

ACTRA

ACTRA MAGAZINE SUMMER 2016



**Mark your calendars!
We're celebrating ACTRA's 75th
year anniversary in 2018!**

We're celebrating!



ACTRA.75

Tommy Tweed became the first National president of ACTRA in 1952. Born and raised in Medicine Hat, Alberta, Tommy was a founding member of RATS in 1943. Tommy was also one of the group of four individuals, which also included Esse Ljungh, W.O. Mitchell and Jean Murray, to first be presented with a John Drainie Award for their distinguished contribution to Canadian broadcasting. Without the talent, hard work and dedication of our founders, our union would not be what it is today. ACTRA has grown into a mature organization that draws from the strength of its members, and sisters and brothers in the Canadian labour movement.

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Photo courtesy of Bell Media. Credit: Jan Trjls



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CanCon in a borderless FAANG world

By Ferne Downey, ACTRA National President

“Everything is on the table.”

That’s how the new Minister of Canadian Heritage described the review she had just launched into Canada’s cultural policies. It’s exciting, but also unnerving. Our industry, and all of the work we do as performers, is closely tied to government policy. The right mix of government support and regulation has helped to build a screen-based industry that has resulted in more work opportunities for us to tell Canadian stories. The wrong mix could put all of that at risk. As you’ll see elsewhere in this issue of ACTRA Magazine, we’ve been working hard to get on the new government’s radar and make

sure it understands just how important our industry is and how it works. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the Liberals were elected on a promise of change—but the sort of change they deliver will have a huge impact on our creative industries and all the people they employ.

Change happens whether we want it or not. In our industry, it’s already underway. A global digital revolution has changed the way in which people enjoy and appreciate culture. Movie theatres and record stores are being replaced by Netflix and iTunes. While this does create new opportunities for ACTRA members to have their work

marketed and seen, it also creates new challenges for performers and our culture as a whole. As Australian professor Julianne Schultz noted in a recent lecture on culture in a digital era, we’re living in the “Age of FAANG.” That’s a shorthand term stock analysts use to describe the new global era dominated by Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Netflix and Google. These are the new titans of global industry. They’re worth billions of dollars and they aren’t constrained by borders. In fact, they have more assets than many countries.

They are also, as Schultz notes, dramatically different from the big businesses we knew in the past:

“What makes this different to say, the rise of the multinational firm of the middle years of the 20th century—the great corporations that sold energy, transport and consumer goods—is that culture and the art and craft of making meaning are at the heart of the new corporations... As a result, support for sustaining, growing and exploring cultural identity is also more fragile than those who came of age in the middle of last century could have ever anticipated...

Facebook’s 31-year-old founder Mark Zuckerberg recently warned of “the danger of people and nations turning inward—against this idea of a connected world and a global community.” We might nod in agreement if we think about China at its authoritarian worst, but what about in an open place like Australia? Do we become invisible and lose our moorings?”

You can easily change the word Australia for Canada in that question. Like Australia, we’re not a global superpower or an economic titan. Both countries exist in the shadow of not only the largest economy in the world, but the largest culture producer in the world. We’ve managed to build a creative industry here in Canada through hard work, talent, effort and planning. It didn’t happen by accident and it won’t thrive if we forget that.

As the government looks to these issues, some are arguing that government should simply give up, get out of the way and let the markets take care of themselves. The core of the Broadcasting Act laid out—almost 50 years ago—principles that are still relevant today. The technology we use may be different but the idea that our broadcasting system should be owned and controlled by Canadians and used for the benefit of all Canadians is unshakably vital.

The key fundamentals for which we’ve advocated in the past remain relevant if we want to make sure Canadian content does not disappear on our screens:

1. Effective and enforceable regulation of broadcasting on both conventional and digital platforms;
2. Maintain Canadian control of our telecommunications corporations;
3. Increase public and private investment in the production of new Canadian content; and
4. Support independent and local voices.

The timing is intriguing: Canada’s sesquicentennial celebrations (with culture as a

centrepiece) will launch in 2017; ACTRA will celebrate 75 years of vigorous cultural advocacy in 2018; and Canadian content is hot, and being discovered and re-discovered every day. Yet, when Canada has so much success, is it really wise to put “everything” on the table? We have built something for which it is worth fighting on behalf of this and future generations.

At ACTRA, we have been quite proficient at adapting to the constantly changing landscape. It is not change I'm afraid of—it is change to the point of unrecognizability and the potential decimation of CanCon and, consequentially, our work opportunities. Intelligent, strategic decisions will need to be made in this Canadian Heritage consultation and we will need to have a strong, clear voice. The government has a leading role to play to ensure our Canadian industry continues to thrive and CanCon is respected. Culture has grown into a major economic driver and is a beacon for young, creative people trying to make a living. We are in it to stay.

Canadian content rules, balanced regulation and government support have helped to ensure our industry continues to thrive in the face of a flood of American content. We need this balanced approach to continue in the Digital Age. Every step we take will be directly tied to your life as a professional performer—talk to your MP regularly at your constituency office. Make friends. Help them understand how our business works—because “everything is on the table.”



Ferne Downey,
Sarah Gadon and
Benz Antoine

From radio's "dollar a holler" to viral video ads

By Stephen Waddell

ACTRA has been negotiating agreements with the Canadian advertising industry since the 1940s when radio actors and announcers, who had already organized themselves in locals across the country, formed a national association in an effort to be paid more than a "dollar a holler"—the going rate back when radio commercials were challenging print advertising to be the dominant ad medium. When television became generally accessible in the early 1950s, ACTRA negotiated session and residual fees for TV commercials with the Canadian ad industry that compensated performers fairly for their on- and

off-camera work. Then in 1999, at the dawn of Internet advertising, ACTRA negotiated the first national agreement in the world to cover performers appearing in video ads exhibited on the Internet. Today, digital advertising is challenging conventional advertising in terms of total ad spend, the bulk of which is spent mainly on text ads while video ads represent less than 20% of the total.

As we prepare for negotiations in early spring 2017 with the Association of Canadian Advertisers (ACA) and the Institute of Communications Agencies (ICA), ACTRA faces real challenges with ongoing work

opportunities for professional performers. Many members who used to enjoy working in commercials are seeing fewer opportunities than in the past. Advertisers are now focused on the bottom line when it comes to production costs for their spots. Multinational corporations are increasingly producing commercials that are used globally. The trend of using members of the public and employees of the advertiser in commercials continues. Production of non-ACTRA digital ads is increasing as advertisers turn to non-signatory agencies and production companies to produce directly for digital media using non-ACTRA performers. And U.S. advertisers and agencies are coming to Canada increasingly to produce non-ACTRA ads for the U.S. and global markets. Ironically, we are not alone to face these hurdles on our side of the table. The *Mad Men* era of full-service ad agency predominance has passed. Non-signatory boutique content agencies are producing digital commercials, which attract major advertisers that shoot ACTRA when the content requires professional performers but shoot non-ACTRA when the content does not require professional performers.

In an effort to increase the share of union work in digital commercials, you'll remember that in 2011 ACTRA and ACA/ICA agreed to a digital media pilot project. The goal of this project was to permit four-hour minimum calls (instead of the standard eight-hour call) and reduce minimum session fees by half for such four-hour calls. The result of this experiment was a doubling of production of ACTRA-covered

digital media commercials year-over-year for six years. In the last round of bargaining, in response to member complaints predominantly in Toronto, ACTRA eliminated the four-hour call/half-day rate, a victory to be sure. But in exchange, we had to trade exclusions for members of the public and advertisers' employees to satisfy truth in advertising concerns. We also made the trade to save our share of professional work in these commercials, work as announcers, hosts and interviewers, and to maintain/increase ACTRA's share of commercial jurisdiction and member work opportunities.

Meanwhile, in the U.S., SAG-AFTRA and the ad industry have recently concluded renegotiation of their National Commercial Agreement and released the Terms of Settlement. SAG-AFTRA received healthy wage, residual and benefit increases. In exchange, the ad industry received exclusions for members of the public and advertisers' employees—which matches ACTRA's exclusion language agreed in our bargaining two years ago. SAG-AFTRA and the U.S. ad industry are facing the same challenges we face in Canada. Digital media is disruptive; advertisers are aggressively pushing a bottom-line approach to their ad spending; competition from global advertisers/advertising; and non-signatory boutique content agencies.

In an effort to increase work opportunities for our members, ACTRA has launched ACTRAonline.ca—an online talent database of ACTRA members. Also in development is an online portal for engagers to contract performers under ACTRA's contracts. We want the engagement of an ACTRA member

Photo: Jag Gundu

to be as easy as searching for and purchasing a song from iTunes.

