

ACTRA
TORONTO

THE MAGAZINE FROM ACTRA TORONTO

performers

VOLUME 23 • ISSUE 2 • FALL 2014

WHO IS
THE REAL
Tatiana
Maslany?



PLUS:
FILMMAKING
IN TORONTO
1974 | 2014

ACTING IN
VIDEO GAMES

SHOW ME
THE MONEY

LET'S TALK TV

and so much more!



YOUR *Performers* Magazine!

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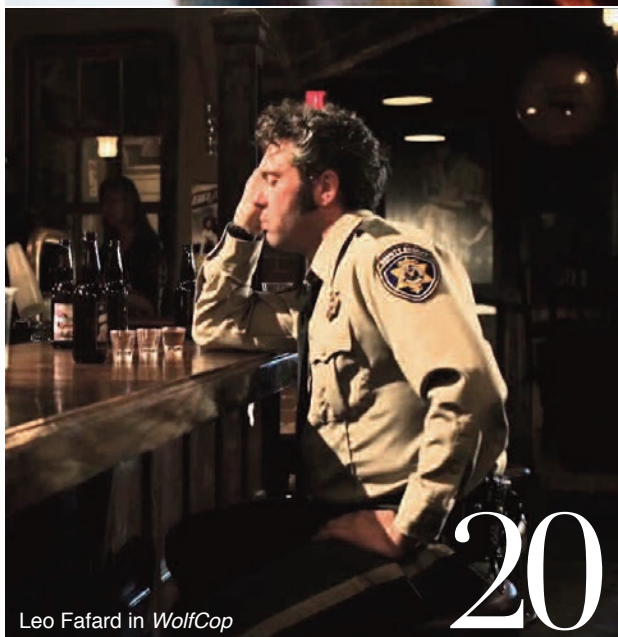
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Leo Fafard in *WolfCop*



Performers

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David Sparrow
ACTRA Toronto President

President's **Message**

ANOTHER ELECTION!?! OH WAIT, THAT'S A GOOD THING.



ACTRA Toronto V.P., **Wendy Crewson**, is famous for, among other things, teaching us that “to choose to be an artist in Canada is to choose to be an activist.” Less pithy but still true, I’d add, “To choose to be an artist in Canada is to choose to be informed about and actively involved in elections.”

In June 2014 we had a provincial election. We lobby provincial government to establish tax regimes that bring stability to our film and TV industry and allow creative enterprises to flourish. In 2015 we’ll have a federal election. We lobby the federal government too. They make decisions that affect the Canada Council, CBC, the Canadian Media Fund and the regulations that govern the conduct of producers and broadcasters. Drawing a straight line between those levels of our government and Canadian voices, stories and culture is easy.

But what about the Toronto city election on October 27th? Are municipal politics important to our industry? Well, yes. In fact,

many city departments are directly involved in helping to make film and TV production happen in Toronto. The City Councillors and Mayor you elect will make decisions that set the budgets for and direct the mandates of those departments.

Here are just a few:

Toronto Film Board – *The Toronto Film, Television & Digital Media Board* is an executive group made up of 14 industry members who advise the Mayor and City Council on matters of concern to the recorded media industries. ACTRA Toronto Director of Independent and Broadcast Production, **Mimi Wolch**, co-chairs this important industry board.

The Film Czar! – *The Toronto Film Commissioner and Director of Entertainment Industries* liaises with stakeholders across the industry and abroad to promote Toronto as a filming destination. ACTRA Toronto member **Zaib Shaikh** (*Little Mosque on the Prairie*) was recently appointed to this influential position. His

goal is to make Toronto into a “global media playground,” drawing upon our strength as a diverse and vibrant city.

Planning – The *City Planning* department sets the tone for development in Toronto. On their home page they describe a Toronto that “fosters creativity and opportunity.” A comprehensive plan that supports clean, green creative industries and the building of world-class studios is important to our city and our industry.

Permits – All permits to film on City of Toronto streets, property and parks are issued by the *Toronto Film, Television and Digital Media Office*. The office offers links to resources for talent, crews, government and industry connections, tax credits, studios, locations and suppliers. This one-stop shop and our reputation for film-friendly neighbourhoods attract productions from all over.

Police and Emergency Medical Services – Car chases, stunts, street scenes, public spaces... Police and ambulance personnel keep crews, talent and the public safe during production.

Transportation – Production vehicle and crew parking, snow removal, and road maintenance... all depends on cooperation from the *Transportation Services* department along with the assistance of *Parking Enforcement*.

Toronto Transit Commission – Getting to set and back home again often involves a bus, a train or both. More and better investment in our transit system will help build a city that works and moves.

Housing – A city that builds and maintains affordable housing, especially in proximity to artistic and innovation hubs, helps artists to thrive and to retire in dignity. Artists are a proven driver of development.

Economic Development and Culture Division – “The media entertainment industries are central to Toronto’s cultural vitality and economic strength,” says Mike Williams, General Manager of the Economic Development and Culture Division. That attitude helped to make Toronto the third largest production centre in North America. Active celebration of arts and culture supports tourism and ancillary industries while it weaves neighbourhoods and business improvement areas together across the city.

Some believe municipal politics has the most direct impact on the daily lives of residents. Its impact on our industry can’t be understated. So, as the city election approaches, think about *your* vote for *your* industry. Ask your councillor and mayoral candidates where they stand on arts and culture. Ask them what they’ll do to support and facilitate the film and TV industry. Ask them if they know how important an economic driver we are for this city (\$1.15B in 2013). Get out and help a candidate you trust to bring your voice to City Council. But most of all, be an activist and VOTE.

Together our choices will build a strong industry and a vital city. ●

In solidarity,



David Sparrow, ACTRA Toronto President

“The media entertainment industries are central to Toronto's cultural vitality and economic strength,” says Mike Williams, General Manager of the Economic Development and Culture Division. That attitude helped to make Toronto the third largest production centre in North America.”

WHO IS
THE REAL
TATIANA
MASLANY?

Photo: Adam Cantor



Tatiana Maslany's name rings with critics, clone fans and Canadians. I've been an admirer of her work for many years. I first noticed her in *Heartland*, where she played rodeo circuit rider Kit Bailey, Amy Fleming's rival for Ty Borden's affection over three seasons. I remember thinking, 'I love her characterization and the nuances of her turns.'

At TIFF 2012, I saw her play the lead, Claire, in a TiP film called *Picture Day*, for which she later won the 2013 ACTRA Award in Toronto for Outstanding Performance, Female. Shortly after, I heard she'd won the lead role in a new Sci-Fi series called *Orphan Black*. I was thrilled a Canadian had booked the lead in this promising series and I couldn't wait to see her work, watch her tell the story and breathe these clone characters into life. In *Orphan Black* she plays eight characters so far and frequently has scenes with herself. The first season was incredible and took the world by storm; I was hooked. The second season had me hanging on the edge of my seat, craving each next episode.

With critical acclaim for her work and international appreciation, Canadian pride in Tatiana has soared. The list of awards for her performances is growing. ACTRA Toronto's pride in her and happiness for her is the reason she graces the cover of this issue of *Performers* in a photo by Sam Santos of Canada's premier celebrity photographer, George Pimentel Photography. It's wonderful to see her get the recognition she so richly deserves.

But what is she really like? I'd met her a few times on the set of *Orphan Black* and was always impressed with her work ethic, her on-set etiquette and her generosity. I asked a few people she works with to share some of their experiences of her.

Actor **Kent Nolan** had this to say, "Tat has never relied solely on talent. Yes, *Orphan* gives her a chance to show her natural acting chops on TV, but Tat is dedicated to the craft. She puts hours into the script, into character prep. She never just shows up to work. She shows up having already done her work and ready to dig deeper. And that can be rare with young actors.

"She's actually hilarious. Some people were surprised when she landed a spot on *Parks and Rec* but when I heard, I was like, 'Finally!' She used to steal scenes on the regular in her improv group back in Regina. Not intentionally. She just naturally has a great sense of humour."

Her voice coach on *Orphan Black*, **John Nelles**, offers his observations and experiences. "Working with Tatiana shows me her openness to exploring and discovery. When in front of the camera she is always present and trying new things, sometimes very subtle, sometimes bigger; but she is always seeking truth in the scenes, living the lives of each clone. Her skill is that in every take of a scene she is adjusting, reacting and probing to

keep looking for the truth within the scene, finding connection with the other actors. This pursuit goes on throughout the shooting day.

"Some days, we'll be shooting a scene with more than one clone. Tatiana is set to play one, while Kathryn (her Acting Double) doubles the next clone. They may have spoken ahead of time, but on the floor, they'll do a private blocking with the director, D.O.P and a few others, where they figure out how to shoot, and delve into any last minute questions about what's going on in the scene. Tatiana will do her performance as clone one and also multitask with what Kathryn is doing as clone two. Kathryn is very skilled at knowing the characters well enough now to do what works, and Tatiana may step in briefly or figure something out for clone two to enhance the performances. She thinks of both parts: what's going on for both and how to make it work.

