



I N T E R

Spring 2003

# ACTRA

The Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists



## Muzzling Culture

What trade agreements have to do with actors

PAGE 8

**Thor Bishopric**

# Happy Birthday... ACTRA

**A**CTRA marks its 60th anniversary in 2003 – celebrating 60 years of great Canadian performances, 60 years contributing to and fighting for Canadian culture and 60 years of advances in protecting performers. All members should be very proud of our organization's tenacity and grateful to those members who came before us and ensured ACTRA's success.

In February, ACTRA Toronto kicked off our 60th in style by presenting three ACTRA Awards at a reception at the Royal Ontario Museum. The ACTRA Awards were the Canadian industry awards, initiated in 1972, and awarded annually by ACTRA until 1986, when the Gemini Awards for Canadian television began. For some years now, we have yearned to have awards again – awards that centre on performers and performance – and our 60th seemed the perfect opportunity. Starting small seemed reasonable – our 1972 event had just three awards – so we decided to re-introduce the ACTRA Award in our branches. In 2003, we'll be presenting ACTRA Awards from our branches in Newfoundland/Labrador, Maritimes, Montreal, Manitoba, and in conjunction with awards already presented in British Columbia.

Toronto honoured **Gordon Pinsent** with an ACTRA 'Award of Excellence,' and presented two ACTRA Awards for Outstanding Performance to **Kristen Thomson** and **Shawn Doyle**.

We'll also be celebrating our 60th at the **Banff Television Festival** (June), at the **Atlantic Film Festival** (September), at the Canadian Consulate in Los Angeles (October), with a reception in Ottawa, and with a commemorative issue of *InterACTRA* this fall.

On another celebratory note, thank you to our membership for strengthening ACTRA's financial situation. In January, members ratified a constitutional referendum calling for an increase in members' dues and an ACTRA **Performers' Rights Society** service charge. It's a difficult decision to ask for more from actors – artists whose income is meagre and uncertain.

But ACTRA can't do its job fighting on behalf of our members if our resources are dwindling. Your decision to strengthen ACTRA means we can remain focused and effective in our efforts. The additional resources will be directed toward core activities such as the fight for Canadian production, bargaining, and the continued collection of Use Fees through ACTRA PRS. Please see page 6 for more on the referendum.

By the time you read this, we will have commenced negotiations on our **Independent Production Agreement (IPA)** (see page 4). Sixty percent of ACTRA member income is generated under the IPA – it's by far our most important agreement. As always, we expect negotiations to be difficult – fighting hard for

improvements, protecting existing gains, while assuring everyone from here to Hollywood that we too want to maintain stability in our industry.

And on one final celebratory note, National Councillor **Maria Bircher** and I are beaming with pride over another birthday – that of our daughter Teale Miranda Bishopric. Teale arrived at St. Mary's Hospital in Montreal on February 16th at 10:26 p.m. She was born in perfect health. The blessing of our daughter's birth will forever ensure that 2003, the year of ACTRA's 60th anniversary holds a special place in our hearts.

## Dying a dramatic death? Canadian culture is.

Since CRTC rule changes in 1999, production of English-Canadian television drama has seriously declined.

Send a letter to Heritage Minister Sheila Copps. Tell her you're disappointed in the Federal government's disregard for Canadian culture:

Sheila Copps, Minister of Canadian Heritage  
House of Commons, Parliament Buildings  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6 (No postage required)

**Support ACTRA's Campaign for Canadian Programming**

It's easy – visit [www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca) and  
send an email letter to Sheila Copps

**ACTRA**celebrating **60** Years



Since 1958, the **Actors' Fund of Canada** has helped thousands of performers and other entertainment industry professionals in financial crisis to get back on their feet after a major setback. When artists in need have nowhere else to turn, the Fund can intervene at a critical moment with a rent cheque, grocery money, a subsidy for prescription drugs or other assistance.

If you are ill, injured, or have suffered a financial catastrophe that puts your health, shelter or ability to work in jeopardy, contact the Fund for quick and confidential help.

The Actors' Fund of Canada is a registered charity sustained by members of the entertainment industry professions. For more information or to make a tax-deductible donation, contact the Fund at:

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 TEL: (416) 975-0304 (TOLL-FREE 1-877-399-8392)  
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 E-MAIL: [contact@actorsfund.ca](mailto:contact@actorsfund.ca)  
[www.actorsfund.ca](http://www.actorsfund.ca)



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**Editorial Advisory Committee:**

Thor Bishopric, Stephen Waddell, Brian Gromoff, David Macniven, Kim Hume

**Contributors:**

Lorraine Ansell, Randy Birch, Jennifer Blaney, Jamie Bradley, Anna Bucci, Dinah Christie, Dave Clarke, Joy Corion, Sharon Davidson, Aidan Devine, Ferne Downey, Don Dudar, Jack Duffy, Randy Duniz, Richard Hardacre, Matt Holland, Amy House, Karen Ivany, John Juliani, Dan Mackenzie, Rob Macklin, Garry Neil, Wayne Nicklas, Peter Partridge, Kelly Ricard, Lloyd Robertson, Gary Saxe, Anne Marie Scheffler, Chris Scott, Thomas Tapley, R.H. Thomson, Carol Taverner, Catherine Vaneri, Jeremy Webb

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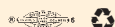
Please return any undelivered mail to:

ACTRA, 625 Church Street, Suite 300, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2G1  
 PHONE 1-800-387-3516 OR (416) 489-1311 FAX (416) 489-8076

[www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca) [interactra@actra.ca](mailto:interactra@actra.ca)

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Cover photo of R.H. Thomson and Aidan Devine by Carol Racicot.



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# IPA Negotiations scheduled for March/April 2003



André Leclerc

**Stephen Waddell**  
National Executive Director

In October 2001, ACTRA quickly concluded a successful round of bargaining with the producers' associations, the **CFTPA** and **APFTQ**, that renewed ACTRA's **Independent Production Agreement (IPA)**. Although it was a lousy time for bargaining, ACTRA secured 3% increases in each year of the two-year agreement, ensured more jobs for Canadian actors by negotiating an understanding with the industry respecting the issuance of non-Canadian work permits and the promotion of work opportunities for Canadian performers, established ACTRA's jurisdiction over internet productions and established basic hourly rates for non-vouchered Background Performers. Unfortunately, the state of the Canadian film and television industry has declined further since 2001. Since ACTRA's last IPA negotiations, no union or guild in the Canadian entertainment industry has bettered the terms ACTRA won in October 2001.

The Canadian film and television industry is feeling the effects of a marked decrease in Canadian drama production as a result of CRTC regulatory changes in 1999 that have had a negative impact on the volume of Canadian dramatic production.

Non-Canadian service production has also declined over the past year because of several factors:

- many major studios and broadcasters are carrying heavy debtloads and consequently reducing the amount of production they are able to commission;
- broadcasters are producing more low-cost 'reality' programming, thus reducing the job opportunities for professional performers;
- overseas markets for television shows have decreased – the trend in foreign broadcast markets shows an increase in locally produced programming and a decline in licence fees paid for U.S. or Canadian productions. Canada is an exception to that trend as our broadcasters continue to pay large fees to license U.S. comedies and dramas for simulcast;
- the Canadian federal government's elimination of the 'matchable expenditure' loophole in the **Income Tax Act** which took away a tax shelter for film and television productions at the same time that alternate locations in Australia, New Zealand and some U.S. states were implementing new tax credit systems;

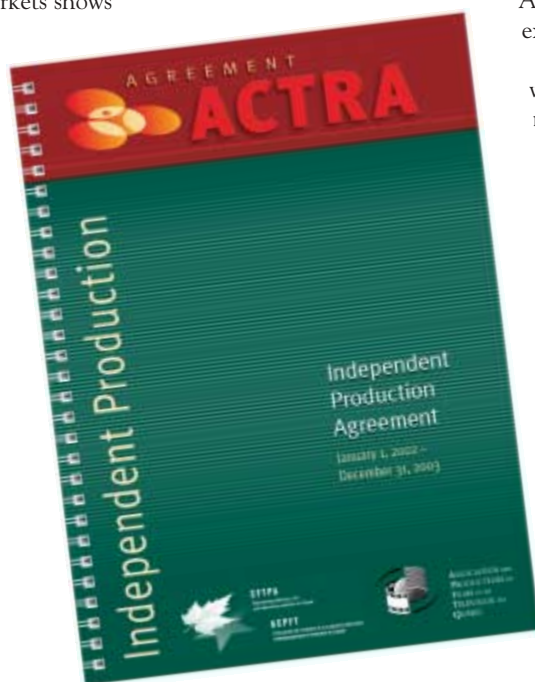
- the Canadian production industry also faces increased competition for service production, as foreign locations such as Australia, New Zealand and Central Europe build up the infrastructure necessary to support major productions; and
- the events of Sept. 11, 2001 and the potential of an international conflict have given increased weight to the U.S. campaign against so-called "runaway production" – production levels in Los Angeles rose throughout 2002 and entertainment industry jobs in L.A. are expected to increase throughout 2003/2004. In addition, U.S. labour unions are sounding a conciliatory note regarding their upcoming negotiations.

For the first time in many years the volume of production in Canada has not increased year over year. The total volume of film and television production in Canada remained flat in 2002 and the trend is projected to deepen into 2003.

ACTRA is actively working to ameliorate the effect this industry downturn may have on ACTRA members. ACTRA has undertaken several important policy initiatives to combat the decline in Canadian drama production (see *Garry Neil's policy article on page 19*). Learning from the last IPA and **UBCP** negotiations, ACTRA is countering the producers' strategy of withdrawing projects during the months leading to negotiations. ACTRA is sending a message to the industry that Canada is a stable, predictable work environment for indigenous and service production. As ACTRA's Chief Negotiator, I have recommended to ACTRA's National Council that IPA negotiations begin well in advance of the contract's expiry date. Negotiations are scheduled for March 24 to April 3, 2003 – 8 months prior to the agreement's expiry date of December 31, 2003.

ACTRA intends to enter these negotiations with a shortlist of substantive proposals, determined through consultation with members, and finalized by ACTRA's IPA bargaining team. We will be vigilant in our staunch defence of ACTRA's contractual rights and in our quest for focused gains for all ACTRA members. Although the Canadian industry is not enjoying the level of production to which the industry has become accustomed, ACTRA will not lose sight of predictions that global spending on media and entertainment will reach (U.S.) \$1.4 trillion by 2006, fuelled in large part by spending on the digital distribution of content and on filmed entertainment.

Information regarding the ongoing IPA negotiations will be posted at [www.actra.ca/actra/control/bargaining](http://www.actra.ca/actra/control/bargaining)





## Performing Arts Lodges of Canada

Under the distinguished patronage of Her Excellency, the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Governor General of Canada

PAL is a national charitable organization offering assistance to older, disabled or needy members and associates of Canada's professional performing arts community in the areas of health, well-being and accommodation.

PAL is a provider of services, not simply an assisted housing provider. Thus the establishment of assistance to individuals, such as that provided through Supporting Cast, is vitally important.

Share the PAL vision. Become a PAL member, or make a tax-deductible donation. For information about all our Chapters, you may contact us at:

PAL Canada, 110 The Esplanade, #328, Toronto ON M5E 1X9

PHONE: (416) 777-9674 • info@palcanada.org • www.palcanada.org

*Taking Care of Our Own*

## Deal reached with CBC

ACTRA has reached a deal with **CBC** for the renewal of the **CBC Radio and Television**



**Agreements.** ACTRA has negotiated a one-year extension of the CBC agreements with a 2.5% increase in performers' minimum fees, retroactive to July 3, 2002. Achieving retroactive pay increases is rare with the CBC, so we're proud to have been able to secure retroactive increases again in this round. CBC also agreed to continue to participate actively in the joint ACTRA/CBC working committee looking at internet programming. In addition, we committed to begin bargaining for the next agreement before the end of March. In February, referendum packages were mailed to all members eligible to vote – those who have worked on CBC agreements in the last three years. On March 4, the new agreements were ratified by a vote of 97.4%. The new agreements will expire on June 30, 2003.

## BANFF2003 JUNE 8 - 13

### 2003 Award of Excellence

**David Chase**  
Creator of *The Sopranos*

### 24<sup>th</sup> Banff Television Festival

**BANFF2003**  
JUNE 8 - 13

**EXECUTIVE**  
NOVEMBER 7 - 14, 2003

**SCIENCE2003**  
DECEMBER 3 - 6

**HISTORY2003**  
DECEMBER 7 - 10

innovationexcellenceopportunity

**BANFF2003.COM**

## Glitches at Global

ACTRA served notice to bargain on **Global Television Network** in October, 2002. Global replied by asking us to bargain with each individual station in the network, which we've refused to do, arguing that Global is a national network with which we have an existing collective agreement that we were seeking to renew. Discussions between Global and ACTRA on this issue continue. While it is regrettable that Global is asserting this position, the situation is an example of how ACTRA benefits from the federal **Status of the Artist Act**, which gives ACTRA the right to enforce its bargaining rights on broadcasters and federal institutions.



