

**ACTRA MAGAZINE**  
WINTER 2018

**ACTRA**  
**75 YEARS**  
**OF CANADIAN**  
**STORYTELLING**

**75TH**  
**ANNIVERSARY**  
**ISSUE**  
**VOLUME ONE**

Eleanor Collins was a groundbreaking performer in Canadian entertainment history. She was a CBC Radio and Television singer and performer in the 1950s and 1960s. Fondly known as “Vancouver’s first lady of jazz,” Eleanor is one of our Canadian entertainment pioneers. After making her television debut on CBC Vancouver’s innovative variety show, *Bamboula: A Day in the West Indies* (the first Canadian television show with an interracial cast and the first live music TV show broadcast from Vancouver), the CBC, impressed with her talent, gave Eleanor her own national show (*The Eleanor Show*) making her the first woman in Canada and first Black entertainer in North America to host their own national television show. Canada has not been shy in thanking Eleanor for the contributions she has made to her country. Eleanor has been honoured with multiple awards over the years, including UBCP/ACTRA’s Sam Payne Lifetime Achievement Award in 2006. In 2014, on the occasion of her 95th birthday, Eleanor was made a member of the Order of Canada in recognition of her pioneering achievements as a jazz vocalist, and for breaking down barriers and fostering race relations in the mid-20th century. Still a vibrant spirit, our remarkable Eleanor will be 99 years old this year!

Photo courtesy of Eleanor Collins Personal Collection.

# ACTRA 75

Celebrating 75 years of Canadian Storytelling

This year ACTRA is proudly celebrating 75 years of outstanding Canadian performances, 75 years of contribution to our Canadian identity and 75 years of advances in protecting performers.



PAGE 28



PAGE 12



PAGE 26

## To mark ACTRA's 75th anniversary, we're kicking off celebrations with this special edition of *ACTRA Magazine* featuring stories told by members from coast to coast to coast.

Many will remember our 60th anniversary *InterACTRA* magazine edition—you can read the issue online at [actra.ca/actramagazine](http://actra.ca/actramagazine).

### **President's Message**

Celebrating our Past, Charting our Future by David Sparrow **4**

### **Bargaining Update**

75 years of collective strength by Stephen Waddell **10**

### **Features**

Ellie Harvie in British Columbia **12**

Blair Young in Alberta **14**

Kelly Handerek in Saskatchewan **16**

Kevin Longfield in Manitoba **18**

Teri Loretto in Ottawa **20**

Jean Yoon in Toronto **22**

Cary Lawrence in Montreal **24**

Francine Deschepper in the Maritimes **26**

Ruth Lawrence in Newfoundland/Labrador **28**

### **Backstage**

Celebrating our ACTRA Awards History **30**

Applause **32**

Molly Parker Q&A **36**

Farewell **38**

ACTRA'S 75TH ANNIVERSARY

# Celebrating our Past, Charting our Future

By David Sparrow

Seventy-five years ago, an intrepid group of voice performers stormed out of the CBC demanding better wages and a little respect for the work they were doing entertaining Canadians. That strike was short-lived and successful! Few recognized it as the spark that would create a vibrant national union...ACTRA. In short order, groups in Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver and Winnipeg realized there was strength in numbers. In 1943, they decided to form a national coalition.





ACTRA's January presser to discuss combatting sexual harassment in creative industries: Sedina Fiati, Mélanie Joly, Theresa Tova, David Sparrow.



Mark McKinney at #OurTV 2009 Parliament Hill rally.

Radio, recorded on wax tubes, records; TV, live and recorded; cassette tapes, 8-track, videotape, laser discs, CDs, DVDs, thumb-drives; cable, satellite, Internet; streaming via AVOD, SVOD; social media... we've been adapting and negotiating new technologies into our contracts since the dawn of ACTRA.



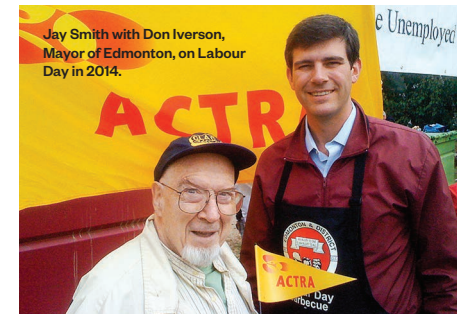
Ellen David and Tristan D. Lalla lobby MPs in 2016.

Now, as we celebrate 75 years of union activism in the arts, we stand on the shoulders of those early members and all the others who have since volunteered to make things better and more secure for performers working in the audiovisual sector. Those first inspired activists probably never imagined what their walkout would become. In 2016, the film & TV sector in Canada grew to over \$7 billion in production spending

and created over 140 thousand Full-time Equivalent (FTE) jobs. ACTRA has and continues to play a large role in building our important domestic industry. Performers have always been and remain the face of Canadian culture. Through the diversity of our performances, we have helped to define what it is to be Canadian. We project Canada to the world, supporting all kinds of Canadian business pursuits, including tourism, immigration and more. Our industry is an important driver of the Canadian economy.

ACTRA is also the go-to voice on the arts in Canada, and we punch above our weight on the international stage too, taking a leading role in discussions surrounding the best of contract provisions and on intellectual property rights for audiovisual artists. Our union was the first to negotiate terms for Internet Use. We were the first to land a national contract for videogame production... the only such contract to include terms for residual Use. Our last Independent Production Agreement (IPA) landed Use provisions that now see work broadcast in Digital Media treated the same as work done for conventional broadcast. Similarly, our latest National Commercial Agreement (NCA) sees members better compensated with full session fees and increased Use fees for digital commercials. We do this important work because change is happening... constantly.

With each change, we're told by our producer/engager partners, "This may not catch



Jay Smith with Don Iverson, Mayor of Edmonton, on Labour Day in 2014.

on. We're not sure how to monetize this. Be flexible." Fortunately, successive groups of member volunteers and staff have figured out the necessary steps and always worked to put performers first. Their efforts include work done on everything from contracts, to work opportunities, health & safety, respect on set, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, political lobbying, industry relations, pension & retirement (AFBS), CASCUS—the bank for performers—and so many more important initiatives.

So, YES! As self-employed workers in the



Wendy Crewson,  
Sarah Polley on  
The Hill.

arts, we stand on the shoulders of those leader members who stepped up and laid the foundation for all the benefits we enjoy today. To them I say, “Thank you and well done.”

However, lest you think the work of our generation is done... with 2018 bringing reviews of the Broadcasting, Telecommunications and Copyright Acts, along with a fresh mandate letter for the new CRTC Chair and the renegotiation of NAFTA under the still looming spectre of the TPP, now is the time for Canadians and ACTRA members,



Heritage Minister  
Mélanie Joly,  
Debra McGrath,  
Colin Mochrie.

concerned about their cultural future, to pay close attention and demand that we set our own cultural agenda. We have a government that is willing to talk and appears to be listening; but will it follow through? Its recent deal with Netflix would suggest the devil is in the details and we still have work to do.

It’s 2018. We know what the Internet is now. Smart people have learned to monetize content delivered through the Internet pipeline. Just as we regulated signals through the air, cable and satellite, the time has come to regulate the Internet and to collect on the real value our Canadian marketplace offers. So, YES. Over-the-top streaming services should pay to support the creation of Canadian content and should follow the same rules to which we hold our domestic broadcasters. Last year over \$730 million dollars in subscription fees left Canada bound for Netflix. Netflix paid no GST, no corporate tax, and contributed nothing into the Canada Media

## ACTRAvists



Fiona Forsythe  
and Alyssa Cross.



Jacob Sampson, Fernando Yaca,  
Mary-Colin Chisholm and Koumbie on set  
of ACTRA diversity video *Family Tree*.

Fund to support the creation of Canadian content.

Wait, didn’t Netflix recently agree to invest \$500M over five years in Canadian production? Yes, but not specifically in Canadian content production. And this deal—a deal written by Netflix—is less than the foreign service work it already has in development to be shot in Canada. Don’t get me wrong, we welcome and celebrate content production of every kind, but we celebrate Canadian content produced by Canadians just a little bit more.

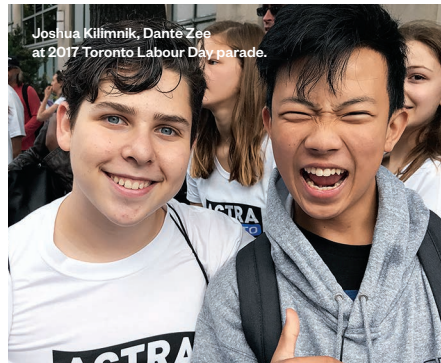


2016 L.A. members’  
conference panelist  
Lyriq Bent.



Cory Bowles at  
Save Nova Scotia film  
rally in Halifax 2015.