"She puts hours into the script, into character prep. She never just shows up to work. She shows up having already done her work and ready to dig deeper. And that can be rare with young actors."

"Then we do a 'clone changeover' where both actors switch makeup, wardrobe, and focus, to return and play the other clone. Kathryn has been watching Tatiana during her performance in order to be able to do what Tatiana was doing, to be there for Tatiana as she fits into what has been shot for the second clone character. As we continue, Tatiana adjusts and refines the performance, while staying within the parameters of what's been shot. Both of them remain so focused and open to each other as they make it all come together. It's fascinating to watch and be a part of.

"Sometimes one of the clones has to impersonate another clone. Sometimes it's to gain access to someplace, like the Dyad party, or, even trickier, with someone who is very familiar with the clone the character is impersonating. Tatiana considers: how good is this clone at the impersonation; what 'tells' might there be; when to reveal or not that it's really not the clone we think it is. We work vocally on how one tries to match the other's voice or characteristics. She is so good at finding the right blend to make it believable without being obvious. I think she also trusts the audience to keep up.

When I speak with her about a dialect note, or she gets notes from the director or camera crew, she is open and focused, and,

WHO IS THE REAL TATIANA MASLANY?



Tatiana Maslany with Indrit Kasapi (L) and Ben Lewis (R) in a publicity still for *Other People*.

Photo: Mercedes Grundy

in the next take, the note is there, incorporated and explored. She is able to do it with equal skill with each clone. That's the real mastery - she does it with all of them!"

Kathryn Alexandre, Tatiana's Acting Double on *Orphan Black* shares this: "Watching Tatiana work has been the best acting lesson I have ever had. A true professional, acting is her craft and she is unrelentingly dedicated to perfecting it. The set is her workspace and you watch her use the space to mine the character's journey in the scene, their physicality, their emotional core, their obstacles, their point and counterpoint. She is

"She is a true lead. She leads the cast and crew by example in hard work, dedication, professionalism, manners, encouragement, love, and absolute childlike fun and silliness."

unafraid to explore every possible avenue and is an open well of story, emotion, and action for her scene partner(s) to access and play off. Her skill really shines when she knows the scene is not sitting where it needs to and she bravely digs deeper and does whatever she has to do, to push herself to where she needs to go. All of this is fuelled by intense love for her craft, and accomplished with such grace, humility, generosity and infectious joy for the work at hand. Watching Tatiana is watching an incredibly skilled artist at work. It's an honour."

"Tatiana is always the least important person in the room – in her eyes. She is the mother hen. She is forever telling others to please go before her at the lunch table, always checking in and asking if everyone has all that they need, always asking how you are feeling and how your mother is, always noticing when someone is down and picking them back up, always making you laugh with a funny face right when you need it, always honest with advice and encouragement, and always the hardest working and likely the most tired person in the room but never showing it. She is a true lead. She leads the cast and crew by example in hard work, dedication, professionalism, manners, encouragement, love, and absolute childlike fun and silliness."

Stephen Lynch is Head of Makeup for *Orphan Black*. "I guess one of the oh-so-many things that's remarkable about working with Tatiana and watching her work, is her ability to compartmentalize. It is so impressive to witness this young woman immerse herself in the headspace and the physicality of one of her characters and not become overwhelmed at the enormity of the project or her responsibilities. It's quite a talent. That, and her enormous capacity for chocolate."

Actor **Richard Lee** spoke about working with Tatiana in the stage show *Other People* at Tank House Theatre in Toronto in January 2012.

"While watching her through our rehearsal process, I began to realize she had all the qualities of a great performer. She had things I was seeking in my own practice: a rigorous, diligent and intelligent approach to the acting work; a brave, fierce, and truly intrepid sense of exploration that allowed her to really push the work. And finally, she has a work attitude that was inviting, graceful and kind. In a word, she was the kind of actor

TATIANA MASLANY

ACTORS BIO



that I had aspired to become my entire career and she did it all with such humility that I was truly humbled to see her work. She is my reminder that a good work ethic and good attitude are always the path of a great actor.”

Aaron Willis was her Director in *Other People*. “I loved directing Tat. She is an absolutely fearless and vulnerable performer. And she’s generous, funny, and an absolute joy to have in an acting ensemble. Her skill and versatility are remarkable – it doesn’t surprise me at all how she can carry *Orphan Black* the way she does.”

Actor **Sarah Gadon** shared this personal anecdote. “I was playing Frisbee with Tatiana in Regent Park last month. It was one of those gorgeous sunny days that seem to burst through the middle of a rainy spring. We had kicked off our shoes and were running around barefoot, like kids. I remember at one point watching Tat double over with laughter, tears coming to her eyes, hair everywhere and thinking, ‘there is something utterly compelling about her.’ I love to watch her swim around inside her emotions. She experiences life in its fullest capacity - with such freedom. It’s this quality that makes her one of the most fearless actresses I’ve ever encountered. It also makes her one of the best people to spend a sunny day with.” ●

“I loved directing Tat. She is an absolutely fearless and vulnerable performer. And she’s generous, funny, and an absolute joy to have in an acting ensemble.”

– **Aaron Willis**, Director, *Other People*



Past President, Heather Allin is an actor, playwright, filmmaker and activist. She was President of ACTRA Toronto from 2009 to 2013.

Selected Credits:

FILM

Cas & Dylan
Picture Day
Grown Up Movie Star
Ginger Snaps 2: Unleashed

TV

Parks and Recreation
World Without End
Being Erica
The Nativity
Heartland
Flashpoint
Instant Star
Would Be Kings
RenegadePress.com
2030 CE

VOICE

Captain Canuck (voice of Redcoat)

SELECTED AWARDS

Orphan Black: ACTRA Award in Toronto nomination, Critic’s Choice TV Award, Canadian Screen Award, Golden Globe nomination, Gracie Allen Award, People’s Choice Award nomination, Satellite Award nomination, Television Critics Association Award, Young Hollywood Award.

Cas & Dylan: CSA Nomination, Phillip Borsos Award

Picture Day: Phillip Borsos Award, VFCC Award, ACTRA Award in Toronto, Breakthrough Performer

Grown Up Movie Star: Sundance Special Jury Prize, Genie nomination

***Flashpoint*, “Planets Aligned”**: Gemini Award

RenegadePress.com: Gemini nomination

Ginger Snaps2: Unleashed: Chainsaw Award

2030 CE: Blizzard

FILMMAKING IN TORONTO

1974 | 2014

My Mom loved taking me to the movies.

She loved movies and I learned to love them because of her. That shimmering screen held magic people with magic stories. Even the projector ray was mysterious. Thanks, Mom.

Growing up in the Beaches of Toronto, filmmaking was an unknown craft to me. It was unknown to most Torontonians. There were only a very few centres of film production in the world and many Canadians left home to create cinema classics: **Mack Sennett**, **Mary Pickford**, among a surprisingly large number.

But many talents stayed. Eventually, they became a part of the surge in made-in-Canada movies. Homegrown classics such as **Don Shebib's** *Goin' Down The Road*, **Gordon Pinsent's** *The Rowdyman*, and the gay-themed *Winter Kept Us Warm* - the first English-language Canadian film to screen at the Cannes Film Festival. They were produced right in my backyard... sort of.

Suddenly Canadian films were getting international, if not local, attention. Most pictures in the neighbourhood cinemas were British or American. The Government of Canada successfully developed the National Film Board, whose 1944 film, *Churchill's Island*, won an Academy Award. Next, they granted \$10 million to the burgeoning industry by creating the Canadian Film Development Corporation (CFDC) in 1967, with the erudite **Michael Spencer** as its first executive

director. Its mandate was to foster and promote the the development of a feature film industry in Canada. Productions increased by multiples. The CFDC required all financed films to have at least 65% Canadian actors above the line. The producers quickly deduced that meant they could cast 35% of the roles with Hollywood stars or, sometimes, fading Hollywood stars. American actors poured into Toronto.

Toronto became Hollywood North and, almost out of necessity, the Toronto International Film Festival was established.

I became an actor right around the time the CFDC was founded. It wasn't much help to me - not all films got financing from them. For example, *Goin' Down The Road* was done on a shoestring or, rather, Don Shebib's credit card. My first major film was *Faceoff* and it was Canada's first million dollar movie. It opened in hundreds of theatres across Canada and got me



Don Shebib's *Goin' Down The Road*

I was here in 1974...

by Art Hindle



Photo: Marcus Obal

noticed here and in Hollywood. But I was determined to stay in Canada and try to do films like Shebib's — until I took a meeting with a woman doing a film about a painter I'd long admired and discovered that all she wanted to know was my astrological sign. When I asked why, she said she found people of certain signs worked better together. I left that meeting disillusioned and angry — 'My tax dollars going to a film casting according to horoscopes?!' I told friends that, if I really wanted to work with off-the-wall directors, I might as well take up the Hollywood offers. Which is what I did. In the end, I was hired because of my talent, not my citizenship, or my sign. The CFDC kick-started the Canadian film industry but it was a wild and uneven process.