## National Film Board

ACTRA has served notice to bargain on the **National Film Board** with a view to renewing our existing agreement that is due to expire on April 30, 2003.



## ACTRA members approve dues change, ACTRA PRS service charge

The dues change and **ACTRA Performers' Rights Society** service charge proposed in the constitutional referendum package mailed to all Full ACTRA members in December have been approved. These changes will put ACTRA National, our branches and ACTRA PRS in a more stable financial situation, and allow ACTRA to focus on service areas for members: the fight for Canadian production, bargaining, and the continued collection of Use Fees for members through ACTRA PRS.

The dues change was approved by 69.34%; the ACTRA PRS service charge passed by 57.17%. A total of 12,580 ballots were mailed out to full members. 2,381 ballots were received on the dues change (18.93% of ballots mailed) and 2,321 ballots came in on the ACTRA PRS service charge (18.45% of ballots mailed).

ACTRA's revenues were no longer adequate to cover costs of our organization and maintain services members expect. ACTRA dues hadn't increased since 1991 – 12 years ago. In the past five years, the industry has grown by over 130%, but our dues stayed at 1991 levels. In real dollars, dues have declined by 30% as a result of inflation. The success of the referendum is a welcome vote of confidence from our members.

[www.actra.ca/actra/control/referendum](http://www.actra.ca/actra/control/referendum)

### CHANGES TO DUES AND FEES

	From	To	Effective
Basic dues	\$130	\$175	March 1, 2003
Working dues	1.75%	2.00%	March 1, 2003
Dues cap	\$2,000	\$3,000	March 1, 2003
Basic initiation fees	\$300	\$450	March 1, 2003
Professional Reputation initiation fees	\$600	\$900	March 1, 2003
Apprentice member basic dues	\$30	\$75	March 1, 2003
ACTRA PRS service charge	0	5%	Jan. 16, 2003

As of February 1, 2003, the following fees for Commercial Work Permits (Apprentice members and non-ACTRA performers) apply:

**Performers** (all categories except Background Performers and Group Background Performers)

	Apprentice Member	Non-ACTRA Performer
1st work permit	\$343.75	\$412.50
2nd and subsequent permits	\$250.00	\$300.00

**Minors** (under 16 years of age)

1st work permit	\$237.50	\$285.00
2nd and subsequent permits	\$175.00	\$210.00

**Adult Background Performers (Except Group Background Performers)**

1st work permit	\$156.25	\$187.50
2nd and subsequent permits	\$106.25	\$127.50

**Minors Background Performers** (under 16 years of age)

1st work permit	\$112.50	\$135.00
2nd and subsequent permits	\$68.75	\$82.50

**Group Background Performers**

Each Group Background Performer Permit	\$50.00	\$60.00
Stand by Babies under three years	\$18.75	\$22.50

The above fees apply to each Television Commercial or each Radio session.

Local & Regional Addendum	\$43.75	\$52.50
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Waiver Fees for Voice Patch: \$506.25 per commercial up to a maximum of three waiver fees per pool of commercials during same session: \$1,518.75

## ACTRA's John Drainie Award and the Banff Television Festival

ACTRA's **John Drainie Award** for contribution to broadcasting will be presented this June at the **Banff Rockie Awards** during the **Banff Television Festival** in Banff, Alberta. Each year, nominations are solicited from ACTRA members, and passed along to the award jury – the award's past recipients. In 2002, the jury chose **David Suzuki** to receive this prestigious award. Nominations for the 2003 award closed on March 7.

John Drainie, one of Canada's most distinguished and well-known actors, died in 1966 at the age of 50. In 1968, ACTRA established the annual John Drainie Award to commemorate one of its best-loved members.

ACTRA's John Drainie Award is a bronze

medal portrait of John Drainie by renowned Canadian sculptor and medallist **Dora de Pédery-Hunt**.

The Banff Television Festival is one of a number of venues for ACTRA's 60th Anniversary celebrations. In addition to presenting our John Drainie Award during the Rockie Awards, ACTRA's 60th Anniversary will be marked at **Breakfast with ACTRA**, with a **Master Class** on performance, with ACTRA's participation in the morning plenary **Showcase of Excellence**, and by taking part in the evening reception **Tribute!** Are you an ACTRA member planning to attend the Banff Television Festival this year? Let us know. Send an email to [interactra@actra.ca](mailto:interactra@actra.ca).



ACTRA's John Drainie Award medal, by renowned Canadian sculptor and medallist, Dora de Pédery-Hunt, whose portrait of Queen Elizabeth II appears on modern Canadian coins.

## Say YES to public medicare – a message from the CLC

The **Romanow Report** on the future of health care reflects what Canadians want from our public health care system. But now both the federal and provincial levels of government are not listening to what Canadians have said. Many provincial premiers are on record as rejecting key recommendations from the Romanow Report. Both levels of government are silent on the critical issue of for-profit health care when they know full well ordinary Canadians won't buy it.

In February, the provincial Premiers and the Prime Minister signed a **First Ministers' Accord** on health care. The **Canadian Labour Congress reports**, "Although a first step, the agreement will not completely secure the future of medicare as a national, public health care system in which access to care is based on need, not on the ability to pay. We will need to remain alert and committed."

ACTRA supports the work of our member activists – we're proud that **Shirley Douglas**, as national spokesperson for the



Canadian Labour Congress  
Congrès du travail du Canada

# Yes National Public Medicare

**Canadian Health Coalition**, is on the front lines working to protect public medicare – but we all need to do our part. Public medicare is one of the few social benefits that performers, as freelance workers, have access to.

Our politicians need to hear from you. Tell them that medicare belongs to you and you don't want it taken away. Your message will make a difference.

Fax a letter to your MP's office in Ottawa by going to [www.clc-ctc.ca/publicmedicare](http://www.clc-ctc.ca/publicmedicare). Click on **Fax Your MP**. Call your MP or the Prime Minister. Your MP's riding office should be in your local phone book or call 1-800-622-6232 to find out who your MP is. The Prime Minister can be reached at:

**Rt. Hon. Jean Chrétien, M.P.**

**Prime Minister of Canada**

**House of Commons, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6**

(no postage required)

PHONE: (613) 992-4211

FAX: (613) 941-6900

EMAIL: [pm@pm.gc.ca](mailto:pm@pm.gc.ca)

[www.clc-ctc.ca/publicmedicare](http://www.clc-ctc.ca/publicmedicare)

[www.petitiononline.com/romanow](http://www.petitiononline.com/romanow)

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

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



Susie Almgren (Montreal) speaking at ACTRA's National Council meeting.



National Councillor Eric Murphy from Toronto with recently elected Maritimes President Jeremy Webb, who attended as an observer.

Photos by Carol Racicot

## National Council establishes permanent Finance Committee, elects new Vice President

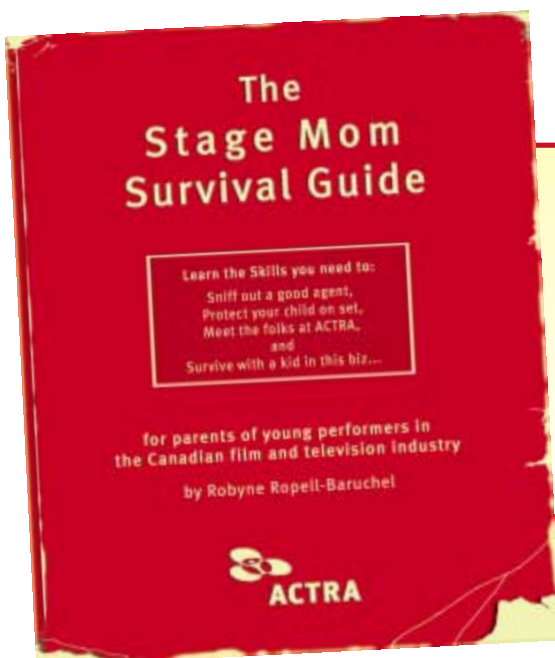
ACTRA's **National Council** meeting over the weekend of January 25-26 brought together councillors from all 10 branches. In addition to the regular reports, Council passed the draft 2003-2004 budget, elected a permanent **Finance Committee** and elected members to the **National Discipline Committee**. **David Macniven** (Toronto) was elected **National Vice President**, replacing **Jefferson Mappin**, who resigned that post in December. Jefferson will continue to serve as Chair of the **National Constitution Committee**. **Robert Collins** (Toronto), **Eric Murphy** (Toronto) and **Alvin Sanders** (UBCP) joined the group as new National Councillors. ACTRA PRS Director **Mercedes Watson** presented a draft overview and planning paper, and **R.H. Thomson** reported passionately on the progress made at the recent **International Network for Cultural Diversity** meetings in South Africa that he attended on ACTRA's behalf. National Council meets next May 31-June 1, 2003.

## The Stage Mom Survival Guide

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

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

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



# What culture and trade

A conversation with R.H. Thomson by Aidan Devine

*Excerpt from a keynote address delivered by R.H. Thomson to the Third Annual Conference of the International Network for Cultural Diversity, October 11, 2002, Cape Town, South Africa.*

## British Airways Flight 57

Let me offer you a synopsis of the problem. I will call my synopsis **BA Flight 57** which was the overnight flight from London to Johannesburg. On my first trip to the Southern Hemisphere I was offered '18 channel gold' by British Airways, 'the most diverse and up-to-date program choice in the skies.'

I stood at the back of the darkened cabin lit now only by the glow of the screens. It was an eerie light. All the television watchers had headphones and it was silent except for the background roar of the jet power outside. I began to watch what my fellow travelers were watching wrapped in their half sleep. There was a crime show on one screen. There was a shooting from a different crime drama on the next screen. Far away, men were chasing one another and shots were fired. Close to me there was a plot against the world and up ahead an American Army officer gone bad was threatening to commit 'the biggest terrorist act the U.S. has ever seen...' Flickering from almost every screen was entertainment with some sort of violence. Yes, here and there was a comedy channel or the 19th channel with its map and us as the little white model winging our way over the vast continent of Africa.

In the glow of our screens we watched basically one culture while flying over many cultures. We watched the product of basically one country while flying over many countries, many peoples, many languages, many stories, many fears, many joys, many sacred paths, many children. Yet those peoples that lay below were silent. Their countries and cultures were on the outside. Their voices and languages and stories were not available as we lay in sleepy comfort in the glow of one culture. Silence reigned over them.

To silence so many peoples of their stories, in the end you silence them of who they are. I also think the silence robs everyone. The silence robs the world of the wealth of their stories, their voices, their languages. Our enduring wealth lies in our diversity.

I sat down with actor and activist R.H. Thomson the other day over a cup of coffee. After using him as a career role model for years, I kept on running into him at the corner store on Bloor Street and we'd talk about the state of culture in today's economic climate. "I'm an actor, what's this got to do with me?" I wondered. Not to mention, Robert – as he asked me to call him – admitted, "it's the kind of stuff that makes your eyes glaze over."

Still, I wanted to learn more, and we kept on saying we should get together, have a coffee and talk about it. We never did.

Then I was asked to interview him on the very subject and write something for **InterACTRA**. Great! I thought. This is the opportunity I was looking for. We met three days later at Kilgour's and I started to understand how important the work he's doing really is.

**Trade Agreement:** two or more countries get together and make a bunch of rules about how they do business so that they can sell the things they build, make or grow more easily. It's set up so that there are rules that everyone has to observe to ensure that no one has an unfair advantage.

That sounds pretty good to me, but there's a problem when it comes to culture. The film and television industry is so huge now, that it no longer seems to be a way for people to tell stories to each other about themselves. It's just another moneymaking venture.

**The film and television industry is so huge now, that it no longer seems to be a way for people to tell stories to each other about themselves.**

In a small-market nation with a limited number of people to advertise to, the cost of making a television show that can compete with, say, an American show, is more than the advertising revenue it can take in. So what countries around the world do is subsidize or otherwise support their industry to make up the difference. Now you have a country that has a lot of American shows on TV along with some of their own shows.

**"Luckily Canada was ahead of the game in 1988 and negotiated some cultural exemptions into our Free Trade Agreement with the U.S."**

If you have some sort of a trade deal with a big power such as the U.S. and you never thought to negotiate cultural exemptions, that government subsidy or program is likely to be considered an unfair advantage by American companies who don't get money from their government. The U.S. then files a complaint about the subsidy, and if they are successful, they claim "Equivalent Commercial Effect," Robert tells me.