This is why it’s even more important to get our definition of cultural sovereignty right. Now! NAFTA currently works to protect culture through a broad cultural exemption that allows each country to create rules to support its own cultural voice. While the government has said it supports the current provision, it also supports certain provisions in the TPP, including stronger language supporting the rights of corporations over actual countries. This is unhelpful. Free trade deals must not ignore our sovereignty,



Joshua Kilimnik, Dante Zee  
at 2017 Toronto Labour Day parade.



Nigel Bennett, Theresa Tova,  
Spiro Malandrakis, Huse Madhavji  
take meetings with MPs in 2016.



Katie Boland  
at 2014 #TalkTV  
Hearings.



Shailyn Pierre-Dixon  
and Christina Dixon.

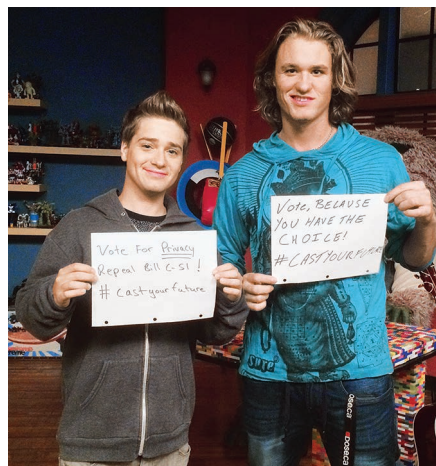


Neve Campbell,  
Molly Parker at  
ACTRA's 2016  
members'  
conference in L.A.

## TELLING OUR STORIES



Cameron Moore, Amanda Tapping,  
Kristin Lehman on set of ACTRA's  
*Reel Women Seen* advocacy video.



Travis Turner and  
Dylan Playfair (left)  
and Sandra Oh  
promoting ACTRA's  
#castyourfuture 2015  
election campaign.

Alison Louder and Grace Gordon.



Shannon Kook, Sarah Gadon, Huse Madhavji.



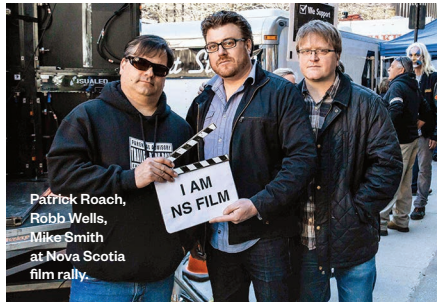
Brittany LeBoeuf, Maika Harper, David Sparrow, Heather White, Jenny Pudavick.



Bryn McAuley, Kyra Harper and Grace Lynn Kung.



Drake and Ferne Downey at 2010 broadcaster demo in Toronto.



Patrick Roach, Robb Wells, Mike Smith at Nova Scotia film rally.



Alan Wong, Ray Strachan join 2015 social media election campaign.

# POLITICAL ACTION



Jennifer Sadowsky and Heather Allin at 2017 CLC.





Art Hindle and Tantoo Cardinal.

our history, our legacy, and our cultural responsibility to future generations. Our cultural agenda must be set by Canadians and must serve all Canadians.

I would be remiss if I did not touch on the important topic of harassment and assault in our industry. At the time of this writing, we are meeting with members across the country, individuals who have bravely stepped forward with disturbing reports of discrimination, harassment and assault. Your union is listening, learning, working with stakeholders and seeking advice from professionals to create stronger processes and policies for the industry and for ACTRA so we can better support survivors of such abuse. On November 23, 2017, ACTRA hosted an industry roundtable convened by CUES, and attended by the leadership and advisors of many groups, including the CMPA (producers), the CBC, TIFF, Equity, DGC, WGC, NABET, IATSE, TAMAC, the Casting Directors Society of Canada, Women in View and many other organizations representing workers and management in the entertainment indus-

**CanCon is not all sled-dogs and snow-drifts anymore. Shows like *Murdoch*, *Private Eyes*, *Mohawk Girls*, *Rookie Blue*, *Orphan Black*, *Little Mosque*, *Motive*, *Heartland*, *19-2*, *Republic of Doyle*, *Trailer Park Boys*, *Letterkenny*, *Call Me Fitz*, *22 Minutes*, *Bellevue*, *Rick Mercer Report*, *Baroness von Sketch*, *Kim's Convenience* and more tell the stories of our modern Canada; they are seen in hundreds of territories around the world and some are found in primetime slots on U.S. carriers. CanCon is kickin' it and competing on the world stage.**



Jackson Davies and Joanna Bennett at #OurTV2009 rally on The Hill.

try. This first of what will be many meetings allowed a place for gaps to be identified, ideas to be shared and progress to be reported on. Our initial shared goals are for the industry to stand together against harassment, bullying, abuse and assault of every kind; to develop a speedier, more inclusive process to support survivors; and to continue to move this file forward by ensuring it has industry-wide support



Stephen Waddell, Paul Sun-Hyung Lee, Jean Yoon, Yannick Bisson at recent #cancon review.

and effective teeth to change behaviours, and eliminate the fear and confusion that helped predatory behaviour persist for so long. The work we do must be effective now and into the future. Thanks to all who bravely stepped up to share their experiences.

For half the time there has been a Canada, there has been an ACTRA. To mark our 75-year anniversary, we're kicking off celebrations with this special edition of *ACTRA Magazine*, the first of two anniversary issues in 2018, to commemorate the past and the future of our union. Many will remember our 60th anniversary *InterACTRA* magazine edition—you can read it online at [actra.ca/actramagazine](http://actra.ca/actramagazine) in an easy-to-read flipbook (along with other archived issues of *ACTRA Magazine* and *InterACTRA*). Please take the time to learn more about your union's history. Thanks to every ACTRAvist who has supported the



Jay Baruchel and David Gale at ACTRA's Stage Parent Guide 2012 relaunch.



Tyrone Benskin, Jesse Camacho, Demetrius Joyette at ACTRA lobby day 2013.

work of our union and our industry. We achieve great things when we work together. Now, on to the special 75th anniversary issue. I hope you enjoy the stories told by your fellow members from coast to coast.



David Sparrow  
ACTRA National President

# 75 years of collective strength

By Stephen Waddell

Arguably, negotiating ACTRA's collective agreements is one of the most important activities our union does for our members. When negotiating with producers, we strive to improve the wages and working conditions of performers while resisting producer demands for roll-backs and concessions. Most negotiations are settled with neither ACTRA nor the Engagers feeling they won or lost big over the other, which is the best result. But not all negotiations unfold that way.

Our 2006 Independent Production Agreement (IPA) negotiations remain one of our most volatile, and ultimately successful, rounds of bargaining.

In anticipation of our first day of IPA negotiations on October 23, 2006, we knew Internet production was going to be on the table. Robb Wells, Mike Smith, John Paul Tremblay, Eric Peterson, Alberta Watson, Wendy Crewson, David Sparrow, Maurice Dean Wint, Tonya Williams and many others joined our bargaining team that day in

support of the ACTRA negotiating committee and our objectives. When the producers tabled their proposals, we saw their proposals would have eviscerated performers' pay—10–25% pay cuts; attacks to our residual system; and no additional payment for performers' work in digital media.

An exasperated Gordon Pinsent was so offended by the proposals, he stood up from the bargaining table and walked right out of the room.

In the tough days and nights that followed, our membership across the country supported our bargaining team. Following unsuccessful efforts to find an agreement with the assistance of a mediator, ACTRA's Negotiating Committee and National Executive jointly issued a letter asking the membership to support a strike mandate. The membership responded, voting overwhelmingly in support of the Negotiating Committee. Notwithstanding, the Engagers persisted in their demands for performers to work for free on the Internet. On January

8, 2007, ACTRA members (except members in British Columbia who work under the BCMPPA) went on strike for the first time in the union's 64-year history. And what a unique strike it was! ACTRA unilaterally published a version of the IPA under which performers could work while on strike that included a 3% increase in minimum fees and all of the proposals presented by ACTRA in negotiations. On the first day of the strike, producers lined up outside the ACTRA office to sign our promulgated agreement to keep productions shooting. All projects in production at the time of the strike continued to shoot having signed ACTRA's temporary Agreement, and performers enjoyed an increase in pay. Never before (and likely never again) had any union called a strike while the workers continued working with a pay increase!

Canadian performers stood their ground for seven weeks. On February 19, 2007, a settlement was reached and the strike officially ended. By standing in solidarity, ACTRA members avoided devastating concessions, and secured a collective agreement that increased minimum fees by 3% in each year of a three-year agreement as well as payment for Use on the Internet. ACTRA was the first performers' union in the world to establish minimum fees and Use rights in entertainment product for digital media.

The 2007 negotiations of the B.C. Master Production Agreement (BCMPPA) could have been similarly challenging after producers tabled Sideletter #9, a proposal that would have significantly harmed B.C. performers. The producers' Sideletter #9 was a proposal

**“ACTRA was the first performers' union in the world to establish minimum fees and Use rights in entertainment product for digital media.”**

providing tiered discounts for lower-budget films or the first two seasons of a TV show. This Sideletter would have cut performers' rates and Use fees, and reduced Insurance & Retirement contributions. Concerned about this proposal, a large contingent of high-profile UBCP/ACTRA members joined their bargaining team on the first day of negotiations in a demonstration of solidarity to show producers they would not accept these terms and would consider strike action if necessary.

