Eleanor Park, ACTRA Saskatchewan soon hired part-time representative, Ruby Dodd, opening an office in those wonderful bricks of Somerset Block in Regina. I was the second, and longest-serving representative. The branch grew rapidly with aggressive organizing, servicing and community engagement. Brenda Niskala, Bill Siggins and presently Mike Burns followed.

Despite its size, our branch was a squeaky wheel becoming, in Rita and Rex Deverell's words, "the scourge of the nation," consistently agitating to secure a place for individual artists in Saskatchewan and the nation. The branch has always advocated regional programming in film and broadcasting. The list of initiatives is lengthy, including creating 'A Committee to Occupy the New Saskatchewan CBC Building with Saskatchewan Programming by 1984', demanding Saskatchewan-based programming. Numerous briefs and representations to CBC and governments stressed

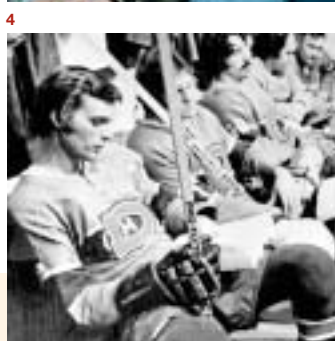
the hiring of local artists, paying union rates, recognizing the value of local artists in film and commercial programming. Unique agreements in education, experimental film and broadcasting, and contributions to the founding of Sask. Motion Picture Association and SaskFilm Development Corporation, are noteworthy.

A major focus over the last 30 years has been professional development. With ACTRA's leadership, Saskatchewan Film/Video Professional Development Committee instituted the Professional Development Initiative to address industry training needs. Talent catalogues, organizing drives and other promotional actions were also undertaken, with unique agreements designed to support professional development situations and a solid commitment to the labour movement, leading to early affiliation with the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour.

As initiator of the Sectoral Council for Culture, now the Human Resources Council, the branch was a recognized contributor to the Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board. Most recently, it played a key role in establishing status of the artist legislation in the province.

Since writers and performers had long worked cooperatively together, ACTRA's restructuring in the '80s and '90s made little sense to our branch. But now, as a performer organization, we're as active as ever. Recognizing the need for close community links, alliances were forged (and continue) under leaders such as Hilda Allen, John Buller, Gabe Prendergast, Ken Mitchell, Thirza Jones, David Miller, Walter Mills, Rita Deverell, Kim McCaw, Wm. Dixon, Jean Freeman, Alan Bratt, Gerry Sperling, Donna Caruso, Michele Serada, Rod McIntyre, Bruce Steele, Ian Black, Mike Burns, and Chris Scott. Not all can be named, but all are valued.

– Sheila Roberts (ex-Kuziak) was ACTRA Saskatchewan Branch Representative for 15 years, from 1974 to 1989.

the
ACTRA
story

- 1 Gordon Tootoosis as Almighty Voice in *Alien Thunder* (1973). The film starred Donald Sutherland and featured the Cree Indians of Saskatchewan.
- 2 Arcola, Sask. became known as "Prairie Movie Town" when it served as the location for the filming of W.O. Mitchell's novel *Who Has Seen The Wind*, starring Gordon Pinsent and Brian Painchaud in 1977. A number of local actors had roles in the film, Kathleen Meikle, Connie Trafiak, Linda Leith, Mike Peters, and 150 locals worked as extras.
- 3 Brent Butt in *Corner Gas* (2003).
- 4 Keir Dullea in *Paperback Hero*, filmed in Delisle, Saskatchewan (1973).

ACTRA EDMONTON

Thriving to spite our day jobs

by Sharon Killey

When CBC TV signed on in Edmonton on October 1st, 1961, no one considered giving up a day-job for this new television medium. Producer Armand Baril approached Glyn Williams and asked if he would consider appearing in a live television series to be called *First Nighter*. Glyn, a part-time opera singer whose day job was with Imperial Oil, responded that he didn't feel comfortable singing, walking and smiling. Glyn was convinced, however, and in January 1962 was learning pop material during lunch breaks. It wasn't long until Reg Gibson arrived from Winnipeg to discuss ACTRA with Glyn and his co-star Dorothy Harpell. As a result, Glyn became ACTRA Edmonton member #00001.

CBC Television and Radio showcased Edmonton performers, writers and journalists. Up-and-coming talent had opportunities to hone their craft in music, variety, drama, documentary and current affairs. Tommy Banks initiated his legacy of music and variety shows.

In 1974 Dr. Charles Allard opened the doors of ITV and in 1980 convinced the SCTV group to move from Toronto to Edmonton for a two-year stint. CFRN TV offered up variety and the occasional drama. ACCESS Television/CKUA radio hired members to work on educational programming.

In 1976, the feature *Why Shoot the Teacher* was filmed in Alberta – screenplay by James DeFelice – and was the precursor of the '80s boom. The first taxpayer-funded provincial agency of its kind, the Alberta Motion Picture Development Corporation (AMPDC) was created in 1981, jumpstarting Alberta's film and television industry. Independent production

companies sprang up and began telling Alberta stories. Anne Wheeler was busy writing and directing. In 1987, the ITV Sound Stage opened its doors and became home to numerous feature films, MOWs and series. The film and television industry was alive and well in Alberta. Then, after 15 years, the Alberta government shut down the AMPDC and the industry came to a stop.

The industry in Edmonton has always derived its energy and its vision from the local community. On the 60th Anniversary of ACTRA we reflect on the many achievements of Edmonton Branch members and applaud their contributions to the development of the film and television industry and the Edmonton theatre scene. Some of these contributions have been recognized in lasting ways: the Kaasa Theatre, Shoctor Alley, Tommy Banks Way, and – we can't forget – Wayne Gretzky Drive. Some have also been named members of the Order of Canada: The Honourable Tommy Banks (Officer), Anne Burrows (Member), Peggy Holmes (Member), Walter Kaasa (Member), Thomas Peacocke (Member), Joseph Shoctor (Officer), Rudy Wiebe (Officer) and Holger Petersen (Member).

Glyn Williams, over coffee with another founding member, Colin MacLean, recently reflected on the early days and how fortunate he felt to have been there at the beginning of a very exciting business.

We've come full circle. The Edmonton film and television community struggles along in spite of adversity. The Alberta government is again a supporter of the industry. Senator Tommy Banks conducted his last big band concert at the Winspear Centre on March 22, 2003, and members still don't consider giving up their day jobs.

– Sharon Killey is celebrating her 20th anniversary as ACTRA Edmonton's Branch Representative.

the
ACTRA
story

1 Stuart Margolin (Slim), Wayne Robson (Pete), Luke Reilly (Max), Rebecca Jenkins (Daisy) and Francis Damberger (Ivan) in *Bye Bye Blues* (1988).



Photo: Douglas Gurnea

2 Jake (Shaun Johnston) and The Kid (Ben Campbell) in *Jake And The Kid*, Season II (1996).

Photo courtesy: Nidany/Green North Productions
Photo by R. Van Schaik

3 Edmonton ACTRA members at the Citadel Theatre for the 'poster shoot.' This photo appeared in *The Edmonton Journal* on May 4, 1988.



Photo courtesy: The Edmonton Journal

4 Glyn Williams



5 The cast of Edmonton's Channel 5's *First Nighter* (1961): Neil Smith, Dorothy Harpell, Glyn Williams and Harry Boon.

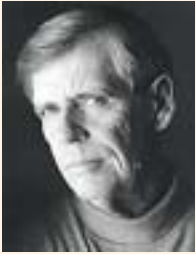


Photo: Laddie Penick

ACTRA CALGARY

Remembering the past 37 years

by Dennis Corrie

the
ACTRA
story

Dennis Corrie has served three times as President of the Calgary Branch.

The arrival of CBC radio in Calgary helped 'launch' our branch. In 1966 when Fred Diehl was hired to produce radio drama, he said "we don't want to just produce locally, we want to send our programmes regionally and nationally." Calgary actors rejoiced. The first season, Fred produced 13 dramas for the network and at his insistence, six scripts were written by Albertans.

Founding member Tim Christison was our first member to make a living – and support three kids – within ACTRA's jurisdiction. In 1988 Tim became the first and only Calgary member to win a national ACTRA award for *Patient's Diary* beating out Arthur Black and Peter Gzowski. Dale Goldhawk credits Tim with naming the Media Guild.

Jack Goth made his mark on the national scene when he and Victor Knight worked all night reworking ACTRA's constitution. While they toiled away the rest of Canada was watching Pierre Trudeau invoke the *War Measures Act*.

Peggy Goth was our branch rep for over 20 years. Her memories include looking after an over-refreshed Lee Marvin, getting a kiss from Paul Newman, dealing with a contrite William Shatner, seeing Ron Howard at age 20 in *Locusts*, Helen Hunt at age 10 in *Pioneer Woman* and Christopher Reeves in *Superman*.

Linda Kupeczek, former Branch President and National Director, remembers the '80s: "We were a tiny branch maintaining a brave presence within an emerging industry that didn't like the notion

of paying performers and writers professional rates. Those of us on the front lines took a lot of flack, but we survived, and so did the branch."

Douglas Riske was President in the mid-'80s. "CBC radio drama still sustained us and the Americans helped pay the bills and taught us skills needed to survive." Riske adds that, "the regions were under scrutiny and needed defending in order to keep the work in the community. It was a rare time to be part of a fine organization that has served our community and country well."

Into the '90s ACTRA Calgary celebrated when *Unforgiven* won the Academy Award in 1992. It was the first time a 'Best Picture Winner' had been shot in Canada. Past President Daryl Shuttleworth remembers bestowing W.O. Mitchell with his lifetime membership while he watched the Expos on TV. Daryl remembers "*North of 60* nervously stepping up to the plate with a wing and a prayer. A one-hour drama about native life in the North? Then, *Lonesome Dove* and *Honey I Shrunk The Kids* and *Viper*. With each series came opportunity for Calgary actors to improve their skills as actors."

Immediate Past-President Randy Birch: "I am constantly impressed by the diversity and energy of our members. It is my great pleasure to have been given the opportunity to build on the legacy of those who have preceded me. Thanks for the memories."

From the Calgary Branch, Happy 60th, ACTRA!

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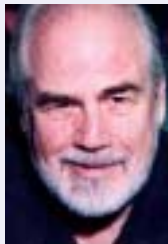
5



- 1 (l-r): ACTRA members Jack Goth, Diane Hayden, Fred Diehl (also a CBC producer), Tim Christison and Jack Phillips, Operations Manager for CBC Calgary.
- 2 Jack Goth
- 3 William (Bill) Berry
- 4 Vi Powlan
- 5 Patricia Benedict

Closing the Janus Temple

In reviewing the ACTRA/UBCP years some veterans had this to say:



Bruce MacLeod, ACTRA B.C.

From the perspective of one fortunate to witness the beginning and participate in the development of ACTRA, it is impossible not to salute ACRA, CCAA, as well as ACTRA, those who laboured for and benefited from its existence. The membership owes a great deal to a gentle man named Len Hayman, our first B.C. administrator and a strong woman named Ellen Randells, the right Branch Rep at the right time. We owe a long-overdue thank you to early members Bill and Doris Buckingham, Cathy and Jimmy Johnston, Dorothy Davies, Ted Stidder, Sally Creighton, Sam Payne, Wally Marsh, Daphne Goldrick, Roy Brinson, Graham Campbell and John White, many who served as President of the B.C. branch. Also, many writers, performers, broadcast journalists and administrators who should be acknowledged – I have already exceeded my allotted space. But, I speak for many who, unfortunately, can no longer be heard.



Sam Sarkar, UBCP President, 1993-94

I presided over the little meeting at the Arts Club on Granville Island when ACTRA and the UBCP were being courted by the 'big boys' of organized labour. One strong memory of that night is that, though there were many meetings where members were unruly or uncivil, this one took the cake. The conduct of quite a few was, to put it mildly, deplorable. It was like sitting in front of a mob straight out of the *Old Testament*. But *Robert's Rules of Order* and civility carried the day and the unruly were put in their place. There's something valuable in that.



Steve Adams, President ACTRA B.C., 1994-95

I sit here thinking about what I learned as President of ACTRA B.C. I learned that it's about principle, not double-speak. I learned it's about one's right to express, not suppress. I learned that to effect change, you must vote. I learned that, as an actor wanting to make a difference in your community, you must get involved. Most of all, I learned that the good people who stood by my side made it one of the richest experiences of my life. Merci. Bonjour and happy anniversary!



Peter Partridge, UBCP President, 1994-98

I first became President in 1994, believing B.C. needed protective autonomy from the centralist bureaucracy then in the ACTRA Alliance. We established a strong little union, based on the fundamental democratic premise that we were run by performers and responsive to their needs.

In my second term, UBCP initiated merger negotiations with ACTRA. Our members wanted to retain our hard-won autonomy but within one national organization. We carved out our return to ACTRA through the Kelleher Agreement in 1996. I am proud that UBCP has helped reform ACTRA into a better, more decentralized service organization run by actors for actors.



John Juliani, President UBCP, 1998-2003

Looking at the past; looking at the present...

Finances: I love that word – Reform. Assembling a dedicated team of consummate financial professionals. Benefits plans: What have we achieved? What can we improve? What sustain? Child regulations: Playing a leadership role protecting the most vulnerable. PAL in Vancouver: Answering the challenge of supporting our pioneers. CCRA: The Taxman Cometh; going to bat for performers in the income tax hotbox. Communication: www.ubcp.com's Burning Issues provides answers straight from the industry's mouth; Membership meetings where all sides can

be heard; meaningful dialogue with our National organization and sister branches. Member-friendly offices: newcomers and veterans alike find education and information, a smile and an encouraging word...

the
ACTRA
story

"I learned that, as an actor wanting to make a difference in your community, you must get involved."