That means they work out how much they think the foreign subsidy will cost them in lost revenue over, say, the next 15 years. The U.S. powers that be then look for a way to equalize the discrepancy. They might, for example, decide to slap a \$50,000 tariff on every truckload of tires, or wheat or lumber shipped in from the offending country. They collect the money.

This kind of thing can't go on for very long before the offending subsidy is cancelled. Now the small country can't afford to make its own television shows and is forced to buy them from the U.S.



# have to do with actors:

“Luckily,” says Robert, “Canada was ahead of the game in 1988 and negotiated some cultural exemptions into our **Free Trade Agreement** with the U.S. We also made sure these exemptions carried through to **NAFTA** in 1994.” While Robert is skeptical about the effectiveness of this ‘exemption,’ in theory we have the right to subsidize and make rules about certain sections of our own film and television industry. It is a hard-fought battle and we must be constantly vigilant in protecting the right to make our own decisions about culture.

Other countries aren’t so lucky. “Mexico is a perfect example,” Robert tells me. “They had a strong film and television industry, they went into trade deal talks with the U.S., and we warned them to get exemptions for culture. They said ‘No. We have a strong indigenous industry here.’ They didn’t exclude culture from the deal and within two years the Americans had bought up all the distributors in Mexico. Now they have virtually no industry at all. All the theatres show American films and the revenue leaves the country instead of going to fund more Mexican films.

**Mexico is a perfect example... They didn’t exclude culture from the deal and within two years the Americans had bought up all the distributors in Mexico. Now they have virtually no industry at all. All the theatres show American films and the revenue leaves the country instead of going to fund more Mexican films.**

“This is what we want to avoid around the world,” he adds.

What is this organization you’re involved with, I ask him, and what does it do?

Three years ago Robert became involved with an organization called the **International Network for Cultural Diversity (INCD)**. It was originally a Canadian initiative that now brings together people from more than 60 countries to work for arts and culture in a global economy.

The INCD helps set up similar organizations in different parts of the world. Over the last three years they have developed a treaty designed to guide governments on cultural issues when they enter economic trade talks. The object is to take this document to the cultural ministers and have them propose it as a negotiating tool to their governments.

*(continued on next page)*

Actor and activist R.H. Thomson in conversation with actor and article author Aidan Devine.



# What culture and trade have to do with actors:

– continued from previous page

Asked what can people do to help, he says “Educate and impassion people to be champions of their own cultural identities. We want people to feel the need to embrace who they are and want to share it with others. We don’t want to protect our culture, we want to celebrate it and produce advocates of it. Without this it will surely die.”

**Read up on cultural issues at [www.incd.net](http://www.incd.net) and [www.cdc-ccd.org](http://www.cdc-ccd.org)**

As he explained this, his passion for this country was apparent, and mine was awakened. I was fighting back a warm rush of emotion for the country we share as I tried to jot down a few notes. It was pointless to

continue writing. My mind became awash with thoughts and hopes that I could ply my profession in something Canadian, something beautiful, and something strong and hopeful. Give me a chance and I will show other Canadians how great a nation this is and how wonderful its people.

Thank you, Robert, for taking on this challenge. Thank you for coming to the fore and speaking for us. Thank you for having the courage and character to be a protector and advocate of our rights. You are my role model once again.

*Aidan Devine is an actor and a proud Canadian. He was an ACTRA Montreal Branch Councillor in the mid-1990s and now serves as both an ACTRA Toronto and National Councillor. He has appeared in many U.S. and Canadian TV shows, features and series.*

## How can I contribute?

- educate yourself – read up on cultural issues at [www.incd.net](http://www.incd.net) and [www.cdc-ccd.org](http://www.cdc-ccd.org)
- inject cultural issues into the debate on globalization
- tell your politicians culture is important to you and worth protecting from international trade agreements
- talk to your friends and neighbours about the threat of globalization to our culture

*“Educate and impassion people to be champions of their own cultural identities. We want people to feel the need to embrace who they are and want to share it with others. We don’t want to protect our culture, we want to celebrate it and produce advocates of it. Without this it will surely die.”*

– R.H. Thomson



# Who would have thought the new Hollywood North is... Winnipeg?

by Rob Macklin and Wayne Nicklas

## PRODUCER'S OFFICE – DAY 1

A beautiful, sunny California day. We discover Walter Chipnick in final negotiations with television starlet and her agent.

### WALTER

This script is the best thing I've seen in six months. I laughed, I cried, it was more fabulous than *Les Mis!* And we're going to produce it on a soundstage in Winnipeg.

### TV STARLET

Win a what? What did he just say?

### AGENT

Sorry, Walt, we didn't quite follow you there. A soundstage where?

### WALTER

It's in Canada. You'll love it.

### TV STARLET

Canada? Like Vancouver? Toronto? Halifax?

### WALTER

No, no. This is new. Winnipeg is the latest and greatest. Incredible production climate.

### AGENT

But it's desolate, remote, lacking in beauty and sophistication. Allison simply won't shine against that background.

### WALTER

She'll shine, she'll shine. There's terrific sunlight on the prairie.

### TV STARLET

Sunlight on my skin? Are you crazy or something? Besides it's cold and I don't "do" cold unless I'm skiing.

### AGENT

Look, Walt, how about we move this thing to Aspen?

### WALTER

By the way, Allison, there's no direct from L.A. so you'll have to catch a connecting flight in Minneapolis.

### TV STARLET

The horror. The horror.

The scene described on the left has been played out with surprising regularity in the last couple of years. Is rehabilitation the purpose of sending these stars to Winnipeg? Retribution? Or perhaps something more sinister? A long list of stars have already received the treatment, including the likes of **Diane Keaton, Rob Lowe, Shannon Doherty, Parker Posey, Shirley MacLaine, Patrick Swayze, Brian Dennehy** and **Sam Neil**.

Some of them even claimed to like it, but the burning question remains – why? In the name of all that's decent, why?

Manitoba, seemingly the most unlikely location, has become the new Mecca for offshore production. Our little province has become the production destination of choice for companies like **MTV, CBS, TNT, NBC, ESPN** and **Lifetime**.

Undoubtedly our provincial tax credit scheme, which rewards producers for employing Manitobans, has had the

largest initial impact. However, almost all provinces have some form of this plan, so it cannot be the only factor working in our favour. Much credit has to go to our wonderful performers, expert crews and a dynamic Film Commissioner, **Carole Vivier**. Her mission has been to pound the hard sidewalks of L.A. and relentlessly promote Manitoba.

*(continued on next page)*

**Our people are working more frequently, earning a bit more money, and some are landing major support – and even lead – roles**



Sharon Bajer played a 1940s housewife, in **Betty**, an episode of **The Atwood Stories** series.

# Who would have thought the new

– continued from previous page

**Film Training Manitoba** supports the whole infrastructure with a respected and well-funded program, helping to stabilize the crew situation. To complement all this activity, ACTRA Manitoba instituted a **Professional Development Program**, so very important to a community where actors have not had a great deal of opportunity to practice their film craft. With the generous support of the province and some assistance from ACTRA National we have been able to keep our workshop tuition fees affordably low. And our members are taking advantage of it.

Yah, Manitoba is a 'happenin' place'. January, 2003, and already two features are in prep for photography sometime in mid-February. We've never had production starting so early in the year before. The two movies are **Seven Times Lucky**, with about 30 cast roles and **The Saddest Music in the World**, with about 27. Both are Canadian with a local producer. Both are receiving equity loans from the **Manitoba Film and Sound Corporation**.

The Corporation invested in five productions last year, including three TV series. In addition, we saw two other Canadian productions, a feature and a children's (dance) TV series. With an equity fund of only \$900,000, Manitoba Film and Sound is the linchpin in the endless quest to funding agencies and can take a reasonable amount of credit for the robust nature of our local industry. Without a strong local industry, the infrastructure needed to attract offshore production would be sorely lacking.

This impressive increase in overall production has meant good things for ACTRA Manitoba members. Our people are working more frequently, earning a bit more money, and some are landing major support – and even lead – roles.

Some recent noticeable casting successes for Manitobans include the following examples. **Aleks Paunovic** in the role of Petrovic in **Christmas Rush** and **The Crooked E** (The Enron Story)



Tricia Cooper, Leonard Walmer, Claude Dorge and Judy Cook in **Betty**.



Doug Morrow, Jan Skene, Ryan Black, Brad Proctor, Herbie Barnes and Rebecca Gibson on the set of **Tipi Tales** with three of their puppet characters, Sam, Junior and Russell.

John Gilmore

# Hollywood North is... Winnipeg?

**Are we really Hollywood North? Not! Halifax West? Not Maritime enough. Regina East? Getting closer. We just think of ourselves as “Manitoba Central”**

as Lazarri and **Rebecca Gibson** in **Hell On Heels: The Battle of Mary Kay**. Other Winnipeggers gaining notice are **Jon Ted Wynne**, who gave a true-to-life deadpan depiction of the smooth-talking Jeff Skilling in **The Crooked E** and **Sarah Constible** as a down-to-earth no-nonsense lawyer, Cynthia Petersen, in **The Many Trials of One Jane Doe**. **Sharon Bajer** transcends adeptly through her sophisticated feminine beauty to play a 1940s frumpy housewife, Betty, in **Betty** from **The Atwood Stories** series. Also, ex-Manitoban, ACTRA member and Hollywood star **Adam Beach** returned to star in **Sacrifice: The J. J. Harper Story**.

Making a large contribution to our success has been local member **Rick Skene**, who has himself become stunt coordinator extraordinaire and managed to assemble a stable of stunt performers who have delighted producers, particularly those from L.A.

Winnipeg's own **Royal Liechtenstein Theatre Company**, a hilariously funny comedy troupe, showed their stuff to a national audience on **CBC** in an hour-long television special. ACTRA members one and all, the troupe made us proud with their offbeat and intelligent humour.

And there's more. **Toy Castle**, a children's TV dance series finished its third season employing a number of local ACTRA dance members. Dance production is a reoccurring theme in Winnipeg



Courtesy of Muse Entertainment

Courtesy of Muse Entertainment

(l to r:) Manitoba member Jon Ted Wynne, gave a deadpan depiction of the smooth-talking Jeff Skilling in **The Crooked E**. Sarah Constible as lawyer Cynthia Petersen in **The Many Trials of One Jane Doe**. ACTRA Manitoba member Lora Schroeder played Jane Doe 2.



Ben Mark Holbeck, Courtesy of Alliance Atlantis Communications

R.H. Thomson and Shirley Maclaine in **Hell on Heels: the Battle of Mary Kay**.

and we won't be surprised by what's next after seeing productions such as **Without A Word** (Partick Swayze) and the Emmy-winning **Dracula: Pages from a Virgin's Diary**, directed by **Guy Maddin**.

The children's science fiction TV series **2030 CE**, soon to prep for its third season, has given us many young, talented new members, impressively growing our young talent pool. The series is an important stabilizing factor for the industry and adding substantially to performers' incomes.

We even had a children's Aboriginal TV puppet series, **Tipi Tales**. The wonder-

ful little puppets teach viewers universal human values. The sets were incredibly creative, the cast and crew loved the production and more seasons are coming.

These are some of the reasons why we are a talented, ambitious and increasingly successful community of performers, but are we really Hollywood North? Not! Halifax West? Not Maritime enough. Regina East? Getting closer. We just think of ourselves as “Manitoba Central.”

*Rob Macklin is the ACTRA Branch Rep for Manitoba. Wayne Nicklas is President of ACTRA Manitoba.*



UBCP/ACTRA members Jason Schombing and Richard Thomas on the set of *Just Cause*.

Alison Stewart

stewarding increased by 40% in 2002. A challenging year. Slight light at the end of the tunnel. Cup of clichés half full, but hope abounds in early 2003. But then, we all know that HOPE “springs eternal.”



John Juliani  
President, UBCP

CALGARY

Looking forward to greener pastures in 2003

If the reports of increasing production for Alberta become a reality, we are looking at greatly improved production levels for this year and beyond, however, what we continue to lack is a provincial incentive program that is competitive with other provinces. ACTRA Calgary continues to work with **AAMPTU** (Association of Alberta Motion Picture and Television Unions), in efforts to augment the monies available to indigenous film producers (**Alberta Film Development Fund**) with incentive pro-

Alberta MLAs are introduced to feature film production through reps of the Alberta Association of Motion Picture and Television Unions (AAMPTU) on the set of **Open Range** with Kevin Costner.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Message from UBCP

2002 – an eminently forgettable year. 40% drop in production. Drastic industry-wide hardship. New Liberal government decides to sell **Bridge Studios** and axes Film Commissioner. Toughest round of collective bargaining in UBCP history. **Susan Croome** appointed Film Commissioner in November. Five B.C. film unions conclude and ratify collective agreements. B.C. Film industry delegation visits Los Angeles for pre-Christmas sales blitz. Heavy lobby in favour of retaining federal tax incentives.