We are also in the process of simplifying the National Commercial Agreement to make it easier to find provisions; producing a Quick Tips guide and rate/use fee estimator; and producing promotional materials to assist our Industry Relations staff in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver in their constant outreach to the ad industry to hire ACTRA members.

ACTRA and ACA/ICA are committed to promoting the engagement of performers under the NCA. To give meaning to this statement, ACTRA and ICA/ACA have been discussing simplifying the residual payment system, which is now based on unit weighting per geographical area of use for conventional TV commercials, and a fee for periods of time for New Media commercials. ACTRA and ACA/ICA know we are competing with non-union production. We and the industry know ACTRA members are better performers than non-union performers. But we also need to make it easier to pay performers for use of commercials. Pre-payments for periods of time of commercial use across all platforms, like in the IPA, might be the way forward.

As we approach NCA negotiations next year, we do so understanding the environment in which we are reopening our contract with the industry. Both sides know we need to be innovative and smart about updating our agreement. We need to make it easier to hire and pay an ACTRA member than go non-union. ACTRA has a history of ground-breaking contracts; of promoting excellence and innovation; of finding

solutions that are simple, elegant and modern. We will continue to lead the way.

Please participate in the member focus groups being organized in your local Branch this fall. Member focus group discussions will directly influence the formation of the proposals we will be taking into negotiations with ACA/ICA next year. Let us know what issues are important to you—increasing minimum fees; work opportunities; improving working conditions? Come meet with your local leadership and staff, email us at nca@actra.ca—get into the conversation about the NCA. Tell us how you think we can both promote more work, and better pay and working conditions while attracting and encouraging more good paying ACTRA commercial jobs.



Stephen Waddell is ACTRA's National Executive Director and Chief Negotiator. He is pictured here with his dog Bowie



19-2's Recipe for Success

What makes a show successful? Why does one show get more buzz than another? As I ponder the success of the Canadian beat cop show, *19-2*, I ask myself these questions.

By Cary Lawrence

Adrian Holmes and Jared Kesso

The show originated in French and to great acclaim. Without belittling the show's success in French, it is easier to have success in the French market because it is much smaller, and French audiences adore their talent and enjoy watching their own stories about their own peeps set in their own hometowns. So, how come *19-2* in English is such a hit? The competition is far greater and we don't have a star system like our French counterparts. And yet, this past year, *19-2* garnered numerous nominations and awards at the Canadian Screen Awards (a.k.a. the "Candys").

Without a doubt, there is something distinctly different about *19-2*. Aside from the fact that I recognize pretty much every street scene (I am a native Montrealer), I can also read French text on newspapers and billboards; and I know a bunch of the performers. But there is something else that makes *19-2* different, a 'spice' that I cannot put my finger on. The show is an excellent example of the amazing talent this country possesses. The direction is stellar; the writing, thought-provoking and engaging; and the technical aspects make this show stand apart from other Canadian shows for the simple reason that the show is made on a low budget. But, there is something else. What is it?

In speaking with Bruce Smith, executive producer and head writer for *19-2* since its beginning, I learned a little more about the show's uniqueness in the English market. For example, unlike the American cop show model, *19-2* is a serialized show. This means you cannot watch the episodes out of order. The episodes do not stand alone

and the main characters do not re-set after each episode. And here is one of the many reasons this show is, in my opinion, so successful. Quebec television is made similar to the way we make feature film and *19-2* is produced like such a feature. In the French *19-2*, there was one director for the entire season. In English, there is more than one director but he/she will prepare to shoot three-to-four episodes, working in advance for up to a month to six weeks before shooting those episodes like a fea-

ture. The 'feature' is then divided into three-to-four episodes. What happens in this model is magical. The actors get to live out their characters more deeply. There is fluidity to the filming. There is a signature in those episodes from the vision of the one director. As an actor, I can attest to this model as a satisfying way to work.

But let us step back and look at the writing. Initially, Bruce and his team of writers adapted the French *19-2* directly

to English; basically, they translated the show. I give credit where credit is due. The writers of French *19-2* created a very high bar of success for the English writers. The French version is dynamic, emotionally-charged and passionate. The show is exacting on the characters, fast moving, and the episodes waste no time pulling the audience into the personal lives of the characters. The writing is fabulous, and Bruce and the producers of *19-2* knew this show could very well have the same out-

“

The characters reacted to the shooting differently in English than in French. This is partly due to a new cast but these reactions created a domino effect for the rest of the show.

”

come and similar effect on English audiences. Bruce watched the French episodes and read the original scripts before he started writing the episodes in English. He kept the same story line but let the characters move organically in their own direction. "Straight translating does not always work. You have to re-invent the story as you go," says Bruce. The season two opener was the last adapted episode. "By putting the characters through intense emotional experiences, it showed how

the English characters were different from the French. Their reactions were different," says Bruce. The way the show has moved separately from the original since then is purely organic. The writers made choices with no real idea what they would look like a year later.

This Quebec model is relatively new to English viewers. The writers had some barriers to break through. *19-2* does not 'solve' crimes. Bruce reminds me that it's a show about patrollers and not detectives: "We never find out who shot who; this is the reality of first responders." English audiences can choose from a wide selection of cop shows and they have certain expectations for procedural, for detail and for a certain level of logic. In the French market, that is not of concern. The French do not have as many cop shows with which to compete. English audiences turn on the TV and turn off their brains. This Quebec model asks a lot of the audience. It asks them to figure out 'who done it' with the help of the characters. They have to pay attention. So changes had to be made in order to massage the English audience.

"It's more a show like *ER*. It's about the relationships and not so much the trauma. It's not about when the gun went off but it's about the impact of that on the people."

The fact that *19-2* has gone beyond the success of French *19-2* is a testament to the writers (both English and French) and, ultimately, the English writers' understanding of English audiences. This Quebec model of shooting feature film-style has been a successful experience. Working with the same directors has been an "awesome"

experience for the writers and actors. French *19-2* director, Daniel Crou, a.k.a. Podz, (who won a Candy for Best Achievement in a Dramatic Series for ‘School’) directed the season two opener and successfully reshot the haunting, uninterrupted 13-minute single-camera tracking shot. This episode is a good example of how the English and French versions veered in different directions. When Podz was directing the actors in this particular episode, he had to contend with a shifting environment. The impact of the shooting had a differing effect on the characters. The characters reacted to the shooting differently in English than in French. This is partly due to a new cast, but these reactions created a domino effect for the rest of the show. Yet, you have the same sequence and the same director shooting the same shots, but somehow the result shifts and there you go, the show suddenly has a different DNA.

Naturally, a different cast produces a different show. The English version emphasizes the ensemble cast whereas the French focuses on the two main characters. Over the past three seasons, the writers of English *19-2* have brought in new characters and they have fleshed out some characters. These added beats have steered the show slightly off-side from the French. The city of Montreal is a featured character in the show as well. The writers do not pretend that Montreal is any other city. The show is grounded in French Montreal. The characters never go to ‘English’ Montreal. The audience is watching a French show. The characters are French, the signs are

French, and the concept here is that the audience just happens to hear and understand it in English. It is a clever way to transfer that French flavour over to English.

I see a diverse society in my city—diverse cultures, diverse ethnicities and diverse genders. The other day, I was downtown and a few cop cars passed by me. It was great to see a female cop, and both a black and white officer in each of these cars. Now this is representative of Montreal in 2016. I am proud of the fact that *19-2* reflects the

realities of my city. Casting is paramount and is another reason why, I think, this show is so successful. Quoting Bruce, “Diversity is a focus for us. It’s a character-driven show, so strong, varied characters are the first priority in the [writing] room. Season three introduces two key new characters, both women.” For Andrea Kenyan and Randi Wells of Kenyan Wells Casting, their prime directive from the producers was to offer roles to a diverse talent pool. And it has paid off. Kenyan and Wells won a

Candy (Canadian Screen Award) for Best Achievement in Casting for the episode “School” this past March.

The roles in the show paint a portrait of this town’s multi-ethnic society, with equal representation of women and men. We relate better to a show when it reflects what we see in our daily life.