– Steve Adams

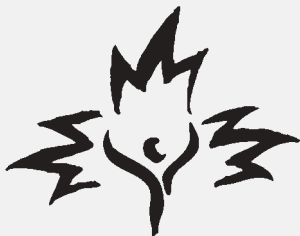
It is with great sadness that we advise that John Juliani passed away unexpectedly in August, 2003. His creativity, passion and commitment to our members and the industry across the country are dearly missed.



Happy 60th ACTRA!

from

The Canadian Conference of the Arts



Canada's oldest and largest arts advocacy organization extends best wishes to ACTRA's members and staff on this momentous occasion. The CCA looks forward to working with ACTRA and serving as the public voice of the cultural sector for many years to come.

For more information on the CCA, please contact us at:
804 – 130 Albert Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5G4
(613) 238 3561; Fax (613) 238 4849
info@ccarts.ca
www.ccarts.ca

Canadian Actors' Equity Association is proud of the work that ACTRA has done for Canadian artists these past 60 years.

Equity would like to congratulate all ACTRA artists, past and present, for making their association such a strong, visible leader in the entertainment industry. Your choice to work as ACTRA professionals in this industry reflects your commitment to high standards of labour practices across all jurisdictions.

We look forward to the next 60 years of professional partnership with our wonderful sister organization through our reciprocal agreement, as we have since Dec. 8, 1971.

Congratulations to you all.

It is well deserved.



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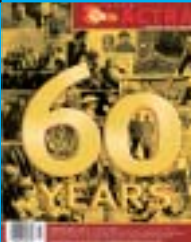


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SPORTS

Les Boys scores again

- Playback Nov 25, 2002

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Nuts and bolts and big ideas

ACTRA's policy advisor and former General Secretary Garry Neil outlines advances made for performers through negotiations, all the while striving for Canadian culture on the policy front.

the
ACTRA
story



Garry Neil, a policy issues consultant for many clients in Canada's arts and cultural community, has been associated with ACTRA since 1977. He was General Secretary of the Alliance from 1986 to 1992 and continues to provide policy advice.

When the 'Four Gentlemen of Studio A' discussed organizing a union at CBC radio in Toronto in 1941, they were motivated by a basic concern. The work they did as singers was completely unregulated, without contracts, the fee and work hours determined at the whim of the producer. The history of ACTRA is the story of how actors, singers, dancers and other performers joined together to tackle these basic workplace issues. Throughout, ACTRA has been a leader in performers' collective bargaining, with clauses that established benchmarks for unions around the world.

The Radio Artists of Toronto Society (RATS) received a charter from the American Federation of Labor in 1943. The first issue was establishing minimum fees and written contracts. Bernard Cowan, long-time CBC announcer (*Front Page Challenge*, *Wayne & Shuster*) and ACTRA activist, recalled the earlier arrangement for voice artists – "a dollar a holler," he called it. Performer groups in Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and Winnipeg organized a loose coalition in 1943, the Association of Canadian Radio Artists (ACRA). With little precedent for negotiations, and not covered by labour laws, they achieved a first collective agreement with the CBC in 1946.

Joining with francophone artists' unions in the Canadian Council of Authors and Artists (CCAA), ACTRA's predecessor firmly established jurisdiction in all recorded media, including an agreement (with CBC) for commercial production. In what may be the earliest such arrangement in the world, the CBC radio

"ACTRA has been involved in all of the subsequent debates about how to support Canada's film and television industry."

agreement provided limitations on how the material could be used. Additional fees were due ('step up fees'), by the beginning of the '50s, if a permanent record of the show was made, later followed by fees for repeat or other uses. This was the birth of the residual fee.

Collective bargaining expanded quickly through into the next decade with the expansion of the CBC and, in 1963, the English-language groups reorganized as ACTRA, inheriting all CBC Agreements. Early antagonism with the CBC had been replaced with a more cooperative relationship and ACTRA expanded nationally as CBC television stations were opened.

ACTRA's jurisdiction expanded along with the growth of the industry. A first agreement with commercial production companies and advertising agencies was concluded in 1958; one with the National Film Board was reached in 1957. The NFB agreement came to include Canada's independent producers, becoming the Independent Production Agreement (IPA) also in 1957.

In the mid-'80s, ACTRA decided the 'fixed payment' residual formula inadequately addressed the work opportunities: new markets such as videocassettes, in-flight television, pay and educational television and a burgeoning cable television industry. With the rise of more independent producers, ACTRA decided to negotiate a royalty fee, a percentage shared by all the performers in the work.

The first such agreement (with the CBC in 1982),



Photo courtesy: Tom Harvey. Copyright © 1964 by Continental Distributing Inc.



Photo: Lisa Sakulensky

provided for 5% of sales into ‘supplemental’ markets. Later, the IPA introduced the royalty formula, in 1986, but the effect was limited. It became clear that ACTRA needed it based on the distributor’s gross revenue (DGR), rather than the producer’s share.

Through the 1980s, the importance of the various agreements shifted dramatically away from the CBC and towards the IPA. While the Commercial Agreement remained significant, the CBC Agreement had become virtually irrelevant by decade’s end, as CBC was hiring independent producers rather than producing in-house. So, the battle to establish DGR as the basis of the royalty fee was primarily fought with Canada’s burgeoning independent production sector. This fight was won in 1995.

Various working condition issues now surfaced – turnaround, meal provisions, requirement for nude scenes and others – causing protracted negotiations and many months of agreement extensions. One major issue was the growing use of non-Canadian performers, coming to a head during CBC negotiations and leading to industrial action.

More and more foreign actors were being used, often even in secondary roles. The membership became increasingly militant and ACTRA, arguing that the permit system allowed it, began to deny work permit applications. In 1977, ACTRA engaged in the only industrial action in its history. Performers walked off the set of *The Goldrush Follies* when the CBC hired yet another non-Canadian, over ACTRA’s objection. The production was halted and, amidst threats of a lawsuit, the fight was ultimately successful. Agreements were changed to limit the producer’s use of non-Canadians. More importantly, the climate of the industry shifted as producers became far more aware of the need for a Canadians-first policy.

Keeping culture Canadian – performers strive for a Canadian industry

Performers work in an industry heavily reliant on government policies and programmes. Since early days, ACTRA members have sought more involvement in the policy process. We have been in the forefront of efforts to adequately support the production of Canadian stories, and to ensure the place of Canadian creators in the industry.

When the Board of Broadcast Governors first considered Canadian content rules in 1959 – for private television stations not affiliated with the CBC – members of the Canadian Council of Authors and Artists were there. Delegations regularly appeared before the BBG’s successor, the CRTC, arguing to improve and expand the system. ACTRA contributed to the hearings leading to the introduction of radio’s Cancon rules, the primary policy tool in the development of a Canadian music industry. ACTRA also played a key role in devising the ‘point system,’ introduced in 1974, to determine a ‘Canadian’ movie’s eligibility for Capital Cost Allowance.

On the funding side, ACTRA worked with a succession of governments in the 1960s, and was a key supporter of the 1967 decision to create the Canadian Film Development Corporation (now Telefilm Canada). ACTRA has been involved in all of the subsequent debates about how to support Canada’s film and television industry, through the period of the CCA provisions, which encouraged deal-making rather than movie-making, to the current blended system. ACTRA has consistently encouraged a mix of public and private sector support combined with judicious use of tax credits to support domestic productions, and those financed from abroad.

the
ACTRA
story

Al Waxman ...on ACTRA



“When I was accepted as a member of ACTRA I felt ten feet tall. That’s what I continue to feel, pride... as a member of ACTRA.”

– the late Al Waxman

1 Tom Harvey and Robert Shaw in *The Luck of Ginger Coffey* (1964).

2 ACTRA’s IPA 1999 negotiating team (l-r): Chuck Shamata, Brian Gromoff, Stephen Waddell, Nora Dell’Agnese (standing), Thor Bishopric (seated), Richard Hardacre, Ferne Downey, Bobby Hannah and Bob Collins.

3 Charmion King on the CFTO picket line in support of striking NABET workers in 1988.

4 ACTRA director Ken Pogue speaking to media at a Copyright demo in 1988.



Photos by Paul Till

the ACTRA story

“Globalization and trade agreements continue to seriously erode Canada’s ability to implement cultural policy.”

ACTRA has been a key player as well in the regulatory processes, appearing several times yearly before the CRTC, and working to improve Canada’s *Broadcasting Act*. Most important in this respect were ACTRA’s efforts to retain the strong provisions requiring the system to be ‘predominantly Canadian’ and the equal opportunities provision of the current Act.

Rights of Artists

Artists’ ownership of their work, fair treatment in the tax system, and the right to freedom of expression are key issues of concern to ACTRA. Our efforts in these fields have led to amendments of the *Copyright Act*, providing sound recording performers with ‘neighbouring rights’, a basic right for audiovisual performers to authorize recording of their work and to enforce existing contractual provisions against third parties. This latter provision is unique in the world.

After a decade-long fight in the ‘70s and ‘80s, ACTRA succeeded in its efforts to limit the use of foreign artists in Canada, to require employment authorizations when performers are engaged and to provide that immigration authorities consult with the appropriate union before issuing an authorization to a foreign artist.

One of the key battles over the years was the campaign for status of the artist led, both nationally and globally, by ACTRA’s General Secretary, Paul Siren. Siren co-chaired Canada’s delegations to the UNESCO meetings drafting the *Declaration on the Status of the Artist* adopted in Belgrade in 1980. In 1986, he co-chaired a federal task force whose recommendations led to the adoption of Canada’s *Status of the Artist Act* in 1992.

Many of these campaigns came together in the Performers Rights Day held on October 31, 1989.

Leading Canadian performers from ACTRA, UDA and AFM, traveled to Ottawa to urge that government provide additional rights for Canada’s performers. The Prime Minister of the day, Brian Mulroney, made a commitment in the House for “action to solve the problems of professional performers in Canada.”

Cultural Sovereignty

Mulroney shortly enacted the greatest threat to performers – the *Free Trade Agreement (FTA)*. Globalization and trade agreements continue to seriously erode Canada’s ability to implement cultural policy.

A Speakers’ Bureau of leading members raised the cultural dimension of free trade as early as 1986, galvanizing the cultural community and ultimately the nation. The FTA’s cultural exemption, while inadequate, would not have been negotiated were it not for these efforts.

This willingness of ACTRA members to speak on this issue has sometimes come at great cost. ACTRA President Dale Goldhawk was forced to resign his presidency in 1988, when CBC objected to his authorship of an *ACTRAscope* article raising concerns about the FTA. ACTRA ultimately won the dispute, and this tradition of activism on globalization carries on today with members such as R.H. Thomson representing ACTRA at a number of international meetings and parliamentary committees in recent years. Also, ACTRA’s Political Action Committees are actively spearheading a national fight for more support for cultural production, particularly television drama. There have been decades of active involvement in the public policy process and, at a conference devoted entirely to the subject in 2002, ACTRA’s policy agenda for the coming years was firmly established.

William B. Davis ...on ACTRA



William B. Davis and Gillian Anderson in *The X-Files*.

“What a sense of pride I had when my mother took me into the union office...”

What a sense of pride I had when a few months later my mother took me into the union office with my sheet of permits and I too became a member of the union. And that sense of pride has only increased over the following 54 years.

Dave Broadfoot ...on ACTRA



“ACTRA... put the stamp of ‘professional’ on all of us.”

The creation of ACTRA 60 years ago was a courageous step forward. Once ACTRA came into being, Canada’s performing artists and the writers of their words could no longer be taken for granted. ACTRA had put the stamp of ‘professional’ on all of us. As beneficiaries of this 60-year-ago creation, we have many achievements to celebrate, not the least of which, is the respect of our audience.

Recognizing and promoting our diversity – an ongoing challenge

by Sandi Ross

Many conferences were held, in the late '70s through into the '80s, to address cultural diversity concerns in theatre, film and television in Canada. Such luminaries as Salome Bey contributed, and Vera Cudjoe's Black Theatre Canada was created. But meaningful support was needed for performers of colour, such as Ms. Bey.

In 1986 I was elected to ACTRA Toronto Council and, being black, 'given' the 'Equal Ops' portfolio. I was not amused. However, through my friend, Brenda Kamino's Equal Opportunities Committee at Equity, planning started immediately.

In 1989 CAEA held an extremely successful conference on non-traditional casting, Talent Over Tradition. I then challenged ACTRA to hold a conference reflecting the film industry. I had already been collecting photos and résumés from visible and audible minorities, and disabled performers. The Equal Ops Committee members agreed this gave us a broader base and focus. We also included Italian and Jewish performers, because conversations with agents revealed that these so-called 'white ethnicities' were hard to cast outside of stereotype.

ACTRA sponsored a non-traditional casting conference in 1990. Despite best efforts we were tripped up. While the meeting venue was totally accessible, the reception was not. To top it off, the winner of our *Into the Mainstream* award was *The Disability Network...* and they came with camera crew and reporters!

However, the *Into the Mainstream* talent catalogue was launched there and quickly became an important resource for casting directors throughout its constantly improving editions. Even today, people still ask for it. I used to carry a box of books at the ready in my car, and we raised support from Alliance, Atlantis, CAW, DGC, Livent, NABET, The Canadian Film Centre and all government sources.

The book included all races and abilities of those mandated. Four editions in eight years were produced, although it increasingly became harder to raise money. The book worked. In 1997 I appeared in *Down in the Delta*, directed by Maya Angelou and starring Alfre Woodard. The producer said if they hadn't had a copy of *Into the Mainstream* at the 1995 Locations Expo, that project would not have come to Canada. I'm proud of that.