Today we can say with assurance that we've grown up to the point where we stand on our own. We can brag about tremendous talents both in front of and behind the cameras. (See cover article on **Tatiana Maslany**.)

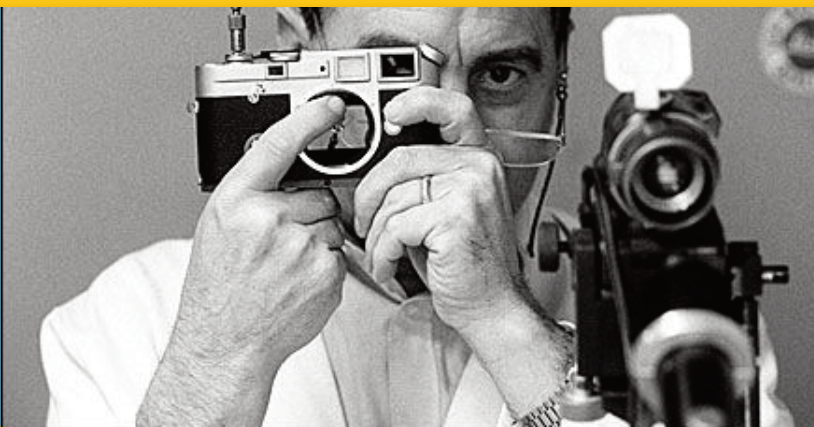
Our TV and film product sells around the world, garnering rave reviews and awards. Our children's live action and animation programming is an especially successful export. With a small population spread thinly across the second-largest country in the world, we will always need government investment in our industry, as do our energy, oil and aviation industries. But our industry provides ample return on that investment: it's a green industry that attracts and nourishes the desirable "creative clusters" that revitalize cities and create high-quality skilled jobs and it is a vital part of our unique culture. For that, I'm proud that both tax credits and I have grown old together so gracefully. ●



Faceoff was Canada's first million dollar movie.



"Toronto became Hollywood North and, almost out of necessity, the Toronto International Film Festival was established."



Shown here. The CBC logo used from 1974-1986

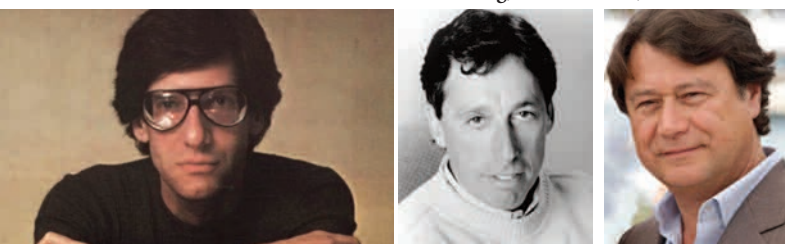
- CBC was 38 years old • NFB was 25 years old • **Jean Gascon** was the Artistic Director of Stratford
- Theatre Passe Muraille, Factory, Toronto Free and Tarragon were the avant-garde theatres in Toronto.
- **Popular TV shows:** *The Beachcombers*, *Swiss Family Robinson*, *Singalong Jubilee*, *The National Dream*.
- The Board of Censors was snipping scenes out of films coming into Ontario.
Films cut: *Pretty Baby*, *In Praise of Older Women*, *Coming Home*, *The Tin Drum* (source: Wikipedia)
- All the cinemas were owned by Americans and none would agree to program a Canadian film.

THE INFAMOUS TAX SHELTER YEARS



In 1974, a brand new Capital Cost Allowance deduction allowed investors to write off 100 per cent of their investment in film. Monied professionals actually hoped the film wouldn't do well, so they could use the loss to reduce their overall income tax bill. Some of the films made during this period were never released. B-list American actors were paid more money than they could command in the U.S. to come to Toronto and star in projects of sometimes dubious artistic merit. Toronto posed as a vaguely unidentifiable American city. Survivors: **David Cronenberg**, **Ivan Reitman**, **Robert Lantos**. It has been said that the only people who made money during this period were lawyers and tax brokers but that is not strictly true. ACTRA was already insisting upon a good wage for actors.

Tax Shelter Survivors: David Cronenberg, Ivan Reitman, Robert Lantos



12 ACTRA TORONTO PERFORMERS

QUOTES FROM THE PAST:



"Faced with an indifferent public, harsh critics, limited funds, and foreign-owned movie houses, filmmaking in Canada is, by necessity, a labour of love."
"You cannot make a feature film in Canada and get your money back."

Filmmaker, **Paul Donovan**
(quoted on CBC's archives) Photo: Astrid Warberg



"We've been brought up on product from abroad and Canadians don't, I don't think, care very much one way or another really."

Budge Crawley, NFB Producer and father of former ACTRA Toronto President, **Sandy Crawley**

2014

Toronto has numerous screened-based industrial hubs: the Port Lands, Eastern Ave., Kipling and Evans, Wallace and Dufferin, Liberty Village, to name a few. We host big-budget tent-pole features like *Pacific Rim* and *Pixels* in no small part because our stunt performers are second to none. Our domestic TV industry is the healthiest it has ever been.

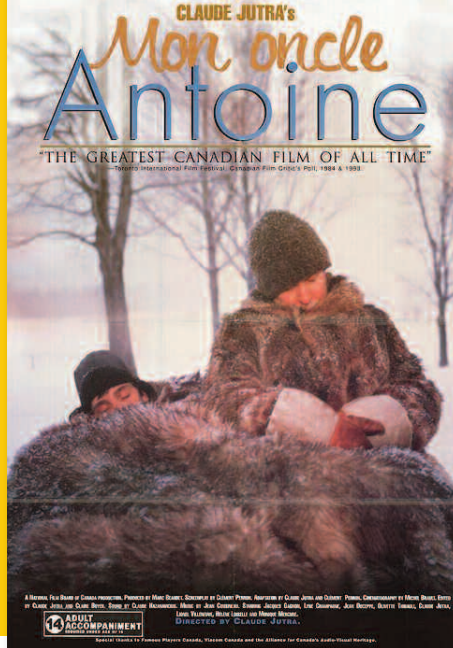


IT'S A FACT

STATISTICS (2013)

25,000 people directly employed in Toronto's film and TV industry
1,100 projects filmed.

(Source: City of Toronto/Doing Business/Film in Toronto/ Made here. Seen everywhere.)



Mon oncle Antoine is a National Film Board of Canada French language film from the early '70s. Poster design: Erick Querci



The Ontario Board of Censors took offense at 'In Praise of Older Women'. Photo Courtesy Everett Collection.

All this leads us to wish for a mayor who will not mess it up. Though much cultural policy is forged in the cauldrons of federal and provincial ministries, a municipal government can better our fortunes. As the country's largest metropolis, Toronto has a loud voice and can advocate for itself to other levels of government.



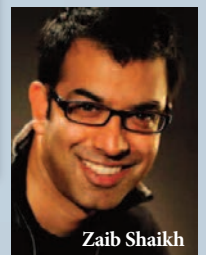
QUESTION FOR A WOULD-BE MAYOR

Background: Toronto has purpose-built, state-of-the-next-art studios and a diverse pool of trained professionals, specialists and experts, combined with graduates from eight major universities and community colleges. Toronto is where unique artistic, computational and networking excellence can be channeled into a globally competitive screen-based industry.

Question: Will you invest in our creative capacity?

The fine points:

- 1) **Transit** is an entertainment issue. Performers must be able to get to work in the entertainment hubs by public transit.
- 2) **The Toronto Arts Council** needs to support the theatre work through which our members sharpen their skills.
- 3) Toronto's artists are among its poorest residents. Social housing, including **subsidized work/live spaces** are needed to keep them from relocating to other parts of Canada or the U.S. Senior artists are in urgent need of subsidized housing along the lines of the **Performing Arts Lodge**.
- 4) There are many businesses looking for a foothold in the developing Port Lands: retail, residential, sports. The entertainment industry has already invested in the area and is established. The Mayor needs to **keep screen-based jobs and businesses a top priority in land use planning**.
- 5) **Parking** for production vehicles is vital to our business. The city needs to include it when planning screened-based hubs.
- 6) The Mayor should advocate at the federal level to **eliminate the Canadian Media Fund incentive for production to go to less-serviced remote regions**. The expertise and infrastructure are here in Toronto. The Mayor needs to insist we keep it here.



Zaib Shaikh

TORONTO'S FILM, TELEVISION AND DIGITAL MEDIA OFFICE

The City's Film, Television and Digital Media Office has appointed ACTRA member **Zaib Shaikh** its new Commissioner and Director of Entertainment Industries. The office "supports the industry by providing a one-stop shop for everything from permits to planning and guidelines." (City of Toronto communication) Zaib Shaikh's profile and industry intelligence will serve us well marketing Toronto to foreign producers.