Benz Antoine is one of the cast members in the English *19-2*. He is also the only actor from the original French show. Interestingly, he was the only visible minority

game. Benz had just returned from L.A. when he auditioned for the French *19-2*. Speaking French with a very particular accent was a tall order. Worried about being authentic, Benz was in a “Pure Laine Blanc Quebecois show and [he] was ‘comme un cheveux sur la soupe’ (a hair in a bowl of soup).” It is true, francophones are proud of their language and can smell a bad accent a mile away. It was a successful challenge for Benz. He won the trust of viewers. He endeared his fellow actors thanks to Podz; “I have to tell you the truth, he [Podz] was my greatest acting teacher.” Benz gravitated towards this “maestro” of a director. He worked closely with Podz and the two leads to iron out all of the kinks in the French version. The result is a well-sculpted, solid, credible character and a winning television series. Quebec audiences LOVE their talent. “On the French side? You’re a rock star!” For a whole season, Benz thought and ate in French. He was number three on the roster. His character, Tyler Joseph, was a major deal in the French version.

While Benz was still shooting the French season two, there was word circulating that *19-2* was going to be produced in English. Sphere Media had successfully adapted *Sophie* for English audiences and was looking to produce another show. Benz heard the original broadcaster was not interested in seeing any of the original cast (there were three perfectly bilingual actors in the French version). But he still held on to the hope that his character in French was rock solid and he would be given the opportunity to audition. When he learned that Adrian Holmes (a visible

“
Playing [the role] the same can be advantageous but it can also bite you in the heel. The French and English do not think or feel or emote the same way.
”



Benz Antoine and Mylène Dinh-Robic



Laurence Leboeuf and Mylène Dinh-Robic



19-2 won the Academy's 2016 Canadian Screen Award for Best Dramatic Series: (L-R) star Jared Kesso, executive producer Luc Châtelain, star Adrian Holmes, executive producer Virginia Rankin, executive producer Jocelyn Deschênes, writer and executive producer Bruce M. Smith. Photo: Academy.ca/G Pimentel Photography

minority) was cast as one of the leads, Benz thought, “Now, I’m really dead because if there’s one minority, in my mind, that’s it.” The token ‘black’ actor had been cast. “That’s the reality.” But wait, not true here. To make a long story short, Benz got an audition thanks to his agent’s persistence. It was a nerve-wracking audition for Benz, “Cuz, how can you mess up something that I’ve been doing for two seasons?” Playing [the role] the same can be advantageous but it can also bite you in the heel. The French and English do not think, feel or emote the same way. How does one balance what you know inside and out yet still remain open to shifts and changes that occur when speaking a different language? It was not easy.

Season one of the English 19-2 was pretty straight-up for Benz. He essentially re-did what was successful in the French show with little shifts here and there, “I remember this scene. Oh, we’re [shooting] it on the porch? Ok great.” This changed in season two. Bruce Smith informed Benz his character was going to change a little bit. Benz thought, “Why? Why are you going to change something that works?” He resisted at first. He had to let go of what he naturally gravitated toward. He had to stop himself from saying, “But in the French version Tyler did this...” In season one, Benz did enjoy a certain amount of attention from the other English actors who were curious about how ‘it was done’ in French. Podz saw this shift too when he came to direct and told Benz, “Buddy, it’s not the same guy.” Benz acquiesced. There is no doubt these changes have been good

decisions. In April, the writers were given the green light to begin writing season four.

So, what sets these two seemingly similar shows apart? What are the differences from an actor’s perspective? The French side: the pay is not all that great; the French work much faster; there is no free time to hang out in one’s trailer; the days are full of long, complicated shots; the time is tight for special effects and make up. The upside: the characters are real and raw; the director is often the same throughout the series, which allows for a character-driven drama; AND there is the notoriety with French audiences. The English side: there is more time in between shots to hone the characters and get a sense of the directors’ visions; ethnic and gender diversity are well represented; and “I got the transport, I got the money, I got the trailer... I’m making money and people are like... who are you?” says Benz. We come back to the star system in English Canada... or lack thereof. Does it matter? Some would say, “No, thank goodness we don’t have a system like the Americans,” and then some would say, “It would be nice to be known by our own people.”

Here’s where I take a little side trip down the 417 to Ottawa where this very issue can be addressed. Every year, ACTRA sends a troupe of actors to storm Parliament Hill. These actors meet with senators, MPs and ministers in key positions to lobby for more funding for Canadian productions, more legislation to safeguard our distinct Canadian culture, and generally paint a picture of the life of a self-employed Canadian actor to our government representatives.



The Success of CMF & 19-2

ACTRA Montreal helped create the local lobbying collective, the Quebec English-language Production Council (QEPC), and has co-chaired it since its inception.

The QEPC initiated change in how the CMF funds minority groups, which led to the creation of the Anglophone Minority Incentive Fund (AMI).

Since 2013, the QEPC's continuing lobbying efforts have resulted in an increase of \$1.5M to the fund, which now stands at \$4.5M.

Seed money from the AMI is what allowed 19-2 to fill the gaps in its funding and greenlight the show. The series continues to access the fund.

Entering its fourth season, 19-2 provides thousands of jobs in Montreal.

Truth be told, it's a big eye opener for most MPs. These actors provide MPs with a better understanding of what our needs are, what we provide to Canadians and what our country can gain from more production in Canada. We contribute a lot to our GDP. The more we let our voices be heard, the more the folks up on The Hill get us! They understand the entertainment industry and they see how unique we are from our southern cousins. On average, MPs don't know us because they don't see us! Going to The Hill is slowly changing perceptions and putting a face to an industry that is a money-maker on so many levels. MPs like it when you mention numbers!

When Benz was invited by ACTRA to go to Ottawa, he felt it was his time to step up to the plate. Benz doesn't consider himself the political type. He rarely votes on ACTRA issues. He thought, "What's going to change? How is this [vote] going to impact me?" Once he set foot on The Hill (after driving in a huge snow storm to get there), his impression immediately shifted; "Wow, somebody has to come and fight for all this stuff that we take for granted." He was amazed at how little politicians know about our business. To them, self-employed means unemployed. Benz's mum still asks him, "When are you going to get a real job?" Addressing the importance of this industry gave a face and a name for the politicians. Benz was recognized by many politicians, including Mélanie Joly, our Minister of Canadian Heritage, for his work in the French 19-2. But wait! Don't despair. We do have icons in Canada! Eric Peterson, Gordon and Leah Pinsent, and

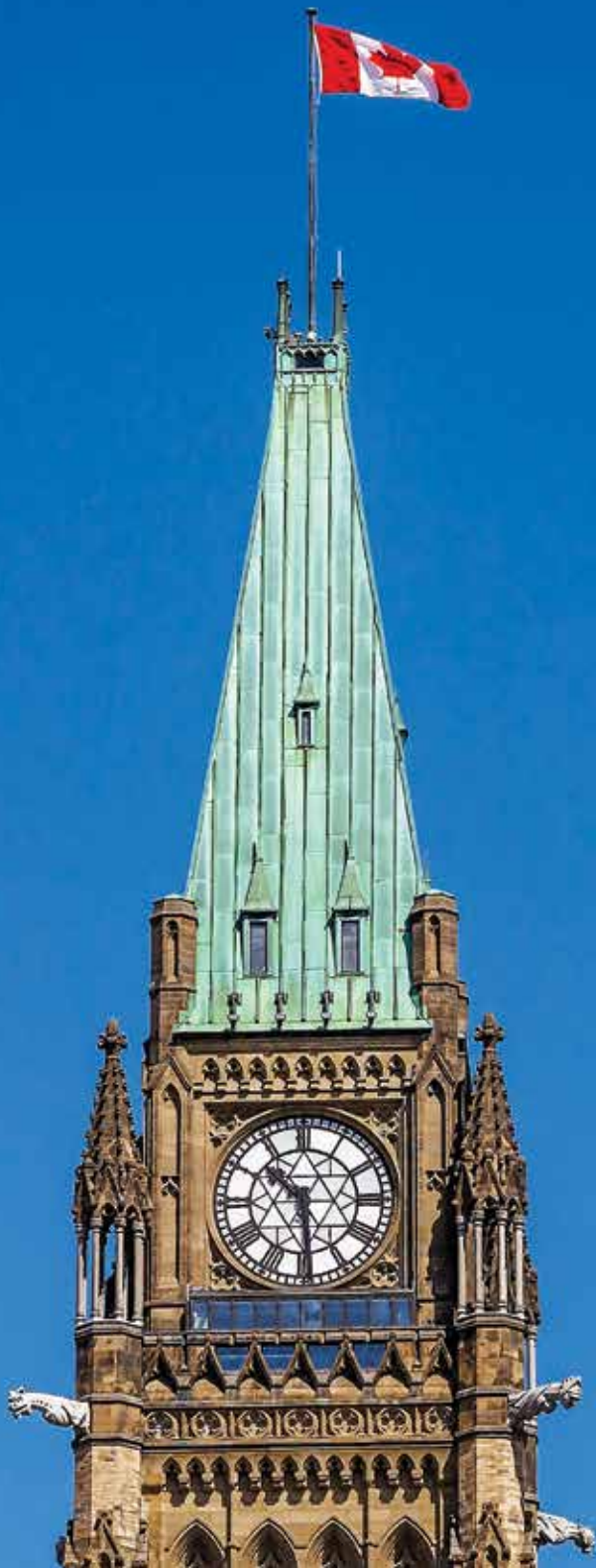
Tantoo Cardinal have all gone to The Hill. Their presence has made a real difference. We can change the way our MPs think and, more importantly, how our viewers think. It begins with producing competitive shows with a unique edge and flavour that is palatable to Canadians. We can tell our stories, and the success of 19-2 is setting the stage for more. We need to get these politicians' attention and blast our cultural worthiness to them.