This collective show of strength caused the producers to take the proposal off the table and UBCP/ACTRA members avoided what would have been a devastating change to the BCMPPA.

ACTRA has achieved additional world-firsts in negotiations in other areas of production as well.

We would not have been successful in significantly improving our made-for digital media Use rates in the last round of National Commercial Agreement (NCA) bargaining

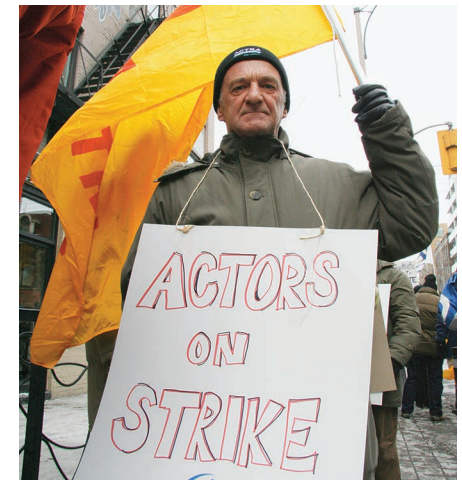
had it not first been for our historical win in the late 1990s. At the dawn of Internet advertising in 1999, ACTRA negotiated the first collective agreement in the world to cover performers appearing in digital media ads. Thanks to this achievement, we won a 175% increase to our made-for-digital media Use rate this past summer, which now puts performers' work—and pay—in digital media on the same level as broadcast commercials.

The struggles of the past have given us a firm foundation on which we continue to build. UBCP/ACTRA just completed renegotiation of the BCMPA in December. The new Agreement will see performers receiving 9% in increased rates over the next three years and groundbreaking language on sexual harassment. Terms for New Media production have significantly improved with a landmark 90-day Basic Declared Use for New Media, and minimum rates that are now equivalent to film and television production at all budget levels.

Next up for ACTRA bargaining later this year will be the IPA and we have every intention of continuing to build on our success.

The last 15 years of ACTRA's bargaining history have been both challenging and ground-breaking. As our industry keeps pace with changing technologies, the next 15 years and beyond will also be challenging. That said, if we have a clear vision of what we want, if we stand together and are determined to achieve our objectives, we will prevail.

Clockwise from top: ACTRA members and friends across Canada rallied in support of ACTRA's 2007 strike; Pictured here is a group shot of the Toronto demo outside CMPA HQ; the late Wayne Robson; BMCPA bargaining team Dax Belanger, Paul Dzenkiw, Lori Stewart, Ellie Harvie, Lesley Brady, Enid-Raye Adams, Keith Martin Gordey, Alvin Sanders, Jason Cameron. Missing from picture: Cathia Badiera, Laurie McAllister, Sandy Perron, Chris Webb, Stephen Waddell. Photo: Max Bygraves



Stephen Waddell, ACTRA National Executive Director and Chief Negotiator



This special  
75th anniversary  
issue of  
ACTRA Magazine  
features stories  
told by members  
all across this  
great land.

Alvin Sanders as Pop Tate  
in the Netflix series *Riverdale*.

# Thanking our Alvin

By Ellie Harvie

Several years ago, I wrote an article for *ACTRA Magazine* entitled “A West Coast Action Plan” about the Save BC Film movement. This movement swept our industry back in 2013 as a stance against the lack of government support for the province’s TV and film industry, which, at the time, was suffering with production levels well below those in other provinces.

Well, four years later, that movement should be called “Yeah, We’re Good Now!” As I look at the state of the industry today, which is currently breaking production and member earnings records, my focus shifts to Alvin Sanders, who recently finished his final term as UBCP/ACTRA President. Here, I talk to Alvin about the changes he has seen in the industry, his start in our union and how he has affected change.

When Alvin moved to Vancouver in 1984, he was performing mainly in theatre productions. *Beachcombers*, *Danger Bay*, *MacGyver* and *Wise Guy* were the series of the day, “but it wasn’t long before *21 Jumpstreet* arrived and after that there were several Cannell shows.” Of course, those of us who are familiar with the history of UBCP/ACTRA know Stephen J. Cannell’s challenge, as a U.S. producer, was he only wanted to deal with B.C. unions. But ACTRA was a national union with national collective agreements. That gave rise to B.C. creating its own production agreement and becoming an autonomous branch of the national organization.

Alvin first became involved in the union in 1999. “I sent a letter to the Executive Board complaining about it choosing to take away access to our RRSP funds. I received a letter from the President [John Juliani] telling me if I had a problem with the choices being made by the Executive Board, I should run to be on the Board. So I did.” By 2001, Alvin was attending ACTRA National Council meetings and noted, “I was the only person of colour on Council.”

During the early 2000s, Alvin said nine of the 12 Executive Board members of



Alvin Sanders spoke out in solidarity with locked out Rocky Mountaineer service workers in 2012.

UBCP/ACTRA were people who predominantly worked as Background Performers. “At that time,” Alvin added, “the feeling in the local industry (and in the membership) was that staff actually ran the union, not the members.”

Since that time, Alvin has been an integral part of the improvements in union relations, not only within our B.C. industry but with our brothers and sisters across the country. But by far, Alvin is most proud of the effect he has had with UBCP/ACTRA staff, “I think the mending of that relationship and the respect the entire membership now has for the work being done every day by our hard-working staff has been my greatest contribution. I’m very proud of how smoothly our Executive Board works with our staff now, and the respect UBCP/ACTRA now has with our industry partners and

the ACTRA National leadership. I like to think I contributed positively to those changes.”

Alvin has just finished a TV movie (yes, he can still depend on those) and currently has a recurring role on the hit series *Riverdale*.

Alvin says he will remain on the UBCP/ACTRA Board as Past President and will turn his focus to doing theatre “while I can still remember lines!”

We thank him for his service.



Ellie Harvie is a Vancouver-based actress, and currently serves as Treasurer on the Board of UBCP/ACTRA and as a ACTRA National Councillor.



# One of the Best Actor Days Ever

Q&A: Chantal Perron  
By Blair Young

Chantal Perron in the Alberta-shot  
feature film, *In Plainview*.

## ALBERTA

ACTRA Alberta member Chantal Perron has starred in many Alberta-shot productions, including *Heartland*, *Blackstone* and *Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee*. Additionally, a role was written specifically for Chantal in the Alberta-shot FX series *Fargo*. Here, ACTRA Alberta President Blair Young talks to Chantal about a few of her experiences in the Alberta production scene.

**Blair: It's ACTRA's 75th anniversary this year. What does this mean to you?** Chantal: Honestly, it blows my mind. Seventy-five years means... let's KEEP GOING! Being an ACTRA member has made me feel so much safer [working]. Let's face it, I've been on independent sets and know the risks actors take without insurance or coverage—you could ruin your whole career. Feelings of solidarity and strength come with being an ACTRA member. Frankly, [being a member] makes me proud to say, "I am a professional actor in Canada."

**You mentioned you started [working] in the screen-based industries about 15 years ago. What was that period like here in Alberta?** The first six or seven years were amazing. Then we dipped. Even just in the number of auditions—I felt it. Happily,

we've been on an upswing [for] the last several years. I feel like *Hell On Wheels* was a real boost to our community. Since then, I feel we are back in the game as a sought-after location. According to Calgary Economic Development, over the last 15 years Alberta-shot films have won more Oscar, Golden Globe and Emmy Awards than any other province. Even when we were on the downswing, our Alberta production folks were still remarkable. We are a 'go get 'em' type of people. The temperature doesn't matter! I love those L.A. directors who say, "Can we really shoot today?" The Alberta crews say, "Yeah this is awesome, it's gorgeous out!"

**With starring roles in several Canadian television series over the years, what stands out for you?** Ego-wise my absolute favour-

ite was *Fargo*. After I auditioned, writer and showrunner Noah Hawley wrote a role specifically for me. Probably the best experience ever. One of my favourite sets to be on was Bruce McCulloch's *Young Drunk Punk*. The humour was so very "Canadian"—quirky, odd-ball. And Bruce allowed us to improvise a lot, not that any of my improvisations ever made it into a cut. I enjoy that kind of work.

**As well as your film and series work, you are also a voice and theatre performer. How do you make it all work?** As an Alberta performer, I honestly cannot see me making a living without working in all performance disciplines. But as I get older, I'm less focussed on the stage and more focussed on the intimate, subtle beats specific to the camera work I've been doing. When I go

back on stage, I feel like I'm yelling and being broad. And after I've been on stage for a few months, and go [back] into the [screen-based] audition room, it can be quite difficult to adjust. But overall, there is nothing more exciting than performing. Last year, there was a day when I had a voice gig followed by a theatre rehearsal in the morning then I worked on-set for the rest of the day. I considered it a fun challenge. Probably the best day as an actor I've ever had!



Chantal Perron and Shaun Johnston between takes on *Heartland*.