Art Hindle is an old actor/director who witnessed the dawn of film tax credits. He does not want to be around to witness their demise.



By Elias Toufexis

Acting in Video Games

Or, how I learned to stop worrying and just go with this whole thing.

Whenever a fellow actor or actress recognizes me at an audition or on set, I've learned to prepare myself for the inevitable questions about my work in video games.

How did you get into games? Is it just voice work? Where do you work most of the time? Does it pay well? Do you have groupies?

Ok, nobody has asked that last one... and I don't. Well, maybe a few.

Video games evolve so quickly that the job for an actor changes from gig to gig. These days most AAA (high budget) games use

what is called performance capture, while other video games only want voice work. I've worked extensively in both.

Performance capture is when you put on a tight black suit with "dots" or "markers" that are attached to various points on your body. These dots are captured by about 40 plus cameras and translated by computer into a loose skeleton of your body. There is also a small helmet-mounted camera pointed at your face. Data from the helmet camera is also fed into the computer and, eventually, animated over with your likeness (sometimes just your facial movements, but not your likeness. Think Andy Serkis as Caesar in the *Planet of the Apes* movies). You're also

“

Video games evolve so quickly that the job for an actor changes from gig to gig.

”



mic'd so your entire vocal, physical, emotional performance is captured.

Voice work is what you'd think it is, for the most part.

Voice work, performance capture or acting in film and TV; they are very different of course, and each has its merits, but preparing a character is the same whatever the medium, isn't it?

My first job was on a game called *Need for Speed: Carbon*. I auditioned for it as I would for any film or TV show because this game was using live actors for the scenes in between the gaming. My character in this game was just a filmed version of me. It wasn't much different than working on a film set, except mostly in front of a green screen. If only the rest of the games were this simple.

Then came *Rainbow Six: Vegas 2*, which I auditioned for as a voice actor and booked the role. This was still in the early days of performance capture. I simply said my lines like I would in an animation project and they had the designers themselves capture the characters in the motion capture suits. It hurt the final project because you had non-actors doing the body movements of professional actors and trying to match our performances. It was disjointed.

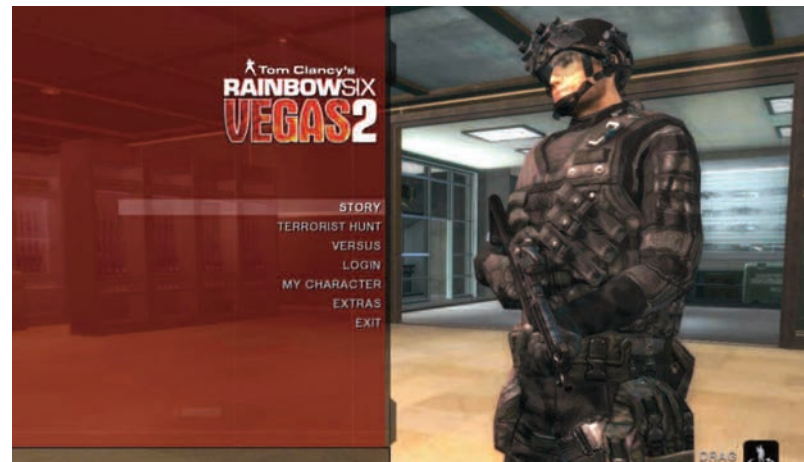
Eventually gaming companies noticed the problem and decided that it *might be a good idea* to have actors do the voice, face and body of a character. So my experience in the first two games kind of amalgamated into performance capture. Now, 90 per cent of the time, the projects we work on are full on performance capture.

A performance capture day is like any other day on a set. You have your director, your fellow actors and your make-up and hair people, except instead of making you look pretty, they

make you look like this.

Then you go about your day performing scenes as you would on any film set, except there's no need to re-light or reset cameras so it moves along more quickly. A lot of times, unlike film, you have to go through entire scenes without cutting; the reason being that the player is the one actually controlling the camera during these scenes, so there are no edit points. If you mess up, you have to start all over.

A little added bonus about performance capture is that you only work office hours. You're there from 8 to 5. You hardly ever go into overtime. The pay ain't half bad either. (Thank you, ACTRA.)



Screen capture image of *Rainbow Six: Vegas 2*

Acting in Video Games continued

“We have major gaming companies in Canada: Ubisoft, Eidos Montreal, Bioware... all top-of-the-line companies making multi-million dollar games. They are using a lot of Canadian actors from across the country.”



Elias Toufexis at work in Performance Capture studio

There's still voice work, to be sure. A game I'm presently working on has scenes that I've performance captured but the 'in-game' experience is a first person view, (meaning, when you play, you see what the character you're playing sees), so you'll just be hearing my voice for a good portion of the game.

The voice work in games is more or less the same as for an animated project in that you record from a script, with your fellow actors as often as possible. Then the game is animated over your voice, like a cartoon would be. The only real difference is that oftentimes you have to perform what are called "barks," which is an entire four-hour session of yelling things like "Grenade!" or "To the left!" then another four hours of "Breath heavy running" and "Jump medium height."

Try voicing the effort noise of "Jump short height."

Now try "Jump medium height."

Now do it for four hours.

The lucky thing for us Canadian actors is that this is just the beginning. We have major gaming companies in Canada: Ubisoft, Eidos Montreal, Bioware and a few others. These are all top-of-the-line companies making multi-million dollar

games. They are using a lot of Canadian actors from across the country.

This medium is exploding and we are right in the middle of it.

At first, being a fancy and serious actor, I had some issues with acting in video games. You know what, though? Most of the games I work on have scripts and characters that are equal to or better than the TV shows I do. Because of games, I get invited to conventions all over the world. (Ok, I've been in a bunch of sci-fi shows too. Canada is also full of those!) I've sat for hours signing autographs in places like London, Sacramento, Los Angeles, Montreal and the big Fan Expo in Toronto. It's a blast.

The gaming companies themselves have huge marketing budgets, so, if you play a major role, they bring you to different festivals and press junkets. It's all a ridiculous amount of fun.

So, how do you get into this?

You don't need a specific type of agent because most companies are now casting their games using casting directors we all know. Talk to your agent, check with casting directors and then audition your butt off. Don't forget though, just because this is a video game doesn't mean you should audition any differently than you would for a TV show. Don't overdo it. A character in a game these days is just as subtle as one in a film, in some ways, more so. Basically, "Do not saw the air too much with your hand thus, but use all gently."

Did I just quote Shakespeare in an article about video games? Damn right. ●



Elias and his character Adam Jensen from *Deus Ex: Human Revolution*

Elias Toufexis was on ACTRA's Bargaining Committee for the Ubisoft Agreement. For Elias' full bio go to: <http://about.me/eliasoufexis>



UBISOFT™

More Intel on Video Gaming

Founded in 1986, Ubisoft is the fourth largest videogame producer worldwide. The French company is headquartered in Montreal and has 29 studios in 19 countries. They have 17 franchises including *Assassin's Creed*, *Driver*, *Rabbids*, *Rayman*, *Red Steel*, *Far Cry*, *Just Dance* and *Splinter Cell*. Their sales in 2012-13 came to €1.256 billion. They opened a Toronto studio on Wallace Avenue in 2012 with a performance capture facility equipped with 80 performance capture cameras. They have partnered with Sheridan College's Screen Industries and Research Training Centre (SIRT) which trains students to work with performance capture technology. The Toronto facility opened soon after the province's digital media tax credit was expanded. Excited about the high-quality job opportunities, the Government of Ontario invested \$263 million.

At the press conference to announce the opening of the Toronto studio, the *National Post* quoted **Yannis Mallat**, chief executive of Ubisoft Toronto and Montreal saying, "Virtual production, specifically performance capture, is a critical part of the experience we provide to players around the world. It contributes to storytelling in our games and delivers narrative and interactive gameplay to maximize immersion for the players."

ACTRA performers have been working in Ubisoft games since 2003, starting with *Myst*. Our first complete, unified agreement with Ubisoft was ratified this year covering rates, residuals and working conditions on all Ubisoft games. ACTRA is actively seeking agreements with other smaller game producers.

ACTRA Toronto also has a relationship with SIRT to bring the superior skills of professional performers to game developers in training.

Click here to watch actors perform this kind of work:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=12matnRFT10>



Show me the Money

By Chris Owens
Editor, *Performers Magazine*

So you want to make a movie. What are some of your financing options?

The first thing you should know is that financing a movie can be a complicated venture. In some ways, you may have to be as creative in your approach to fundraising as you are in your approach to filmmaking. Unless you are that rare bird who can straddle the two worlds of art and business, you will probably need to enlist the help of an experienced producer, an accountant, and/or an entertainment lawyer.

On the plus side, movies get made everyday. Determined storytellers find a way to raise money and produce films despite the odds - and the paperwork. To give you an idea of what's out there, here are some of the key options: federal and provincial tax credits, Telefilm funding programs, private sector funding, and crowdfunding.