Until the final edition, *Into the Mainstream* was free. Some thought that it was now in direct competition with *Face to Face*, though *Mainstream* was not designed as competition; simply a tool to attract more varied production. And, God bless her, Brenda Kamino came in to work on the last edition.

In 1997, burned out, I resigned everything. At this juncture, I hope ACTRA will, like SAG in L.A. or New York, devote a staff member to work fulltime on the new positive initiatives being pursued by ACTRA's diversity advocates.

the
ACTRA
story



Sandi Ross is a former President of ACTRA Toronto Performers and long-serving Councillor.

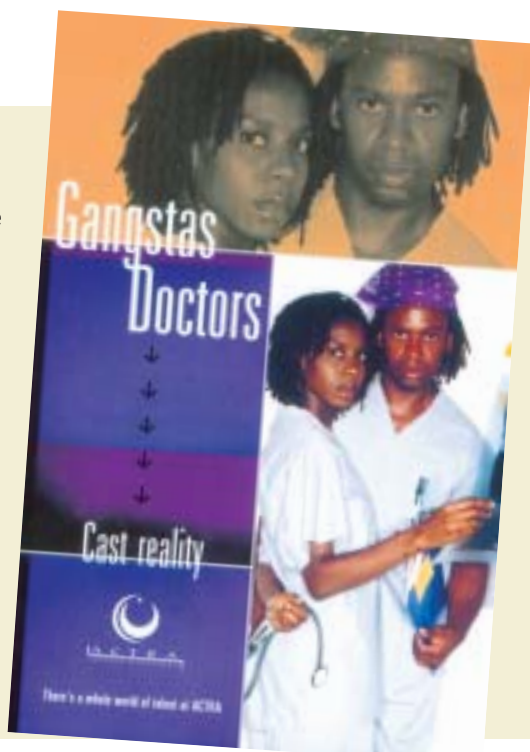
"Into the Mainstream quickly became an important resource for casting directors."

Promoting our diversity continues...

ACTRA has promoted diversity at the negotiating table. The Equal Opportunity Policy, written into both the IPA and the National Commercial Agreement, obliges producers to respect diversity in casting.

ACTRA Toronto's diversity advocates, performers Priya Rao and Leesa Levinson, work with staff to ensure diversity initiatives are a top priority for ACTRA. In 2001 ACTRA launched a 'cast reality' campaign to promote casting of visible minorities and differently-abled performers in a full range of roles and not just stereotypes. ACTRA Toronto Performers is a proud sponsor of the ReelWorld Film Festival and the Innoversity Creative Summit that promotes innovation and diversity in media.

One of the postcards from ACTRA Toronto's Cast Reality campaign.



DIGITAL MEDIA

Looking back and looking forward

by Thom Tapley

“Contrary to the doomsayers, each new technology has expanded the entertainment industry.”

the
ACTRA
story



Thom Tapley is ACTRA's National Advisor for Digital Media.

Technological change has had a huge impact on the entertainment industry and all of those who make their lives in it. In fact, technological change has not only been a part of the industry, it created it. After all, radio, television, and cinemas were all technological innovations. Technology allows people to see and hear what is really important – the programmes.

Each introduction of new technology results in industry instability, fear and disruption. In the early '30s, the music industry rallied to address a new technology called 'radio.' A group of composers contended that a hotel violated their copyright by re-playing a recording of their songs on a radio in the hotel lobby. The introduction of television in the '50s prompted predictions it would cause the extinction of live theatre. In the '80s, the movie industry took on VCR manufacturers. Jack Valenti, head of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), predicted that the VCR would kill the film and TV industries. Of course, radio, cinema and television have all co-existed. Contrary to the doomsayers, each new technology has expanded the entertainment industry in ways that were unimaginable at the time.

What happens to ACTRA agreements during periods of technological change? Historically, new types of content and distribution have been introduced into ACTRA agreements with less than enviable terms for performers. Producers tend to argue that new media require two criteria: low up-front fees and the right to perpetually exploit programmes without any additional performer compensation. Historically, producers paid an up-front payment to the performer in exchange for perpetual use. This was the case for both radio and television and continues to hold true

for theatrically released films. In ensuing years, ACTRA worked hard to negotiate better up-front fees and to secure access to ongoing revenues through use fees.

The arguments continue in current digital media negotiations. Producers contend that a reduced basic up-front fee should provide the ability to exploit the creative product forever, with no further compensation for the performers. History repeats itself.

The introduction of digital technology to the entertainment industries has created the most tumultuous four-year period that the industry has ever seen. The music industry is a good illustration of this, and what takes place in the music industry is mirrored, albeit at a slower rate, in the audio-visual world.

This disruptive period has often resulted in less-favourable terms for performers. Under the strain of change, many unions have lowered up-front fees and allowed for perpetual use in areas such as animation and video gaming. Regrettably, this loss of perpetual rights happened in a period where production and revenues have dramatically increased in these genres.

But all is not doom and gloom. Although technological innovations have experienced tumultuous introductions, technology has almost always expanded the entertainment industry, creating more, not less work. Technological innovation has increased, not decreased, revenues. Instead of the end of the film and television industries, as predicted by Jack Valenti, the home video market now accounts for nearly one-third of Hollywood's revenues.

Two years ago, ACTRA became the first and only union determined to tackle head-on the changes taking place in the industry. Although it has been a

Sonja Smits ...on ACTRA



“The ACTRA women’s caucus has worked hard... and its work has been expanded upon by successive generations of fabulous and committed women.”

In the '80s I had the privilege of joining a group of passionate, dynamic and fabulously outrageous women who founded the ACTRA women’s caucus. It was a very emotional and exciting time as we fought for acknowledgement that specific issues faced women members. Exploitation and ‘soft core’ films were running rampant in

our struggling film industry and this group of amazing women worked hard to establish a framework of rights and protections. That work has continued and been expanded upon by successive generations of fabulous and committed women. The friendships I made through ACTRA continue today and the memories of the fun we had (and we had lots) still make me smile. Thanks ACTRA!

William Shatner ...on ACTRA



“I want to acknowledge the extraordinary work of ACTRA.”

I’m an ACTRA member of long standing. In fact, I’ve been standing long enough to want to sit down. But before I do, I want to acknowledge the extraordinary work of ACTRA – the enormous good the

association has performed for actors – the grand benefits that accrued to us – congratulations to all of us on the 60th Anniversary of our union.

rocky road, ACTRA has established itself as a leading authority for performers in the expanding area of digital media. ACTRA has maintained performer fees, using this period to evaluate the models by which performers share in the success, where others have taken the route of allowing perpetual use.

Digital media will continue to have an impact on

the entire industry and ACTRA will continue to stay abreast of the rapidly changing environment, make informed decisions, play an active role in the decision-making process, think long-term and perhaps most importantly, learn from our own history to continue to protect and improve performers' rights in the face of technological advances.

20 YEARS AND GROWING

ACTRA PRS

by Mercedes Watson

While ACTRA's growth can be traced from the '40s, ACTRA Performers' Rights Society (ACTRA PRS) only came into being in 1983. During these 20 years, however, ACTRA PRS has administered 'use fees' to performers in the thousands, with collections growing by roughly a million dollars a year for the past six years. In 1996, the Assistant Director, who had a staff of only three, often remarked that the department was run by "luck, a pencil and paper and the tenacity of the department's staff!"

Today, collecting over \$7,000,000 and sending out more than 20,000 cheques in its last fiscal year, ACTRA PRS has moved beyond the pencil-and-paper approach to a sophisticated, customized software programme that houses the data on the many productions for which we've successfully collected Use Fees. It is no surprise that with a staff of 13, the department still continues to struggle with the volume of thousands of hours of creative programming work of which ACTRA's professional membership can boast. We continue to draw on the assistance of our branches across the country, our improved sys-

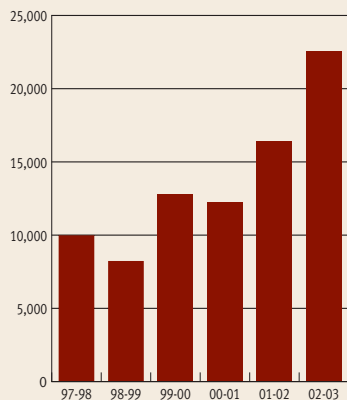


Performers paid! Lyn Jackson and Garry Neil sign the first stack of cheques collected for members by ACTRA's new Performers' Rights Society in 1984.

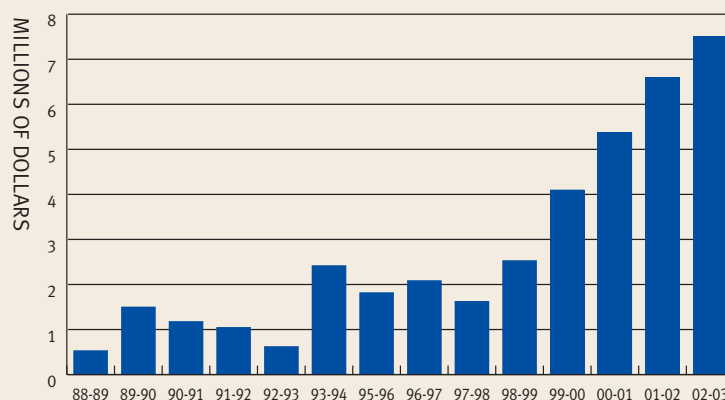
tems, and our tenaciousness to successfully collect money owed to performers.

We haven't yet met our departmental goal of collecting all monies owed to all performers who have worked under ACTRA's numerous collective agreements – but we've taken very big steps in that direction. We have developed expertise in distribution and added staff with industry experience to increase our claims. We have proven that the producers and distributors who said there was no money in Use Fees were wrong – and our progress (*see charts below*) speaks loudly that payments to performers after productions are completed are equally as important to their livelihood as those fees negotiated at the time of production.

Mercedes Watson is Director of ACTRA Performers' Rights Society.



ANNUAL NUMBER OF CHEQUES DISTRIBUTED TO PERFORMERS



ACTRA PRS COLLECTIONS 1988-2003

the
ACTRA
story

ACTRA 60th Anniversary Honourees

the ACTRA story

ACTRA's 60th Anniversary is the perfect occasion to bring back our ACTRA Award – to bring back the pride and enthusiasm of celebrating our own.

Jamie Bradley – Award of Excellence (Maritimes)

Georgie Collins – ACTRA Calgary founding member tribute

Rejean Cournoyer – ACTRA Award for Outstanding Performance, male (Maritimes) *The Event*

Shawn Doyle – ACTRA Award for Outstanding Performance, male (Toronto), *The Eleventh Hour*

Joyce Erickson – Life Membership (UBCP)

Jack Goth – ACTRA Calgary founding member tribute

Kay Grieve – ACTRA Calgary founding member tribute

Antony Holland – Award of Excellence (UBCP)

Andy Jones – Award of Excellence and Life Membership (Newfoundland/Labrador)

Garry Little – Life Membership (UBCP)

Bill Luxton – Lifetime Achievement Award (Ottawa)

Les Lye – Lifetime Achievement Award (Ottawa)

Leslie Nielsen – Award of Excellence (National/Los Angeles)

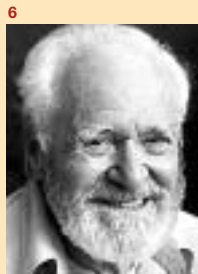
Ellen Page – ACTRA Award for Outstanding Performance, female (Maritimes), *Marion Bridge*

Gordon Pinsent – Award of Excellence (Toronto)

William Shatner – Award of Excellence (Montreal)

Kristen Thomson – ACTRA Award for Outstanding Performance, female (Toronto), *I Shout Love*

Gordon Tootoosis – Award of Excellence (Saskatchewan)



3 Leslie Nielsen receiving the ACTRA Award of Excellence at ACTRA's 60th Anniversary celebrations at the Canadian Consular Residence in LA, with Thor Bishopric, ACTRA National President.

4 Georgie Collins

5 Gordon Tootoosis

6 Antony Holland

7 William Shatner

8 Joyce Erickson

9 Andy Jones

10 Kay Grieve

11 Rejean Cournoyer

12 Garry Little

1 Ellen Page in *Marion Bridge*, winner of the ACTRA Award for Outstanding Performance (Maritimes).

2 Gordon Pinsent, winner of the 2003 ACTRA Award of Excellence (Toronto), with award presenter Paul Gross.

Photo courtesy: Idealworld Films, Photo: Nancy Ackerman

My Award of Excellence

by Jamie Bradley



So it was May 8th when I hauled my aching carcass into my Halifax home. It was two weeks of insanity driving to Disney World in a van with my three kids and 86-year-old father and I was looking forward to falling down.

Instead, I checked my 300 unread emails — one of which was from ACTRA Maritimes Branch Representative Gary Vermeir. He said that I might be receiving some phone calls from the press because Branch Council had decided to bestow upon me the first ACTRA Maritimes Award of Excellence.

“ ” I replied. I was honestly floored but the flooring I received then wasn’t half of what I experi-

enced the night of the party. Two days later, the night of our AGM, I was surprised (read floored) to find one of my best friends, Bill Forbes. Bill had driven three hours from where he was directing a show just to embarrass and insult me in a wonderfully deprecating speech. I was accused of many things and most of them, I swear, were untrue.

I remember walking up to the stage, shaking Thor’s hand, hugging Bill and then — now here’s where it gets blurry, said some stuff. I wish it hadn’t happened so quickly, it was like driving by a picket fence, but I have been told since that mine was a heartfelt thank you to my wife and family and something about actors sticking together.