English Canada is up against a lot. There are many successful cop shows from which to choose. We are inundated with NEW series, sequels, season openers and new episodes... we drown in choice. Just look at Netflix. For the French, there is less competition. They are surrounded by a sea of Anglos (that mustn't be easy) and, as Benz says, "You'll never get the numbers like in French, it's fanatical!" And yet, francophones are still able to produce brilliant, unique, raw, honest work, and they make it fly with their audiences. 19-2's model is something to admire. Bruce Smith and his team of writers are expounding on this winning product. Along with this successful model, English 19-2 is striving to be a politically-correct drama with diverse representation. We can continue to produce shows with these winning aspects. Still, there is that little something that I cannot quite put a name to. It is that spice, that 'Je ne sais quoi,' that makes what we are doing such great work on so many levels. We have borrowed from our compatriots and we have created something unique in this market. Something distinct. Something new. And this is where we begin. We

begin by telling our stories, with our accent, about our culture, using our cities as backdrops. We showcase our proud, highly diverse and immensely talented pool of award-worthy writers, directors, actors, producers, technicians and casting directors. The last little bit of seasoning, that unnamed spice, is where the magic lies. Let us call that magic spice, 'Canadian.'



Cary Lawrence is a Montreal-based, bilingual actor. She was recently elected as ACTRA Montreal Branch President. Cary recently finished touring the critically-acclaimed documentary theatre piece, SEEDS, by Annabel Soutar. When she isn't at the office fulfilling her duties as President or waiting for another gig to come along, Cary teaches yoga. A lot.



#ACTRAontheHill

By Ferne Downey, Rebecca Applebaum,
Shannon Kook & Alvin Sanders

Last fall, Canadians elected a new Liberal government and gave it a mandate to change things in Ottawa. For nearly 10 years we had a Conservative government that seemed obsessed with budget cuts and was at times hostile to the arts sector. A new government, and over 100 new Members of Parliament, were elected on a promise to invest in and promote Canadian culture. *Now is our* time to ensure this government delivers.

So this past February, I joined a group of Canadian performers on ACTRA's annual trip to Parliament Hill. As always, our goal was to put Canada's creative economy on the political agenda. With so many new MPs, our efforts felt more important than ever.

Some of our actors were new to the art of lobbying, including Benz Antoine, Shannon Kook, Rebecca Applebaum, Nigel Bennett, Ellen David, Huse Madhavji, Spiro Malandrakis, Michelle Nolden and Rick Roberts. They were all naturals and as eloquent as you would expect. Other members of our group were seasoned lobbyists, including David Sparrow, Art Hindle, Tristan D. Lalla, Theresa Tova, Alvin Sanders and myself. It made for good chemistry.

We all have preconceived visions and expectations surrounding our trips to Ottawa, which makes each of our shared experiences fascinating: Alvin Sanders, my National Vice President and the President of

UBCP/ACTRA, has made four lobby trips to The Hill; two of our 'newbie' lobbyists, Shannon Kook and Rebecca Applebaum, each made their first trip this year. You can also read about another "newbie" lobby experience in this issue of ACTRA Magazine from Benz Antoine, which is included in Cary Lawrence's 19-2 feature story.

It is crucial in this time of unprecedented change to set policies to assure the survival and ongoing growth of our industry. We need a Canadian government that understands it has a role to play in growing our screen-based industries. We've seen the impact resulting from reckless cuts to our industry, such as Nova Scotia's now obsolete film tax credit. The Nova Scotia industry has been decimated; people have lost jobs and have had to relocate elsewhere to continue to work. We also know that when governments commit to coherent cultural policies, creative industries thrive and contribute billions of dollars to the economy.

The government recently announced plans for a full review of Canada's cultural policy and we're going to work relentlessly to ensure our voices are heard. To learn more, visit actra.ca and click on "Advocacy." It will be a very busy fall.

Ferne Downey

“Everything it takes to be a great actor makes us great lobbyists.”

Rebecca Applebaum

When I was first asked to take part in the ACTRA Lobby Day in Ottawa, I really didn't know what to expect. First of all, it wasn't a one-day event. It was two very jam-packed days of non-stop activity: preparing, building relationships and trudging the very slushy sidewalks around Parliament Hill. Suffice it to say, I learned a ton! For one, I saw first-hand how important and vital lobbying is and what it actually looks like in action.

Politicians need help figuring out what to do. They're not experts on everything and they certainly aren't on the ground dealing with the issues that concern our industry. Without our help, MPs can make uninformed decisions that will affect us directly. They are not simply people who we elect every few years based on their election platforms. We must take responsibility to connect our issues to their policies while lobbying.

For our visits to the MPs' offices, we were divided into smaller groups. My team included ACTRA Toronto Executive Director Sue Milling, ACTRA Toronto V.P. External Art Hindle and Shannon Kook. It became very clear to me through our meetings that diversity truly is our strength. Each one of us had different experiences to draw from, which allowed us to discuss our policy priorities from

several different angles. And it was really great to realize that we're pretty good at this lobbying thing too. Us performers are great speakers and storytellers—and great at developing relationships. That is, everything it takes to be a great actor makes us great lobbyists.

We are truly invested and passionate about representing actors and our industry in Ottawa. It made me very proud to see us all working so well together. On the train home, a passenger even commented on Ferne's great leadership, observing how she communicated with us throughout the whole trip (and this was after all the official business was done!). I'm learning more and more that we're a union full of great leaders who are all willing to lend their time, talent and experience to ensure our rights are collectively protected and our industry thrives. It was humbling to be among our all-star team. I'm very grateful I had the chance to take part.



Shannon Kook, Art Hindle and Rebecca Applebaum

“Art was so comfortable—it was like he was having a beer with the leaders of our country.”

Shannon Kook

“We're leaving for Parliament Hill in a day, and we'd love for you to come!” was the message I received from my National President, Ferne Downey.

When people call on me for a community issue, I feel an immediate sense of duty and patriotism. I am also blanketed by a wet heave of fear and incompetence: “What can I do? I don't know anything about this.” And when I look at Bernie Sanders taking on the 1%, I wonder if he too faces this hurdle. He probably does. Anyone who has done something great

has. But they step in, listen with their hearts and put egos aside.

“Say yes,” was my first reaction to Ferne's message. One of my first lessons in acting is that I've said ‘no’ to so many opportunities and only regretted my decision. Sometimes we focus on the material on paper instead of the internal sensation that moves us forward: “What if I get an audition while I'm away?” (“Say no!”) I said yes. And I did get an audition but was able to tape it in my hotel with a fellow lobbyist, Huse Madhavji, the night of our return from Ottawa. To have

support on so many levels is important in our business. We can't do these things alone, so thank you, you and you.

No time was wasted upon our arrival in Ottawa. We were briefed with notes, and broken into teams where we thought up our tactics on how to introduce ACTRA to our new government and how to get them to follow through with their pre-election commitments to the arts.

We slipped our way up Parliament Hill in suits and snow boots, with one of our seasoned lobbyists Art Hindle taking my arm and guiding me safely into Parliament. In the rooms with the MPs and their staff, I was sweating and nervous. Art was so comfortable—it was like he was having a beer with the leaders of our country. Sue Milling led and channelled our landings while Rebecca Applebaum side-swiped MPs with the details of the Beijing Treaty. I

commended leaders for being on our side, and asked how and when we could help them follow through with their election promises. It wasn't long before my doubts took a side-step and I was in sync with my lobby team.

My first trip to Ottawa was definitely an eye-opener. It was encouraging to see the likes of many celebrated Canadian actors like Sarah Gadon (2016 ACTRA Toronto Award of Excellence), as well as the breadth of diversity in gender, age and race on the lobby team.