Read on my friend

Show me the Money continued

FEDERAL TAX CREDITS

To qualify for federal tax credits, your film must meet certain prescribed criteria outlined in the guidelines published by the Canadian Audio-Visual Certification Office (CAVCO). There are different rules depending upon whether you're applying for the *Canadian Film or Video Production Tax Credit* (CPTC) (the credit is for 25 per cent of "eligible labour") or whether you're applying for the *Film or Video Production Services Tax Credit* (PSTC) (the credit is for 16 per cent of "eligible labour"). The rules are quite complex. For example, to be eligible for the CPTC - also known as the "Canadian content" tax credit - your film must be produced by an eligible Canadian production company and that company must own 100 per cent of the copyright of the film. The film also has to meet the "points test" and the "spend tests." Good news for Canadian performers: the "points test" requires that the first or second lead performer in the film must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident. No exceptions.

The PSTC - also known as the "production services" tax credit - has a bit more flexibility in terms of the requirements (the film doesn't have to be owned by a Canadian company, no need to meet points test, etc.) but there still are specific requirements the film must meet in order to qualify. Bottom line: if you're considering applying for tax credits to help fund your film, you should definitely start by consulting CAVCO's guidelines (available online at: www.pch.gc.ca) as well as the counterpart rules for each of the provincial jurisdictions that offer tax credits.

PROVINCIAL TAX CREDITS



Ontario

Ontario Media Development Corporation

guidelines with respect to each of the three tax credits that it administers:

The Ontario Film & Television Tax Credit (OFTTC) is a refundable tax credit of 35 per cent of qualified Ontario labour expenditures available to eligible Ontario-based Canadian corporations for eligible film and television production.

Ontario Interactive Digital Media Tax Credit (OIDMTC) is a refundable tax credit to qualifying Ontario-based corporations of up to 40 per cent of eligible expenditures for interactive digital media products created in Ontario.

The Ontario Production Services Tax Credit (OPSTC) is a refundable tax credit to eligible Ontario-based Canadian and foreign-controlled corporations of 25 per cent of qualified Ontario production expenditures for eligible film and television productions.

TELEFILM FUNDING

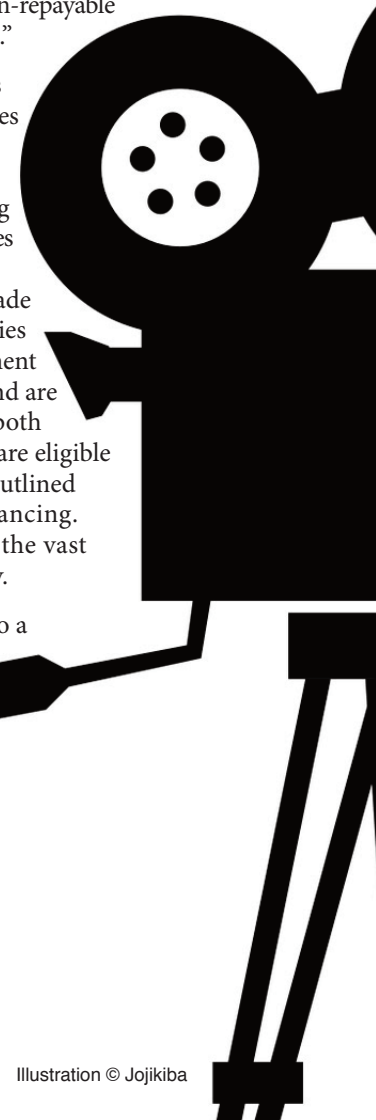
**TELEFILM
CANADA**

Telefilm Canada is a federal government agency that provides financing and promotes Canadian films through its various funds and programs. On Telefilm's website (www.telefilm.ca) you can find the applications and review the necessary requirements. You can also phone or arrange a meeting to consult with a Telefilm analyst who can help you navigate the maze and requirements of the various funding programs. Eligibility is based on a variety of criteria, including, for example, your track record and those of your production team.

One of the programs Telefilm offers is a Micro-budget Production Program for first-time feature-length filmmakers with an emphasis on the use of digital platforms for marketing, distribution and audience engagement. According to Telefilm's website, they fund: "8-10 projects through the main component and up to 3 projects in the Aboriginal component. Support will be through a non-repayable financial contribution of up to \$120,000."

Telefilm also administers all of Canada's film and television co-production treaties with 53 countries. These treaties assist Canadian producers and their foreign counterparts in collaborating and pooling financial and creative resources to help get their project to "greenlight". One of the key advantages of movies made and certified under co-production treaties is that they can enjoy all of the government incentives available to domestic films and are considered to be 'national products' in both participating countries. These 'co-pros' are eligible for the "Canadian content" tax credits outlined above as well as direct government financing. European countries tend to comprise the vast majority of our co-production activity.

Notably, the United States is not party to a co-production treaty with Canada (clearly, not necessary given the level of U.S.-based film activity in Canada!).





PRIVATE FUNDING

THE HAROLD GREENBERG FUND

In terms of private funding, there are a number of options to consider. For example, the Harold Greenberg Fund is a key fund that has invested almost \$84 million in Canadian films, comprising some 3,982 projects. It has a Script Development program, an Equity Investment program and an Industry Initiatives program. The rules and guidelines for these programs are all available online.

Here is a list of private funds each with different requirements and some with specific areas of interest:

The Harold Greenberg Fund

www.bellmedia.ca/harold-greenberg-fund/

Bell Broadcast and New Media Fund

www.bellfund.ca

Rogers Documentary Fund

Rogers Telefund

Rogers Cable Network Fund

www.rogersgroupoffunds.com

Independent Production Fund

www.ipf.ca

Shaw Rocket Fund

www.rocketfund.ca

Cogeco Program Development Fund

www.cogecofund.ca



Chris Owens is the editor of *Performers*. He's a fan of his 93-year-old grandmother's self-titled band, *Olga and Friends*. He plays hockey with Sgt Rock.

CROWDFUNDING



Over the last few years, crowdfunding has become a new way to raise film financing through platforms such as Kickstarter and Indiegogo. To put it simply: project creators set a funding goal and a deadline. If people like a project, they can pledge money to help make it a reality. Note, however, it is important to do your research since these crowdfunding platforms each have specific requirements. For example, funding on Kickstarter is "all or nothing." Projects must reach their funding goals to receive any money. Otherwise, they get nothing. According to the Kickstarter website: "All-or-nothing funding might seem scary, but it's amazingly effective in creating momentum and rallying people around an idea. To date, an impressive 44% of projects have reached their funding goals."

Crowdfunding is a good alternative when traditional methods of financing are unavailable. For example, Saskatchewan is currently without a film production incentive program. This led Regina filmmaker **Lowell Dean** to come up with other creative ways to finance his movie: *WolfCop*. He entered to win a \$1 million funding prize offered by the CineCoup Film Accelerator (a Canadian social platform designed to create interest and funds for independent projects). The contest involved making a trailer for the film followed by online voting and a final pitch to a panel of judges in Banff. He won and the Canadian horror film *WolfCop* was born.

(L to R) Amy Matysio, Leo Fafard and Aidan Devine in *WolfCop*.

Photo courtesy of Wolf Cop Productions Inc.



In an effort to expand the story, Dean and his producers launched their own Indiegogo campaign to raise money for *WolfCop* extras, like an action figure and graphic novel trilogy. So far they've raised nearly \$13,000 — \$3,000 more than their original goal.

There are lots of ways to finance a film project. Make sure you consider all of your options. Stay determined. Think creatively. Tell your story in any way you can. Where there's a will, quite often there's a way. ●

Performer-Producers

IS PRODUCING **HELPING** OR **HURTING** YOUR ACTING CAREER?

By Katherine Barrell

Last spring I sat clutching a complicated iced-coffee confection across from one of the most accomplished film producers in Canada. I was brimming with pride as I broke the news of my newfound passion. "I'd like to start producing." There was an awkward silence while I waited for a joyful roar of encouragement, and then, "You're already an actor, isn't that hard enough?"

Well it wasn't the answer I was expecting and it definitely planted a seed of doubt. The dilemma – is producing helping or hurting my acting career?

I sat down with my good friend **Sarah Booth** to ask her the same question. Sarah and her husband **Gavin Michael Booth** have spent the last year producing their feature film, *The Scarehouse*, which they co-wrote and produced. Sarah stars and Gavin directs. The film was shopped at the recent Cannes film market where it garnered offers from around the globe. In addition, *The Scarehouse* is already set for theatrical release by NBC Universal in the U.S. and D Films in Canada.

Sarah gives me a knowing grin. Clearly we have both struggled with the same question. "At first I thought yes - but then I think that's ridiculous! Because I produce I am a better actor... I understand filmmaking more. Instead of doing something out of fear (I'm) doing it from a place of confidence. Ninety per cent of this business is confidence. If you know what you're doing you'll be fine."