I wish I could tell you more, but... I was floored. *Jamie Bradley is thrilled to be the first recipient of the ACTRA Maritimes Award of Excellence.*

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ACTRA
story

13 Shawn Doyle and Kristen Thomson, winners of ACTRA Awards for Outstanding Performance (Toronto).

13



14 Bill Luxton and Les Lye, aka “Willy & Floyd”.

14



Photo courtesy: The Ottawa Citizen. Photo: Jean Love

Dakota House ...on ACTRA



The overall knowledge of what is written in the news articles (InterACTRA) as well as the security and benefits of being an ACTRA member have enabled me to feel safe and taken care of as an actor.

Don Chevrier ...on ACTRA



Having been an ACTRA member, (and AFTRA) for many years, I really treasure and value what ACTRA has done for me. Far back in the 1960s, ACTRA fought for member rights and work conditions... ACTRA has produced the finest retirement package in North America! Good job over the years!

Heather Blom ...on ACTRA



“With ACTRA, I never have to worry about age discrimination.” In many other cases, young people are not taken seriously. With ACTRA, I never have to worry about age discrimination. ACTRA will help me if I have a problem, or listen to me if I have an idea. I feel secure when I am on set because ACTRA staff have been generous with information and are always watching out for us minors!

Looking for more?

Additional copies of ACTRA's 60th Anniversary special edition of *InterACTRA* are available for sale at ACTRA Branch offices and select bookstores across Canada.

**For a location near you
call 1-800-387-3516**

The Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists
21,000 trained professionals
Online at www.actra.ca



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celebrating 60 Years



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We do have stars: the ACTRA Awards

by Lorraine Thomson

When television began in Canada, if you owned a TV set and had service in your area, you could see Canadian programmes and Canadian stars.

Around 1962 the industry started to change. American programming, cheaper and more profitable to air than Canadian-made programmes, began to dominate. Their product arrived with plenty of ready-made promos, blurbs and stills to give to the press and broadcasters.

In 1970, because of the erosion of Canadian content, ACTRA sent some famous faces to lobby Ottawa on behalf of restoring CanCon (sound familiar?) and generate publicity. We received a terrific reception and we talked about finding ways to maintain the positive attention.

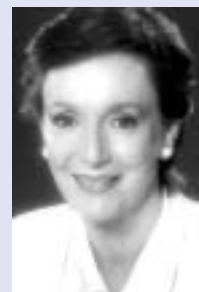
Bruno Gerussi and I shared a taxi to the Ottawa airport, and on that ride we invented what became the ACTRA Awards, to be presented to writers and performers in television and radio. Soon, with other board members, Pierre Berton and Dave Higgins, I presented the idea to the ACTRA Board. They loved it and supported it wholeheartedly. We were assigned the job of “putting it together,” along with the marvelous Margaret Collier and the invaluable Elizabeth Malone. Margaret Collier and I found the sculptor Bill McElcheran and our famous Nellie statue. Elizabeth named her Nellie. She is not Barbara Hamilton or Juliette!

The first annual ACTRA Awards in 1972 took place at the Park Plaza Hotel in Toronto and were not televised. There were three awards: Graham Spry took The John Drainie Award, Pierre Berton won the Gordon Sinclair and Geneviève Bujold won the Earle Grey. Our plan was to develop slowly but the event was such a success in the press and the industry that we went to television the next year.

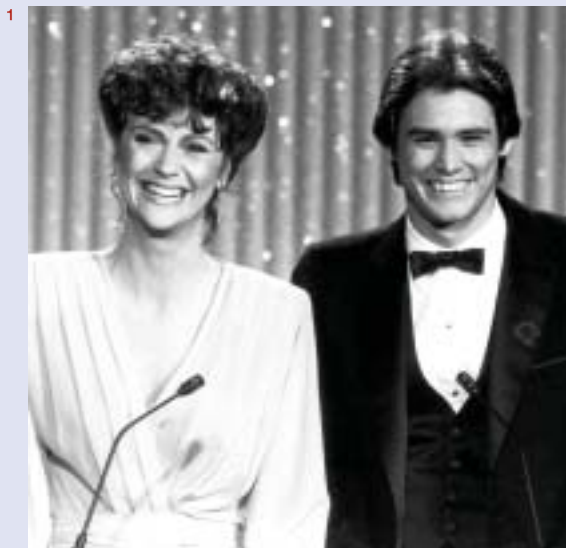
As the proud producer and co-founder of the ACTRA Awards, I have many memorable moments including the reunion of *The Happy Gang* with Bert Pearl, the uniting of Juliette, Joan Fairfax, Shirley Harmer, Phyllis Marshall, Joyce Sullivan and Sylvia Murphy as *The Golden Girls*, and my last-minute presentation of an award because the female impersonator Craig Russell would not come out of the ladies' bathroom. You see, we did have stars and the ACTRA Awards recognized and promoted them.

Thank you once again to all who were involved, and congratulations to ACTRA for starting an awards system in Canada.

the
ACTRA
story



Lorraine Thomson co-founded the ACTRA Awards, is a founder of the AFBS Oral History Project, the Founding Chair of the AFBS Museum of Canadian Broadcasting, a former ACTRA Councillor, National Treasurer, Vice-President and AFBS Governor.



- 1 Hosts of the 1982 ACTRA Awards, Dixie Seatle and Jim Carrey.
- 2 Roger Abbott and Joyce Davidson with Nellies – publicity for the 1985 ACTRA Awards.
- 3 SCTV at the ACTRA Awards in 1978: Rick Moranis, John Candy, Eugene Levy and Catherine O'Hara.
- 4 Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau speaking at the 1983 ACTRA Awards.

BRAGGING RIGHTS:

The Canadian way

by Ferne Downey

the
ACTRA
story



Ferne Downey has worked extensively in television and film for 20 years. A Past President of ACTRA Toronto, she is ACTRA's representative on the PAL Board, and Co-Chair of the Entertainment Industry Coalition (EIC).

In the '50s and '60s, Canadians were the best in the world at producing TV drama. Shows like *Quentin Durgens*, *MP* and *Wojeck* ruled CBC, and CBC just ruled. Canadians were in studios so much they invented studio cameras and created writer, producer and performer exports for American networks. On April 1, 1968, recognizing the need to both protect and build on the growing strength of our industry, a new *Broadcasting Act* was proclaimed and in December of that same year, ACTRA committed to publishing its first talent catalogue, soon to be called *Face to Face With Talent*.

U.S. producers, woefully ignorant of the strength of our performer base, brought all their actors with them. "We don't know any Canadian actors," they complained. The Institute of Canadian Advertisers in 1968 chimed in with, "We don't know who is available for commercials in this country."

Now, we're practical, resourceful people. If a lie is presented as a fact, we don't punch the speaker in the nose, we don't litigate, we simply prove them wrong. The reality was, and is, Canada has fantastic actors. We fought back, not just with words, but with photographs and detailed casting proof.

The Talent Promotion Committee, under actor Leslie Yeo, set the ball in motion. Soon the first volume of *Face to Face* was on the desk of every CBC and independent producer, film executive, and artistic director in the country. It became an extremely effective weapon against the unnecessary importation of performers. The next 30 years saw ACTRA publishing *F2F* biennially, promoting the interests of per-



Photo by Paul Hill

Anne Tait and ACTRA member Donald Ewer at Toronto launch party for *Face to Face with Talent*, Ninth Edition in 1987.

formers from coast to coast. ACTRA stewards still use *Face to Face Online* to fight for Canadian casting in service productions.

Inspired by *Face to Face*, the ACTRA National Equal Opportunities Committee launched *Into the Mainstream* to promote underused visible and audible minorities, as well as disabled performers in ACTRA, and regional talent directories were also created, all proving especially useful in the '90s when closer cooperation became the order of the day between ACTRA and provincial film commissioners.

In 1997, we caused quite a stir by launching our first version of *Face to Face Online*. Beginning modestly, it has developed into a powerful national ACTRA resource. Provided as a member service under the ACTRA Plan, each individual maintains his or her own portfolio. Through a fully searchable database, information is centralized coherently in one place. A thing of beauty, flexible, it can work hand in glove with local directories like ACTRA Calgary Online, ACTRA Maritimes Online and CD, ACTRA Montreal and others.

Through all the growth and changes, *Face to Face* remains what it has always been, a self-determined promotional tool for ACTRA members and an inspiration for other initiatives. Currently, Montreal has a project underway regarding background casting; ACTRA Maritimes' extensive voice-talent directory is cross-referenced with *F2F* – the possibilities appear endless. *Face to Face* is bursting with useful potential, and poised to capitalize on its task of creating work opportunities for Canadian actors.

Molly Johnson ...on ACTRA

In 1996 I had an opportunity to buy my first house. It came about through an ACTRA RRSP programme that I had never paid much attention to. ACTRA sends so many useful bits of information to its members, and I am very glad that I noticed this one. Well, the house

deal closed over the holidays, right between Christmas and New Year's, of course. All the same, Charlie Johnson, Mitch Rose, Bhoop Singh and Jane Nelson each came in over their holidays to sign cheques and put the sale through, allowing me to purchase my first home. Over many years I have received good advice and counsel from the staff at ACTRA and I very much appreciate it!

ARTISTS AS LOBBYISTS:

ACTRA a long-time collaborator with the Canadian Conference of the Arts

by Megan Davis Williams

Few arts organizations were on the horizon ahead of CCA and ACTRA. Both arose when, in the artistically bleak post-World War II environment, Canada's artists began to meet and lobby for an infrastructure and policy measures to support their work. At the Kingston Conference in 1941, artists took the first step in a process that led Canada from a colonial cultural entity to the conscious recognition that the federal government had responsibilities for cultural policies which would sustain our own national cultural development. In 1944, some of those same artists prepared the *Artists' Brief Concerning Cultural Aspects of Canadian Reconstruction* for the federal government. They might be viewed as the ideological ancestors of both the CCA and ACTRA.

The CCA and ACTRA have collaborated on many issues over the long lives of both organizations, speaking out in support of freedom of expression, advocating for funding for the arts, and developing

federal status of the artist legislation. Since the advent of the Free Trade Agreement and NAFTA in the mid-nineties the CCA and ACTRA have worked together to counteract the pressures these agreements exert on our domestic cultural interests, on our very cultural sovereignty.

As the new millennium unfolds, the indigenous forms of cultural expression that we cherish in Canada are subject to even greater pressures from globalized markets. ACTRA has adopted an activist stance by working with its members to publicize the decrease in Canadian drama production, by working to promote the cultural diversity treaty and by keeping these issues high on the agendas of parliamentarians. If more arts organizations were as active and focused as ACTRA, the future of the arts in Canada would be assured.

Megan Davis Williams is the National Director of the Canadian Conference of the Arts

the
ACTRA
story

“As the new millennium unfolds, the indigenous forms of cultural expression we cherish in Canada are subject to even greater pressures from globalized markets.”

Steve Smith ...on ACTRA

The budget for our pilot was \$700 – that was to pay the band. They were a small, independent station. ACTRA was not a factor – it was non-union. What they wanted us to do was 13 episodes, which I would write and my wife and I would perform – and we would get \$6,500, total, for all 13 episodes – for two performers and a show writer. My friends were saying, ‘Don’t do it, that’s ridiculous. You could work at McDonald’s and do better.’ But I just ignored that advice, because it wasn’t coming from my wife. She felt we should do it. And we did.

So we got on TV, and out of that, I started getting freelance writing jobs for other shows, and some of them were CBC productions – Wayne and Shuster, or an Irish Rovers Special – and they wanted me to write the show. Bear in mind we’re getting \$500 an episode doing everything. Scale to write the CBC show was \$3,500. I phoned to check. It’s one show, and all I’m going to do is write it. And they said ‘That’s right. That’s \$3,500.’ It was one of those things where somebody’s really wrong here. Either somebody is really being overpaid, or I’m really being underpaid. And I went with Plan Two. In reality what happened out of that is, sure, you’re getting paid well for when you’re working, but you may not have another job for six months.

What ACTRA provided for me was an entry level. You could actually sustain life at the entry level, of having some kind of success in Canada. I’m absolutely convinced that would not be the case without ACTRA, because we wanted to be on television. If they’d have said ‘it’s \$200 a show,’ we would have said ‘fine.’ When you’re young, you’re always living in the future – it’s going to lead to something – and it did. It would not have led to what it led to without ACTRA setting the entry level. And that was pretty helpful to us.



Steve Smith as Red Green.

Strong culture required

by Mel Hurtig

the
ACTRA
story



Mel Hurtig O.C., recipient of numerous awards and several honorary doctorates, is one of Canada's pre-eminent nationalists. His latest book, *The Vanishing Country*, is already a best-seller.

While Brian Mulroney and his unprecedented continentalist government constantly assured Canadians that culture was not on the free-trade table and that his government was committed to safeguarding the cultural interests of Canadians, we now know there was a tacit understanding that they would act in such a way as to avoid major U.S. complaints about, among others, the book publishing and magazine industries and film policy. While Jean Chrétien's infamous 1993 *Red Book* stated that "culture is the very essence of national sovereignty and national pride," labelling it one of the three pillars of foreign policy, we now know his massive cutbacks have wreaked havoc, undercutting our creative abilities, dispersing our talent, abandoning our cultural independence, reducing or even eliminating support for the written means by which Canadians communicate with their fellow citizens and the world. A prominent Canadian publisher called the 1995 reduction of publishing industry support "the most cynical betrayal in the history of book publishing in Canada."

Should we be surprised that the CBC is no longer a prime-time player in dramatic programming or that Global TV need only pay lip service to Canadian content while stuffing its schedule with cheap, "dumped" American product? Should John Manley's reduction in support for Canadian TV production in Canada, while blatantly increasing the amount of tax dollars available to American filmmakers in Canada, be so shocking? Or is this betrayal simply a further reflection of Liberal priorities at the behest of the usual suspects, the BCNI, and the raft of other Americanizers of Canada who have so successfully fooled so many with their scare tactics should we dare not integrate

even further into the American system?