Together, we represented—our country and our union. And you can too.

As Bernie has said from the beginning, "I can't do it alone." Whether you're left or right, I think this mentality is worth anyone's penny. And this was a truly memorable and fruitful trip for my union—our ACTRA. In solidarity.

“Each time I go to Ottawa for one of our lobbying trips, I take with me the spirit of our entire membership. It is not a responsibility any of us who have had this opportunity take lightly.”

Alvin Sanders

I feel very lucky to live in these times. We have an extremely strong and active union, ACTRA, which is able to lobby all levels of government (municipal, provincial and federal) for the passage of laws and regulations that allow the industry in which we work to exist and ensures Canadian stories will be part of our cultural mix.

I know it's hard for some of our younger members to imagine, but it wasn't so long ago that one of the primary ways workers and employers resolved disputes was simply by brawling in the streets.

Greed is still alive and well. I don't believe it is possible to overstate how important the ACTRA lobbying efforts are for our industry and for each and every one of us individually. Each time I go to Ottawa for one of our lobbying trips, I take with me the spirit of our entire membership. It is not a responsibility any of us who have been given this opportunity take lightly. I know the time I spend with MPs and senators is important and necessary.

ACTRA can't just demand that politicians take action on our requests and pay attention to our needs. We must do our best to

convince all political parties how valuable the cultural industries are to the Canadian economy. With background information and statistics loaded up on our mobile briefcases, we bring our personal stories, which make our presentations meaningful and memorable for the politicians and their staff.

ACTRA's hot-button issues during this lobby trip included support for long-term funding commitments to the CBC, the NFB and Telefilm Canada. At this point in time, our current government seems to be keeping its pre-election promise to support our cultural institutions. Another huge priority on which we schooled politicians is for them to ensure that broadcast regulations supporting Canadian content are in-line with the ever-changing media landscape. Internet broadcasters, like Netflix, need to pay their fair share when it comes to supporting Canadian culture.

Protecting performers' intellectual property rights is also a hot button issue we are flagging with this government. The Copyright Act goes under review in 2017 and this affects us! We need the right to



Maria del Mar, Russ Neeley and Alvin Sanders

control our image and get paid fairly for our work, regardless of where it is exhibited. The recent 'World Intellectual Property Day' this past April 26 showed the great lobbying efforts by our members who took to social media to share messages of support. We joined audiovisual artists from around the globe to encourage everyone to get behind the ratification of the Beijing Treaty. Our government needs to step up to this now.

*Unions + government support
of unions = workers can succeed*

It is not only necessary that laws and regulations be passed, but they must also be enforced. The contracts ACTRA negotiates are only as powerful as the legal system and the labour boards that oversee them. ACTRA will always do everything in its power to maintain positive relationships with all political parties because whoever forms government must understand the needs of our ACTRA workers and appreciate the importance of the cultural industries to the Canadian economy.

I am ready to lobby whenever I am called. I'm sure you are too. Lobbying is not just something ACTRA does a few days a year. It's a constant narrative full of curves and new characters, and all of our members have a part to play.



Huse Madhavji with MPs Julie Dabrusin and Kevin Waugh



Rick Roberts, Michelle Nolden and David Sparrow



Ellen David and Tristan D Lalla



Nigel Bennett, Theresa Tova, Spiro Malandrakis and Huse Madhavji



Canadian Heritage Minister Mélanie Joly, Sarah Gadon, Ferne Downey and Benz Antoine



2016 ACTRA
WOMAN
OF THE YEAR

Catherine
Joell
MacKinnon

Promoting accessibility is the key to opening doors to great performances

Catherine Joell MacKinnon has had a love of the performing arts for all of her life. Even though at a young age she was told it would be impossible for her to pursue an acting career because she could not hear, a determined Catherine ignored these naysayers and went on to become an award-winning performer, producer and filmmaker. Catherine is also paving the way for other deaf performers. In addition to being a continuity person specific to deaf actors and an American Sign Language (ASL) coach, she also spearheads initiatives to create positive awareness for deaf actors. Catherine is a natural leader and teacher who promotes accessibility and inclusivity to get the best performances from everyone.

How did you get your start acting?

My first live theatre performance experience was *Johnny Belinda* when I was five years old. I was in awe watching the actress signing on stage and said, “I want to be like her!” When I was nine years old my cousins and I did a performance of *Anne of Green Gables* for family members in my grandparents’ barn loft on Prince Edward Island.

When my family and I moved to Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, at age 15, I was cast in a short film called *Skip to the Beat*. The crew was all women. It was such a great experience that I then decided to pursue opportunities both in front of and behind the camera. I also acted in the community theatre production, *Evening of Sign*, and various schools productions in both ASL and English.

Who are your mentors?

I am inspired by the work of other deaf actors. I tuned in weekly to watch the detective series *Sue Thomas: F.B. Eye* that ran from 2002 to 2005. The show was based on the experience of Sue Thomas, a deaf woman whose ability to read lips landed her a job with an elite surveillance team at the FBI. But it wasn’t the case-solving private detective on which I was fixated as I was following the work of Deanne Bray—the deaf actor who brought Thomas’s character to life. Deanne is amazing. So is Vanessa Vaughan, who is an accomplished deaf actress. Mentors [like that] are important to learn from.

Tell us about your experience working on the *Fargo* TV FX mini-series in Calgary, Alberta.

My *Fargo* experience was amazing. I was an ASL teacher and continuity [person]. I flew to Los Angeles to work with Adam Goldberg for his crash course in basic ASL, and his ASL dialogue lines, so Adam could communicate with deaf actor, Russell Harvard. Russell and I go back to the days on set of *The Hammer* film in 2009 (I lived in L.A. from 2007 to 2011). Russell knew that I lived here in Canada and recommended me to the producers.

Wearing my continuity hat was a big responsibility on *Fargo* as none of the directors, producers or script supervisors knew ASL. I watched over, on set and in the editing room, to make sure that Russell’s lines were accurately portrayed in ASL to a true form. I did the same for Adam. Similar to a hearing actor who ‘ad libs’ their lines, deaf actors also do this in ASL. [spoiler] I worked with Adam until his character got killed off in the show.

What does receiving ACTRA’s Woman of the Year mean to you?

It’s an incredible honour. I am thankful to be part of ACTRA’s initiatives to create a positive awareness for deaf actors. Our creation of ACTRA’s online “Guide to Auditioning Deaf Actors” is possibly a ‘first’ in our industry. The Guide was produced as a handy tool for casting decision-makers, and to promote work opportunities for deaf and hard of hearing actors. Promoting accessibility is the key to opening doors to great performances.

What are you currently working on?

I am working as a Deaf Community Consultant in the theatre production *Ultrasound* at Toronto’s Theatre Pass Muraille. The play works on multiple linguistic registers: one actor speaks her lines while signing; one actor signs exclusively; and English-language subtitles are projected onto panels in ways that reflect the emotional tenor of the scene. The play also explores the divide between those born into the deaf culture and those who enter into it. The play’s production company, Cahoots, is further planning to launch an online Deaf Artists and Theatres Toolkit (DATT) to encourage further theatrical collaboration between communities.

Share with us your words of wisdom.

When I was a performer just starting out, I was told it would be impossible for me to pursue an acting career simply because I could not hear. I encourage all people to follow their passions. Never give up.

Catherine Joell MacKinnon’s recent credits include ASL coach and continuity person in the FX mini-series, *Fargo*, and a starring role in the ACTRA diversity video, *Share the Screen*. Having earned a BFA in film studies from Ryerson University, Catherine’s first short film *I’m Not From Hear* won numerous awards in the U.K., Canada, Finland, Russia and the U.S. Her additional credits include: co-producing *The Hammer*, which won eight film festival awards; her live performance in the *Vagina Monologues* with Rachel McAdams and Shirley Douglas; and roles in *Kenny vs. Spenny*; *Voices of Chernobyl*; *Skip to the Beat*; and *Are You Neutral?* Catherine is also a director of the biennial Toronto International Deaf Film and Arts Festival.

A young boy with short brown hair, wearing a black pinstriped suit jacket, a white dress shirt, and a red bow tie. He is looking off to the right with a slight smile. The background is dark with some warm, out-of-focus lights.

“Likes,” camera, action!

Canadian performers are recognized around the globe for our great talent. I am a part of the millennial generation, or NextGen, working in this industry and I hope to share some insight on our perspective.