UBCP opens new offices. Unprecedented membership access and services. Majority of meetings now held on site; saving money and creating more intimacy and membership involvement. Financial restructuring completed. Tweaking of management responsibilities continues. Upcoming contract negotiations with CAW staff. Crackerjack Executive Assistant – **Maureen MacDonald**. Lesser reliance on external consultants. CFO conducting efficiency audits of all departments. UBCP investment income up despite steadily declining interest rates. Thorough comparative analysis of **MBT** and **AFBS** benefit plans. Relations with ACTRA improve. Continued integral involvement in the creation of **PAL Vancouver**.

Comprehensive, very well-received **Orientation Program** for Full members, Apprentices and UBCP Extras. New interactive website launched offering online dues payment and online payroll record verification. Significant inroads into non-union commercial organizing. On-set



Chris Large

grams to entice foreign productions to choose Alberta as their location. It is hoped that the larger budgets and needs of foreign production will bring soundstages, post-production facilities, other industry-related businesses and infrastructure that will help to build a sustainable film and television industry in Alberta.

AAMPTU, with the assistance of **AMPIA** (the Alberta Motion Picture Industry Association) and the **Alberta Film Commission**, was able to organize a set tour of **Open Range** for our provincial politicians (MLAs). The MLAs were bused to the set, treated to lunch and a talk, by producer **David Valdes**, who stressed the need for production incentives. During a break in the shooting, they spent time talking candidly and having a photo taken with **Kevin Costner**. Each MLA who attended the tour has received a souvenir copy of the photo. Reaction to the tour has been extremely positive and plans are in the works for another. Direct and positive exposure of the MLAs to producers who have decided to shoot in Alberta, and may be deciding to return, can only help us in our lobbying efforts.

All in all, I think we have successfully weathered a tough period in regard to film production in our area and I pray we all have a busy and prosperous 2003.



Randy Birch  
President, ACTRA Calgary

## EDMONTON

### Three features boost Edmonton activity

Who would have thought that after a long period of inactivity and in the dead of winter Edmonton would be home to three feature films? Two of the films are follow-ups to the successful supernatural thriller, **Gingersnaps**, by producers **49th Parallel Films** (Toronto) and **Combustion Films** (Calgary). The third, **White Coats**, formerly *Intern's Diary*, brings together producers **Minds Eye Pictures** and **Second City Entertainment**. In view of the energetic startup to the year we are hopeful we will continue to be busy throughout the spring and summer and this in turn, will result in increased, meaningful work opportunities for our members.



Chris Lange © Werifilms Alberta Inc.

**CBC Radio** has donated facilities and production personnel to record a compilation voice sampler for the branch in addition to individual CD demos to help some 30 members market themselves. Thanks to CBC Calgary Drama Producer **Allan Boss**, CBC Edmonton's **Jochen Eggert** and **Ron Yachimec** for their time and their expression of support for the ACTRA Edmonton community.

In this year of our 60th Anniversary, we want to take this opportunity to recognize the continued commitment of the

Edmonton membership to ACTRA and the principles on which it was founded.



Dave Clarke, President,  
ACTRA Edmonton

## SASKATCHEWAN

### Difficult year ends on upswing

The winds of change are blowing through the Saskatchewan Branch office – our beloved Branch Rep, **Bill Siggins**, left for other pastures as of Jan. 3. Bill is working in the documentary world for **Four Square Productions**. He will be missed and there are big shoes to fill. Our mighty council welcomes his replacement, former National

Tyler (Eric Johnson, right) confronting Brigitte (Emily Perkins) in a scene from **Gingersnaps – the Sequel**.

Councillor **Mike Burns**, and Bill won't be too far away. (His office is in the same building!)

Our production year of 2002 went out with a bang with **Falling Angels**, a **Triptych Media/Minds Eye Pictures** production based on the novel by **Barbara Gowdy**. Directed by **Scott Smith**, the production cast three-quarters of its roles locally! (An estimated 18 out of 24!) We hope this is an indication of the year to come, with out-of-town producers realizing just how strong our talent base is here. Rumours of series fill the air in 2003 as excitement builds for our new soundstage. Sadly, **Body and Soul** was cancelled before all episodes could be completed, but on the flip side it was announced at the soundstage opening that **Mythquest** would be returning its production to Saskatchewan.

Our **Saskatchewan Talent Development Fund** continues to grow and thrive. Before Christmas we were offered a chance to support the kids from **RepREZentin'**, the series that trains local aboriginal youths in film acting and production, in their trip to the **Sundance Film Festival**, where their production was being shown. I ask you – how many first-timers get to Sundance?

(continued on page 16)

absolutely vital to the strength of our union. So we created all-day conferences as a tangible service to members, with professional development workshops, and a redesigned plenary session, inviting high-profile keynote speakers such as actor/director/producer **Paul Gross**, actor/activist **Shirley Douglas** and CRTC chair **Charles Dalfen**. Issues of real importance are now in the spotlight.

With the goal of addressing the crisis in Canadian television drama, we are helping lead the national fight to renew a strong, indigenous industry. Our **Political Action Committee** coordinated a letter campaign to MPs, and continues with one-on-one meetings between prominent actors and federal Ministers and MPs.

In ACTRA's 60th Anniversary, we have led the initiative to relaunch the ACTRA Awards after a 17-year hiatus. The goal is simply to celebrate the achievements and excellence of fellow Canadian performers.

This spring we have a challenge to face anew. Negotiating the IPA, we will work with our fellow performers across Canada in our national union, pursuing our collective goals. In our view, it is vital to build a single national bargaining strategy, so that we are not continually played off against each other.



Allan Feldfeld. Courtesy of Minds Eye Pictures.

The Field sisters in **Falling Angels**: Lou (Katharine Isabelle), Sandy (Kristen Adams) and Norma (Monte Gagne).

Chests swelled with pride across the province!

I'd like to take this opportunity to publicly thank the **Saskatchewan Branch Council** for their hard work and integrity in a difficult year. To some, we're just the mythical province between Alberta and Manitoba, but to us, Saskatchewan is home and we love and believe in our film industry.

We sit out the bad years and hope for the best. Here's to a great rest of 2003 for everyone!



*Chris Scott, President, ACTRA Saskatchewan*

So, in the face of adversity, and shrinking operating revenues, we set ourselves some achievable goals to give value to the members. We turned up the efforts on foreign productions: members earned 70% of significant roles and 97.5% of day-player roles. We created (TIP), a local indie production program, and saw 60 productions cast with our actors. This program is available to all branches as the **ACTRA Indie Production agreement (AIP)**.

We believe that member involvement is



*Richard Hardacre  
President,  
ACTRA Toronto  
Performers*

## TORONTO

### Despite production drop, Toronto finds opportunities in indie production

The **CFTPA's** latest trending report at the **Prime Time** conference in Ottawa indicates 2002 was the first year in many that the production industry recorded little or no growth. Indeed, our levels of overall production in Toronto stagnated at disappointing levels we hit the year before, worsened by the ebbing away of Canadian dramatic television production.



Toronto Councillors Eric Murphy, Seán Mulcahy and Michael Miranda attending the ACTRA Awards in Toronto.





Ottawa Council Member Bill Luxton presents a life membership to award-winning puppeteer Noreen Young at ACTRA Ottawa's AGM and party.

## OTTAWA

### New branch rep, production strong

ACTRA Ottawa had a busy few months leading up to the hiring of our new Branch Representative, **Chris Cornish**, in September. Chris has been focusing on getting up-to-speed on the collective agreements, building relationships with the local productions and agents and improving communications and services to the membership.

On the professional development front, we held a very successful three-day workshop in October with **Brenda Bazinet** from **The Actors Workshop** in Toronto, and are planning several more projects for the spring.

Our AGM and annual party in November were great successes. This year, we combined the two events, which were held at one of Ottawa's hippest bars, the **Mercury Lounge**, with entertainment provided by the fabulous **Johnny Vegas Orchestra**. Our guest speaker, **Robert Pilon** from the **Coalition for Cultural Diversity**, gave a passionate presentation on the importance of maintaining cultural diversity under the threat of global trade deals. We also honoured three of our long-time members with life memberships. There was some lively discussion among our members about a variety of issues, including the referendum regarding dues and the implementation of an ACTRA Performers' Rights Society service charge. The event was a big hit, with the largest turnout in years.

On the production side, we continue to see strength and some growth in animation.

A number of successful ongoing productions continue with plans for new seasons, including **Hoze Hounds**, **Untalkative Bunny**, **Kevin Spencer**, while a new production of the **Ren and Stimpy Show** is now in production.

A major production, by Ottawa standards, came to town in November. A U.S. MOW, **Outrage**, shot here for three weeks. The majority of the cast and background performers were made up of local Ottawa performers, giving our members a welcome pre-Christmas boost. More good news is



that the producers of **Outrage** will be returning to Ottawa for the filming of a feature, **Decoys**.

Lorraine Ansell  
President, ACTRA Ottawa

## MONTREAL

### Member services expand, apprentice training well received

November (was it really that long ago?) was ACTRA Montreal's 2002 AGM. Well-attended, the evening offered everyone a look back at a tough year and a glimpse at what we have planned for the future. Members in attendance were treated to a hint of Montreal's plans for celebrating ACTRA's 60th Anniversary in 2003. The announcement of a short film (video) festival generated some excitement; inviting all Montreal members to take their art into their own hands, pick up a camera and shoot! A screening and presentation of awards will happen sometime this summer...

On a community level, ACTRA Montreal has entered into an industry coalition with local parties such as the technician's guild, equipment rental houses, studio owners and even local producers – all with the intent of growing our production levels through the joint promotion of Montreal. We have always been concerned with ensuring that our members get the work when projects come to town. But in the face of dwindling production numbers, ensuring that production comes to Montreal at all has become a priority.

Member services continue to expand with the addition of a sound booth and audition room, to say nothing of the widely successful **Professional Development** workshops and events such as our recent **Writer's Panel**. And finally, the ACTRA Montreal **Apprentice Member Initiation Course** is up and running. Following a local by-law change at the recent AGM, the course is now mandatory to become a Full member of ACTRA. So far, it has been well received by new and old Apprentice members alike.

We are excited about our plans for 2003 and we would like to join the members across the country in celebrating 60 years of pride in and commitment to the Canadian performer. ACTRA Montreal would also like to congratulate our very



own Assistant Branch Representative, **Micheline Russo**, who celebrated her own anniversary of 30 years at ACTRA.

Matt Holland, President,  
ACTRA Montreal

(continued on page 18)



Fun at ACTRA Montreal's November AGM (l to r): Arthur Holden, Deena Aziz and Steve Adams.

Yasmin Saiti

## NEWFOUNDLAND

### Training's up when work's down

Following a long, very dry spell in production it appears that things are finally picking up in Newfoundland. There has been a steady stream of small productions (documentaries, commercials, industrials and CIPIP productions) that will take us to year end. For the coming year the **Newfoundland Film Development Corporation** is showing many projects in development including a feature film and two series. A couple of these projects already have a major portion of the funding and broadcasters in place.

With work opportunities down for members we have been concentrating on initiatives to help members maintain and improve on their skills. Working with **Filmpro**, an industry-wide training organization, we have developed a series of workshops: **Character Development, Auditioning for Kids** and **Auditioning for the Camera** were done in the fall of 2002 and were sold out with waiting lists. Over the next three months we plan to offer **On Camera Essentials, The Mechanics of Acting** and the **ACTRA Apprentice program**. Through Filmpro and the Gander film office we are also sponsoring four two-day acting workshops in central Newfoundland.

The provincial government has recently announced a cultural policy that will help preserve and enhance the culture of Newfoundland and Labrador. The plan maps out a series of guiding principles for the development of new strategies, initiatives and programs. Phase One, which states the mission and guiding principles of the policy, has been passed by the cabinet and includes recognition of professional artists and their importance to the province. Phase Two of the plan will outline the goals, objectives and key actions that flow from the guiding principles. We will be lobbying government to include recognition of ACTRA's jurisdiction in commercials and industrials done by government departments as part of Phase Two of the cultural policy.