Without a strong culture a country exists in name only. ACTRA has always been a strong fighter for Canadian sovereignty and for the promotion and protection of Canadian culture. It is our artists – all artists, actors, writers, painters, dancers, whatever – who can have the greatest influence on a people. In my recent book, *The Vanishing Country*, I lamented the abandonment of our proud experiment in independent nation building and the steady undermining of our Canadian industrial base, and so many of our social and cultural institutions, and the commitment to further integration with the U.S. by successive governments. In the film industry, we have been suppliers of some talent to the American film industry and, with the ready compliance of government, have built an industry here largely dependent on the needs of a foreign culture, rather than our own. Surely, it's unseemly to accept that our prime role in life is to train workers for foreign industries.

ACTRA's record of success and its commitment to maintain and expand our Canadian cultural identity, lends a measure of hope to those of us who want to see ourselves reflected on our cinema and television screens, who want to share a Canadian perspective with the people of the world. ACTRA's history clearly demonstrates a readiness and ability to provide the leadership sadly lacking in many areas to ensure that Canada's distinct identity will not only be preserved, but enhanced and expanded with a new vigour and determination. There is no doubt in my mind that ACTRA can play a major role in the reestablishment of sovereignty and respect for the wonderful heritage we all share.

Lyn Mason Green, Canadian Actor Online, www.canadianactor.com ...on ACTRA



"I am much more aware of the political aspects of our business and what ACTRA and UBCP do on our behalf and why."

Some of you may remember the first cluttered and none-too-pretty CAO homepage when it arrived in cyberspace in 1998. Both ACTRA Toronto and ACTRA National recognized the potential and became our first corporate sponsors. UBCP followed not long after. Sponsorships have allowed CAO to add sophisticated discussion boards and to grow to over 6,800 registered members and an average of 225,000 page views per month.

CAO has saved more than one neophyte actor time and money, not to mention aggravation. But as the website has grown, it has also become popular with experienced actors looking for a community online. Cyberspace has crackled with heated debate about 'runaway' production, SAG's Rule One, ethics issues in casting, exploitative entry level agencies, protection

of children on set, BG performer concerns, national and provincial cultural policies and the ongoing effort to bring non-union work into ACTRA's fold.

We all have learned from each other on CAO. I can say that I am much more aware of the political aspects of our business and what ACTRA and UBCP do on our behalf and why. I have learned that it's more important than ever, especially in these volatile times, to pay attention to what's happening and to the issues that are having a substantial impact on our lives every day.

We must all get active on our own behalf. With real information and understanding, we can strengthen and protect our rights as artists and our presence as a cultural voice in Canada. Canada needs us. The industry needs us. Let's keep talking. See you online!

Jane Mallett and The Actors' Fund

by John Mallett

My mother and my uncle Pat, who lived with us, tried to shame actors into being a more cohesive force. The people who flowed through our house were mother's choice, and they were actors – these were the people my mother thought were worthwhile – she called other people “klunks.” She had a fierce loyalty to them. She felt actors needed to be supported when not immediately employed. She tried to get the actors to espouse something worthwhile. The union was a consequence of these discussions.

Once, a chunk of scenery fell on my mother while she was on set at the CBC. It should have been nailed down properly. Very scary and untoward. Someone there suggested to her “you wouldn't want to sue your employer, would you?” That's what it was like.

She was involved in putting on, as she would call it, “the damn benefit,” an annual fundraising event for actors, to raise money for performers who were disabled or unable to work. It was a really big thing for my mother, she was frustrated at the amount of time and responsibility that fell on her shoulders – she saw actors really down, that ought not to be.

– John Mallett is Jane Mallett's son.

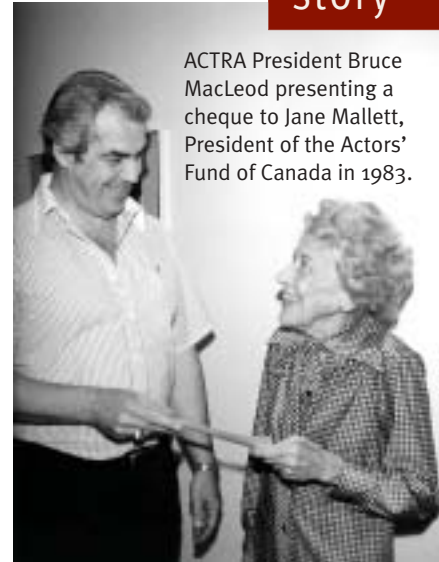
“The Actors' Fund of Canada was founded in 1957 to provide assistance to colleagues who were aging, sick or simply facing difficult times. It started with five one-dollar bills, one each kicked in by five prominent actors – Jane Mallett, Donald Davis, Barbara Hamilton, Douglas Rain and Dennis Sweeting. Within a year it had raised \$10,000 from benefit performances. The fund stands as a security for all people in the entertainment industry who work on a freelance basis and do not have access to many standard social benefits.”

– ACTRAscope, 1982

“The fund stands as a security for all people in the entertainment industry who work on a freelance basis and do not have access to many standard social benefits.”

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ACTRA
story



ACTRA President Bruce MacLeod presenting a cheque to Jane Mallett, President of the Actors' Fund of Canada in 1983.

Memories of the sixties and seventies

by Vernon Chapman

My memory of those formative years for ACTRA have become foggy. But as I glance through old ACTRAscopes, the fog lifts and memories flood back. And what memories! Some pleasant: events and achievements; others unpleasant: about failures and internal strife. Because Toronto had become the centre of radio and television production in English Canada, ACTRA Toronto inevitably became the largest, most influential local with 1,795 members in 1964, as compared with the second largest local, Montreal, with 394. It would be no exaggeration to say it was the fuel that ran ACTRA. Toronto was most often in the forefront of ACTRA's campaigns to obtain better funding for the CBC so that it could produce Canadian shows using Canadian talent. On several occasions, prominent Toronto members made representations to the CBC and to the CRTC regarding limiting the amount of foreign content and the number of foreign performers employed by both the CBC and independent broadcasters.

But, conversely, Toronto could also be bothersome. Once, reversing a 6-year trend of non-quorum membership meetings, a large group presented a petition signed by 101 members urging the national board to

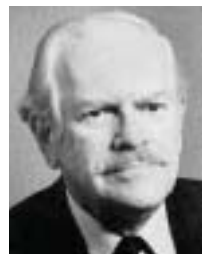
overturn the ratification of a new CBC Agreement. It was felt ACTRA had compromised too far on the issues. On another occasion a dissatisfied actor rallied a group of equally dissatisfied performers and started an Actors' Committee, independent of ACTRA. ACTRA grew alarmed but ACTRA Toronto managed to persuade the dissidents to become an Actors' Committee within ACTRA. Very soon thereafter the leader of this group was elected to the local Branch Council, learned about the problems and was thus able to contribute to ACTRA from within. Both these examples show membership involvement and, although sometimes causing worry, it was infinitely preferable to the complacency too often exhibited by the Toronto membership in those days.

Twenty years of ACTRAscopes reminded me that, regrettably, the fight to create and sustain work opportunities for our members and protect their interests continues. But ACTRA Toronto is still supplying dedicated leaders, as in ACTRA's first 30 years, to fight in our worthy cause.

Photo courtesy CBC Still Photo Collection, Toronto and Laddie Dennis



Laddie Dennis and Don Francks in the CBC series *Unforeseen*, episode *Man Running* (1960).



Vernon Chapman is writing a history of Canadian Actors' Equity Association.

VOICE
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story



Victor Knight is an ACTRA pioneer.

“Management’s argument about not having a large enough talent pool here was revealed for what it was, a sham.”

Memories of ACTRA Montreal and the genesis of Canadian content regulations

by Victor Knight

ACTRA Montreal was born with the Radio Actors of Montreal Society (RAMS). The francophone Union des Artistes, operating on the French network, was added to the mix, a bridge made possible by the creation of our umbrella organization, the Canadian Council of Authors and Artists (CCAA). The CCAA was headquartered in Montreal, negotiating agreements with CBC/Radio-Canada and the Association of Advertisers and Agencies, providing separate but equal agreements in both English and French. This arrangement lasted into the ‘50s. But things were changing. TV complicated everything.

French methods and approaches were not the same as those in English. In the early ‘50s, joint-programming used English and French actors. A bilingual weekly series – *Je me souviens* in French and *Dateline* in English – was made in Montreal. Another filmed series, *Radisson and Groseilliers*, took a similar approach. They were heady days and we worked well together. Between radio and television, an actor could have a busy life, thanks to the negotiated agreements that the CCAA and ACTRA created. The missing factor, of course, was a professional theatre, although amateur theatre flourished in both languages and actors cooperated in the creation of their own theatre companies. The first dubbing studios were opened to serve TV’s growing appetite. It seemed like heaven. It couldn’t last, and of course, it didn’t.

In 1959 the French television producers went on strike at Radio-Canada. CCAA advised members that those having contracts must honour them and cross picket lines. Montreal members were confused. Some crossed; others didn’t and were blackballed by CBC for months. Neil LeRoy, then President of CCAA, came to Montreal to convince members. Union des Artistes refused. None crossed the picket lines. LeRoy was mugged on his way out of the city. René Lévesque became the spokesperson and leader in this long and costly strike. It changed everything.

Union des Artistes were unforgiving in their judgment, and withdrew from CCAA. ACTRA and UDA signed a recognition agreement but went their separate ways.

Hard times ensued. The bilingual programmes disappeared, replaced on TV by *Shoestring Theatre* – a descriptive title – a weekly repertory of live dramas. But the heyday was over.

President Dennis Sweeting and Director General Marcel Francq were accused by some Toronto mem-

bers of a rather unspecified malfeasance in 1964. The lawyers had a field day. All parties, accusers and accused, hired lawyers expecting them to be paid by ACTRA. The hearing, under Bora Laskin, later Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, determined no malfeasance had occurred but that the association was badly mismanaged. After all the legal bills were paid, ACTRA was broke. Its building was sold, and we had to start all over again.

All this coincided with a major slump in production in Canada. Canadian film producers were beginning to establish an industry here, but TV screens were showing more and more American-produced shows. Programmes were being dumped by American networks at rates with which no Canadian producer could compete. It became evident that this all-demanding issue had to be fought and won. ACTRA needed new leadership. We found it in Paul Siren, largely responsible for creating the campaign for Canadian content regulations.

I had recently been elected Vice-President of ACTRA and had a number of humbling experiences at membership meetings. One prominent writer-member inquired, “What’s it like, Victor, to be VP of f—k all?” Another complained that our retirement savings plan paid less interest than a savings account at a bank!

At the same time, the Board of Broadcast Governors, now replaced by the CRTC, were holding hearings in Ottawa on the Canadian content for TV and radio. ACTRA and UDA were jointly presenting papers, cheered on by the musicians’ union who were not themselves participating. Several meetings had taken place. The TV owners, managers and lawyers had presented powerful arguments. We were fighting a losing battle.

The deputy chairman of the commission, Harry J. Boyle, told me bluntly that if we did not find a way to change the flow, the TV ownership would have its way; there would be no regulations on Canadian content. We needed a miracle. I said to ACTRA General Secretary Paul Siren, “Telling them won’t do it. The members will have to show them.”

ACTRA commissioned a film of the members doing their thing. Over a hundred best-known performers and writers delivered it to the next hearing. None of the owners’ lawyers could compete with that little gem of a film and, with the appearance of many of Canada’s most talented and popular performers, singers, dancers, actors, comics and writers, ACTRA was not to be denied. Management’s argument about

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not having a large enough talent pool here was revealed for what it was, a sham, a convenient lie that didn't hold water. We won the battle. Regulations were enacted favouring ACTRA's point of view. Slowly the tide began to turn.

Now holding the office of "President of f—k all", and responsible to correct those low-interest payment complaints mentioned earlier, we reorganized our retirement savings programme. The Actra Fraternal

Benefit Society was formed, under the Presidency of John Ross and the management of Bhoop Singh. The society was legally enabled to insure members. Outside insurance arrangements were cancelled and replaced by in-house coverage. Members' retirement savings funds were removed from the previous investment trust company, and a new company of investment advisors was hired – the Fraternal fund you know today was created.

ACTRA takes an international role – our history with FIA

by Paul Siren

It was a European actors' initiative – British and French actors' unions – that led to the formation of the international organization, FIA, the International Federation of Actors.

My first participation in FIA was a meeting in Prague, in 1967. FIA had North American representation and ACTRA was elected to the executive committee. SAG and AFTRA attended as observers, and both affiliated with FIA shortly after.

From its inception, FIA has presented the views and needs of artists to international institutions such as UNESCO and World International Property Organization. FIA's contribution is evident in the work of UNESCO and the ILO (International Labour Organization), in the development of the Status of the Artist Declaration, adopted by UNESCO in 1980, and in WIPO's work in the continuing battle on residual rights and copyright for artists.

Seven years ago, Katherine Sand, then FIA's General Secretary, outlined the objectives of FIA. Her concerns centred around 1) New technology and how it will affect performers' working lives and rights in their performance; 2) Live performance – how more attention can be paid to live theatre and dance; 3) Improving the work of FIA's member organizations, through training, exchange of information and mutual assistance, and, 4) Getting – and keeping – performers' rights through national and international laws, strong contracts and involvement in the administration of performer rights by collection societies.