By Harrison Houde

Jacob
Tremblay

many of us NextGen Canadian performers share. Our family, friends, industry community and ACTRA are what allow us to dream big while becoming creative performers in Canada.

This girl is on fire

No, it isn't Katniss Everdeen. I want to bring your attention to Shailyn Pierre-Dixon, who at the Canadian Screen Awards this year took home the Best Supporting Actress Award for her work playing Young Aminata in the CBC mini-series, *The Book of Negroes*. Aside from her fantastic performance in this series, she also has a substantial role in *Between* alongside Jenette McCurdy, and in the feature, *Jean of the Joneses*, that was shown at the SXSW film festival. With all of these great projects being released within just a year or two's time, Shailyn is definitely a young Canadian actor to watch and represents some of the best talent to come out of Toronto, or as we NextGens call it, "the six."

A multitude of talents!

We can't forget that many Canadian actors have a multitude of talents, and actor Charlie Storwick from Alberta is now off to the races with her singing career too. In working with Charlie for three years on the YTV kids sitcom *Some Assembly Required*, it became clear to me that music is one of Charlie's passions. Between jamming on and off set, I am not the only one excited about her voice and her music, which is about to drop on us like glitter in the sky.

Drake, a famous Canadian actor turned rapper who popularized "the six," began

Annedroids cast Adrianna Di Liello, Addison Holley and Jadiel Dowlin.

Photo courtesy of TVO



Yes, with our eyes stereotypically glued to our phones between takes (our sides are there!), to some we may seem like our stage parent's little lucky star. Many of us have had the benefit of fantastic parental support, and we truly enjoy the creative process of performing on and off screen. I remember as a kid, my older sister forcing my parents and relatives to watch our lip sync shows while I'd laugh at my ever-so hilarious fart jokes and we'd both laugh at our song parodies. It's fun hearing similar childhood stories from my peers.

The Jacob

I have to mention someone close to home who shares my agency PLAY Management in Vancouver—definitely a name you may recognize as of late... Jacob Tremblay. Just this year Jacob received a huge amount of attention for his amazing performance in the award-winning film *Room*. His supportive parents were not too far outside the spotlight. Good people around us, taking care of us, is an important factor that

his acting career in 2001 under the name Aubrey Graham. He received five Young Artist Award nominations for playing the role of Jimmy Brooks in *Degrassi*. Add that to eight Juno Awards, six Grammy Awards...and counting for his music career accomplishments.

From Montreal, there's stunt performer Naomi Frenette, who received a Taurus World Stunt Award nomination and won the 2015 ACTRA Montreal Stunt Award for her full-body burn (in a toga no less!) in the film *Pompeii*.

This year I put my money where my mouth is and made my first short film, *I Dare You* (shameless plug). It is a coming-of-age dramedy that was accepted by Telefilm Canada's Not Short On Talent program that was screened at the Cannes Film Festival. I was lucky to have young, talented people on board, including

ACTRA Members Sydney Scotia, Zachary Gulka and Artin John, crew Alex Hodgson and Jeff Zwicker, and many other creative people in the industry who helped me.

Adjusting the antenna on my TV...

Since the beginning of television, home-grown drama has been one of us young performers' big gateways into the acting profession. CBC's *Heartland*, for example, has been called the "Law and Order of Canada" as it has helped launch the careers of many actors, including Tatiana Maslany, who starred in four seasons, and *Arrow* star Stephen Amell. The Alberta production is shot in the town of High River and on a studio set in Calgary. Alisha Newton joined the *Heartland* cast at age 10, and over the last four seasons of the show fans have watched her grow up. Also shot in Calgary is *Wynonna Earp*, with NextGen



Some Assembly Required cast
Travis Turner,
Charlie Storwick,
Kolton Stewart,
Sydney Scotia,
Harrison Houde
and Dylan Playfair
Photo: Thunderbird

actors Christina Merlo, Anna Quick and Summer McBrien. Imajyn Cardinal from the Edmonton series *Blackstone* is also getting a lot of attention as she's also the lead in the gritty Montreal-shot movie, *The Saver*.

Up and coming from the east (my east) is Manitoba actor Nazariy Demkowicz who recently made his mark with a Young Entertainer Award in Los Angeles for his performance in the TV series *The Pinkertons*. It's about time Winnipeg is put back on the map thanks to NextGen talent like Nazariy, who also won the Best Actor Joey Award for his work on *The Pinkertons* and received a Joey Award nomination for his work on Talia Pura's short, *Late*. Winnipeg actor Omar Benson also received Joey Award nominations for roles in the short *Our House*, *Our Neighborhood* and the comedy TV series, *Sunnyside*.

The Nova Scotia series *Mr. D* currently features the comedy stylings of many emerging performers, including Cassidy Mattera, Simon Paul Mutuyimana, Rebecca Wolfe and Jordan Poole, each of whom

were recently presented with certificates of achievement by ACTRA Maritimes.

Young cast members from the Montreal series *This Life* include ACTRA Montreal Member Stephanie Janusauskas and ACTRA Ottawa Member Julia Scarlett Dan.

The kids' show *Odd Squad* shot in Toronto just received Daytime Emmy Awards for Outstanding Writing in a Pre-School Animated program, and Outstanding Music Direction and Composition. Last year the show also picked up two Daytime Emmy Awards and several nominations. Series lead Dalila Bela was nominated for a 2016 Canadian Screen Award. The show *Annedroids* picked up 10 Daytime Emmy nominations, including nods for Outstanding Children's Series and Best Performance for actors Jadiel Dowlin and Addison Holley. The *Annedroids*' cast won a Young Artist Award, while stars Addison and Jadiel



Nazariy Demkowicz



Shailyn Pierre-Dixon
Photo: Desiree Thomas

have each won Joey Awards. Other great youth and kids shows filmed in "the six" include *The Stanley Dynamic*, *Dino Dan* and, of course, *Degrassi*, which just won the 2016 Canadian Screen Award for Best Youth Program. Cast member Aislinn Paul won the 2016 Best Performance in a Youth Series Award. *Backstage*, a new teen series shooting in Toronto, is set in a fine arts school full of talented high school students. Get ready to hear more about the multi-talented actors on this show too!

Some Assembly Required was taped in front a live studio audience in Burnaby, BC. My cast mates Kolton Stewart, Charlie Storwick, Sydney Scotia, Dylan Playfair, Travis Turner and Ellie Harvie have been a blast to work with. What's not to love about working in a toy factory?

The NextGen and our future

Us NextGen folks are often friendly and collaborative, and this serves our industry well. We are hard-working, ambitious and very passionate artists. No pressure. But remember, it's also on us to create and deliver future performances into the next

century for the entire world to enjoy.

The biggest issue for all Canadian artists is, as always, work opportunities. Our screen industry is doing well right now but we should not take anything for granted. For the most part, it has been the result of a lot of hard work over decades to build our screen industry. But factors like the low dollar and decision-making politicians who get it (or don't) come and go. Our industry needs enhanced funding for the CBC, NFB, Telefilm and many other creators. NextGen performers: When people, such as media types or politicians, speak to you about working in this industry, it's good to have a few speaking notes handy in your back pocket or mobile device that support this industry. Sharing your knowledge on why it is important to nurture our industry makes a difference for all of us.



Harrison Houde's first role was the 'cheese touch kid' in *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. He won the 2016 Best Host Canadian Screen Award for his work on the educational kids science show *Finding Stuff Out*. The show also won the 2016 Canadian Screen Award for Best Children's Non-Fiction Series. Harrison won a Joey Award for his work in the YTV/Netflix sitcom, *Some Assembly Required*. He started playing piano at age four, picked up the drums at age twelve, and now as an emerging filmmaker recently directed, wrote and produced his first short, *I Dare You*.

Imajyn
Cardinal in
The Saver

How Reel Canada is SCHOOLING Canadians (not just students) about Canadian film

In Conversation with
Jack Blum and Vinay Virmani

Vinay: How did Reel Canada start?

Jack: It truly began because Sharon Corder (Artistic Director and Co-Founder) and I saw our colleagues in the industry feeling so defeated by the challenges of getting into the marketplace, and as a result starting to believe that the movies weren't any good. We just thought if we could show young people some of the really great work that's been done, they might actually like it. Of course, it has gone much further than that, as you yourself can testify: You've probably personally met about 20,000 or more high school students through your touring with Reel Canada. What's that been like for you?