Amy House  
President, ACTRA  
Newfoundland/Labrador



Nancy Ackerman. Courtesy of Sierra Films and Halifax's IdealWorld Films

## MARITIMES

### Crash course in acronyms for new Maritimes President

A few words from a newly elected Branch President, it was suggested, would be appropriate for the magazine, as I'm the new boy on the block. So, I write to you now, not from the snowdrifts of Halifax, but from 28,000 feet as I return from my baptism into the world of ACTRA National, attending a National Council meeting.

The work done and the passion shown sends me back to my council with a renewed sense of duty, enthusiasm, and lots of really cool ideas for the next two years. I heard more acronyms this weekend than in my previous 34 years! The trip was invaluable. I saw a superb meeting being run with humour, strength and heart. I saw by-laws changed; committees struck, and points well made. This is the ACTRA that I'd heard about.

Upcoming in the Maritimes we have **Martha Inc.** with **Cybill Shepard**, and **Salter Street Films'** two-part movie about the Halifax Explosion, **Shattered City**. We're proud of the reception of **Marion Bridge** at the **Toronto Film Festival** and of **Thom Fitzgerald's The Event** at **Sundance**.

**Marion Bridge:** Rebecca Jenkins, ACTRA Maritimes member Stacy Smith and Molly Parker.

We bid a sad farewell to **Made In Canada** and continue to see a steady stream of MOW's heading east toward us. 2002 was the first year we had the pleasure of sponsoring film festivals in three provinces: the **Reel Island Film Festival** (P.E.I.), the **Tidal Wave Film Festival** (New Brunswick), and the **Atlantic Film Festival** (Nova Scotia).

The message from the Maritimes right now is "Watch This Space." My council colleagues, a selection of the Atlantic region's finest, are primed and ready to work. Their President, (despite some wicked turbulence as he writes), has his sleeves rolled up so high it could be summer, and the membership is ready to impress any passing casting director!

I am honoured to be working, fighting for and supporting the rich pool of talent that is Atlantic Canada.



Jeremy Webb  
PAMELA (President  
of ACTRA Maritimes  
Even Likes Acronyms)

# Report on the state of Canadian television drama documents the failure of Canadian broadcasters

by Garry Neil

The **Coalition of Canadian Audio-visual Unions (CCAU)** told **Trina McQueen** that urgent actions are required to reverse the precipitous decline in the level of production of Canadian television drama. CCAU's short-term recommendations include:

- **CRTC** to conduct hearings into the state of Canadian drama in 2003;
- strengthening the **Canadian Television Fund**;
- special regulations to require major broadcasters to show a minimum number of hours of original Canadian drama;
- incentives for broadcasting 10-point productions;
- flexibility for specialty services to air new Canadian drama.

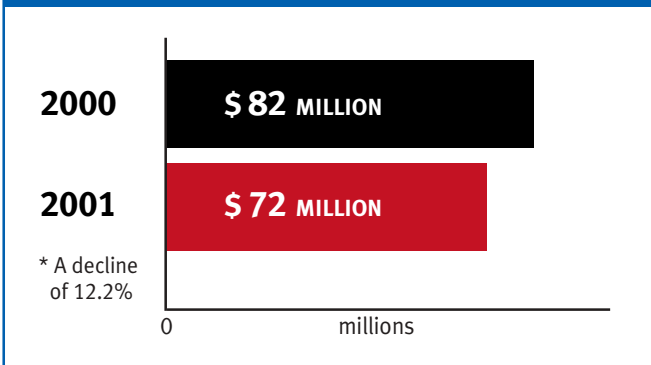
McQueen is expected to report to CRTC Chair **Charles Dalfen** in April. The CCAU, a coalition of nine unions, including ACTRA, with the help of industry experts, analyzed the background to the declining levels of television drama production.

This report highlights the importance of drama and the need for actions to save what has become an endangered species.

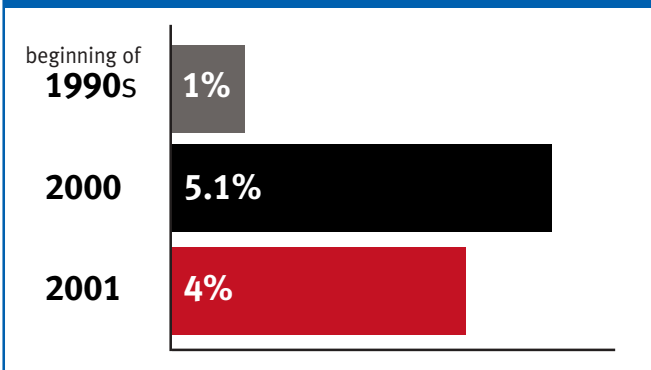
Total expenditures on Canadian drama by broadcasters dropped from \$82 million in 2000 to \$72 million in 2001, a decline of 12.2%. Comparing the performance of English-Canadian broadcasters to those in Australia, which serve a roughly similar audience, the report shows that the licence fee from Australian private broadcasters for regular drama series covers typically 35% of the production budget. In Canada, the licence fee may contribute 8-12%, in the case of six-point productions, and 20-25% in the case of 10-point series. In the United States, independent producers will obtain more than 70% of their production budget from the first broadcast window. Overall, Australian private broadcasters spent 11.9% of their overall programming expenditures on local drama, compared to only 6.4% for their English-Canadian counterparts in 2001.

Read the CCAU report online at [www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca).  
(continued on page 25)

## Expenditures on drama by Canadian broadcasters



## Viewership of Canadian drama



Chris Lange

Another dramatic death – CBC cancels **Tom Stone**. Janet Kidder as Corporal Marina Di Luzio, Chris William Martin as Tom Stone, and Stuart Margolin as Jack Welsh.

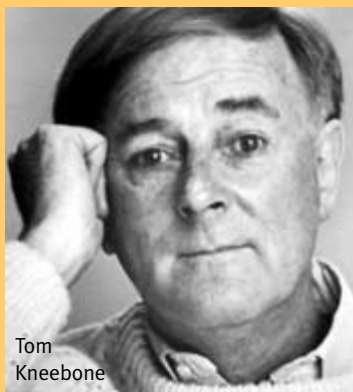
# applause



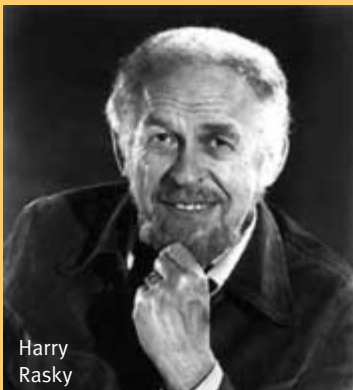
Shirley Douglas



Terry Kelly



Tom Kneebone



Harry Rasky

## 8 ACTRA members receive Order of Canada honours

Governor General Adrienne Clarkson's January **Order of Canada** announcement included eight ACTRA members. Congratulations to those named as **Officers** of the Order of Canada: **George Bowering, Shirley Douglas, Leslie Nielsen** and **Gerald Pratley**; and to those named as **Members** of the Order of Canada: **John Allan Cameron, Terry Kelly, Tom Kneebone** and **Harry Rasky**.

George Bowering is Canada's first **Poet Laureate**. An innovative poet, novelist and critic, his works are known as daring, experimental, Canadian to the core, and infused with humour, irony and wit.

Shirley Douglas is one of our nation's finest performers and a renowned social activist. She has brought some of Canadian literature's most well-known characters to life, such as Hagar in **The Stone Angel** and Marilla in **Anne of Green Gables**.

Leslie Nielsen is an international star who has demonstrated his versatility in both drama and comedy. Credited with reinvigorating slapstick comedy, he is an active participant in the Canadian cultural scene.

Gerald Pratley continues to champion Canadian cinema and cinematographers. Retired founding director of the **Ontario Film Institute**, he is an expert in the theory

and history of the silent film.

John Allan Cameron is a tireless performer and raconteur. One of Cape Breton's most prominent musical ambassadors, he has paved the way for the revival of Celtic music in Canada.

Terry Kelly is a man of determination, perseverance and talent. Blind since the age of two, he uses his own life experience to motivate others. A runner at the 1980 **Paralympics**, he has also made his mark as a musician. His latest album is the first CD ever to be released with liner notes in Braille.

Tom Kneebone is artistic director of the **Smile Theatre Company**, a non-profit organization that brings musicals to seniors' centres and retirement homes throughout Ontario. He writes and directs many of the company's productions that often explore Canada's heritage.

Harry Rasky is an acclaimed documentary filmmaker. His celebration of Canadian artists has brought their talents to the attention of audiences at home and abroad. His insightful rendering of Canadian historical events has cast a light on the complexities of our past.

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

## William Colgate wins songwriting prize

ACTRA member and independent recording artist **Bill Colgate's** song **Let It Be There** won overall second prize and first place in the Gospel Category in the **USA Songwriting Competition** in December. Bill's second overall is the highest placing ever by a Canadian since the contest began in 1996. "Let It Be There" is from Bill's debut CD **when dinosaurs ruled the earth**. His awards bring him opportunities to showcase across the U.S. and airplay on the U.S.-syndicated radio program **Acoustic Café**. The USA Songwriting Competition honours songwriters, composers, bands and recording artists everywhere.



ACTRA member William Colgate won second prize overall in the USA Songwriting Competition for his song "Let It Be There."

## Jennifer Calvert attends Women in Director's Chair Workshop

Based in Vancouver, **Jennifer Calvert** was the sole ACTRA member attending as a director participant in this year's **Women in the Director's Chair** (WIDC) Workshop. Jennifer is one of eight women who attended the acclaimed two-and-a-half-week intensive workshop that boosts careers of women directors. The WIDC Workshop is held every January at **The Banff Centre** in Alberta. Her directorial debut, **Sex Drive**, premiered at the 2001 **Vancouver International Film Festival**.



Jennifer Calvert



Jefferson Mappin

## Thanks to Jefferson Mappin

In December, 2002, ACTRA's National Vice President, **Jefferson Mappin**, stepped down after five years as a National Councillor. A professional performer for more than 25 years, Jefferson started out in Montreal as an 'extra' in Robin Spry's film **One Man**. Jefferson moved to Toronto in the late '70s, dividing his time between theatre and the newly booming film and television industry. All of us at ACTRA appreciate Jefferson's years of hard work (on both Toronto and National councils), his easy good humour and his willingness to be drafted to whatever new initiative needed political might. We'll miss your weekly visits, Jefferson, and wish you well in your artistic endeavours.



Tony Van Bridge



John MacMaster

## CAEA honours to Tony Van Bridge, John MacMaster

ACTRA members **Tony Van Bridge** and **John MacMaster** were among those honoured by **Canadian Actors' Equity Association** (CAEA) in October. Tony Van Bridge received a **Life Membership** in CAEA in recognition of his distinguished career in the performing arts. A British-born actor, director and playwright, Mr. Van Bridge is known for his work on stage and on television in productions all over Canada, the U.S. and the U.K. He appeared for 15 seasons at **The Stratford Festival** and celebrated his 22nd season with **The Shaw Festival** in 2001. He is a member of the **Order of Canada**. John MacMaster received CAEA's **Larry McCance Award** in recognition of his service to the members of CAEA. A well-known tenor, Mr. MacMaster is a resident artist with New York's **AmorArtis Orchestra and Choir**. At CAEA, he has served on National Council and as Treasurer from 1992-1994.

## Golden Globe Award for Donald Sutherland

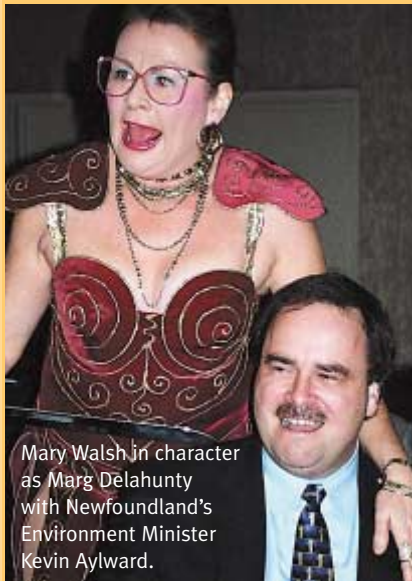
Congratulations to **Donald Sutherland**, who won a **Golden Globe Award** in January for his role in the miniseries **Path to War**. Other ACTRA member nominees for the 2003 Golden Globes were **Eric McCormack** (*Will & Grace*), **Kiefer Sutherland** (*24*) and **Nia Vardalos** (*My Big Fat Greek Wedding*). The Golden Globe Awards honour achievement in U.S. film and television and are presented annually by the **Hollywood Foreign Press Association**.