Blair Young is an Alberta-based stage, screen and voice performer known for his work on *Fargo* and *Hell on Wheels*. Blair is the President of ACTRA Alberta.

Amy Matysio, Leo Fafard and Aidan Devine in the horror comedy feature, *Wolfcop*.

Photo: Shawn Fulton

# The Creative Horizon

By Kelly Handerek





**SASKATCHEWAN**

**At ACTRA Saskatchewan, we enjoy the exciting energies of an industry and art form that celebrates a creative horizon of projects and ideas, teamed with an energetic and diverse membership.**

The impact of these last years have shifted not only our Saskatchewan horizon, but the national and international landscape of production and talent. The completed work stands as strong as our members. Innovative projects—*Wolfcop 1 & 2*, *Incredible Story Studio*, *Moccasin Flats*, *The Velvet Devil* and *Corner Gas*—have demonstrated a creative horizon of authenticity wedded in both story and imagination that has captured Canada’s attention and beyond. Embedded deep in these large works are individuals who grew strong here, and are now shaping and cutting international careers for themselves—Kim Coates, Andrea Menard, Tatiana and Daniel Maslany, Andrea Runge, Trenna Keating, Tom Rooney and Jean Freeman (who was named ACTRA National Woman of the Year in 2014). The ACTRA Saskatchewan experience helped launch these shining careers.

Our branch has also undertaken initiatives to encourage new members from the Indigenous and multi-cultural landscape that is Saskatchewan. We strive to create platforms for all stories and welcome all the talents that make our nation the Canada in which we believe.

Along the way, we have said a sad goodbye to many memorable people who have captured our eyes on screen and our hearts as friends. Ian Black—often looking like he had just returned from a ride across an open prairie with his tall frame and soft voice—stood as strong as his beliefs and talent, and always gave his time and leadership to ACTRA council. Michele Sereda rocked our world with invention and artistic energy like a lightning bolt of passion.



*Corner Gas* folks front L to R: Cavan Cunningham, Jean Freeman, Robin O'Brien, Will O'Brien, Nancy Robertson. Back L to R: Monique Hurteau, Lorne Cardinal, Mike O'Brien, Gabrielle Miller and Brett Butt.

Gordon Tootoosis was a recipient of the ACTRA Saskatchewan Lifetime Achievement Award. Michelle Thrush spoke of Gordon’s passion, sharing with us his advice to her, “This thing called creativity is a gift from the creator and if you deny it you are disrespecting what has been given to you. We need to tell our stories.” These friends, members, colleague creators and others brought the gift of themselves to our branch and left us with their immortal work. Bless them all.

This past October, the Saskatchewan Arts Board presented ACTRA Saskatchewan with its prestigious 2017 Leadership Award. And our Saskatoon-based performer, Daniel Macdonald, was presented with its Arts and Learning Award.

Our future will be defined by the new

performers and leaders (and the stories they create) who are following in the footsteps of the dedicated pioneers who built this strong voice for Canadian artists.

Together, we’ll continue to build the Creative National Horizon that is ACTRA. We are that talented ribbon of landscape called ACTRA Saskatchewan past, present and to come.



Kelly Handerek is an actor, director and writer. He is an ACTRA National Councillor, Past President of ACTRA Saskatchewan and Professor in the Faculty of Media, Art and Performance at the University of Regina.

# Manitoba's success is no mystery

By Kevin Longfield

Photo courtesy of Buffalo Gal Pictures; photographer Allen Fraser

David Lawrence Brown as  
'Sheriff Logan' in *The Pinkertons*.

## MANITOBA

### Fifteen years ago, things were already looking good for ACTRA Manitoba. Work was picking up, even though most roles for local actors were small. Then, in 2003, Shaftesbury Films shot a pilot for *Murdoch Mysteries*.

Manitoba member Doreen Brownstone brought her special magic to her role as Murdoch's landlady. Rebecca Gibson later won a Manitoba Blizzard Award for Best Supporting Actor. Many other Manitoba members were featured in supporting roles. *Murdoch's* Winnipeg roots gave Manitoba members a chance to step up to the plate.

As we head into our 60th year as a Branch, our game shows no sign of slowing down.

Several TV series have shot here, including *Channel Zero* with the now 95-year-old Doreen Brownstone, *Falcon Beach*, *Todd and the Book of Pure Evil*, *Cashing In*, *Less than Kind* and *Sunnyside*. *The Pinkertons* has a special place in our hearts because local actors often drove the story. Winnipeggers David Lawrence Brown, Nazariy Demkowicz, Ray Strachan and Jenny Pudavick all had continuing roles.

Manitoba is also a popular location for movies and mini-series. Our well-preserved architecture works well for period pieces

and Winnipeg's proximity to rural settings allows Manitoba to stand-in for the American heartland. Selkirk, Manitoba, has substituted for any number of small American towns. Many might be surprised to learn that Oscar-winner *Capote*, *Shall We Dance?*, *New in Town* and a couple of entries in the *Chucky* franchise were also shot here.

Manitoba has become more than a stand-in for America with many stories celebrating Canadian life having originated here: *The Stone Angel*; *The Don Cherry Story*; *A Bear Named Winnie*; *Jack* (The Jack Layton Story); *Mr. Hockey: The Gordie Howe Story*; Guy Madden films; and numerous short dramas showcasing the stories of Margaret Atwood and Carol Shields.

"The Manitoba talent pool has grown by leaps and bounds," says casting director Carmen Kotyk. "People are getting more coaching and taking [film work] more seriously." Further states casting director Jim Heber, "First, the pool of versatile and re-



Nazariy Demkowicz and Keanu Reeves between takes on the feature *Siberia* shot in Marquette, Manitoba.

sponsive artists has deepened significantly since I began casting in Manitoba nearly 20 years ago. Local actors have a better understanding of producers and directors' creative expectations. Our community of artists has a clear view of how their craft supports the telling of a story."

We do have a great community. We have a supportive local government, and both Film Training Manitoba and Onscreen Manitoba provide our industry with development support. We've created niche markets such as Christmas, horror and youth films thanks to our talented creators with specialty skills. Past President Rick Skene has helped develop a versatile group of stunt performers and Skene Stunts offers a full-range of stunt services. This helps open the doors for movies that could not otherwise be shot in Manitoba. Rick's contribution to our film community earned him the inaugural Wayne Nicklas Award in 2012 for Outstanding Achievement and

Contribution to ACTRA Manitoba.

But the strongest reason for our growth is our community spirit. Our AGMs and our awards galas are popular, prestigious gatherings. Despite not having a direct flight from either New York or Los Angeles, filmmakers make a path to our open skies and friendly culture. The future looks bright for Manitoba with a new Council, and initiatives to enhance diversity and respect on set and in casting.

A recent story broadcast nationally on CBC News mentioned that seven local directors were working on films, and that last year Manitoba had \$139 million in production with higher volume expected this year. It's no mystery why.



Kevin Longfield is an actor, author and playwright. He has been an ACTRA member since 1986 and a Manitoba Councillor for many years.



Photo: Dominique Blincolet

# They shot a movie once, in my hometown...

By Teri Loretto

*The Game Changer* featuring Dan Aykroyd is a 'We Work Ottawa' short film that promotes Ottawa's talented filmmakers and performers.

OTTAWA

The term ‘town’ is often used to describe Ottawa, despite it being a city, because we really do maintain a small-town feel in many ways. This has not always been a boon, but it has served us well in the film and television industry.

Spitting distance from that other source of entertainment in our major city centre—Parliament—you find yourself on a lake, or in gorgeous forests, farmers’ fields, a lavish Victorian home, a bustling high-tech environment, a world-class museum or a university. Our bilingual and vibrant community attracts companies looking to operate in both official languages and in a setting that allows for a reasonable cost of living. More and more members of our industry are choosing to make ‘The Valley’ their home and the increase in local production is reflecting this trend.

Local initiatives in recent years, such as Branch Council members Peter Dillon and Sally Cleford’s self-produced *The Game Changer* (shot with some of Ottawa’s finest including national funny man, Dan Ackroyd), are helping to promote our local talent. And to recognize our outstanding local

talent, the Lorraine Ansell ACTRA Award of Excellence was established in 2011 and has been awarded to folks such as Bill Luxton, Florence Moore and James Bradford.

The foundations we have built in the Capital are strong and we owe much of this to the pioneers who came before us. Ottawa has been the starting point for so many success stories: we are looking forward to creating new narratives with our vibrant emerging talent pool. Ottawa also houses some of the best and brightest on the digital scene, and we aim to remain at the forefront of new industry initiatives in this sector.

We know we have infrastructure to build if we want to continue to grow and attract new and bigger productions to the zone, but industry highlights from the last few years speak for themselves: a growing features market, a thriving MOW scene and strong children’s programming, coupled



Kian Farley, Teri Loretto, Robert Reynolds and Constantino Glezakos on location of *The Buckley Brothers*.

with a consistent industrial and documentary sector, continue to bring work to our local members.