Vinay: It has been one of the most incredible experiences I've had as an artist, an actor and, generally, just as a person to be honest. The reality is that it's the young movie audiences today that are driving the business; so it's important to engage with them, to really hear how they think, what they want to see, what they find funny. Reel Canada provides a lot of fuel for creativity. And what Reel Canada does—taking us directly into schools to engage with young people—is such an integral part of our movie industry here in Canada today. I am not only able to promote the Canadian story and our culture, but I'm also able to form that direct bond with them.

Jack: You mention the “Canadian story,” which is right at the heart of what we're trying to do. Canada for me is all about a diversity celebration that works—a vast range of geographical regions and climates, ethnic subcultures, multicultural families with different roots, newcomers and established clans, Indigenous peoples and gender differences—and it all somehow comes together and functions better than any other country in the world. So for me, the “Canadian story” is always the “Canadian stories,” plural, going right back to our English, French and Indigenous founding cultures. It has never just been one story, and that is something to cherish and celebrate.

Vinay: That's something Reel Canada is really on the forefront of; not only with diverse audiences in high schools but also with screenings for new Canadians. Meeting those audiences has been such an enriching and humbling experience for me. I really value the time I've been able to spend with these audiences, taking their questions, hearing their stories. For so many of them, their journey has been SO difficult; adapting to a new culture, to a new climate. To welcome people to Canada from all around the world through film is such a powerful and positive initiative. It's actually inspiring—for them and for us, the artists that have the privilege of presenting our work to them. What's it like for you? What's the most rewarding part of this?

Vinay Virmani snaps a selfie with an audience member at a Reel Canada screening





Jack Blum

Jack: It's extremely gratifying to experience the students' excitement when they've seen a film that really turned them on and then have an actor, like yourself, walk out from backstage. You've seen it: They go crazy. At that point, we don't have to say anything about Canadian film or supporting Canadian storytelling. They are connecting with their own culture in a way they will remember. I remember the things that came at me in high school that absolutely influenced the course of my life and it's great to know we're doing just that for at least some of those kids. They are seeing themselves on screen. When

we see ourselves on screen, we get a better sense of where we live and how we connect with other people in our own country.

Vinay: Well, just to build on that, "seeing themselves on screen," what does that mean? Going back to what you said before, we have to look in terms of diversity—in casting, in stories and in voices—we are so ahead of the rest of the world when it comes to this. We're not afraid of putting different ethnicities on screen or telling diverse stories because that's such a Canadian value. When we see ourselves on screen, we get a better sense of where we

live and how we connect with other people in our own country as opposed to watching something that's about other people in other countries.

Jack: And that's exactly what we're trying to achieve with these screenings.

Vinay: So Reel Canada is obviously having an impact on high school students and new Canadians. What about the rest of the country? Canada's sesquicentennial is next year... which gives us an unprecedented platform for the promotion of Canadian film.

Jack: A couple of years ago we started National Canadian Film Day. We wanted to take the excitement we had been experiencing in schools and open it up to everyone. The creation of NCFD helps to ensure every Canadian has an opportunity to see a great Canadian film at least one day a year. Back in April, the third annual NCFD resulted in four hundred screenings taking place in every corner of the country. And Reel Canada is already building the framework for next year when the celebration of

Canada's sesquicentennial will give us an unprecedented platform for the promotion of Canadian film. I'm really hoping ACTRA members will get involved with our 2017 edition, which promises to be even larger with more opportunities to share Canadian stories on Canadian screens than ever before. It will be a moment for the whole industry to step into the national spotlight and take a bow. They can check it out at canadianfilmday.ca.

Vinay: Well, speaking personally, I urge every actor and filmmaker in the country to get more involved with what you're doing. It's incredibly rewarding, so hats off to Reel Canada.

*Vinay Virmani graduated from York University with a business degree prior to studying filmmaking and theatre at The Lee Strasberg Institute in New York. After writing and starring in the hockey comedy *Breakaway*, he went on to write, star and produce the highly successful *Dr. Cabbie*, which broke the Canadian record for audience numbers on opening day. He can be seen next in *The Steps*, which premiered at TIFF in 2015. Vinay has travelled the country with the Reel Canada screenings of *Breakaway* and *Dr. Cabbie* to high school students and recent immigrants studying English.*

*Jack Blum has acted in dozens of movies and TV shows, and with his partner Sharon Corder, written or produced more than 50 episodes of dramatic television. Their feature film *Babyface* premiered at Cannes. They founded Reel Canada in 2005.*

Financially speaking, we're online!

I am happy to report ACTRA's online presence has grown more than ever and is steadily becoming the way we do business. We are committed to saving trees, saving our union money and making it easier to hire ACTRA members.

Our last IPA and NCA referenda were successfully conducted online and our dues invoices were digitally sent to our members for the first time this year! Our agreements are already located on actra.ca as downloadable PDFs. Soon our website will also serve as an online portal for engagers to contract performers using ACTRA contracts. The easy transition to these new and improved digital processes would not be possible, however, without the acceptance of our membership. So thank you for helping to make these transitions seamless!

As this magazine hits the streets, we'll be posting ACTRA's audited Financial Statements for the fiscal year ending February 29, 2016, along with my Treasurer's report to actra.ca. And here are a few other highlights of what's new in our digital portfolio:

ACTRA PRS Annual Report

This year we've produced a new, leaner version of the ACTRA Performers' Rights Society (PRS) 2015-2016 Annual Report. ACTRA PRS is our arm at ACTRA that collects and disburses Use fees, royalties and residuals. ACTRA PRS is always finding new and better ways to track productions globally to ensure you collect what you are owed regardless of where your performance is aired. The new Annual Report will be online soon at actra.ca/prs.

ACTRA PRS Direct Deposit

Make sure you're signed up for direct deposit so you can get your ACTRA PRS money faster and directly into your account! PRS cheques are now mailed just once per year instead of monthly. If you receive your payments through your agent, don't worry as agencies can sign up as well! Just confirm with your agency to make sure it's on board. Visit actra.ca/prs for more information.

ACTRAonline.ca

ACTRAonline.ca is our FREE searchable database of professional performers. It replaces the previous 'Face to Face' database and all members currently have an automatically-generated profile. In addition to ACTRAonline.ca, there are currently four microsites: background.actraonline.ca, diversity.actraonline.ca, stunts.actraonline.ca, and voice.actraonline.ca. Your profile is only as good as YOU make it. THIS MEANS YOU! Casting directors, directors and producers can use this website as a searchable tool for casting opportunities. I urge you to make sure your profile stays up-to-date so it will be displayed when it matches search criteria entered by casting directors. ACTRAonline.ca profiles that are not updated over a two-year period will not be searchable by the casting community. If you have a question about this suite of websites, please email actraonline@actra.ca.



Theresa Tova
ACTRA National Treasurer





Photos: G. Pimentel Photography courtesy of Academy.ca

The Academy's 2016 Canadian Screen Awards

This year *Schitt's Creek* pulled in nine CSAs, including Best Comedy Series. Awards for Best Performance in a Continuing Leading Comedic Role were presented to both Eugene Levy and Catherine O'Hara. Another big winner was *The Book of Negroes*, which collected 11 trophies including Best TV Movie or Limited Series. Lyriq Bent won the Best Performance Award and Shailyn Pierre-Dixon the Best Supporting Performance Award. Aislinn Paul won the Best Performance Award for the youth series, *Degrassi*. Harrison Houde took home the Best Host CSA for the children's series, *Finding Stuff Out*. Julie Lemieux won the Best Performance in an Animated Series CSA for *Numb Chucks*. The sci-fi series *Orphan Black* won seven trophies, with Tatiana Maslany and Ari Millen winning Best TV Drama Performance CSAs.

The Ireland/Canada co-production *Room* was on a winning streak this year, taking home nine Canadian Screen Awards, including Best Picture and Best Performance by Jacob Tremblay. The Academy honoured Wendy Crewson with the 2016 Earle Grey Award for her significant body of work. The Fan's Choice "Candy" was presented to Yannick Bisson. ACTRA is a proud sponsor of the Academy's Canadian Screen Awards. For the full list of winners please visit academy.ca

Schitt's Creek cast: Sarah Levy, Emily Hampshire, Jennifer Robertson, Dan Levy, Catherine O'Hara, Eugene Levy and Annie Murphy



Michelle Nolden won the Best Performance CSA for a Program Produced for Digital Media, for *Saving Hope: Psychic Healing*



Ari Millen from *Orphan Black*. Photo courtesy of Bell Media



Jacob Tremblay



PAL Canada received the Academy's Humanitarian Award. Adrian Luces, Patty Gail-Peaker and Jeff Braunstein



Shailyn Pierre-Dixon and Lyriq Bent

The ACTRA Awards in Toronto

The winners of the 14th annual ACTRA Awards in Toronto are Catherine O'Hara for Outstanding Performance in *Schitt's Creek*, Christopher Plummer for Outstanding Performance in *Remember* and Julie Lemieux for Outstanding Voice Performance in *Numb Chucks*. Tantoo Cardinal presented the 2016 ACTRA Toronto Award of Excellence to Sarah Gadon. The show was hosted by Martha Chaves.