FIA has influenced Canadian policy and legislation. The establishment of a federal government task force in 1986 to study the status of Canadian artists – Gratien Gelinas and I co-chaired the Advisory Committee to the Minister of Communications, a positive experience – can be attributed to UNESCO's proclamation on the status of the artist. With the support of the artists of ACTRA, Union des Artistes, Canadian Actors' Equity and others, legislation was

adopted by parliament in 1992. The *Status of the Artist Act* provides a legal premise for the recognition of collective agreements negotiated by guilds and unions.

No one underestimates the problems performers and unions face, whether they be legal, industrial, economic or social. However, what is certain is that our capacity to deal with these problems is hugely increased if we work together. The milieu in which the artist works is comprised of international corporations, competing producers in film and television influenced and financed by commercial advertising, remuneration, working conditions, and the continuing rights of the artist in the product. Compensation for that product's use requires collective action on a national and international scale.

Since my retirement, I have noticed continuing developments in building and fortifying the legislative and economic rights of artists.



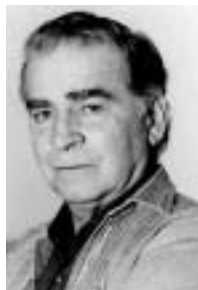
Paul Siren was General Secretary of ACTRA from 1965 until his retirement in 1987. He served on the FIA Executive Committee from 1967 to 1986.



ACTRA attending a FIA congress meeting in Moscow in the 1960s. (l-r): Bernard Chadwick, Dan MacDonald (CAEA), Don Parrish (ACTRA), Robert Rivard (UDA) and ACTRA's General Secretary Paul Siren.

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Dan MacDonald is President of Performing Arts Lodges of Canada. He was Chair of ACTRA Performers' Guild through the reorganization of ACTRA in the early '90s, and served as its first President from 1993-95.

The Performing Arts Lodges of Canada: Caring for our own

by Dan MacDonald

In 1986 a number of ACTRA Performers said "No more!" to accepting the notion that Canada's performing arts community should be content with only the meanest of services in the meagrest of surroundings in the waning years of their careers. With contributions from ACTRA, American Federation of Musicians and Equity, seed money provided needed surveys and studies, leading to the establishment of the volunteer group, Supporting Cast, and finally enabling Performing Arts Lodges of Canada to be incorporated as a national charitable organization. Its first lodge, Pal Place in downtown Toronto, a non-profit complex providing 205 affordable self-contained units, celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2003.

As the major arts union, ACTRA's commitment has provided essential proof of our community's support for the work of PAL. Such support is crucial before fundraising can be contemplated. Recent actions such as a grant in 2003 and a study of ways to implement



Photo: Audrey Horack

Canada Day in the courtyard at Pal Place, Toronto.

ongoing financial support in subsequent budgets, along with historical, annual financial assistance by ACTRA Toronto Performers – a grant of \$1,000 in memory of member Lynne Gorman, who helped establish Supporting Cast and gave it its name – indicate the truth that this community is solidly behind PAL. On the West Coast, UBCP is actively supporting PAL Vancouver's campaign to establish a residence on the city's fabulous waterfront in the near future.

As a precursor to building Pal Place counterparts, the Supporting Cast model will take root in every region of the country where artists work and live. Already additional chapters exist in Stratford and Toronto, as well as Halifax where ACTRA provides office and other assistance.

It is PAL's goal that, by the year 2015, where possible, lodges will exist. By 2020, each Pal Place will have access to long-term care facilities, an undertaking already launched this year by PAL Toronto. It is not just a dream, but a promise. Twenty years into the millennium, with ACTRA's participation, affordable housing and health care for Canada's artists will be in place and PAL's pledge Caring for Our Own no longer a vision, but a reality.



Photo: Brian Derrady

PAL Vancouver: Norman Young, PAL VP Internal, Chuck Stonecker, PAL VP External, Phil Bonane, Acting PAL President, the late John Juliani, President of UBCP and Joy Coghill, PAL Vancouver's Honourary President posing with the Bayshore Gardens site in 2002.

Jane Luk ...on ACTRA



"I didn't want to be exploited. I felt safer knowing I had the union to protect my rights."

I remember getting the ACTRA permit for the first commercial I ever shot – this was back in the '80s. Back then I still had to get six permits within two years to join, and I remember the pressure to really rush for it – I got my last permit with only a few days to spare before the two-year limit was up. There were fewer

opportunities back then for people of colour, of diverse cultural backgrounds let alone women – ACTRA eventually changed the rules to reflect the lack of opportunities, although I think there are more opportunities today than when I started. Joining ACTRA was important to me. As a stage actor, the medium of television and film was new for me. I didn't want to be exploited. I felt safer knowing I had the union to protect my rights.

R.H. Thomson ...on ACTRA



"This is not only a fight for our employment, it is also a fight for our nation."

I salute ACTRA for taking the international stage seriously. Much of Canada's cultural policy must now conform with rules set by international trade deals and unelected trade organizations, such as the WTO. ACTRA has taken up the challenge that sovereignty means sovereignty. This is not only a fight for our employment, it is also a fight for our nation.

ACA/ICA THE COMMERCIAL PRODUCERS

The National Commercial Agreement between ACTRA and Canadian agencies and advertisers has evolved over many years of growth and challenges. The relationship has been based in part on the commitment of the industry to the development and maintenance of a pool of Canadian professional performers to support cultural development in Canada. The industry has agreed to rates and conditions that provide financial support for performers as they develop their performing skills in Canada and around the world. Indeed the advertising industry pays a substantial premium to ACTRA performers to subsidize the earnings that they receive in other areas.

Agencies and advertisers take advantage of the services of ACTRA members to market their goods and services in the highly competitive Canadian and global markets that exist today. Our negotiations therefore are characterized by the determination of ACTRA to maximize income for its members and the insistence of advertisers that rates and conditions for performers be reasonable and flexible to encourage cost efficient and effective advertising that will result in more work opportunities for Canadian performers.

The relationship between the industry and ACTRA has been characterized by a joint commitment to work for common goals. The industry both privately and publicly has supported ACTRA in the face of challenges to the best interests of its members. ACTRA on its part has come to recognize and respond to industry needs for flexibility and cost effective rates and working conditions. We are confident that the good faith that has characterized our dealings in the past will enable us to continue to meet the challenges we expect in the future.

- Ron Lund, *President & CEO,*
Association of Canadian Advertisers
- Rupert Brendon, *President & CEO,*
Institute of Communications and Advertising

ACTRA FRATERNAL

From the very beginning, the goal of ACTRA was to improve the lot of its members working in radio and television, and to that end an insurance plan was created in 1959 under the auspices of a Board of Trustees. From this first policy covering only Accidental Death or Sickness, the ACTRA Insurance and Retirement Plan was born. This institution, which quickly became a key facet of ACTRA's services to its members, provided a variety of insurance and retirement benefits tailored to the unique needs of artists in television, film and radio. In 1975, the Insurance and Retirement Plan was replaced through the creation of the Actra

Fraternal Benefit Society (AFBS). The Society was founded to directly insure ACTRA members, rather than purchasing policies from outside insurance companies. This arrangement allowed the Society to pass on the profits that would otherwise flow to insurance companies to ACTRA members in the form of better benefits. Today, AFBS, on behalf of ACTRA and Writers Guild of Canada members, continues to provide a wide range of services tailored to the unique needs of artists at a reasonable cost.

In an ever-changing world, ACTRA and AFBS have remained true to their roots by focusing on their goal: the rights and welfare of members. Together, ACTRA and AFBS have persevered through political and economic upheaval, changes to the fabric of Canadian society, and the incredible development of the radio, television and film industry. As a new century dawns, we look back on the lessons of our history, and forward to a bright future in the years to come.

From all of us at Actra Fraternal, congratulations!

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF MUSICIANS (UNITED STATES AND CANADA)

Since ACTRA's inception 60 years ago, AFM and ACTRA have been running a parallel course with the goal being our mutual efforts to obtain the best possible fees and working conditions for our members.

That relationship has been marked with the mutual respect which each organization has enjoyed with the other, realizing that the commonality of those who engage our members makes the achievements of either organization a better place for the other. However, it has been one of those occasions where ACTRA and AFM have joined forces that the greatest benefits have been achieved. We need to look no further than the *Status of the Artist Act* and revisions to the *Copyright Act* to include Neighboring Rights as tangible proof of our joint efforts being successful.

It has been AFM's pleasure to work with ACTRA and ACTRA PRS through Stephen Waddell and Mercedes Watson during the past few years and I look forward to combining our efforts, which have already been started, to continue to achieve milestones in other areas which will be of mutual benefit to our respective members.

Happy 60th Anniversary ACTRA, and we wish you continued success in the future!

- David J. Jandrisch, *Vice President from Canada,*
American Federation of Musicians

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“(Our) relationship (with) ACTRA has been... a joint commitment to work for common goals... We are confident that the good faith that has characterized our dealings in the past will enable us to continue to meet the challenges we expect in the future.”

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“Canadian Actors’ Equity Association is proud of the work that ACTRA has done for Canadian artists these past 60 years.”

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF
TELEVISION & RADIO ARTISTS

It is a great pleasure and honor to offer on behalf of the 80,000 members of the American Federation of Television & Radio Artists, AFL-CIO, our heartfelt greetings and congratulations to our dear Sisters and Brothers of ACTRA as you celebrate your 60th Anniversary.

In addition to the sincere bonds of Solidarity, Respect and Affection that AFTRA and ACTRA have long shared, we thank you for the exceptional level of warmth and hospitality that ACTRA and your superb performers have offered us on our every visit to Canada.

The challenge of building a modern, effective organization of professional performers across a great nation and across many artistic disciplines is a daunting task we share. The collaboration of our Unions in production that spans our borders has been exemplary, and we admire your dedication to ACTRA’s principle that the performer’s individual career is the determined focus of all your activity.

AFTRA is proud to know you as friends, and proud to stand with you as Brothers and Sisters.

– John P. Connolly, President, AFTRA

CANADA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS

The Canada Council for the Arts congratulates ACTRA on its 60th Anniversary. From the pioneering efforts of Paul Siren, through the many turbulent and challenging years, ACTRA has been a stalwart defender of Canadian artists and counts among its membership our most distinguished performing talent. ACTRA’s successes have made a significant contribution to the security and dignity of our artists, and the wealth that is Canadian cultural expression. My colleagues on the Board and the staff of the Canada

Council join me in wishing ACTRA continued triumphs in the next 60 years. Encore!

– John Hobday, C.M., Director,
Canada Council for the Arts

CANADIAN ACTORS’ EQUITY
ASSOCIATION

Canadian Actors’ Equity Association is proud of the work that ACTRA has done for Canadian artists these past 60 years. Equity would like to congratulate all ACTRA artists, past and present, for making their association such a strong, visible leader in the entertainment industry. Your choice to work as ACTRA professionals in this industry reflects your commitment to high standards of labour practices across all jurisdictions. We look forward to the next 60 years of professional partnership with our wonderful sister organization through our reciprocal agreement, as we have since Dec. 8, 1971. Congratulations to you all. It is well deserved.

– Victor A. Young, President, and
Susan Wallace, Executive Director, CAEA

CANADIAN AUTO WORKERS

On behalf of the 250,000 members of the Canadian Auto Workers union, I want to express our solidarity with ACTRA on the occasion of its 60th Anniversary marking it as one of the longest-standing unions in Canada.

It is a testimony to the many struggles and sacrifices by you as members and to your leadership that you have stood the test of time in the labour movement. World events coupled with globalization have demonstrated so clearly that Canada’s sovereignty, its independent role in this hemisphere, indeed the world, is dependent upon maintaining our own cultural identity, and ACTRA’s role has been central over the past 60 years as it will be in the years to come.

– Buzz Hargrove
National President, CAW

BEST WISHES FROM THE
CHAIR OF THE CBC

Having worked in television for a number of years as a member of ACTRA, I have nothing but the greatest respect for everyone involved with this fine organization. Therefore, it gives me great personal pleasure to congratulate ACTRA on its 60th Anniversary, truly an historical milestone.

In an increasingly competitive multi-channel universe, it is more important than ever that we maintain a strong Canadian voice that reflects the multicultural and multiracial landscape of this country. As both

Juliette ...on ACTRA

“...What I appreciate most about ACTRA... what I was so thrilled about – I had a pension. It came at a wonderful time of my life.”



I was on the CBC negotiating team for ACTRA in the early seventies – facing my bosses across the table – it was enjoyable. I was in a position to argue for things that the cast in my show couldn’t – they were left out in the beginning. Someone needs to be there from every facet of the business – from the stars to

the actors, singers – from all of ACTRA. What I appreciate most about ACTRA – when I was older and couldn’t work anymore – what I was so thrilled about – I had a pension. It came at a wonderful time of my life – because all of this had been put away. To all those starting out – leave it in there and let it grow!

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our organizations face challenges, these can also bring about new opportunities for the broadcasting industry.

ACTRA and CBC/Radio-Canada share a responsibility for protecting and promoting our unique culture, and supplying the very best in high-quality, distinctively Canadian programming. We at CBC/Radio-Canada deeply appreciate ACTRA's tireless efforts and dedication in fostering new voices, ideas and talents and in making them known across the country and beyond our borders. Indeed, ACTRA plays a leadership role in affecting positive changes on the artistic scene and in promoting Canadian culture in a very significant way.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of CBC/Radio-Canada, my very best wishes and congratulations to all ACTRA members as you celebrate an exciting time in your proud history!

– Carole Taylor, O.C., Chair, Board of Directors
CBC/Radio-Canada

CONGRATULATIONS FROM CBC'S PRESIDENT AND CEO

CBC/Radio-Canada is very proud of its long-standing association with ACTRA. Over the years, both institutions have derived much benefit from closer cooperation and better knowledge of one another. From the beginning we have shared similar values that have been our mainstay and the same desire to nourish the rich diversity expressed by so many fine artistic voices.