Recent features filmed here include projects with Academy Award-winners Michael Keaton, Jennifer Lawrence and Cuba Gooding Jr. as well as Canadian treasures such as Eric Peterson, Paul Gross and Rick Mercer. Smaller budget productions have won international acclaim too—among them, *The Buckley Brothers*, directed by ACTRA member Rachelle Casseus, won Best Comedy at the 2016 Lady Filmmakers’ Festival in Beverly Hills. Things look good on the small screen front too: Zed Filmworks was behind Netflix’s first Ottawa-produced film in 2016, *I Am the Pretty Thing That Lives in the House*, starring Ruth Wilson.

We look forward to the continued growth of our thriving and diverse membership, and to expanding our production centre.

We are working hard to make this happen. For the last decade, Ottawa Board member Barry Blake has taken part in presentations to make the case for continued investment in Canadian programming—CRTC broadcaster license renewal hearings, Canadian Heritage meetings plus several ACTRA lobby trips to Parliament Hill where he has met with MPs. And just like a small town we are the happy hosts. It’s our pleasure to welcome National members when we need ACTRA voices to be heard on The Hill.



Teri Loretto serves on the ACTRA Ottawa council, and is also a member of EQUITY and The Canadian Media Guild. She works for CBC Ottawa News, produces and directs theatre, and is a professor in the Performing Arts and Journalism programs at Algonquin College.

# Sandi Ross: A Force For Her Union

By Jean Yoon



TORONTO

I first met Sandi Ross in 1991. I was the newly hired Cross Cultural Co-ordinator at Theatre Ontario, and Sandi was a key member of the advisory committee that created my position. I was a green young thing and she was the veteran; experienced, generous and excited about the future.

We hit it off right away, and she became not only my mentor and colleague but a dear friend. Sandi had such a huge spirit, an infectious optimism that made you believe anything was possible. I adored her, her booming laugh, her love of theatre and its artists, and her understanding that we always needed to make allies as we pursue social justice in the arts.

I worked with Sandi on a number of platforms: educating our community about opportunities; strategies to survive “the system;” lobbying arts councils, theatres and organizations; and building resources to help culturally diverse projects and artists thrive and initiate our own projects. Her energy seemed bottomless. In the mid-1990s, I saw her almost daily, at advisory and board meetings, at performances, and at the parties afterwards.

Outside of all this theatre, Sandi was deeply involved in ACTRA, spearheading “Into the Mainstream,” a directory of visible and audible minorities created to facilitate culturally diverse casting. This initiative immediately made it easier for producers to cast diversely and persuaded U.S. producers Toronto had the diverse talent to people their shows.

She was also serving on The First Advisory to the Canada Council for Racial Equality in the Arts, a groundbreaking initiative that reversed a restrictive Eurocentric definition of “professionalism” that had blocked so many culturally diverse artists and arts groups from funding.



I’m not quite sure how she did it all, between auditions, rehearsals, performances and shoot days. But she did, turning in fine performances on stage and screen for over 40 years. She was a fine actress whose work infused with such passion and craftsmanship, earning the admiration of critics like the late Jon Kaplan and friends across the country.

It’s almost a year now since she passed so suddenly. I miss her. I miss talking with her, catching up over a glass of wine...

I owe her a huge debt. She rekindled my faith and passion in the arts and opened my heart to the possibility that I could become a practicing artist and thrive. Her advocacy work guaranteed that there was space for artists like myself to practice. She cheered

me and taught me how to cheer on others in turn. She fought so hard and for so long on the frontlines of the cultural equity movement, it’s impossible to describe the breadth of her accomplishments.

Just know this: there isn’t an actor of colour working today who is not somehow indebted to Sandi Ross.

Loud, proud and laughing.

I will forever miss her 360-degree hugs.

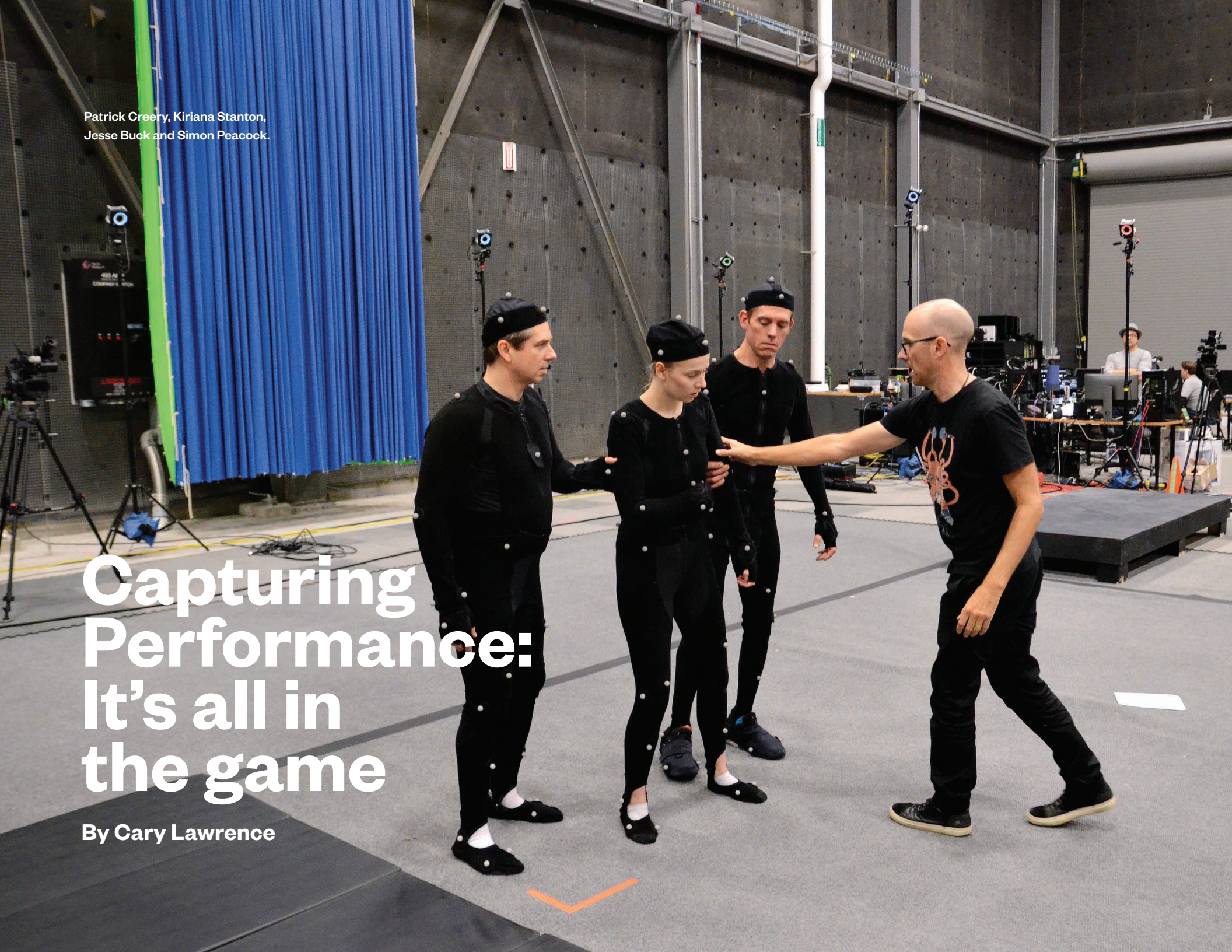


Jean Yoon is an actor, writer, playwright known for her starring role on the award-winning CBC series, *Kim's Convenience*. She is an ACTRA Toronto and National Councillor.

Patrick Creery, Kiriana Stanton,  
Jesse Buck and Simon Peacock.

# Capturing Performance: It's all in the game

By Cary Lawrence





**MONTREAL**

## Long before *Assassins Creed*, *Dungeons & Dragons* was THE THING for gamers. That was 20 years ago. Today, the video game industry is a major employer for young actors.

Montreal is number one for video game production in Canada and number five in the world according to Simon Peacock, ACTRA Montreal President and Video Game Performance Director. This success is largely due to companies like Ubisoft benefiting from our tax incentives, soon followed by: Game On, Eidos and Warner Brothers.

Initially, gaming only required voices, then came silent motion capture and facial helmets in which sensors capture physical movements using in-character animation. As ACTRA member and video game actor Amber Goldfarb says, "Every video game I have been on, there has been an evolution of some kind." Advances in technology are moving exponentially. When Amber got her start in the video game industry the booking was for *Assassin's Creed II*.

From that first voice gig, Amber moved right into motion capture. With a background in dance and martial arts, her abilities are of high value to the industry. She dons different accents and can provide a 'skeleton' of her character through Mo-Cap so animators can overlay physical types using her movements to create multiple characters in one day of shooting. Amber has now worked on over 20 games and she was the first female protagonist in *Assassin's Creed III: Liberation*.