If there's one person in Canada who knows that being a performer-producer is a ticket to success it's **Michael Levine**, a man who has dedicated his career to championing Canadian talent. Michael is one of Canada's leading entertainment lawyers, a founding director of the Canadian Film Centre, serves on the board of several of Canada's leading cultural institutions, and has produced a wide range of film and television programs. Most notably, he became the catalyst for the creation of *Republic of Doyle* when he introduced actor-creator **Allan Hawco** to the team at CBC. *Republic of Doyle* enjoyed six seasons as a popular Canadian television series with actor, creator, and producer Allan Hawco at the helm.

"That's my sweet spot," Michael says when I ask him why he is drawn to artists like Hawco. "I'm attracted to multidisciplinary artists. It's (also) a magic combination of charisma, energy, talent, intelligence – I've dedicated my life to mentoring young people like that."

I recently attended a seminar hosted by **Sarah Fowlie**, Director of Comedy Development at Bell Media. She said they are especially interested in actors bringing their own work to the





Photos courtesy of Getty Images and CBC.ca

Successful Performer-Producers: Allan Hawco, Eugene Levy, Kim Cattrall and Gerry Dee.

table, that there is a “shift from building a show and then trying to find the perfect performer to fit the role, to building a show for a specific performer. The latter will inevitably be stronger.”

More and more Canadian actors are putting on producer hats; **Eugene Levy** is at the helm as creator, executive producer and star of *Schitt's Creek* (CBC 2014); **Kim Cattrall** serves as executive producer and star of *Sensitive Skin* (HBO Canada 2014); and **Gerry Dee** has played four seasons of *Mr. D* on CBC of which he is creator, executive producer and star.

In the year-and-a-half I have been producing I have produced five short films, developed two features and created and pitched a television concept to the two biggest networks in Canada. I have learned more about accounting, financing, unions and Excel spreadsheets than I ever cared to know. But that knowledge has trickled into other areas of my life. Ensuring I have a sound understanding of my finances empowers me as an artist to live a supported lifestyle. I have become versed in legal contracts, liability and intellectual property, teaching me how to better protect myself and my ideas in the future. I have met some of the most inspiring artists in the country who fight to tell incredibly touching, healing and challenging stories. This gives me hope for our industry's future and fuels my passion by reminding me why I do this. But the really interesting thing - I have never worked more as an actor.

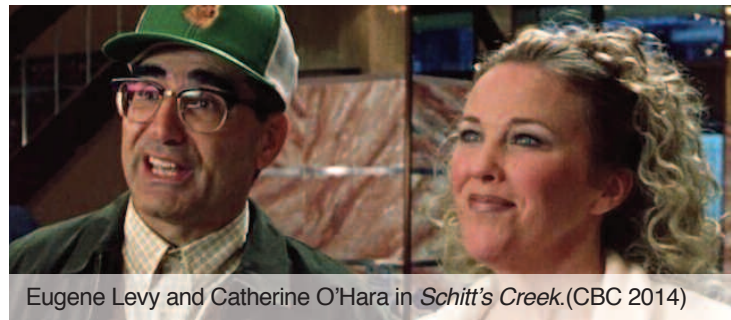
You could perhaps chalk that up to serendipity, timing, or luck, but here's what I think – when I started producing I stopped bringing desperation into the audition room. Producing gave me power. It made me think, 'I am a creator and I tell stories and I am going to keep telling them regardless of whether you hire me for this project or not.'

When young actors ask me how I learned to produce, I say, “I made a short film for \$300 dollars, then I made another one for a bit more, then I got a grant. In other words, I jumped in and learned to swim because I had no other choice.”

Sarah Booth has the perfect answer, “To get a filmmaking degree is \$173,000 - you'll learn cool things, but you won't really learn until you go out and have to deal with real situations... My favourite part of producing is the adrenaline rush you get when everything is falling apart and you have to fix it.” No schooling can prepare you for that.



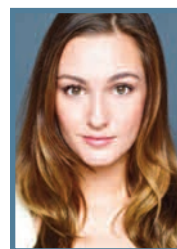
Sarah Booth in *The Scarehouse*



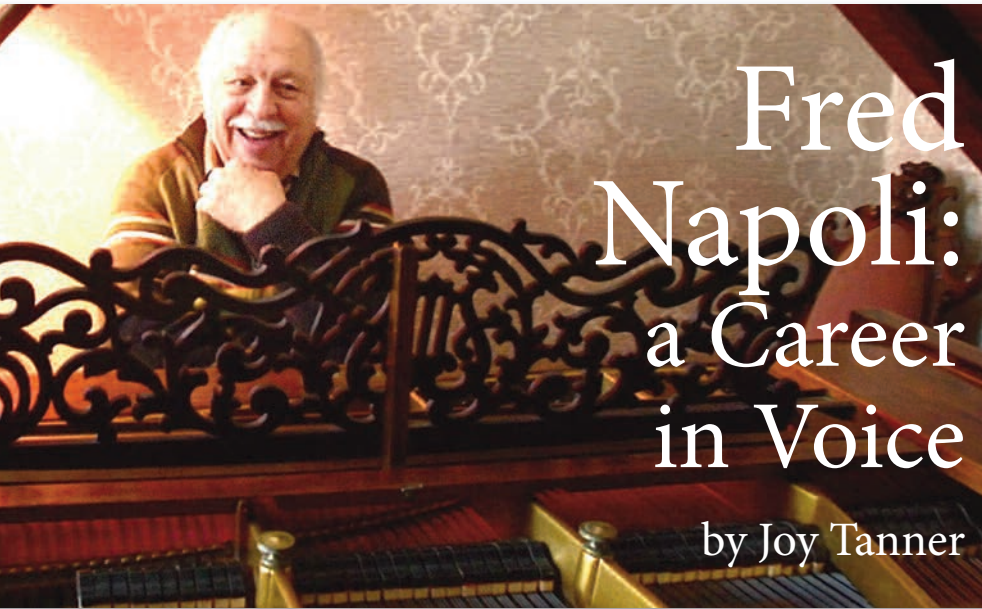
Eugene Levy and Catherine O'Hara in *Schitt's Creek*. (CBC 2014)

Let's face it; we all have things we're not good at. To remedy this Levine offers, “If you're the most creative person, partner with the most boring (business person) in the world. If you have trouble with pitching, find someone who can do the pitch and the business while you do the creative.” Also, don't shy away from doing the work yourself. Because I continue to grind through tasks I hate, I appreciate it two-fold when I can afford to hire someone to do those tasks for me. And, as a producer, you really need to have a little experience with every job. It makes you a much more compassionate and strategic leader and your team will respect you for it.

I've been blessed to work with awesome people who have given me opportunities to advance. And yes, being both a performer and producer is hard. Running two businesses requires a daily tightrope act. But you know what's harder? Waiting for the phone to ring. ●



Katherine Barrell is a Toronto-based actor-producer. She has appeared in several of Canada's most popular television shows, feature films, has produced five short films and has two features in development. Her 2013 BravoFACT short, *Issues*, which she created, produced and starred in, was named one of the top three BravoFACTS of 2013 by CTV's *Canada AM*. Watch *Issues* here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TsPoUGN1dDQ>



Fred Napoli: a Career in Voice

by Joy Tanner

"My agent got a call from **Donald Sutherland's** people informing us that he would sue if I kept imitating him on air. My agent replied that wasn't going to happen, as Fred Napoli has been doing Fred Napoli for 30 years. That was 25 years ago," regales the inimitable Mr. Napoli. You've heard Fred's rich, baritone voice on a myriad of commercials, including RBC, Dare Cookies and NeoCitran. He's narrated over 400 (yes, FOUR HUNDRED) documentaries including the History Channel's *D-Day*, *V-Day* and *Nazi Hunters* series. It's an illustrious career, to say the least.

At 17, Fred left The Hammer, where he grew up, for The Big Apple, in hopes of placement at Julliard. He was an aspiring pianist. Instead, he ended up bussing at Tavern on the Green, which came to an abrupt halt after the manager found him canoodling with a beautiful co-worker. I have a feeling it might have been worth it, based on the gleam in Fred's eye, as he recounts the tale. In any case, it was good fortune, as it brought him back to Ontario, where he began his 26-year career in radio, at CJOY. He eventually moved to Toronto for stints at CFRB to do the night shift. He spent time at CHMI, CKFM, CHFI, CKEY and the CBC. Audiences remember his work at CKFM and his *Music 'Til Dawn* program. He needed content to fill the hours, so he contacted McClelland & Stewart and Doubleday Publishers to read short stories on air. When the contracts ended, he started writing his own. He has a penchant for science fiction, and many were inspired by a correspondence with **Ray Bradbury**. Hence the insomniacs and night shift workers were entertained and entranced by the beacon of Fred's voice.