Last year, ACTRA took part in celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of CBC/Radio-Canada Television. This provided an occasion to feature many ACTRA members. Millions of viewers celebrated the achievements of countless actors, singers, dancers, commentators, etc. – from coast to coast to coast. This year, we are pleased to celebrate ACTRA's 60th Anniversary, a very significant milestone in the cultural history of Canada.

ACTRA and CBC/Radio-Canada continue to work hard to overcome the many challenges facing our industry. We share a strong commitment to greater support for Canadian productions that reflect the multicultural and multiracial landscape of this country. ACTRA's leadership role has been instrumental in fostering a renewed sense of pride in our country and in Canadian talent, something CBC/Radio-Canada also deeply believes in.

On behalf of all of us at CBC/Radio-Canada, congratulations to ACTRA and to its membership for their tremendous contribution to Canada's broadcasting industry and to Canadian society, along with our very best wishes for the continued success of this essential Canadian institution.

– Robert Rabinovitch, President and CEO,
CBC/Radio-Canada

THE CANADIAN FILM AND TELEVISION PRODUCTION ASSOCIATION (CFTPA)

The CFTPA enjoys a mature collective bargaining relationship with ACTRA. The Independent Production Agreement governs the terms and conditions of performers working in the independent sector.

While we sit on opposite sides of the bargaining table, far more drives us together than keeps us apart.

Our common goal of creating and promoting a strong production environment in Canada has led to the creation of low budget incentives; the IPA has also contributed to ACTRA's health and insurance program. On the broader stage we've fought together to stabilize the CTF. We have no doubt that we will find more common ground as we continue to share in each others' success.

– Guy Mayson, Acting President & CEO, CFTPA
– John Barrack, National VP Industrial Relations, CFTPA

THE C.D. HOWE INSTITUTE SALUTES ACTRA

The C.D. Howe Institute is proud to congratulate the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists as it celebrates its 60th Anniversary. ACTRA deserves the gratitude of Canadians for its work in creating a strong and independent national cultural environment in which our artists can thrive and produce a body of work that enables us to understand the unique forces that combine to create a vibrant nation.

The Institute also salutes ACTRA's sustained efforts to build a Canadian cultural industry that nurtures Canada's homegrown talent, which is proudly featured across the country and around the world and which

William Hutt ...on ACTRA



"...a highly supportive and caring association... I have always felt safe and secure... knowing that my union was unfailingly at my side."

ACTRA has always been a highly supportive and caring association, negotiating a delicate and workable balance between the ever-escalating needs of its struggling membership and the legitimate concerns of management. Throughout my 55 years in 'the business' I have always felt safe and secure entering any contract knowing that my union was unfailingly at my side.

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"ACTRA's leadership role has been instrumental in fostering a renewed sense of pride in our country and in Canadian talent."

Don Cherry ...on ACTRA



"This was like joining the Hockey Hall of Fame."

– Don Cherry, on winning the Foster Hewitt Award from ACTRA in 1983.

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“You and your membership have defined the nation and provided the country with the soul and identity it so cherishes today.”

makes a significant contribution to the Canadian economy.

We wish you great success in your 60th year and in all the years that follow. What more can we add than to say: Break a Leg!

– Kevin Doyle, C.D. Howe Institute

THE CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS

There is a legend that claims that it was an ACTRA shop steward composing a solidarity song for the membership who came up with the words: “O Canada, we stand on guard for thee!” And every Canadian is ready to believe that legend.

Since 1943, when you came into being as the first national organization of performers in Canada, you and your membership have defined the nation and provided the country with the soul and identity it so cherishes today.

At 60, you are younger and stronger. There are and there will be new challenges. You can count on Canadian working families standing by your side in your struggles; because your victories as workers and artists always translate into more poetry and the sweetest of harmonies in our lives.

Encore! Encore. Happy 60 and give us 60 more!

– Kenneth V. Georgetti, President,
Canadian Labour Congress

THE COUNCIL OF CANADIANS

Congratulations from all of us at the Council of Canadians to all our friends at ACTRA on the occasion of your 60th Anniversary. Over the last two decades, our organizations have collaborated many times.

We worked together to gain exemptions for culture in the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement and NAFTA,

and fought side-by-side to defeat the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), a proposed global investment deal that would have been the death knell for Canadian cultural programmes. We hope to continue this partnership as the WTO GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services) negotiations heat up.

These are changing times. The future of North America in a unilateral Bush-dominated world is one of the most pressing current issues for all Canadians. For those of us who care about maintaining a distinct voice on the northern half of the continent, these next few years are indeed of huge consequence. Let us take the occasion of this special anniversary to renew our commitment to work together; Canada’s narrative of ‘sharing for survival’ has never been more needed by the world.

– Maude Barlow, Chairperson
Council of Canadians

THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF ACTORS (FIA)

Through the efforts of many dedicated members, ACTRA has now reached its 60th year of activity. The International Federation of Actors is proud of ACTRA; of the work they have done for film, television and radio performers in Canada but also of the outstanding contribution that they have brought to our organisation for several decades.

Trade unionism is a difficult task; it requires determination, spirit of sacrifice but also an important dose of optimism, passion and vision. All these qualities, and many more, have steadily motivated our colleagues from ACTRA in their commitment to the performing arts.

ACTRA has always been conscious of the increasingly global challenges that performers face and – by affiliating to FIA – has joined more than 100 other

(Ms.) Tim Christison ...on ACTRA



“I won an ACTRA Award in 1988. Going down a steep flight of stairs in a dress and stiletto heels at 80 miles an hour was not a good idea.”

I won an ACTRA Award in 1988 – the first ACTRA Award for the branch and the first for CBC Calgary too. That year for the first time, there were a lot of private radio winners and nominees. ACTRA was expanding into private radio stations in some locations. The other two finalists in the Commentary/Opinion category were Arthur Black and Peter Gzowski. Obviously the seating person didn’t expect me to win because we were up in the rafters and going down a steep flight of stairs in a straight line, dress and stiletto heels at 80 miles an hour was not a good idea. I have always thought the biggest kudo was being a finalist in the same category as those two big guys – who were very sweet to me at the reception before the ceremony.

Luba Goy ...on ACTRA



I remember the ACTRA Awards in the 1970s and 1980s – it was always a big party – a great event, honouring people, bringing the country together. You got to meet all these people from across the country who were your heroes. I remember life-loving Barbara Hamilton, dressed in gold lamé, on stage on a turntable at the

ACTRA Awards. What a great sense of humour she brought to the awards, as if saying, “this proves once and for all that I posed for the Nellie statue.” On ACTRA’s 60th Anniversary, Air Farce celebrates our 30th year. ACTRA has taken care of us – it’s our backbone, our strength, our muscle – ACTRA holds us up.

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unions, guilds and associations around the world, with a fierce determination to help improve labour conditions and the social and economic rights of performers – wherever they are and work.

We wish ACTRA all the success that their loyalty deserves and pledge that FIA will always do its utmost to assist you, whenever our voice and the solidarity of our members from the five continents may help make a difference.

Happy birthday, ACTRA! Blow the candles with pride!

– Thomas Bolme, President, and Dominick Luquer, General Secretary, on behalf of all FIA affiliates

NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA

The NFB and ACTRA are nearly the same age, are involved in the same milieu, and have successfully weathered the same good years and bad.

They have worked together forever, usually defending the same causes – quality Canadian audiovisual products and promotion of our local talent.

Happy anniversary and many more successful years to an association that has proven to be a valuable and open-minded partner.

– Jacques Bensimon, Government Film Commissioner and Chairperson, National Film Board of Canada

THE SCREEN ACTORS GUILD

ACTRA and SAG have enjoyed, for many decades, one of the strongest relationships of any of the international performer unions.

This sense of the common bond shared by performers worldwide has led over the years, to a vital presence at each other's negotiations, reciprocity agreements,

enforcement of each others' rights, strike support, and the creation of a North American Performers Unions group within FIA (now called FIANA).

During these years we have never lost sight of the common goal we share – which is to improve the work opportunities for all our members and to ensure, that soon, they will all enjoy the identical contract benefits that are the right of performers when working for international producers

Congratulations, ACTRA, on your 60th Anniversary and we here at SAG look forward to continuing and expanding on our across-the-border friendship.

– John McGuire, SAG Senior Advisor

TALENT AGENTS AND MANAGERS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

TAMAC would like to congratulate ACTRA on its 60th Anniversary.

Over the years we have relied on ACTRA to set and maintain a high industry standard for Canadian performers, a task particularly daunting in the current political climate. ACTRA continues to address the daily challenges of our industry and TAMAC supports it in every possible way.

The relationship between TAMAC and ACTRA has grown steadily, with open communication being the key. Most recently, the 'Rider Initiative' saw TAMAC and ACTRA working together to develop a joint strategy addressing illegal riders being issued with performers' contracts. This initiative has met with great success. TAMAC hopes to continue to work cooperatively with ACTRA on many similar future projects. Happy Anniversary ACTRA!

– Talent Agents and Managers Association of Canada (TAMAC)

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“Happy anniversary... to an association that has proven to be a valuable and open-minded partner.”

Mavor Moore ...on ACTRA



Like almost all Canadian institutions, ACTRA was necessarily started cautiously after much talk. Caution dictated working closely with management (CBC types being in principle warm, the private sector cool), and with our U.S. colleagues (“Are you with us or against us?”). Many of those

involved, including me, were shameless two-timers. We worked as actors one day and producer-directors the next; we wrote plays and documentaries and then reviewed them; we drove taxis, sold shirts or skirts, practiced law or medicine, and several were already

members of other unions/associations – not all of which had helpful Canadian track records.

We also worked on both sides of the border. Before and after the start of Canadian television, I intermittently wrote and directed documentaries for the United Nations in New York. The whole post-war world then seemed intent on revitalizing humanity's artistic, educational and communications resources. In the present state of world affairs I need hardly add that what I remember most from those early ACTRA discussions in Toronto is how they foreshadowed the problems we still face, both locally and globally. ACTRA played then, and plays now, a more important role in Canadian and global affairs than perhaps many of its members realize.

“ACTRA played then, and plays now, a more important role in Canadian and global affairs than perhaps many of its members realize.”

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“La défense de la culture et des droits des artistes-interprètes n’est pas une mince affaire, nous en savons quelque chose!”

UNION DES ARTISTES: 60 ANS DÉJÀ !

En mon nom personnel et surtout au nom des 9 800 membres actifs et membres stagiaires de l’Union des artistes, je tiens à vous féliciter pour votre 60^e anniversaire.

Vous vous êtes toujours battus pour obtenir les meilleures conditions possibles pour les artistes-interprètes anglophones du Canada. Nous voulions le souligner.

Depuis 60 ans, nos deux syndicats professionnels ont su collaborer autant dans les grandes causes comme celle de l’obtention de la reconnaissance du *Statut de l’artiste* ou dans le cadre du combat pour la défense de la diversité culturelle, que dans le quotidien des artistes canadiens qui oeuvrent autant dans la langue de Molière que dans la langue de Shakespeare. C’est pourquoi plusieurs de vos membres sont aussi membres de l’UDA. Notre collaboration leur est essentielle.

Cet esprit de corps remarquable prend toute sa dimension dans notre participation à la Fédération internationale des acteurs. Les règlements de la FIA sont ainsi faits qu’ils n’accordent qu’un seul vote par pays; or, nous avons toujours su fonctionner de façon consensuelle. Notre volonté commune de défendre les intérêts supérieurs des artistes-interprètes canadiens demeure le gage de cette réussite.

La défense de la culture et des droits des artistes-interprètes n’est pas une mince affaire, nous en savons quelque chose !

Nous savons que votre détermination est encore bien vivante et le sera sûrement encore longtemps.

– Pierre Curzi, Président de l’Union des artistes

UNITED STEELWORKERS OF AMERICA

Congratulations ACTRA on reaching this 60th Anniversary milestone. The United Steelworkers has a special

relationship with ACTRA, since we are the union that represents some of the staff who represent the artists.

ACTRA is an important member of labour’s family. Performers are often the strongest spokespeople on issues of national social importance – like Medicare.

Making a living by amusing and entertaining the rest of us can often involve living on the margins. ACTRA is a lifeline, making sure that performers are not unfairly exploited for their talents, that they have decent pay and benefits.

Canadian performers are also fighting to make sure actors can work here in their own country. They are demonstrating to preserve funding for Canadian productions, something the federal government wants to end.

Don’t give up that fight. All of Canada is waiting for a happy ending.

– Lawrence McBrearty, National Director,
United Steelworkers of America

WRITERS GUILD OF CANADA

ACTRA’s 60th Birthday is also a birthday for the WGC. Writers were members of the groups in Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and elsewhere that ultimately came together as ACTRA, and indeed ACTRA’s first CBC agreement – in 1963 – was for ACTRA’s radio writers.

ACTRA is a product of many decades of enlightened cooperation between Canada’s performers and writers. An outstanding example of this was ACTRA’s agreement in 1991 (after, admittedly, some argument) to the formation of the Writers Guild of Canada, and later, in 1995, to the WGC becoming independent. On this Happy 60th Birthday the cooperation continues.

As Bob Hope’s famous theme song has it: Hurray for Us!
– Jack Gray, Writers Guild of Canada

Gordon Pinsent ...on Nellie



Nellie, when you joined our ranks, you graced our gatherings, enlivened our lives, altered our states – and brought us closer together than we’d ever been.

Even if there are many impressions of you, you still have a way of telling each of us with your beamish saucy smile that you are truly an original.

Your steady belief that you could easily get off the ground, told us we could do the same. It was as if you were giving a bit of ourselves back to us.