[www.hfpa.org](http://www.hfpa.org)



Donald Sutherland

# applause



Mary Walsh in character as Marg Delahunty with Newfoundland's Environment Minister Kevin Aylward.

## This evening has \$22,000

**Mary Walsh**, member of the Order of Canada, queen of characters, and princess warrior, helped conquer the debt of St. John's LSPU Hall, in December. Mary Walsh began her illustrious career at the LSPU Hall, the home of **The Resource Centre for the Arts (RCA)**. When "The Hall" found itself in financial difficulties, Mary swooped in, in character as **This Hour Has 22 Minutes' Marg Delahunty**, flailing weapons to save the day. The evening surpassed its \$22,000 goal, raising \$30,000 to help the RCA, which develops, promotes and presents Newfoundland art and artists. The Hall has been home to many well-known Newfoundland performers and ACTRA members including **Rick Mercer, Andy Jones, Cathy Jones, Sebastian Spence, Greg Thomey, Greg Malone and Tommy Sexton**. Mary Walsh was the first Artistic Animateur of RCA and has maintained an active interest and a loyalty to the organization and Newfoundland artists. Thank you Mary!

— Amy House, President,  
ACTRA Newfoundland/Labrador

## 2003 Genie Awards

Congratulations to all our 2003 ACTRA member **Genie Award** nominees and winners. The Genie Awards honour outstanding achievement in the Canadian film industry and are awarded annually by the Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television. [www.genieawards.ca](http://www.genieawards.ca)

ACTRA member nominees for 2003 Genie Awards:

Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role:  
★ **Brigitte Bako**, *Saint Monica*

Best Documentary:  
★ **Dan Bigras**, *Le Ring intérieur*, with Éric Michel

Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role:  
★ **Dominic Darceuil**, *Histoire de pen*

Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role:  
★ **Philip DeWilde**, *Turning Paige*

Best Motion Picture:  
★ **Atom Egoyan**, *Ararat*, with Robert Lantos

Original Screenplay:  
★ **Atom Egoyan**, *Ararat*

Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role:  
★ **Brendan Fletcher**, *Turning Paige*

Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role:  
★ **Gabriel Gascon**, *Le Marais*

Original Screenplay: **Paul Gross**, *Men With Brooms*, with John Krizanc

Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role:  
★ **Arsinée Khanjian**, *Ararat*

Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role:  
★ **Elias Koteas**, *Ararat*

Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role: **Rachel McAdams**, *Perfect Pie*

Best Live Action Short Drama:  
★ **Stephanie Morgenstern**, *Remembrance*, with Paula Fleck

Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role:  
★ **Molly Parker**, *Men With Brooms*

Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role:  
★ **Christopher Plummer**, *Ararat*

Best Live Action Short Drama:  
★ **Sarah Polley**, *I Shout Love*, with Meredith Caplan, Jennifer Weiss

Achievement in Sound Editing: **Donna Powell**, *Rare Birds*, with David Evans, Harvey Hyslop, Paul Steffler

Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role:  
★ **Colin Roberts**, *Flower & Garnet*

Best Documentary:  
★ **Ingrid Veninger**, *Gambling, Gods and LSD*, with Peter Mettler, Alexandra Rockingham Gill, Corneila Seitler

★ Indicates Award Winner



## Congratulations

Congratulations to ACTRA's National President **Thor Bishopric** and ACTRA National Councillor **Maria Bircher** (Montreal) on the birth of their baby girl, **Teale Miranda Bishopric**, on Sunday, February 16 in Montreal. We don't have much of a bio here yet for Baby Teale, but if she follows in her father's footsteps, she could be joining the ranks of ACTRA as an Apprentice very soon. By all accounts, mother and baby are doing well, and father is over the moon. He was caught at the ACTRA Awards with a large box under his arm, and brought out the somewhat-larger-than-wallet-sized framed photo of baby Teale to all who questioned "what's that under your arm?"



## Stephanie Morgenstern

If you ever thought success in the Canadian film/TV industry is all luck, you only have to talk with bilingual actor and award-winning screenwriter/filmmaker **Stephanie Morgenstern**, to realize that's just another showbiz myth. It's the result of pursuing both her artistic and academic passions that has forged her diverse career and collaborations. It's hard not to delve into a sea of topics with her, her inquisitive and analytical personality is so infectious!

Raised in Montreal, her earliest performing experiences (age 12) were original creations, influencing her evolution. "I had pretty radical views about popular culture," she claims, despite numerous television appearances, and animated voice work as a teenager. Earning her B.A. in English (McGill) and a Masters Degree in Social and Political Thought (York), helped, "de-radicalize my thinking. Also, to understand what I was doing as an actor." Constantly challenging the media in which

she works, and her role in it, she's enhanced her talent, and raised the bar for independent filmmaking. A graduate of the Women in the Director's Chair Workshop (Banff), she founded the filmmaker/actor/screenwriter collective, **The Pool**, and co-founded **Ewola Cinema**, with her brother **Mark Morgenstern**.

**Curtains**, the short film she co-directed/produced with brother Mark and acted in, has screened at over 25 international festivals, earning **The Golden Sheaf Award** for Best Script, **The Norman Jewison Award** for Best Direction and a **Genie Award nomination**. "*Curtains* was therapeutic... about a breakdown, a loss of faith, with love, with acting." (One can assume by her notable performances in **The Sweet Hereafter**, **Maelstrom**, **Café Ole**, **Butterbox Babies**, **P.T. Barnum**, **Dash and Lilly** and **Wind At My Back**, and the birth of her daughter, that faith has been restored.)

**Remembrance**, co-written and starring

her husband **Mark Ellis**, was a nominee for this year's Short Film Genie Award. It's the story of a man burdened with 'perfect memory' and his recruitment into the allied intelligence. Their latest collaboration is **Lucy**, their one-and-a-half year-old daughter.

Upcoming: A feature-length version of *Remembrance*.

– Karen Ivany



Joy von Teckemann

Husband and wife collaborators Stephanie Morgenstern and Mark Ellis in their Genie-nominated short film **Remembrance**.



## Aleks Paunovic

Winnipeg native and former Manitoba boxing champ **Aleks Paunovic** is an actor and stunt performer, but started out in a rock band. A producer saw him in the band, and asked him to audition for a role in **Heads**. "I wasn't nervous – it was all about music for me then. I got the role, and the first day on set, I was hooked." The stunts came later, after meeting mentor and stunt coordinator **Rick Skene** during **The Adventures of Shirley Holmes**. "I didn't bug him about getting into stunts, we just had a blast and became great friends, and then I helped out on different films after that – and learned a lot just by watching."

Recent projects include **The Crooked E**, **Christmas Rush**, an episode of **Andromeda**,

a small part in **I-Spy** with **Owen Wilson** and **Eddie Murphy**, and **John Doe**. He was in Los Angeles in January, testing for pilot season.

After the action and Yugoslavian accent he adopted for *Christmas Rush* he had a stunt-free role in *The Crooked E*, about the corruption and fall of Enron Corp. "It was strictly an acting movie, and I struck up a friendship with the lead, **Christian Kane**. He was a big help showing me the ropes, getting me relaxed. I love the action stuff – but it's great to show my talents as an actor," Aleks adds.

The rewards? "It's fun," he says. "You're always 12 years old, playing Cowboys and Indians. I look forward to sacrificing myself for the roles that challenge."



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Aleks Paunovic in the action-packed mall-heist movie, **Christmas Rush**.

"When I started, I didn't know about ACTRA at all," Aleks explains when asked to reflect on the union. "Rick sat me down and said 'read up on ACTRA to know your rights. You have a huge future in this business.' ACTRA makes sure I'm not getting screwed. I know they're watching out for me."



## PATRICIA SCOTT

**P**atricia Scott was my dear friend. She liked me to call her "Patricia." Once, I remarked that the name "Pat Scott," as she was usually known, suited her: clear, articulate, uncluttered like the blue sky. However I followed her wish.

We met approximately 14 years ago as alternates at an ACTRA meeting. During the breaks we talked and talked. She confided that her husband, Cliff, had died recently. She missed him dreadfully but was determined to get out and live. She listened to my woes. Later, at a dinner held for the councillors, she taught me a valuable lesson. Someone rudely ordered us not to sit with her at that table because we were not 'proper councillors.' My hackles raised and I could feel myself preparing for 'fight or flight.'

Patricia leaned on her cane and raised her eyes. Her voice sang out, "Rise above it. Rise above it!" She ushered me to another table where we were welcomed more gracefully.

She was born in what was then Londonderry, Ulster (now Derry). She had been a child actor and she was a 'Belasco,' a famous theatrical name. Once, Patricia, my mother and I all went off to Stratford to see a play. We packed a hamper with sandwiches, cake, a bottle of wine, tablecloth and all the accoutrements of a fine picnic. As we sat among the swans on that sunny day, a policeman appeared before us, "Excuse me, ladies. Are you from Ontario?" "No. I was born in England and I live in the Eastern Townships, Quebec. Do you know them?" said my mother helpfully. "I am from Britain, lived in Winnipeg and now I live in Toronto," added Patricia. "Do you know that it's illegal to consume alcohol in a public place without a licence?" There was a stunned silence. Then, in a flash, they poured the remains of the wine, downed their glasses and innocently looked up. "Sorry constable, it won't happen again."

Patricia served on the ACTRA Toronto branch council devotedly for years. She sat on the **Awards** and **Finance Committees** among others. Clear of speech and mind, she loved ACTRA.

Then she moved to the **Performing Arts Lodge**, which she embraced with equal relish. In latter years, I saw too little of her. She was admired by many for her qualities, particularly her humour and incisiveness. She was, above all, my friend.

– Catherine Vaneri

## TERRENCE LA BROSS ROSS

1932 – 2002

**T**errence settled in Montreal in 1967, one of the many who came here for Expo and stayed. He did it all: stage, film, radio and television; from **Shakespeare** to **Coward** to **Beckett; Gilbert and Sullivan** to ragtime; new plays, old plays, repertory, cabaret, summer stock and the list goes on. He did it all; he did it well and he loved doing it.



He worked hard at it, too, all his life. For instance, he was among the earliest anglo performers here to learn French well enough to find work on the other side of our linguistic fence. He was still working to improve his command when he died.

He was generous in his work and in his life, and rock solid. When the set fell down, he was a useful man to be sharing a stage with.

He was a scrapper. He valued courtesy, but when he saw what he considered unfairness or unkindness towards himself or anyone else, he went for the jugular. He was good at that as well.

He loved growing things. Plants, of course, but also very young children. I could never figure out why they weren't intimidated by this distinguished gent with the trim white beard making faces at them, but they never were. Maybe that's the answer. They knew he was making faces with them, keeping his distance but inviting them to join in the silliness to pass the time at the checkout counter. They did, too. Regularly.

He bought himself a seat in an old, beautifully renovated theatre near his home, the **Monument National**. It's a good seat: on an aisle in the orchestra. On the plaque is the right epitaph for him: "Terrence La Brosse Ross, homme de théâtre, not wanted on this voyage."

– Kelly Ricard

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

Bud Browning  
Tom Fulton  
Julia Houghton  
Leo Jessome  
Stuart Kenny  
Jay MacDonald  
Sean O'Reilly  
Anthony Parr

Peter Purvis  
David Bruce Rankin  
Vivian Reis  
June Sheppard  
Tibor Skorik  
William Stepchuck  
Svetlana Zylina





## Farewell, **BILL McNEIL**

One of my first missions, on being transferred to Toronto from Ottawa in 1962, was to meet **Bill McNeil**. He was a big name in **CBC Radio**; host of the daily newsmagazine **Assignment** and contributor to the Sunday documentary hour produced by **Harry J. Boyle**. I was a fan of Bill's work: the genuine nature of his presentation and his ability to draw out guests in a non-intrusive manner. I also felt I could learn something from him.

After penetrating his initial Cape Breton wariness over what this eager newcomer may expect of him, we developed a lifelong friendship. Those of us in the industry who knew Bill were not surprised at the enormous popularity of the **Fresh Air** shows and his interviews on **Voice of the Pioneer**. They were quintessential Bill; a man filled with grace, charity and good humour. He took a special interest in the activities and concerns of the senior Canadians to whom he broadcast and whose stories he sought out. Bill also responded personally to every one of his fan letters on his old Underwood typewriter.

Like all the good ones, he never faked it... and that's what I learned from Bill McNeil.

– *Lloyd Robertson*

## Good-bye to comedian

### **BILLY VAN** 1934-2003

They sure asked the wrong guy to say a few words about **Billy Van**. You see, where Billy's concerned, I'm biased.