I met Fred this summer at his 200-year-old home in a charming country village. We meandered through the gracious rooms, while Fred told me stories about his collections: 19th-century antiques, his wife's pottery, steel lathes from the early 20th century in his woodshop, and his beloved piano that he rescued from The Grand Opera House of Hamilton. As a child, his grandmother took him to see shows there where, in the

back of the theatre, the piano waited for **Sarah Bernhardt** and other vaudeville acts. He teared up reminiscing about those memories, and about when, in 1961, the Grand was demolished. But not before he rescued the Mason & Risch concert piano which was unceremoniously dumped by the stage door. He played me a number of his own moving compositions. "This piano is an extension (of me), it teaches me about everything - about reading the words off the page, about paying attention. And that is the big deal."

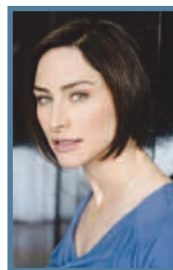
Fred is an artist and philosopher in every sense of the word. "The only way we can prove to ourselves that we are alive is to make

noise, to express and feel without reservation. Everybody dies. But some people never give themselves permission to live. In my art class, I see people trying not to spoil the paper. They can't find out what they are capable of doing. If I had listened to anyone along the way, it would have been such a tragedy. You've got to find out for yourself." He intends to book Carnegie Hall for his 100th birthday, where he plans on performing his sweeping compositions. I'll be there. I promise.

In the meantime, Fred continues to drive back to the TDot to record. Our talent pool should be inspired. "We created the union, basically because we were the ones making all the money in the early years," he says. We stand on the likes of his shoulders - the announcers, the cartoon talent and the commercial voiceover talent.

In celebration and recognition of this, and of your work, submit your voice performances for documentaries, radio drama and cartoon voiceover for the 2015 ACTRA Awards in Toronto. The deadline is October 31, 2014. The work must have had its first English, worldwide, public exhibition between November 1, 2013 and October 31, 2014. Contact your producers for your best material. Perhaps you'll be nominated and hopefully you'll get a chance to meet Fred Napoli, either at a session, or at the Awards themselves. ●

Link to submission form: <http://www.actratontoronto.com/performers/community/the-actra-awards-in-toronto/actra-awards-submission/>



Joy Tanner is best known for her series work on *Cold Squad*, *Life With Derek* and *Degrassi: TNG*. Her latest films include *The Phantoms* and *Neverlake*. She was nominated for a Gemini in 2007.

Let's Talk TV



The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) is in Phase 3 of its *Let's Talk TV: A Conversation with Canadians*.

Phase 3 culminates in public hearings beginning September 8 and purportedly draws upon the issues and priorities identified by Canadians in Phases 1 and 2. However, the Notice of Consultation (<http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/2014/2014-190.htm>) contains 80 questions which are rather daunting for the average viewer. Phase 2 of the review, *Choicebook*, a questionnaire, had more questions about delivery than it had about Canadian content. With the appointment of a new Commissioner two years ago, the Commission appears to be tilting toward a consumer rather than a creator, content and jobs focus.

TV policy reviews can make us nervous. In 1999, the Broadcasting policy review was an emphatic disaster from a performer perspective. It significantly reduced the amount of Canadian comedy and drama in primetime. Fortunately, a 2010 review corrected some of those mistakes.

The current comprehensive review is being conducted at a time when content piracy is at an all-time high and programming is available over the internet on services like Netflix, Apple and Google that have no obligation to kick in money to Canadian production, nor, for that matter, to pay HST.

As a consumer you might want access to your favourite American TV shows for as little cost as possible. On the other hand, your work opportunities and income will suffer if Canadian production declines, to say nothing of your pride in your national culture. As grateful as we are for foreign productions choosing to shoot in our country, they rarely make a household name out of a leading Canadian actor the way *Republic of Doyle* did for **Allan Hawco**. Foreign productions will go where the dollar is cheapest and the tax credits richest and the CRTC does not control the price of the loonie.

The development of quality Canadian TV series like *Flashpoint*, *Rookie Blue* and others, which attract simultaneous licences from American networks, would not have been possible were it not for

arm's-length CRTC regulation. Without regulation, private broadcasters will buy American over Canadian programming, nearly every time. American programming attracts higher advertising revenues for them and it can (though not always) cost less than original Canadian programming. We cannot count on private broadcasters, with their focus on the bottom line, to tell Canadian stories to Canadians.

ACTRA looks out for your bottom line. If the Federal Conservatives weaken Canadian content regulations for broadcasters, or



Flashpoint a Canadian success story

allow Netflix, Google and Apple to haul money out of Canada without making a contribution, your work opportunities could dwindle and, with that, the viability of making your passion your career. We can't let that happen.

ACTRA National has a tight grip on this file and is joining forces with the other audio-visual unions and guilds and the Canadian producers association to make a united submission to the CRTC on September 16.

The 1991 Broadcasting Policy for Canadians declares "the Canadian broadcasting system shall be effectively owned and controlled by Canadians." Let's not let this Canadian cultural asset slip through our fingers. Support your work opportunities. Keep tweeting the CRTC at @CRTCeng, #TalkTV #CRTC. Tell them what matters to you. ●



**Jennifer Higgin –
All legs in 1987.
All smiles today.**

Act Your Age (AYA) was established when **Diane Gordon**, a senior member of ACTRA Toronto requested that ACTRA provide professional development for the senior or “well-seasoned” performer. **Theresa Tova**, ACTRA Toronto, V.P. Internal, called a meeting in 2007 and the AYA actors’ gym was formed.

I’ve still got the legs, now I just dress better

by Jennifer Higgin



For the last seven years, AYA members have met to exercise our actor muscles between those all too few auditions. Some of our activities have included readings of plays by actors/performers **Jessica Booker** and **Diane Gordon**. We’ve held voice workshops with **David Smukler** and **Ellen-Ray Hennessy**, on-camera scene study with **Michael D. Cohen**, classical theatre scene study with **Kurt Reis**, SoulOTheatre with **Tracey Erin Smith**, and acting technique with **Mark Schoenberg**. AYA members presented excerpts from **Diane Gordon**’s play *Scenes from the Queen Streetcar* at the 2012 ACTRA Toronto Members Conference. In 2010 and 2011, we instigated the presentation of winter concerts, comprised of music, poetry, and prose. In 2012, we read Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* with musical interludes, with proceeds donated to PAL Toronto and The Actors’ Fund. Held at ACTRA Toronto, our holiday events have been standing room only and pronounced a huge success. The December 2013 AYA fund-raiser, *Waiting for Cabaret*, was co-written and co-directed by myself and Theresa Tova. It featured scenes, music, dancing, original scripts, a buffet dinner and raised over \$1,700 for PAL Toronto and The Actors’ Fund.

In March of this year AYA developed a formal committee structure in order to take on the responsibilities of advocacy and I was elected its first Chair. Interested members met to



ACT YOUR AGE - A PROUD PART OF ACTRA TORONTO

formulate a mandate which expresses who we are and what we do. Here it is:

Act Your Age (AYA) is a volunteer committee that has been formed by some of our union's senior members, for the following purposes:

1. To celebrate our talents by embracing the history, dignity, and richness of our stories of survival;
2. To provide opportunities through an active actors' gym to keep our skills facile and our focus sharp;
3. To educate the industry and marketers, over time, on the needs and concerns of senior performers;
4. To establish strong liaisons with other committees of ACTRA Toronto, such as YEAA, Diversity and TAWC;
5. To explore and spotlight the new reality of what it means to be a senior;
6. To advocate for a change in the perception of senior performers from invisible and easily dismissed, to capable, hireable, and fun.

There are currently over 60 members of AYA from the greater Toronto area, including Hamilton and Brampton.

This September we are looking forward to a workshop with **Bill Webster**, followed by a trip to Stratford to see *King Lear* and a pre-show chat with **David Prosser**, Director of Communications at the Festival.

Theresa Tova and I have a wonderful history of working together. Tova is inspired by each person's story as it unfolds, and I see the big picture of how it will all go together. When one of us is stumped, the other comes up with the answer. This past April, ACTRA Toronto President, **David Sparrow** led a two-part writing workshop with members of AYA. We defined our "brand" as energetic, well-seasoned, professional, curious, fun, sexy, proven and durable. We've written two video projects to communicate our message and we hope they'll go viral. Look for the first video to roll out in the fall. Tova suggested we give you a teaser here – a photo from the past, and a look at this performer as she is now.