You can have your Junos, your You-knows, your Genies, your Weenies, your Oscars and things –

There is nothing that fills the hand and delights the

eye as does yourself, when the light is right.

You couldn’t have been more real to us, or have had more spirit, more charm or pure beauty, if you’d walked and danced among us. Even as you were, you could have been Prime Mistress of Canada – and we are going to miss you, Nellie.

You were the pedestal with good reason – and now, on your much deserved sabbatical – be assured, you will not get dusty on my mantle nor tarnish in my heart.

–Gordon Pinsent in 1986, the last time Nellies were handed out as ACTRA Awards.

CONGRATULATIONS

WOMEN IN THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

Through 18 years of membership, including five years serving as a local and National Councillor, and particularly the last eight years producing The Women In the Director's Chair (WIDC) Workshop, I've been inspired by the imagination, resilience, dedication and talent of ACTRA members across the country.

Perhaps the most challenging role of my career so far has been as an advocate for performers and women filmmakers, but the ongoing investment that members have made in WIDC and its mission of equity which is indicative of the forward-thinking, pioneering spirit that has shaped ACTRA's 60-year history, has made it all worthwhile. Here's to our continued collaboration towards a future of healthy respect for performers manifested in diverse and compelling stories told on screen by diverse and talented Canadians. Happy 60th Anniversary ACTRA!

– Carol Whiteman, ACTRA member, Co-creator, *The Women In the Director's Chair Workshop*, President & CEO, Creative Women Workshops Association and a two-time Governor General's Award nominee for promoting women's equality in Canada.

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1 Christianne Hirt directs Kathryn Kirkpatrick during the 1998 Women in the Director's Chair (WIDC) Workshop.

2 Workshop Producer Carol Whiteman leading a session at the 2003 Women in the Director's Chair Workshop.

2



Photos: Dan Lee

A salute to ACTRA staff

by Karen Ivany and Bruce H. MacLeod

During the early '60s, a very difficult time in the evolution of our union, it was decided that we should reorganize into a national organization to be known as ACTRA. After a meeting one member went home and began the difficult task of convincing her father that he should apply for the job of General Secretary of this new entity. Thank goodness she persevered. Paul Siren applied for the job and became ACTRA National's General Secretary. Sometime later, another gentleman by the name of Bhoop Singh applied for the job of Assistant General Secretary, he was hired and eventually given the job of setting up a new organization which became Actra Fraternal Benefit Society (AFBS). Two others, Garry Neil and Stephen Waddell fulfilled many roles on the national staff each going on to become National Executive Director. We had a solid foundation and, with the good fortune to have unsurpassed and committed staff, have built our success over 60 years.

Commercial and IPA stewards work the frontlines, tirelessly enforcing our agreements and standing up for the rights of members. Through on-set visits and a myriad of phone calls and emails, they work with members and production personnel to make sure every detail of our collective agreements is adhered to, taking special diligence to ensure the welfare of minors on set. Stewards also serve as a members' most valuable resource – answering their questions, addressing their concerns with producers, and making sure we know what our rights are.

A number of our branches run on a staff of one – courageous souls who juggle stewarding duties with membership administration, outreach and communications. Branch Reps also work with their elected councils to undertake

Continued next page

Rita Ridgway, ACTRA staff since 1965 ...on ACTRA

I joined ACTRA in 1965 as the Commercial Supervisor. In those days, we used to get substantial general increases in minimum fees in commercial negotiations. The advertising industry side in negotiations was represented by Henry Ross, Art Director and Chief Negotiator from Hayhurst Advertising; Anna Repas, who was then a producer at MacLaren Advertising; and Claude Thomson who was the industry's lawyer. Claude has continued to be the industry's advisor up to and including this last round of negotiations. Sometimes commercial negotiations would only take three or four evenings to conclude. I can't remember what year it was, but suddenly things changed big time. The industry producers felt that their negotiating team needed more producers on it since ACTRA seemed to be always getting its way. And since the producers do the budgets and wanted more say in determining performers' rate increases, negotiations became more and more difficult. At that point, the big increases for performers that we used to get were no more.

the ACTRA story



Karen Ivany is a member of ACTRA Toronto.



Bruce H. MacLeod was ACTRA's National President from 1982 to 1985.

"Sometimes negotiations would only take three evenings to conclude... but things changed big time."

the ACTRA story

“Thank you for getting me my first bike!”

Patrick Watson ...on ACTRA



An appreciative 13-year-old Patrick Watson after RATS negotiations tripled his performance fee (1943).

Wendy Crewson ...on ACTRA



“We are at a critical juncture in the survival of Canadian drama.”

We are at a critical juncture in the survival of Canadian drama. ACTRA is in a powerful position to encourage the entrepreneurial nature of film and television production. The union could help enormously in the creation and stewardship of a vibrant industry, whose interests lie in the promotion of Canadian art and artists and in the dissemination of Canadian ideas and culture.

Mag Ruffman ...on ACTRA



“We can either wait for the perfect script to come along, or we can try producing it ourselves.”

One of the best ways for an ACTRA member to change the course of our industry is to become a producer. We know how we want to work, who we want to work with, and what stories we'd be good at telling. We can either wait for the perfect script to come along, or we can try producing it ourselves. Here's what we have to lose: Pride, because producing is hard. It requires leadership, discretion, magnanimity, focus and determination. It requires people skills, nerve and tenacity we may not dream we have. So if we're willing to take some bruising on the learning curve, here's what we have to gain: dramatic series with roles we're craving to play, a big-picture understanding of how the industry works, an end to whining, the beginning of careers that span many dimensions, and a level of creativity we'll never have if we remain only performers. How hard can it be?

A salute to ACTRA staff

Continued from previous page

special projects and bring local concerns to the national agenda.

Our national staff continues to support our collective vision as we thrust into this new millennium. Staff still bring council ideas to life, gently guiding us into uncharted waters, making our union an industry leader, a point of reference for other associations. Focus on public policy, outreach and organizing ensures our 'brand name' is internationally recognized and respected. Today, staff handle many calls from industry players seeking ACTRA's perspective and input.

The nuts and bolts of sifting through talent files, ('real' file-cabinets overflowing with photos!), resulted in our first television commercial about ACTRA, featuring over 100 member images, promoting us all! Persistent communications strategies ensuring press coverage and informed member support are never-ending. ACTRA staff is quick to build on the momentum, forwarding concerns and information to MPs and scheduling meetings with politicians at all levels. Many story ideas and articles for *InterACTRA* are initiated and written by staff who coordinate and oversee its production.

Countless staff hours launched our national website and computerized member system. Staff presentations at the Banff New Media Festival resulted in a published report refuting digital producer and distributor claims that lower production costs necessitated reduced wages for artists.

Thank you to all who have worked for ACTRA over our 60 years – thank you for your dedication, commitment and hard work on our behalf.

Taylor Shannon Baruchel ...on ACTRA



Being a member of an organization like ACTRA means a lot to a young person such as me, since our position in the world is that of just beginning to view life, on the macro scale, beyond just ourselves and our own lives. The concept of a union has always fascinated and amazed me, people coming together for the same cause or agenda and therein creating a forum where everyone's opinion is welcome (to a certain extent). ACTRA really puts meaning into the old saying 'united we stand, divided we fall.' Oh yeah... and their parties rock!

“ACTRA really puts meaning into the old saying 'united we stand, divided we fall'... and their parties rock!”

Honour Roll of ACTRA Presidents

- 1952 **Tommy Tweed**, President, Canadian Council of Authors and Artists (CCAA)
- 1953-1954 **Bernard Hogue**, President, CCAA
- 1955 **Neil LeRoy**, President, CCAA
- 1955 **Louis Belanger**, President, CCAA
- 1956-1959 **Neil LeRoy**, President, CCAA
- 1959-1963 **Dennis Sweeting**, President, CCAA
- 1963-1964 **Dennis Sweeting**, President, Association of Canadian Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA)
- 1964-1967 **Henry Comor**, President, ACTRA
- 1968-1971 **Victor Knight**, President, ACTRA
- 1972 **Reg Gibson**, President, ACTRA
- 1973-1977 **Donald Parrish**, President, ACTRA
- 1978-1981 **Jack Gray**, President, ACTRA
- 1982-1985 **Bruce MacLeod**, President of Association of Canadian Television and Radio Artists, and Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists
- 1984-1986 **Lyn Jackson**, Chairperson, ACTRA Performers Guild
- Michael Mercer**, Chairperson, ACTRA Writers Guild
- Dale Goldhawk**, Chairperson, ACTRA Guild of Broadcast Journalists and Researchers
- 1986-1988 **Gino Marrocco**, President, Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA)
- 1986-1988 **Seán Mulcahy**, Vice-President, ACTRA Performers Guild
- Pete White**, Vice-President, ACTRA Writers Guild
- David Mowbray**, Vice-President, ACTRA Guild of Broadcast Journalists and Researchers
- 1988 **Dale Goldhawk**, President, ACTRA
- 1988-1990 **Meg Hogarth**, Vice-President, ACTRA Performers Guild
- Marian Fraser**, Vice-President, ACTRA Writers Guild
- Janet Torge**, Vice-President, ACTRA Guild of Broadcast Journalists
- 1989 **vacant, in protest**
- 1990-1991 **Meg Hogarth**, President, ACTRA
- 1990-1991 Council of Chairpersons:
Charmion King – Performers
Jack Gray – Writers
Mitch O'Connor – Broadcast Journalists
- 1991 Council of Chairpersons:
David Ferry – Performers
Jack Gray – Writers Guild of Canada
Tim Christison – ACTRA Writers Guild
Mitch O'Connor – Broadcast Journalists
- 1992-1998 **Sandy Crawley**, President, ACTRA
- 1992-1993 Council of Chairpersons:
Dan MacDonald – Performers
Jack Gray – Writers Guild of Canada
Mark O'Neill – ACTRA Writers Guild
Mitch O'Connor – Broadcast Journalists
- 1993 Council of Chairpersons:
Dan MacDonald – Performers
Jack Gray – Writers Guild of Canada
Mark O'Neill – ACTRA Media Guild
- 1993-1995 **Dan MacDonald**, President, ACTRA Performers Guild
- 1995-1999 **Brian Gromoff**, President, ACTRA Performers Guild
- 1999-present **Thor Bishopric**, President, ACTRA Performers Guild (later drops “Performers Guild” part of name, remaining Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists – ACTRA)

the
ACTRA
story

1



2



Photo: Paul Hill

- ACTRA's President Jack Gray organized a President's dinner in 1981 (l-r): Jack Gray (1978-81), Dennis Sweeting (1963-64), Margaret Collier, Don Parrish (1973-77) and Elizabeth Malone. Absent: Victor Knight (1968-71), Reg Gibson (1972).
- Meg Hogarth, Chairperson of ACTRA Performers Guild with Bruce MacLeod, member of the National Executive at a mid-term meeting in 1988.

Cover photos: ACTRA 60 (by row, l to r):

FRONT COVER

First row: *The Nature of Nicholas*. Photo courtesy Domino Film and Television International Ltd. Photo: Allen Fraser. *Quentin Durgens, MP*. Photo courtesy Gordon Pinsent; SCTV at the ACTRA Awards in 1978. Photo courtesy CBC Still Photo Collection, Toronto; *Goin' Down The Road*. Photo courtesy Don Shebib; *Anne of Green Gables*. Photo courtesy Sullivan Entertainment. Photo: Rob McEwan; *DaVinci's Inquest*. Photo © CBC 2002. All rights reserved.

Second Row: *North of 60*. Photo courtesy Alberta Filmworks Inc.; *The Last Chapter II: The War Continues*. Photo © CBC 2003. All rights reserved; *Road to Avonlea*. Photo courtesy Sullivan Entertainment. Photo: Michaeline McDermott; *Front Page Challenge*. Photo courtesy CBC Still Photo Collection, Toronto.

Third Row: *The Friendly Giant*. Photo courtesy CBC Still Photo Collection, Toronto; '40s dinner with RATS; *Due South*. Photo courtesy Alliance Atlantis Communications Inc. Photo by John Medland; Charmion King on the picket line. Photo by Paul Till.

Fourth Row: *Paperback Hero*; *The Kids In The Hall*. Photo courtesy Broadway Video Enterprises. Photo by Patrick Harbron.

BACK COVER

First row: *9B*. Photo courtesy CBC Still Photo Collection, Toronto; *Nellie McClung*. Photo courtesy CBC Still Photo Collection, Toronto; *Jake and the Kid*. Photo courtesy Nelvana/Great North Productions. Photo by R. Van Schaik.

Second Row: ACTRA performers at 1980 Festival of Festivals film shoot; *The Forest Rangers*. Photo courtesy Oasis International; *An American In Canada*. Photo © CBC 2003. All rights reserved.

Third Row: Edmonton's Channel 5 *First Nighter* Photo. Laddie Ponich; *Videodrome*. FilmPlan International II, Universal Release © 1983 Universal City Studios Inc.; *The Royal Canadian Air Farce*. Photo courtesy Royal Canadian Air Farce; *North of 60*. Photo courtesy Alberta Filmworks Inc.

Fourth Row: *Footsteps in the Snow*. Photo courtesy Gary Plaxton; *The Beachcombers*. Photo courtesy CBC Still Photo Collection, Toronto; *Contact*. Photo courtesy CBC Still Photo Collection, Toronto; *Street Legal*. Photo courtesy CBC Still Photo Collection, Toronto. Photo: Yanka & Yolanda VanDerKolk; ACTRA at a 1960s FIA congress, Moscow. Taping the radio drama *Coast Guard*. Photo courtesy CBC/Sudsy Clark.

the
ACTRA
story

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