Since Simon's foray into the industry, the male/female ratio has gone from 100% male to 60%/40%, and the trend continues. Many games are violent. As such, companies grew weary of being seen as condoning violence against women. Now, demands on the industry have encouraged gender equity. While Amber is often the only woman in a Mo-Cap studio, she has seen the progression of more female characters taking on bigger roles. And in some games, 'customized' gaming is available; from gender to skin and hair colour. It is interesting to note that production offices are still largely male dominated.

### DID YOU KNOW

Not all gaming scripts are locked before going into studio? Actors can collaborate on certain scenes and engage in the creative process. Programmers constantly do tests to make sure the game is working. This means it can take anywhere from two to five years to produce a game!



Simon Peacock and Amber Goldfarb.

And, although the median hiring age range in the industry is between 25-40, slowly, younger actors and older, more seasoned actors are being hired to reflect our society.

The hardest thing about working in gaming is the amount of words actors must memorize and Simon is awestruck at the muscle memory power these actors possess. Sometimes actors arrive on set and are handed a stack of new re-writes one-inch-thick to plough through.

In the future, Simon believes Mo-Cap studios will cease to exist. Technology already exists to track an actor's movements without a suit. Virtual Reality, or VR (goggles that provide a 3D reality), and Augmented Reality, or AR (using your phone to create a reality right in front of your eyes), will also affect the industry's need for actors. There's an Adobe program that can record a voice for as little as 20 minutes and create hours of dialogue without the use of an actor. It

will be homogenous and bland, but it is happening.

You may think the sky is falling but remember; theatre and radio were considered dead with the advent of movies and television. Consider the 'R' in ACTRA; we were once Radio artists; then 'T' for Television artists was added. With 75 years under our belt, ACTRA has persevered through growing pains. Thanks to the great talent in our house we call ACTRA, we continue to defy technological advances because we still need good old fashion human beings to produce great product.

Happy Birthday! From Montreal.



Cary Lawrence is a Montreal-based bilingual actor who recently served as President of ACTRA Montreal.



Photo: Riley Smith

# A New Wave of Maritime Artists

By Francine Deschepper

*Black Cop* star  
Ronnie Rowe Jr.  
with writer/director  
Cory Bowles.

## MARITIMES

ACTRA Maritimes' members Cory Bowles and Koumbie have a lot in common. They both began their acting careers on two of Halifax's longest-running TV series, *Trailer Park Boys* and *Mr D*, and have expanded their creative interests into writing, producing and directing their own projects to much success. ACTRA Maritimes President Francine Deschepper talks with them about their inspirations, successes and challenges as Atlantic Canadian filmmakers.

**Francine: How did performing on *Mr D* and *TPB* inspire you to want to make your own projects?** *Koumbie: Mr D* was the first time I was making real money from acting and so, I thought, 'maybe I can do this.' [Then] I started thinking about directing my own stuff. But as a female of colour, there weren't many examples. I consider Cory a mentor. *Cory: Working with director Mike Clattenburg was a real turning point for me. Every time you are acting, you are writing. Almost everyone I know who produces or directs are actors.*

**Koumbie, you were involved in no less than eight shorts in this year's [2017] Atlantic Film Festival, and your film *Hustle & Heart* won the 2017 CBC Short Film Face Off.** *Cory: Koumbie crushed this year's festival! We could just do a Koumbie and Taylor [Olson]*

*festival. And as I'm making that joke I realize she's in my movie too. Pretty dope.*

**And you filmed it using ACTRA's Member Initiated Production agreement?** *Koumbie: Right. I'm a really big fan of MIP because it allows emerging actors to take control of their careers. I think it's pretty interesting the last two winners of the Best Atlantic Short at the Atlantic International Film Festival were both done under the MIP.*

**Cory, your feature film *Black Cop* sold out three screenings at the Toronto International Film Festival, won Best Atlantic Feature at FIN, Best Canadian Feature at the Vancouver International Film Festival and at the Edmonton International Film Festival. How has its success been for you?** *Cory: It's been incredible! It far exceeded what I thought [it*



*Mr. D* cast pictured here: Liam Cyr, Kassidy Mattera, Isabelle Beaupré, Matt Tolton, Gerry Dee, Koumbie.

would be]. I made *Black Cop* with full creative control. It's a movie about racial identity, power and social structure. It sparked a massive debate on morning radio in Edmonton and a big part of my movie has talk-radio in it. So, I'm just going, "Wow, I made real life."

**Why is it important to tell diverse Canadian stories?** *Koumbie: I think right now media is the place where we learn about ourselves —what's right, what's wrong, how we should think and act. So, we have a responsibility as artists to be authentic and honest. Cory: You know, I pitched my stories a few years ago and was told, "they're interesting but too racial." Then Ferguson happened. If we are going to evolve as an industry, we have to adapt, embrace, encourage, listen and support.*

**In 2015, the Nova Scotia government eliminated equity & development funding. How has this affected NS filmmakers?**

*Cory: What we have now doesn't work for everyone, so we are forced to fight over scraps. We need to be more communal. We must stay united.*

**2018 marks ACTRA's 75th birthday. What do you think of that?** *Koumbie: I'm very grateful for my union. Getting involved with YEAA and making *Family Tree* [ACTRA diversity video] helped push my career forward. As someone who once worked on a non-union series, I know how lucky I am to be a member of ACTRA. Cory: I hope we have 75 more!*



Francine Deschepper is a Halifax-based actor, President of ACTRA Maritimes and an ACTRA National Councillor.

# Republic of Storytellers

By Ruth Lawrence

Allan Hawco and  
Mark O'Brien on  
*Republic of Doyle*.

Photo courtesy of OBC.



## In Newfoundland and Labrador, we are surrounded by songs, tunes and stories from birth. Our cultural passion for storytelling is legendary, and many of our brightest are phenomenal, multi-talented artists.

To celebrate our 75th anniversary as a union, we will trace the cultural connections between our ACTRA NL stars and the stories we tell together.

John Moyes, the 2014 AFBS Leslie Yeo Award-winner for volunteerism, was a founding member of ACTRA NL in 1965 back when CBC Radio drama was an actor's only major employer. Times have changed since then with a number of new broadcasters in the mix but CBC still reigns and, in 1979, brought Mary Walsh to our TV screens in *Up At Ours*. Now known to many as the iconic Marg the Princess Warrior, Mary was named ACTRA National's 2013 Woman of the Year for her onscreen work and lifetime of activism. We can also thank Mary for bringing us the much-anticipated holiday feature, *A Christmas Fury*, which sprung from Walsh's cult series, *Hatching, Matching, & Dispatching*. Also from that show, the celestial Susan Kent was elevated into another Walsh creation, *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*. In such a small place, it's common for one performer to lead the way for another rising star.

Our beloved Rick Mercer, who will receive the Academy's Icon Award this year, told ACTRA Toronto's *Performers' Magazine* in a 2012 interview that he was inspired by the late Tommy Sexton of *CODCO* fame to pursue his dream of having a TV show. Though he announced his *Rick Mercer Report* will end after its 15th season, this luminary performer surely has another project up the sleeve of his black suit.

Writer/producer/star Allan Hawco helmed six highly successful seasons of *Republic of Doyle*, which spawned much production activity in NL, and launched the careers of Krystin Pellerin and Marthe Bernard. Mark O'Brien (*Arrival, Halt and Catch Fire*) credits the show with changing his life: "I was given so much freedom to grow and try new things, which is really what every artist strives for. It gave me the confidence and understanding of the craft that I needed to be able to move forward." Hawco is again rocking several roles on the new five-part CBC series, *Caught*, premiering this year with more emerging NL talents.

For 16-year-old Percy Hynes White, his



Mary Walsh as 'Marg Princess Warrior'.

breakout feature was *Cast No Shadow*, which was written by and co-starred his father, Joel Thomas Hynes (*Down to the Dirt, Little Dog*). "It was set in a different time period and made me feel like I was in that world. The script was really fun, a coming-of-age thriller. That was my first leading role and it has influenced how I've acted on camera ever since." After winning a Rising Star award from the Edmonton Film Festival, he now is able to draw from his experience in *Cast No Shadow* for his lead roles in the Marvel series, *The Gifted*, and the upcoming indie feature, *Kook*.

As the leading lights in at least three TV series, three features, numerous shorts and countless associated projects this year alone, ACTRA Newfoundland members often acknowledge those who encourage and support them. Susan Kent says that "a big mo-

ment [for her] was when Sherry White (*Maudie, Rookie Blue*, and mother to Percy) handed me a leather-bound journal and told me, "You're a writer." I have long since used up [the journal] but I did keep a few blank pages at the end. For the unwritten future."


We salute our ACTRA NL storytellers. The next 75 years are looking up.




Ruth Lawrence is a St. John's-based actor, writer and director whose recent work is featured in the comedic anthology, *Hopeless Romantic*.

# Celebrating our ACTRA Awards!

ACTRA proudly re-introduced the ACTRA Awards in celebration of the union's 60th Anniversary in 2003. Ferne Downey and Jackie Laidlaw were dreaming big and commissioned sculptor Adrienne Alison to design what is now our beautiful statuette. Performers celebrating performers across the country!