He's been a dear friend of mine for almost 50 years. I have been involved in many productions where he and I have worked together and I have observed that, from first rehearsal to finished production, his demeanour and work ethic was on a highly professional level. This conduct was also apparent when he was involved socially.

Had he lived longer, who knows how many more characters he would have invented for us to enjoy? You can be sure of one thing – they would be characters of quality.

I, and many more people, shall miss him.

A terrific actor. A terrific singer. But most of all, a terrific human being.

– *Jack Duffy*

**B**illy, all my life you made me laugh. You made everyone laugh. Your own pain, you tucked away in your heart, but there was still so much room for the rest of us.

Laughter heals, and one never forgets the doctor. Thank you for your never-ending consultation.

– *Dinah Christie*



## Report on the state of Canadian television – continued from page 19

The report also looks at audience statistics. During the 1990s, viewership of Canadian drama increased from 1% of overall television viewing to as high as 5.1% in 2000. But, as the effects of the 1999 **CRTC Television Policy** took effect, total viewing of Canadian drama declined to 4% in 2001.

After the report's release, in February, **CBC** announced the cancellation of one of its remaining series, **Tom Stone**, and **CTV** announced a dismal drama line-up for next season, ensuring the decline will continue.

The report suggests that Canada's larger private broadcasters may fall short of reaching their priority programming targets

established by the CRTC Television Policy. It analyzes program schedules of key broadcasters and concludes:

"...an increasing proportion of priority programming is made up of programming other than drama... Canadian drama is particularly low in sweep weeks... in general, the amount of priority programming broadcast by these conventional broadcasters (in) September to November 2002 falls below the eight-hour weekly target."

Since this shortfall will need to be made up, look for lots of Canadian content during the summer months, when audiences are weak.

For the long-term, the report has additional recommendations:

- hold early licence renewal hearings for CBC, CTV and Global;
- require broadcasters to spend money on drama again
- get tough with the broadcasting schedule – more Canadian shows in primetime

Send a letter to **Heritage Minister Sheila Copps** to show your concern about the decline in TV drama. Go to [www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca) or [www.actratratoronto.com](http://www.actratratoronto.com) and follow the links to ACTRA's campaign for Canadian programming. If you don't have email, call ACTRA National at 1-800-387-3516 and we'll send you a copy of the letter.

**EASTERN REGION**

## Would you turn down \$25,000 in cash?

You're at home one day watching your favourite Canadian-produced drama on TV. You get a call inviting you to audition for a five-day role in a feature film. Before hanging up, they mention that the role pays \$25,000. You start planning a Caribbean cruise.

You show up at the audition and win the part. You're overjoyed and make a mental note to pick up sunscreen on your way home. As a fine and upstanding union member, you remember to ask for your ACTRA contract.

"Oh, I'm sorry," says the producer. "This is a non-union production." After a brief pause, during which you imagine your cruise ship sinking in the Bermuda Triangle, the producer adds "Will you do it for cash?" The ship momentarily bobs above the waves.

Do you take the job, or does the luxury liner disappear forever in the murky waters all-too-near paradise?

ACTRA Member **Guy Nadon** faced this very real dilemma. He did the right thing. He told the producer that he could not work without an ACTRA contract. He then called the ACTRA office to report the incident.

Guy encouraged the producer to call ACTRA and we reached an agreement. The production paid all performers above-scale rates, plus insurance and retirement benefits, plus the 130% pre-payment use fee.

One of ACTRA's biggest priorities is to create work opportunities for members. We are constantly looking for non-union production in order to meet with the producer and convert the project into a union production.

This creates work opportunities. We need your help.

If you work non-union, you risk fines and expulsion from

ACTRA. If our members work on non-union productions, producers would have no reason to hire members under our collective agreements. ACTRA would also have no clout in negotiations because producers would argue that they could easily produce at wages and working conditions that undercut our agreements.

However, if you tell us about non-union projects, we may be able to create jobs for you and your fellow ACTRA members. Your identity is always kept confidential.

Guy worked for five days and received his full payment.

I don't know if he took the cruise.



Gary Saxe, ACTRA  
National Organizer (Eastern Region)  
gsaxe@actra.ca

**BRITISH COLUMBIA**

## Organizing Report from B.C.

When I was appointed as Organizer for UBCP in June 2002, film and television production in Vancouver was virtually 100% under the **BCMPA** union contract, but commercial advertising production was largely non-union. A strategy was implemented to try and turn that around.

The organizing campaign was developed as a 'squeeze play'.

We wrote and telephoned the presidents of the product companies and advertising agencies. Many of these were large American or international conglomerates. We asked these executives to honour and respect our agreed-upon standards for Canada. American advertisers already enjoying the huge discount in the Canadian dollar exchange rate could hardly justify further undercutting of our basic rates.

From the bottom up, we launched a campaign to notify and persuade non-union performers who were eligible to join the union to do so, or face higher permit fees when doing union work. This resulted in hundreds of qualified performers signing up.

Across the middle, we approached talent agents to continue to support the union. This included encouraging their qualified clients to join our ranks. Talent agents found to be submitting our members for

non-union work were removed from our UBCP **Talent Agent List** and we sent the paycheques directly to their clients.

We monitored the non-union auditions and sets to see who was being cast and we presented the pictures and résumés of our members who matched the casting requirements. We informed parents about the protections for minors in our agreement, about residual earnings and collection, and about health insurance and retirement contributions by producers for their child's future.

The strategy succeeded beyond expectations as non-union production dropped from 60% in June, to approximately 10% in October. As can be expected, individuals who had specialized in, and become dependent upon non-union income for their livelihood fiercely and loudly protested these organizing strategies.

Peter Partridge  
UBCP Organizer  
peter.partridge@ubcp.com

**WESTERN REGION**

## Country Music Television inside with ACTRA

As you know, ACTRA attempted to certify an Alberta-based commercial producer, **White Iron Productions**, during the summer of 2001. We attempted this certification because White Iron consistently produced their projects non-ACTRA and would only solicit the performances of our members once or twice a year. ACTRA's organizing efforts directed at this commercial producer have resulted in substantially more work for ACTRA members and I'm happy to report that member earnings have increased from approximately \$2,000 annually to \$100,000 over the past year. This proves that rather than having a negative effect, our certification attempt was a wake-up call for producers to work with us rather than against us!

I'm also pleased to report that the **Organizing Department** was successful at tracking down and convincing the producers of a feature film being filmed in Manitoba called **Snow Walker** to sign an ACTRA contract. This production was initially non-union.

If any of you are an avid **Country Music Television** (CMT) viewer, you may have noticed over the last number of months that their primetime programming has changed direction. Rather than the regular video flow that we are all used to, CMT



Guy Nadon

has started to produce their own programming in the form of television movies. Recognizing this as an opportunity for ACTRA members to land more work, I contacted **Agnes Augustine**, a producer for CMT when I learned that she was coming to Calgary to film a television movie called **Christmas Child**. I developed a great rapport with Agnes and soon afterward the Calgary Branch successfully negotiated a contract with CMT. This is significant as the two previous productions shot in Calgary were non-union. Agnes was very pleased with her experience with ACTRA members and she has indicated her interest in working with ACTRA regularly. Keep up the good work!

In closing, best wishes to everyone, in this, ACTRA's 60th year. See you in the movies.



*Don Dudar*  
National Organizer  
(Western Region)  
ddudar@actra.ca

## Indie production agreements turn non-union union

The new **ACTRA Indie Production (AIP)** agreement is a welcome new tool for ACTRA's organizing efforts. AIP is modeled on ACTRA Toronto's **TIP** (Toronto Indie Production) agreement that has been in place for less than a year. TIP has already resulted in ACTRA Toronto members getting work on 17 shorts and six features. In many cases these low-budget productions would have been produced non-union or not at all.

The AIP and TIP agreements are available to low-budget, entirely Canadian-produced films. ACTRA has taken the lead in the Canadian film and television industry with its campaign to support Canadian television drama and agreements such as AIP and TIP are also part of our efforts to support indigenous film production. Both actors and producers benefit under these

new agreements: actors get to perform in real roles while producers get a break on what they pay up-front to performers.

Information on these agreements can be found on the ACTRA National and ACTRA Toronto websites. ACTRA encourages you to let your friends in the industry know about these programs so they can have the benefit of professional performers working in their films!

In other matters related to organizing we wish to remind performers that if you know of non-union film, television or commercial production taking place or about to take place, please contact your local ACTRA office and let the organizer know.

*Dan Mackenzie*  
National Organizer (Toronto)  
danmackenzie@actra.ca

## DIGITAL MEDIA

### Digital media growing up

The changes taking place due to technology and digital media challenge us to look at things differently. The solutions we find over the next couple of years will have a direct impact on the industry for decades to come and become the new touchstone for performers and their creativity.

Concepts that were sketchy at best a year ago are now a part of the new digital reality. An example is **Pressplay**, [www.pressplay.com](http://www.pressplay.com), an online music subscription service created by **Sony** and **Universal**. Major media companies who only a couple of years ago argued that it would be impossible to permit legal digital downloading of music are now in the business of doing just that.

At the end of 2002, both Universal and **BMG** announced that they would stop deducting from artists' royalties charges for packaging and other costs that aren't part of producing and distributing digital music, thus providing higher royalty rates for downloaded music. The remaining big three media companies (**Sony**, **Warner**, **EMI**) will likely be forced to follow suit. We would not have seen these changes were it not for the strength of artist coalition groups, which demanded fairer treatment and were successful in rallying public support. These music industry models will likely be adopted in other areas of the entertainment industry.

What can ACTRA's own history and these recent events teach us?

(continued on page 28)

The search party discovers the corpse by the side of the road in the TIP film **At The Corner Of The Eye**.



A still from the TIP film **The Crypt Club**.

– continued from page 27

# New interactive membership system now online

Over a year ago, ACTRA was proud to launch our new website, including our online talent catalogue **Face to Face Online** at [www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca). Since then (and before), the IT team has been busy working to build, test and deliver our new web-based membership system, that is now up and running and available to all ACTRA members with a password for secure access.

Your ACTRA member password gives you access to three member-only services from [www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca) – the member-only sections of the website including our bulletin board, your unique Face to Face Online portfolio, and now, your personal membership file.

In the membership system, you can now update your own address information, verify payment information, view your work history, have mail directed to your home or to your agent, choose to have your ACTRA PRS cheques sent to your home or your agent, indicate what other professional unions you belong to, and more. From the new system, you don't have to send us an email telling us to send you *InterACTRA* by email, you can choose

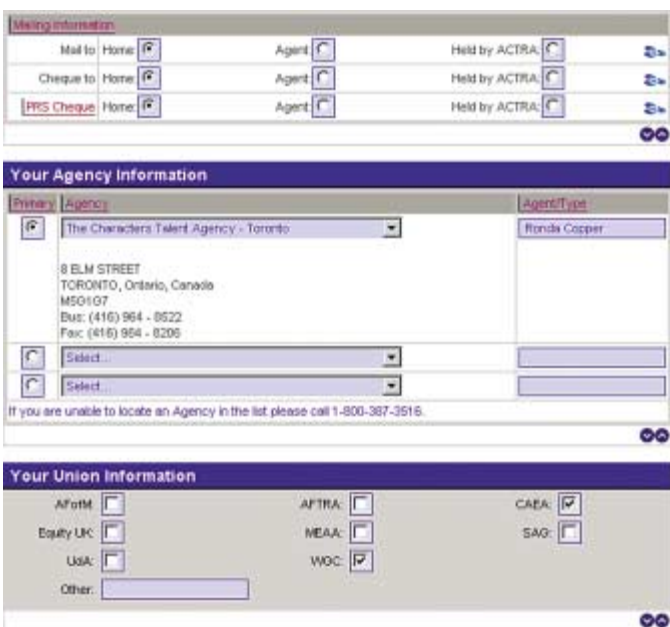
the **Email InterACTRA** flag in the **Business Information** section. The membership system includes your payment history with ACTRA, so you can check what basic and working dues you've paid or owe for the current fiscal year.

To login to the member-only sections of [www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca), choose the **MEMBER** role at the top of the page, and enter your username and password in the fields provided. To get to your personal membership file, scroll down and click the **Membership System Access** button.

## Forgot your password?

**Coming soon...** an automatic way to find out what your password is. Go to [www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca) and look for the link **Forgot your password?** on the homepage. An email will be automatically sent to you with your password.

**Note:** your email address must be part of your membership information for this service – make sure your ACTRA branch has updated your email address in your membership records.