Right: Julie Lemieux and Sarah Gadon. Photo Jag Gundu

Below: A special presentation of statuettes was made to ACTRA Toronto's stunt pioneers. From left to right: ACTRA Toronto President David Sparrow, John Stoneham Sr., AFBS President & CEO Bob Underwood, John "Frenchie" Berger, Matt Birman, Robert "Bobby" Hannah, Shane Cardwell, Alison Reid, Dwayne McLean, Anita Tyukodi (sister of honouree Anton Tyukodi), Branko Racki, Helen Popelo (sister of honouree Morris "Moe" Maurizio Santia) and Shelley Cook. Photo: George Pimentel



ACTRA Alberta Celebrates 50-Plus-Year Anniversary

DON AST & MAUREEN THOMAS PRESENTED LIFETIME MEMBERSHIPS

ACTRA Alberta celebrated its 50-plus-year anniversary on April 1 at the Westin Calgary. "At 50 years plus, ACTRA Alberta has grown into a mature performers' union that draws on the strength of its members here in Alberta," said ACTRA Alberta President Duval Lang during the celebration. Alberta members Don Ast and Maureen Thomas were presented with Lifetime Memberships for their outstanding service to ACTRA.

Left to right, Maureen Thomas, the Honourable Ricardo Miranda, Alberta Minister of Culture and Tourism, Don Ast, and ACTRA Alberta President Duval Lang. Photo: Kim Faire



Sam Payne Award Winners

Stephen E. Miller is the recipient of the Sam Payne Lifetime Achievement Award. Garwin Sanford received the Sam Payne Award. Presented by UBCP/ACTRA, recipients of the Sam Payne Awards are recognized for their contribution to Canadian theatre, film, radio and television as well as for their personal attributes that mirror those of Sam Payne, including humanity, artistic integrity and encouragement of new talent.

Garwin Sanford and Stephen E. Miller. Photo: Clancy Dennehy

ACTRA Maritimes Award Winners

Cory Bowles hosted the second annual Screen Nova Scotia Awards. ACTRA Awards were presented to Simon Paul Mutuyimana for Outstanding Male Actor in a Supporting Role as Dwight in the feature film *Across the Line*. Jennie Raymond won Outstanding Female Actor in a Lead Role for her performance as Constable Roach in the TV series *Sex & Violence*. Mike McLeod, who plays the Priest in the TV series *Forgive Me*, won Outstanding Male Actor in a Lead Role for the second year running. The award for Outstanding Female Actor in a Supporting Role went to Jackie Torrens for her role in *Across the Line*. For the full list of winners, visit screennovascotia.com.

Jackie Torrens and Jennie Raymond. Photo: Mike Tompkins



Alberta's 'Rosie' Awards

Jordyn White from *Blackstone* took home the Best Performance by an Alberta Actress Rosie Award. Celebrating excellence and outstanding achievement in Alberta film, television and new media, the Rosie Awards are presented by the Alberta Media Production Industries Association. ACTRA Alberta received the Friend of the Industry Award for the 50-plus years it has represented performers in Alberta. For details visit ampia.org.

Courtesy of *Blackstone*. Photo: Dan Power

Tim Steeves, Rick Mercer,
Greg Eckler, George Westerholm

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ACTRA National Diversity Committee

By Angelica Lisk-Hann, ACTRA National
Diversity Committee Chair

The ACTRA National Diversity Committee was proud to launch the second iteration of the Short Film Script Competition in spring 2015. In line with the Committee's mission to help create a national dialogue and get issues of diversity on the agenda, ACTRA members were invited to draw from their own personal experiences with the goal of identifying and articulating contemporary diversity challenges that exist in the industry and for Canadians at large.

Members from across Canada were asked to submit a script that answered the question, "How are diverse Canadian stories important for our screens and our society?" The successful candidates were selected last fall and provided with funding to create a film based on their winning script. The videos were officially released this past winter.

A big thank you to past Diversity Committee Chair Jani Lauzon who spearheaded this initiative and congratulations to the winners: *Give Physical Diversity a Shake* by UBCP/ACTRA Member Darren Howarth-Chapel; *Drum With Us* by ACTRA Ottawa Member Christine Mao; and *Family Tree* by ACTRA Maritimes Member Gordon Patrick White.

The Committee's mission is to bring diversity issues onto the national stage. For more information on the ACTRA National Diversity Committee and to view the winning films, please visit actra.ca/diversitycommittee.



Darren Howarth-Chapel in *Give Physical Diversity a Shake*



Jaiden Mitchell in *Drum with Us*



Aliyah Arab in *Family Tree*



Angelica Lisk-Hann, pictured here on the Academy's red carpet, was the Stunt Coordinator on the miniseries, *The Book of Negroes*, which took home 11 CSAs in 2016

Farewell

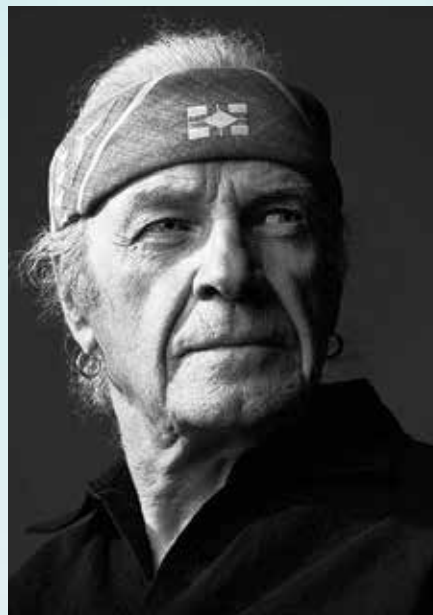


Marilyn Boyle
1930–2016

When we call someone a “trooper” in our business, we’re referring to a person who perseveres with fortitude and tenacity. It is a compliment in a business where the vagaries of fortune are constant. Marilyn Boyle was a trooper.

In Winnipeg, she was a headliner. Already in her 40s, she trooped off to Toronto to see where else her talent would take her. It took her many places across the country. She returned to Winnipeg for semi-retirement (what performer really retires?). ACTRA Winnipeg presented her with the Victor Cowie Lifetime Achievement Award and Rainbow Stage ensured her place on its Wall of Fame. While those two honours were treasured by her, she was one of our treasures. Sadly, Marilyn passed away at age 87 in March of this year. Her laugh, as sweeping as the prairie on which she was raised, will linger with all who knew her.

Brian Richardson



Don Francks
1932–2016

My father was magical, complicated, hilarious, rebellious and spiritual. My parents met on the set of Francis Ford Coppola’s film *Finian’s Rainbow*, Coppola’s first film and Fred Astaire’s last. From Hollywood, we lived off the grid, for six years on Red Pheasant Reservation in Saskatchewan, then nomadic in a school bus (with the word “home” written across the front) until we settled in Toronto where my father again found his love for performing and singing.

Making films like *They’re Drying Up the Street*, for which he won an ACTRA Award, he established himself as a Canadian icon. He loved to perform so much that he would perform anywhere—on the subway, walking down the street. He loved to make people smile.

We harmonized and sang together—he exposed me to all kinds of music. We worked on many projects and he taught me so much. We love you Iron Buffalo—my brother Rainbow and our mother Lilli Marie.

I will not say farewell Iron Buffalo, I will just say Tapwe.

Cree Summer Francks

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Jodelle Ferland has been acting professionally for most of her life. Hailing from Vancouver, she got her start working on *Cold Squad* before landing the lead role in 2000 in *Mermaid* for which she received a Daytime Emmy Award nomination. Her credits include Stephen King's *Kingdom Hospital*; Terry Gilliam's *Tideland*; playing three characters in *Silent Hill*; and a vampire in *The Twilight Saga: Eclipse*. Jodelle stars on the sci-fi series *Dark Matter*.

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JODELLE FERLAND

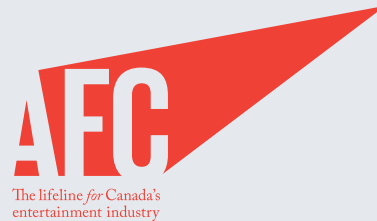


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