Eugene Levy holding his 2010 ACTRA National Award of Excellence with the Barenaked Ladies band members Tyler Stewart, Ed Robertson, Kevin Hearn, Jim Creeggan.



ACTRA Maritimes 2013 winners John Dunsworth, Shelley Thompson, Thom Fitzgerald (for Jane Alexander), Christopher Shore.



Holly Gauthier-Frankel and Don Jordan performing at the 2010 ACTRA Montreal Awards.

ACTRA Manitoba Awards 2010 celebration.

Sandra Oh wins 2009 ACTRA National Award of Excellence.

Tatiana Maslany with 2016 ACTRA Toronto Award of Excellence winner Sarah Gadon.

Crystal Balint, Rebecca Husain and Dan Payne at the UBCP/ACTRA Awards in 2017.



## imagineNATIVE honours Tina Keeper with the August Schellenberg Award of Excellence

Accomplished actor, producer and activist Tina Keeper has been an active member of Canada's film and television industry for over thirty years. She is well-known for her role as RCMP officer Michelle Kenidi on the hit CBC series *North of 60* for which she received a Best Performance Gemini Award. Tina Keeper was named ACTRA National Woman of the Year in 2017. ACTRA is a proud sponsor of imagineNATIVE's August Schellenberg Award of Excellence.

## UBCP/ACTRA Awards

Performers from across British Columbia were honoured in Vancouver on November 18 at the sixth annual UBCP/ACTRA Awards gala. Tammy Gillis won the Best Actress Award for her role in *Menorca* and the Best Actor Award went to Adrian Holmes for his role in *19-2*. The Best Emerging Performer Award went to Adam DiMarco for his role in *Marrying the Family* and Rebecca Husain won the Best Voice Award for her role in *Beat Bugs*. Simon Burnett, Leif Havdale, Corry Glass and Jon Kralt took home the Best Stunt Award for their performances in *Supergirl*. Veena Sood was the recipient of the Lorena Gale Woman of Distinction Award.

Corry Glass, Jon Kralt, Rebecca Husain, Adrian Holmes, Veena Sood, Tammy Gillis and Adam DiMarco.



Tina Keeper photo: Mike Tjoe, UBCP/ACTRA photo: Milos Tosic.





## Jennifer Podemski honoured with 2018 ACTRA Toronto Award of Excellence

Jennifer Podemski's acting career first blossomed when she was a teen and landed roles in *The Diviners* and *Dance Me Outside*. Of mixed First Nations and Israeli descent, she soon noticed the lack of First Nations people writing, producing and directing screened entertainment. She produced three seasons of the award-winning dramatic television series *Moccasin Flats*. In 2005, Jennifer founded Redcloud Studios Inc, an independent production company dedicated to pushing forward Indigenous narratives across all platforms. For the critically acclaimed feature film *Empire of Dirt*, Jennifer was nominated for Canadian Screens Awards for both supporting actress and producer in 2015. For the same acting role, ACTRA Toronto nominated her for the Outstanding Performance—Female Award in 2014. Jennifer's actor credits include *Degrassi: TNG*, *The Rez* (Gemini nomination), *Republic of Doyle*, *Take This Waltz*, *Jimmy P.*, *Blackstone*, *Sensitive Skin*, *FireSong*, *Hard Rock Medical* and *Cardinal*. In 2016, ACTRA Toronto's Women's Committee (TAWC) presented Jennifer with the Nell Shipman Award, which honours a female producer, writer or showrunner who has advanced gender equity in the screened entertainment industry both in front of and behind the camera.

## Donald Sutherland receives honorary Oscar

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences presented Donald Sutherland with an honorary Oscar this past November. In his six-decade career he has appeared in more than 140 films, including *The Dirty Dozen*, *M.A.S.H.*, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, *The Hunger Games* series and most recently *The Leisure Seeker*. He has won an Emmy Award and two Golden Globe Awards. In 1983 he won a Genie Award for Best Performance in *Threshold*, shot in the Ottawa General Hospital. In 1978 Donald was named an Officer of the Order of Canada and in 2000 he was honoured with a Governor General's Performing Arts Award. Donald grew up in Bridgewater, Nova Scotia. He graduated from the University of Toronto with a double major in Engineering and Drama.



## ACTRA Maritimes honours Jeremy Webb

ACTRA Maritimes presented Jeremy Webb with the 2018 David Renton Award of Excellence for his contribution to the membership. “Jeremy is a talented artist, a strong voice for Canadian culture, and a huge supporter of local talent” said ACTRA Maritimes Past President Jamie Bradley upon presenting the award to Jeremy. “We thank Jeremy for his outstanding service to ACTRA. And we wish him much success with his new role as Neptune Theatre’s Artistic Director.”



## Congratulations to ACTRA Saskatchewan

ACTRA Saskatchewan has been presented with the Arts Board Leadership Award. The Saskatchewan membership and elected council have been honoured for their dedication to improving the lives of artists in the province. This special award celebrates the contributions and achievements of individuals, groups and organizations in all arts disciplines. The Arts Board also presented ACTRA member Daniel Macdonald with the Arts and Learning Award.

Pictured here, ACTRA Saskatchewan's Daniel Macdonald receives the Arts and Learning Award by the Saskatchewan Arts Board.



## Tonya Williams honoured with Crystal Award

Actor/producer/director Tonya Williams received the 2017 WIFT-T Crystal Award—the Special Jury Award of Distinction. An award-winning performer, Tonya founded the Toronto ReelWorld Film Festival in 2001. Reelworld continues to be a launching pad for great talent in all areas of the entertainment industry. Tonya is a passionate advocate for diverse filmmakers around the world.



# PAINTER

ACTRA  
National's  
2018 Award of  
Excellence  
recipient

This year, Canadian performers honour British Columbia-born actor Molly Parker with the 2018 ACTRA National Award of Excellence.

From her roles in the hit TV shows *House of Cards* and *Deadwood*, to indie features and award-winning films such as *Men with Brooms* and *Marion Bridge*, Molly is known for her passionate and diverse performances. Here Molly talks to us about maintaining her connection to Canada, why she's grateful for the support of her union, and her love for playing oddball characters.

**From your work in big-budget series to indie films, do you approach each role differently?**

While the medium does not affect how I approach the role, I do need to know who I am working for. In indie film, it is the director/filmmaker. For TV, it is the writer. First I want to know what the tone of the piece is but to find this out, I need to know who to ask. The biggest difference between the two is the resources. For example, in a TV show, I'd likely be working with a professional crew, and be provided with hair, makeup, and costumes, plus some privacy and food. In small indie films, I often bring some of my own costume options, a folding chair, etc.

**Is there one role you still yearn to play?** I've just not ever thought in those terms. Film is so collaborative it's usually a whole package I am responding to. But I am very much enjoying aging into playing women with character!! I like playing oddballs and women who have some connection to joy. What I now dread doing is going to work knowing I will have to spend the day in fear or emotional pain. I know that's what we do, but... it's tiring. I want to go to work and laugh!!

***Twitch City*, *Trigger* and, most recently, *Weirdos* are some of the Canadian productions you've been a part of. Is there a special thought or feeling about working on Canadian productions you can share with us?** I feel so proud to have a career in Canada and have a community of filmmakers here [in the U.S.]. These days, it feels like a safe

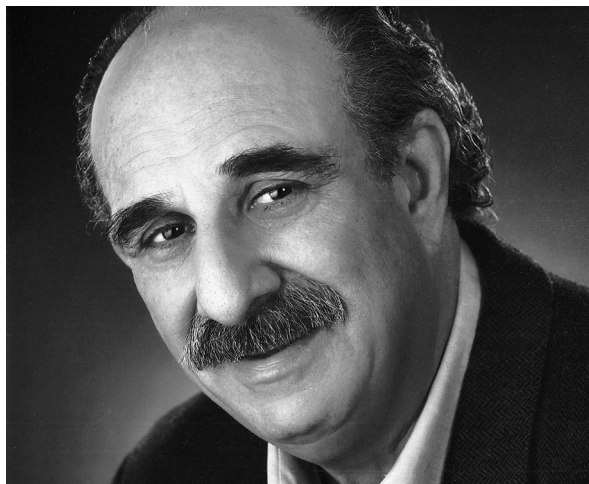
place to take risks and try new things. I love that. I am very grateful I have maintained a connection to my Canadian indie roots!

**Do you feel being an ACTRA member is important?** I cannot imagine doing this work without the support of our union. The existence of our collective agreements makes it possible to set boundaries in a very gooey business. I work a lot with children, playing mums, and am particularly grateful for the work ACTRA does protecting our child performers. ACTRA empowers actors!

**What's next for Molly Parker?** I am playing Maureen Robinson in the new Netflix series *Lost in Space*. We have been shooting in my hometown of Vancouver. I am very grateful ACTRA helps bring work to Canada. I am always travelling for work as nothing really shoots in L.A. and I am always thrilled when that work takes me home!