"I've still got the legs, now I just dress better"

Hey casting directors, producers, writers and directors - we're available! Let's have more senior performers on our screens! ●

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~Charles M. Schulz

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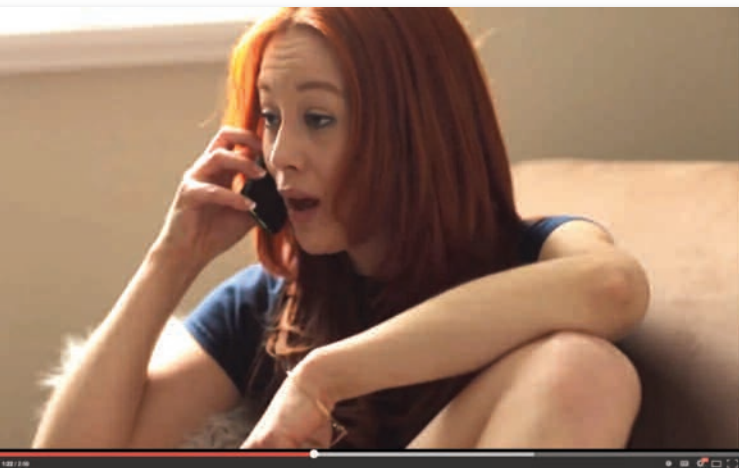
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Member News



Courtney Deelen in Nicole St. Martin's *A Bloody Mess*.



Freya Ravensbergen and Rebecca Singh's *Just Another Day*

TAWC Toolkit “period” pieces play at the Female Eye Film Festival

Two short films made with the assistance of the Toronto ACTRA Women's Committee (TAWC) Toolkit sessions played at the Female Eye Film Festival: **Freya Ravensbergen** and **Rebecca Singh's** *Just Another Day* and **Nicole St. Martin's** *Bloody Mess*. Both films also won honourable mentions from CRANKYFEST, a festival devoted to short films about menstrual periods. CRANKYFEST's jurors include **Jay Baruchel**, **Anna Silk**, **Denis Villeneuve**, **Kevin Pollack** and **Amanda Brugel**. *Bloody Mess* tells of a woman who does the deed with her crush and wakes up to find an unexpected visitor came last night. *Just Another Day* is an animatic film about two everyday police officers just gettin' the job done. The first Toolkit sessions challenged filmmakers to create a work with the theme of “taboo.”



FULL DAY RATES FOR NEW MEDIA COMMERCIALS!

After 17 days of hard bargaining, at times with the assistance of a mediator, a deal was reached on the National Commercial Agreement. The new deal includes a full day's session fee for made-for-New-Media commercials and a 6% rate increase over the three-year contract. Major concessions demanded by the Engagers were fought back. Many thanks to the dedicated, wise and patient members of the bargaining committee: Lisa Berry, Lindsay Leese, Burke Lawrence, Jamie Spilchuk, Hannah Cheesman, and supportive observers Blair Johannes, Theresa Tova, and David Gale. Bargaining was led by National President Ferne Downey and, of course, your president, David Sparrow. **A great big thank-you!**



CRANKYFEST judges:
Anna Silk, Jay Baruchel, Denis Villeneuve and Amanda Brugel.

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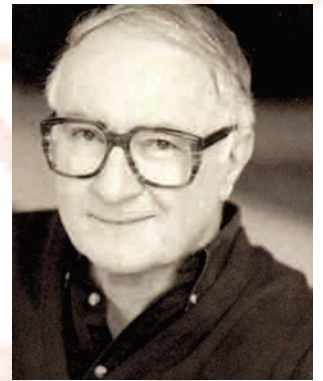
KIRSTEN BISHOPRIC

Beauty, brains, and talent; Kirsten had them in spades. Her public image was sensual and sometimes florid, but Kirsten consistently displayed the greatest sense of personal taste and unique style. It was always a treat to see what she chose to wear on any given day. A ferociously dedicated mother, grandmother, spouse, daughter, aunt, friend and sister (AFBS's Thor Bishopric is her brother), Kirsten also understood the importance of community. If she believed in something, Kirsten was a tireless volunteer for a cause. In 2000, she was instrumental in fighting against, and successfully stopping, the closure of Toronto's beloved Downtown Alternative School. A few years ago I had the opportunity to volunteer beside Kirsten on a number of occasions – first assisting in memorials for friends and later on the board of The Cayle Chernin Award - and I was struck by her energy, organization and passion to help. When I suggested she run for ACTRA Toronto council Kirsten smiled coyly and with humility agreed to think about it. I'm sure she discussed the idea with Thor and to our great benefit she agreed to run. Shortly after being elected an ACTRA Toronto Councillor in 2012, council approved Kirsten as chair of our most prestigious event: The ACTRA Awards in Toronto. A daunting task, to say the least, but our confidence in Kirsten and her sense of style was not unfounded. For a year Kirsten keenly shadowed outgoing chair, and dear friend, Karen Ivany. Then, in February of 2013, Kirsten put on one of our most fabulous shows to date. You may recall it was a sensual and stylish affair. Sadly, Kirsten was too ill to continue as chair after her first successful Awards show. She died in April of this year. Kirsten stepped up, she left us all too soon and she is sorely missed, but we will always remember her style.

*In memory of those who
have left us all too soon.*

TOM HARVEY

By Don Cullen



*Sartorial, tasteful but never intimidating
A bank manager? Perhaps
The gent who takes collections at the Presbyterian?
No – It is an actor acting – Tom's sophisticated Tom Foolery
In the tradition of Harry Lauder, Will Fyfe, Billy Connolly
Merry Andrews all, rollicking in life's absurdities
Tom Tom the piper's onto playing Hava Nagila on bagpipes
Four bars in and we are helpless with the good music
of laughter
A birthday gift for a Jewish friend.
Wayne and Shuster knew his worth
For 30 years of comic diligence
Tom plays the Aberdeen miser while practising
generous generosity
A major facet in Diamond Tom
Like the loving reflection of dearest Bobbie
Of son Doug and the extended family
Of friends close and dear
His talents in the Navy, in Show Business, ever in demand
A life tribute clothed in success
He reminds us that the Play must go on.*



LES CARLSON

Dad died on May 3, at home in Toronto, in the loving care of his wife Joan Warren and his son Ned, after a protracted battle with cancer. He was 81. He had a full life as an actor, having worked extensively on screen and stage, with literally hundreds of credits to his name. I had the good fortune to work with him a few times and it was always a lesson. When I was younger he'd talk about the craft of acting in terms I could understand; it was one of the great joys of my life that I got to continue that conversation with him into adulthood. He was fiercely intelligent, he read voraciously, but he wouldn't put up with being called an "intellectual": whatever smarts he brought to the table, his work started and ended with his instincts. (If you want to see some of what he was capable of, seek out *Camera* by David Cronenberg; that'll give you a taste.) What I didn't know — what I'm learning now — is how generous he was to his fellow actors. I suppose I should have guessed at that: he was very empathetic, and it gave him pain to see others feeling unwanted or inadequate; but he never boasted about making people feel welcome, he simply did just that — I think, especially with younger actors. I can't count the number of people who've let me know what he meant to them. I don't think he could have guessed at how loved he was. Selfless, passionate, spirited, hilarious, unpredictable, sometimes quite shy, at other times gregarious, capable of righteous anger, always full of generosity and heart: these are the ways I remember him. I'm so proud to be his son, and that we had a few chances to howl at the moon together.

• Ben Carlson



LARRY D. MANN

Canadian-born character and voice actor passed away in Los Angeles at the age of 91. Larry Mann started out as a morning disc jockey at 1050 CHUM in 1945. He was best-known for voicing the role of Yukon Cornelius in the animated classic *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* but his imdb profile lists 157 different U.S. credits. He was also recognizable from his portrayal of "The Boss" for 10 years in a series of Bell commercials. His last performance was in *Homefront* in 1991.

NEW MEMBERS OF THE ACTRA TORONTO FAMILY

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

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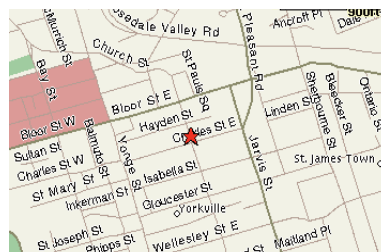
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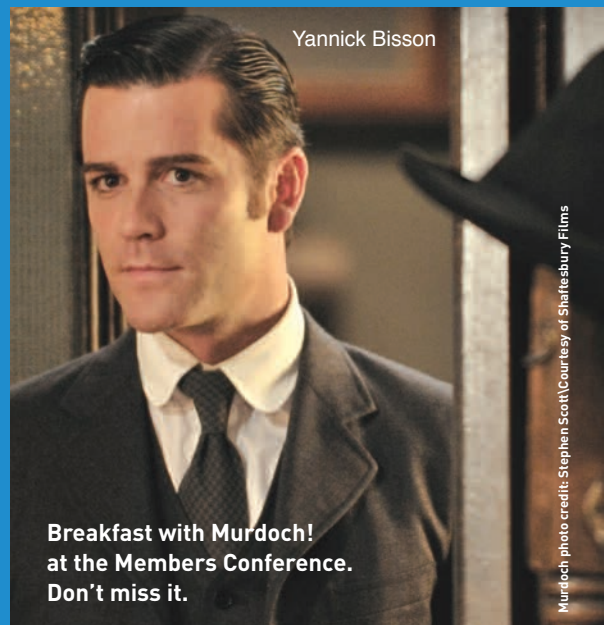
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Yannick Bisson

**Breakfast with Murdoch!
at the Members Conference.
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