The screenshot shows three sections of the ACTRA membership system interface:

- Billing Information:** A table with columns for 'Mail to', 'Agent', and 'Held by ACTRA'. It lists three rows: 'Mail to Home', 'Cheque to Home', and 'PRS Cheque Home', each with a dropdown menu for 'Agent' and a checkbox for 'Held by ACTRA'.
- Your Agency Information:** A form with a dropdown for 'Agency' (currently showing 'The Characters Talent Agency - Toronto') and a dropdown for 'Agent Type' (currently showing 'Ronda Cooper'). Below these are fields for address, phone, and fax numbers, and two 'Select...' dropdown menus.
- Your Union Information:** A grid of checkboxes for various unions: AFTM, AFTRA, CAEA, Equity UK, MEAA, SAG, USA, and WDC. The 'Other:' field is currently empty.

Part of the *Update your Personal Information* page from the new ACTRA Membership System, where members can indicate multiple agencies, show membership in other professional unions, and tell ACTRA where to send cheques.

Historically, new types of content and distribution have been introduced into ACTRA's agreements with less than enviable terms for performers. Initially, in ACTRA's early days, the producers paid a basic up-front payment to the performer in exchange for a perpetual use.

Ensuing years were spent negotiating better fees and access to back-end revenues in the form of royalties and residuals. This was the case for both radio and television. It comes as no surprise that the same trend has materialized for digital media and the internet. Producers argue for a number of reasons, that a basic up-front fee should provide for the ability to exploit the creative product forever, with no further compensation to the performers. History repeats itself.

Changes in the industry are altering the way content is used and how revenue is generated. These new models can benefit performers but gains will likely only come when performers stand up for themselves and demand fair treatment.

The best strategy is to evaluate the changes carefully, make informed decisions, influence the process by being a part of it, and think long term. The next three years will have a tremendous influence over the next three decades.

Think of it this way; you walk into a poker game several hours after the group has been playing. You don't know who you're playing against, what the rules are... and maybe not even what game is being played. You're at a disadvantage.

ACTRA has been able to lead in the digital media world because of strong support from our members

Fortunately we're not in this analogy. ACTRA has been able to lead in the digital media world because of strong support from our members.



Thom Tapley  
National Organizer,  
Digital Media  
[ttapley@actra.ca](mailto:ttapley@actra.ca)



### Ferne Downey

Ferne is an actor currently living in Toronto (although her heart belongs to Halifax – it's an ocean thing). She has worked extensively in television and film for 20 fruitful years. For 12 years, Ferne has been very active in the struggle for performers' rights. She has been a willing 'ACTRA slave', including a term as **Toronto President**. Most recently she served ACTRA on the **Finance Committee** and as Chair of the **ACTRA Awards Jury** in Toronto. She is also ACTRA's representative on the **PAL Board**, and Co-Chair of the **Entertainment Industry Coalition (EIC)**. This past winter Ferne guest starred on **The Old Guy**, CBC Radio's hot series for **The Mystery Project** and was seen in **The Brady Bunch in the White House** for Fox TV.



### Eric Murphy

Performing for more than 20 years, Eric has appeared in theatre, award-winning films, commercials and corporate videos. Credits include **Scales of Justice** (CBC), **Nikita** and **Friday's Curse**. Eric has conceived, written and produced videos for **Hudson's Bay**, the **CNIB**, **ProtectAir**, **BiWay** and **GM**. He has garnered writing grants from the **Ontario Arts Council**, the **OFDC** and **Super Channel**. Fluently bilingual, Eric serves on the Toronto Council of **l'Union des Artistes** and works in Quebec. He has a B.A. from **St. Pat's College**, Ottawa, and an M.A. from **Laval University**. In addition to serving as a National Councillor, he is ACTRA Toronto Performers' **Vice President of Member Services**.



### Austin Schatz

From his humble roots as a farm boy in Saskatchewan to his humble life as an actor in Toronto, Austin has had a few non-humbling experiences in the world of entertainment. A decade-and-a-half on air in AM and FM radio and TV; over 60 stage plays; principal, actor, background, stand-in, OSLO in television and feature films; radio and TV commercials, local, national, international; councillor locally and nationally; **Vice President Internal** and now **Vice President Finance** at ACTRA Toronto Performers. These are some of his past moments. Unfortunately, the majority listed contribute to his unchanging financial state from his humble roots as a...

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All **ACTRA Members** (Full, Apprentice and ACTRA Extras) are entitled to a number of **discounts** when you show your ACTRA member card. For a full list of discounts, pick up a copy of the discounts brochure at your ACTRA branch, or download the discounts brochure from the members' section or the Sitieseer stream of [www.actra.ca](http://www.actra.ca).

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– Jeremy Podeswa, Director.



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No discounts in your area? Want to expand discounts for ACTRA members? Ideas for other discounts? Contact us at [interactra@actra.ca](mailto:interactra@actra.ca) or call Kim Hume at 1-800-387-3516.

# ACTRA 1943-2003

We've been called many things, **RATS**, **ACRA**, **ACTRA**, but the important thing is that this union is built on a solid foundation. Using all my fingers and toes, I counted more than 41,000 performers have been members of our union since 1943. That's a reason to party!

The biggest thing to hit the road is the re-introduction of the **ACTRA Awards**. From sea-to-sea, branches will be anguishing over who will receive the first of the new annual awards.

A special 60th Anniversary publication of *InterACTRA* is due out in the autumn, a commemorative edition full of memories and promises, so buy a plastic sleeve or two, you're going to want to hang on to this one.

Film and television festivals are lining up to help us celebrate our 60th. **The Banff Television Festival** has quite a few things in the works including a **Performance Master Class** and **Breakfast with ACTRA**. The **Atlantic Film Festival** is being renamed the ACTRA Film Festival and the annual ACTRA Maritimes **Midnight Breakfast** promises to be the hot ticket item this year. (Okay, I was kidding about the name change.)

In Canada's second largest city, Los Angeles, the **Canadian Consulate** will be loaning us the official residence for a blowout party and plans are underway to wake up a sleepy town called Ottawa.

So, celebrate and take inspiration from those who came before, the ones who built all that we have in this union. The future of ACTRA relies on you. You are the foundation for the next 60 years as we travel on together.

Tip a glass, say a prayer, do what you need to to take part in some of ACTRA's fabulous 60th celebrations being planned across this dominion.

— Jamie Bradley

## Diamond anniversary for our multi-faceted performers



(Left to right:) **The King of Kensington** (1975-1980) – Fiona Reid, Al Waxman and Helene Winston. **Wayne and Shuster** – Johnny Wayne and Frank Shuster. **Take 30** – Reporter Moses Znaimer and hosts Adrienne Clarkson and Paul Soles. **This Hour Has Seven Days** (1964-1966) – hosts Laurier LaPierre, Dinah Christie and Patrick Watson. Radio in the 1940s – Austin Willis (second from left) and friends, with brother Frank Willis in the booth. A photo of a RATS dinner (Radio Artists of Toronto Society), ACTRA's pre-decessor, from the 1940s.



### Call for photos and memorabilia

*InterACTRA* Fall 2003 will be a special 60th Anniversary issue of the magazine. Do you have photos or other ACTRA memorabilia to loan us for possible inclusion in this special edition? We're looking for photos of ACTRA events, ACTRA members and production stills. Please contact Kim Hume in ACTRA's National Office at 1-800-387-3516, (416) 489-1311 ext. 4045 or [khume@actra.ca](mailto:khume@actra.ca).



Photos courtesy: CBC Still Photo Collection, Toronto

Photo courtesy: Royal Canadian Navy

# CELEBRATING 60 YEARS

## The ACTRA Awards in Toronto rocked!



ACTRA Awards in Toronto winners Shawn Doyle and Kristen Thomson after the awards show.



Paul Gross and Gordon Pinsent at the pre-show reception. Paul presented Gordon with ACTRA Toronto's inaugural Award of Excellence.



Awards Chair Jackie Laidlaw with Committee member Jocelyne Zucco.



Nominee Michelle Nolden at the pre-show reception.



Nominee Wendy Crewson with Award of Excellence winner Gordon Pinsent after the show.



Nominee Rick Roberts with his wife Marjorie Campbell.

**Wow.** What a night. February 27, 2003. We did ourselves proud. We were proud to kick off **ACTRA's 60th Anniversary** celebrations by presenting three **ACTRA Awards** honouring the outstanding work of Toronto members. Proud to have such a fabulous community. Proud of the exceptional work that was nominated by members. Proud of the discerning jury dealing with a cross-section of genres. And positively thrilled to have **Paul Gross** present the inaugural **Award of Excellence** to **Gordon Pinsent** for his extraordinary career as a Canadian actor and his deep support of ACTRA and the industry. It was as moving and charming as you might imagine. Did I mention the fact that we all looked fabulous in our glamorous states? And that everyone had an absolute ball? The high-spiritedness was contagious and host/writer **David Huband** was *funny*. The two Outstanding Performance Awards went to **Kristen Thomson** for **I Shout Love**, a short film by **Sarah Polley**, and **Shawn Doyle** for his body of work in the drama series, **The Eleventh Hour**. The **ROM** rocked. ACTRA Toronto relishes the revitalization of these important member-supported ACTRA Awards and salutes all the nominees.

– Ferne Downey

### Congratulations to all our nominees for the 2003 ACTRA Awards in Toronto!

#### Outstanding Performance – Female

**Wendy Crewson** – *Perfect Pie* (feature film)

**Thea Gill** – *Queer As Folk* – (TV series)

**Michelle Nolden** – *Men With Brooms* – (feature film)

**Kari Matchett** – *Nero Wolfe* (TV series)

★ **Kristen Thomson** – *I Shout Love* (short film)

#### Outstanding Performance – Male

**Maury Chaykin** – *Nero Wolfe* (TV series)

★ **Shawn Doyle** – *The Eleventh Hour* (TV series)

**Matthew Ferguson** – *I Shout Love* (short film)

**Paul Gross** – *Men With Brooms* – (feature film)

**Rick Roberts** – *An American in Canada* – (TV pilot)

★ Indicates Award Winner

# CANADIAN FILMS CELEBRATED AT THE GENIE AWARDS



by  
Anne Marie  
Scheffler



The Genie Award statuette was created by Soril Eroog.

## WE CAN MAKE 'EM, BUT NO ONE CAN SEE 'EM

The first time I ever went to the **Genies** was an exciting, last-minute opportunity. Someone was unable to attend, and because of my volunteer work on ACTRA council, the extra ticket was passed my way. I was dazzled by it all – those other Canadian actors in those neat-looking Canadian films I'd never see, winning awards over more Canadian actors whose names I'd never heard of.

Then I got a little more cultured, if you will, and started to pay closer attention to the film industry in this country – we can make 'em, but no one can see 'em. And now when I go to the Genies, and this is my third time, I know what's going on. I still haven't seen any of the movies, and I am still not familiar with most of the nominees, but that seems to be a large part of Canadian film.

Our hosts were the charming **Peter Keleghan** and the multi-gown-wearing **Arsinée Khanjian**. Arsinée also went home with the best actress award for her work in **Ararat**. **Ararat** took first place for best feature film, and Elias Koteas of **Ararat** took home the best supporting male actor award.

**Bollywood-Hollywood** was also up for the best feature film award. Actor **Rishma Malik** summarized the movie for us, and made me

proud to see the diversity of our country showing up on screen. Nice to see ourselves reflected in our films. **Gary Sinise** graced the stage just to give us a bit of American Movie Star appeal, and he spoke about how great it is to do a movie in Canada. Yes, we are good at service productions.

But what I remembered most from this Genie night was when **Peter Mettler**, ACTRA member **Ingrid Veninger** and **Alexandra Rockingham Gill** accepted the Genie for Best Documentary for **Gambling, Gods and LSD**. Ingrid said "Book those babysitters now. Go and see our movies." This is what winning a Genie is all about – pleading with the public to go and see the movie that you just won an award for and probably spent years making. (I heard Peter worked on *G, G & LSD* for 5 years.)

I ran into Ingrid later on that night in the ladies room. We were complaining about the terrible distribution situation and lack of advertising for Canadian, even Genie-winning, films. But when one of our movies is playing for those brief two weeks, we should get out there and buy tickets. If you don't have tons of money for advertising, at least you might have the podium at the Genies to get the word out to see your film.

Photo courtesy: The Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television.  
By Kodak Entertainment Imaging.



Arsinée Khanjian accepting her best actress Genie for her role in **Ararat**.



Genie winner Sarah Polley with Kristen Thomson who starred in Sarah's film **I Shout Love**.



ACTRA member Ingrid Veninger and Peter Mettler who won a Genie for their documentary **Gambling, Gods and LSD**.



Genie nominee Colin Roberts with ACTRA member Linsea O'Shea.



Elias Koteas won a supporting actor Genie for his work in **Ararat**.

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