**Do you have any advice for young performers just starting out?** I want to share one thing I've learned about auditioning. The people you are auditioning for, the casting director, producer, etc., WANT you to do well. They are afraid of casting the wrong person and need someone to walk in the room and be THE ONE. So, don't think of them as the enemy. Auditioning is not acting, it's getting a job. Help them feel confident in you by being confident. Even if you are acting that part! Develop the skill of believing you are THE ONE when you audition.

Molly's multiple performance award wins include: *Kissed* (1997 Best Actress in a Leading Role Genie Award); *Last Wedding* (2002 Best Supporting Actress Genie Award); *Who Loves the Sun* (2007 Best Female Performance Beverly Hills Film Festival); and *Weirdos* (2017 Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role Canadian Screen Award). Series work includes: *Swingtown* (CBS); *The Firm* (NBC); *Dexter* (Showtime); and *Six Feet Under* (HBO). Feature credits include: *The Five Senses*; *Rare Birds*; *Nine Lives*; *American Pastoral*; and *Sunshine*. Molly's most recent work includes *Goliath*; the feature, *1922*; and *Lost in Space*. Last year, Molly made her writer/directorial debut with the short film *Bird*, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival as well as the Vancouver and Calgary International Film Festivals in 2017.



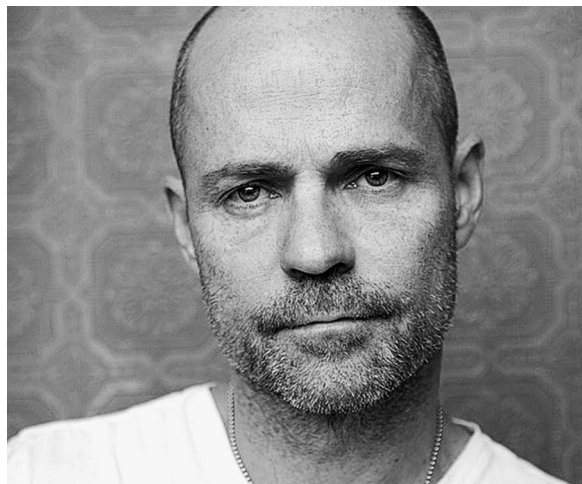
## Harvey Atkin, 1942–2017

Harvey is probably best remembered for a few things. He's remembered for his wonderful character look of big glasses, nose and moustache all of which looked like he bought in a novelty store. He's also remembered for playing the memorable character Morty, the camp director in the film *Meatballs*, as well as desk sergeant Ronald Coleman in *Cagney and Lacey* and his recurring character Judge Ridenour in *Law and Order*.

As his agent for 47 years, I can say Harvey was one of the best self-promoters I have ever met. He could decipher any script in a single read-through and determine how a character was to be played. In addition to his extensive on-camera work, Harvey was a versatile voice performer in animation and commercials. He was also multi-lingual speaking fluent English, French, Italian and some Yiddish.

Harvey was an incredible husband, father and grandfather. He taught countless kids how to swim. He donated often to charities. He was a handyman extraordinaire—the trunk of his car looked like a Home Hardware franchise. He was my friend for 59 years and I shall never forget him.

Larry Goldhar

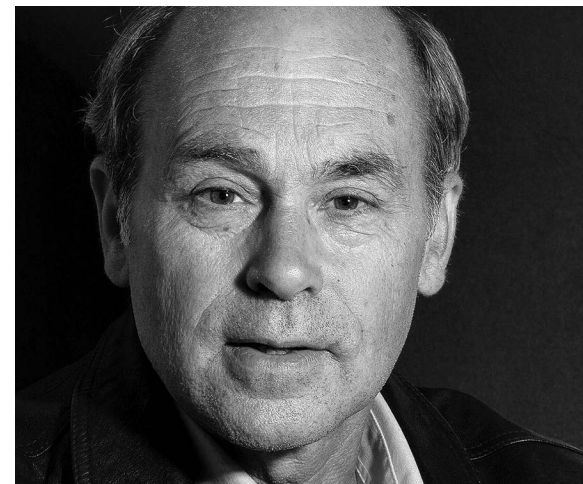


## Gord Downie, 1964–2017

Gord Downie was a musician, writer, performer and activist—but undoubtedly best known as The Tragically Hip's lead singer and lyricist. Formed in 1983, the award-winning band quickly gained popularity while playing in local Kingston music venues. In addition to Gord's career with The Hip, he also released six solo albums, and was a passionate advocate for Indigenous rights and reconciliation.

Gord made cameo appearances with his bandmates playing a curling team in *Men with Brooms* and playing a local band practicing in a garage in the *Corner Gas* episode "Rock On!" He played a police officer (along with Rush band member Alex Lifeson) in the Trailer Park Boys' movie *The Big Dirty*. *Long Time Running*, a documentary about The Tragically Hip's summer 2016 cross-Canada farewell concert tour, premiered at the 2017 Toronto International Film Festival.

Canadian actor and ACTRA member Dan Aykroyd called Downie's passing "the end of an era" and added, "Gord's writing, voice, music, dancing and genuine energetic talent in service of us all will be vital forever in our national, common emotional core."



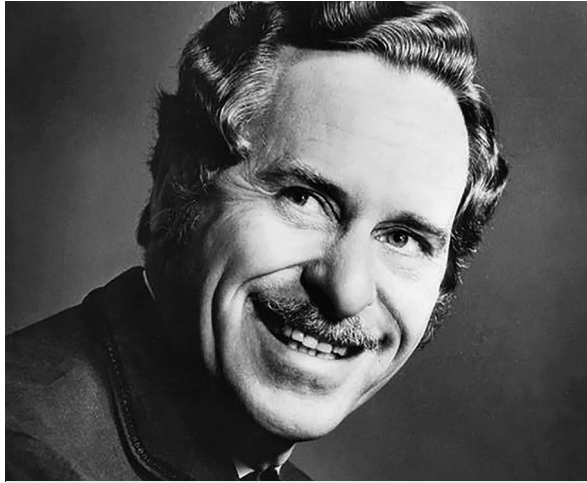
## John Dunsworth, 1946–2017

How can you possibly pay proper tribute in a couple hundred words to someone who changed thousands of lives? You can't. But I'll try because if there's one thing John Dunsworth loved—almost as much as his family and his work—it was words. In scripts, in Scrabble and in conversation. He used them in Latin and in daily love notes to his beautiful wife. He could savour them, swallow them or spit them out like no one else. John loved words the same way everyone loved him.

Here are just a few words to describe the most fearless, fun and unforgettable member of ACTRA Maritimes: Husband. Father. Brother. Son. Friend. Cheerleader. Believer. Manic. Mentor. Mischievous. Thoughtful. Profound. Spontaneous. Joyful. Magical. Romantic. Playful. Unpredictable. Unstoppable. Stonemason. Adventurer. Mariner. Challenging. Champion. Exciting. Excitable. Interested. Interesting. Devilish. Committed. Generous. Poet. Dreamer. Advocate. Fit. Fiery. Fireman. Vital. Present. Whimsical. Wise. Wonder. Wanderer. Actor.

We'll miss you dearly, John. Every actor you gave a start, every silenced group you gave a voice and every one of us who was lucky enough to spend even a moment with you.

Jonathan Torrens



### **Gordie Tapp, 1922–2016**

Comedian, entertainer, writer, and radio and television personality Gordie Tapp passed quietly in his sleep at the age of 94. He will be greatly missed by his family, friends and fans world-wide. My father's career spanned some 70 years starting in radio and then in television. He starred in shows such as CBC's *Country Hoedown* and the syndicated American variety show, *Hee Haw*.

Dad also entertained Canadian Forces personnel around the world and contributed his time to multiple charities. My father received the Order of Canada, the Order of Ontario and the Order of Saskatchewan for his commitment to the country he dearly loved.

Dad was often described as "the greatest storyteller on earth" and I'm certain he is continuing that legacy in heaven alongside Helen, his wife of 72 years.

Kathleen Tapp



### **Monty Hall, 1921–2017**

For 23 years, Monty Hall was widely known as the host of *Let's Make a Deal*.

After graduating from the University of Manitoba, he worked at radio stations in both Winnipeg and Toronto. He developed and hosted the quiz show *Who Am I* for CFRB and hosted a CBC television dance program.

After moving to the United States in 1955, Monty worked on radio and television for NBC, and later CBS hosting various programs. He hosted the game show *Keep Talking* in 1958. In 1963, he co-created *Let's Make a Deal*.

Monty was a major fundraiser for Variety Clubs International and other charitable causes. His daughter, Sharon Hall, estimates her father raised nearly \$1 billion over his lifetime for charity.

Monty was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1988 and a Member of the Order of Manitoba in 2003. He is one of three game show hosts (along with Alex Trebek and Howie Mandel) to have his name on both Canada's Walk of Fame in Toronto and Hollywood's Walk of Fame.

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Photo of Tatiana Maslany courtesy of Academy.ca/3 Pinnacle Photography

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