

# ACTRA TORONTO

# VISION 2020

## 2020 in Review

We started 2020 celebrating record high production levels in Ontario. In 2019, 343 productions had brought in \$2.16 billion in production spending, creating upwards of 45,000 jobs. Announcements of investment in studio infrastructure were a sign of confidence in our production ecosystem – a balance of domestic and service production. We were on track, rising to the Premier's goal to grow the industry.

And, then the pandemic hit. While commercial, animation and voice over productions continued, the television and film industry was impacted across Ontario. Our efforts, early on in the pandemic, ensured performers were eligible for CERB and would continue to be eligible for the Canada Recovery Benefit.

The Union made sure residual payments didn't impact eligibility and that it was possible to earn some income – and more now under the new program – to create and accept work to keep skills sharp.

The Union, while lobbying for immediate pandemic relief and support for performers, got to work with industry partners on what health and safety measures would need to be in place to get the industry rolling again in a recovery period.

ACTRA Toronto staff worked tirelessly with our industry partners on our provincial health and safety guidelines. But it took a commitment, a social contract, on the part of everyone – cast, crew, friends and family members – to make sure the guidelines and protocols were followed, and our sets stay safe and open. We memorized and internalized the trio of protections: wearing a mask and PPE, maintaining physical distance and washing hands.

To-date, the health and safety protocols have prevented any spread of COVID-19 on sets in Ontario. While testing has not been mandatory, most productions ultimately ended up doing some testing in addition to following the provincial guidelines. ACTRA Toronto encouraged testing and worked with Producers to streamline and standardize the testing requirements where possible.

We continue to navigate the challenges of the pandemic, negotiating improvements to health and safety protocols and lobbying for ongoing income and social support through 2021.

Although some of the plans laid out in the 2020-21 Operating Plan were put on "hold" during the pandemic, we are proud of what we were able to achieve.

## Focus on Canada: our stories, our performers

Goal:	Status:
Work with industry partners and participate with ACTRA National in a lobby of Ottawa MPs to ensure any new federal legislation provides the incentives and funding support for the creation and regulation of Canadian content on all our screens	In November, the Canadian government introduced C-10, An Act to Amend the Broadcasting Act. The proposed legislation will treat the Over the Top (OTT) streamers like other broadcasters, ensuring contributions into the development and distribution of Canadian content. There is room for improvement in the Bill and ACTRA will be lobbying in 2021 as the Bill moves through the legislative process.
Continue to work with FilmOntario and the Ontario government on stability of tax credits and the streamlining and simplification of the paperwork required of performers and productions	At the onset of the pandemic, ACTRA Toronto was asked to join Minister MacLeod's Advisory Committee to make short, medium and long term recommendations for the industry. The government was quick to state its commitment to the stability of tax credits which are fundamental to the ongoing competitiveness of Ontario's industry. The committee continues to work on streamlining measures as well as what short term steps will help in the recovery period. We worked with our industry partners to develop the health and safety guidelines, posted an inventory of programs and courses through Ontario Creates, updated and promoted our performer databases and showcase our talent through the ACTRA Awards and our Spotlight series.
Work with government and industry partners to support investments in local infrastructure.	In November, Pinewood Toronto Studios started to build 5 more studios, adding capacity to the 11 stages, including the Mega Stage, the second largest in North America. Also in the Port Lands, Cinespace is expanding, and CreateTO is inviting proposals to build studios. Titan Studios (Cinespace) will add 50,000 square feet to the Kipling "Campus". In Mississauga, William F. White International will open its third production centre in February. Century Studio and the Edwards Blvd Studio, also in Mississauga, are fully booked. And, earlier this month, Aeon Studio Group announced that it is converting a large manufacturing plant in Hamilton into production studios.

Goal:	Status:
Continue work with municipalities and local film offices who are attracting production through workforce development programs and investments in studio infrastructure.	In addition to supporting the development of infrastructure, ACTRA Toronto Industry Relations staff worked with local film offices and post-secondary schools on workforce development.
Support workforce development and incentives to advance gender and cultural equality in the industry	Worked with Telefilm on their committees looking at funding criteria as well as proposing targeted tax credit measures to encourage and support gender and cultural diversity.
Meet with levels of government on improving support to performers through, for example, income averaging	We will look at this as we develop our "asks" for the federal parties as they are developing their election platform documents.
Coordinate with industry and government partners the promotion and celebration of Canadian productions and leading Canadian performers to help create and sustain work opportunities in domestic and service productions through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Media outreach</li><li>■ Meetings and events with Casting Directors</li></ul>	ACTRA Toronto partnered with Ontario Creates to develop and promote the Ready to Roll Campaign. The social media campaign and web-based resources helped to build awareness and confidence of producers to look at Ontario as a centre of production with stable tax credits, the depth and breadth of cast and crew, and gold level health and safety standards.
Celebrate Performers and Award-winning performances at the 18 <sup>th</sup> Annual ACTRA Awards and year-round through ACTRA Spotlight podcasts and social media	Over 1200 performers and industry partners celebrated Award of Excellence recipient Jean Yoon and ACTRA Award winners: Bryn McAuley, Carter Hayden, Cara Ricketts and Dalmar Abuzeid. ACTRA Spotlight podcasts further celebrated award recipients. In December 2020, Instagram followers topped 8000. While performers were not able to get together physically, the level of social engagement increased substantially.

## Focus on Performance:

Goal:	Status:
Work with Producers, Agents and Casting Directors on standards for auditions	Self-tapes and video auditions became the norm in 2020. We will learn from the experience as we look forward to bargaining the renewal of the NCA and IPA in 2021.
Meet with casting directors to implement the recommendations of the Audition Facility Accessibility Audit	Prior to the pandemic, we met with Casting Directors about facilities we had identified as inaccessible during our audit in 2019. As we recover from the pandemic, there is a commitment from casting directors to use accessible venues and to make sure they are clear in their breakdowns that they will accommodate performers living with disabilities for auditions.
Continue to promote the HAVEN helpline and anti-harassment initiatives	The HAVEN Helpline is available to assist members calling about harassment, anti-Black racism and violence. They have also provided mental health support during this pandemic and resources through the LifeWorks app.
Work with industry partners on education initiatives to prevent bullying, harassment and promote consent-based interactions in the workplace	The ACTRA Toronto ad hoc committee on sexual harassment is working on a Code of Conduct and Guide for Acting Coaches and Educators.
Promote the Best Practices Guide for Scenes involving Nudity, Intimacy, Simulated Sexual Activity and Sexual Violence	Just prior to the industry shutdown in March, ACTRA Toronto released the Best Practices for Scenes involving Nudity, Intimacy, Simulated Sexual Activity and Sexual Violence.
Encourage the engagement of ACTRA Intimacy Coordinators	Our renewed agreement with Ubisoft includes a new category and rate for Intimacy Coordinators. With COVID protocols, Intimacy Coordinators are playing a valuable role in making sure any contact is safe, consent based and respectful.

Goal:	Status:
Increase the presence of ACTRA Toronto OSLOs and Business Representatives on set with a focus on health, safety, working conditions and set etiquette	With the pandemic, the focus of OSLOs and the Business Representatives has been on the implementation and adherence to COVID-19 health and safety protocols.
Develop and promote on-line tools to empower performers to know their rights, track their hours and pay, and to keep up to date on ACTRA activities.	While there was some progress in moving from paper to virtual contracting, there is much work still to do as the new membership system is developed. The new website has made finding resources and information much easier for members and producers.
Work with the Stunt and Stunt Women's Committee to introduce an orientation course and mentorship opportunities for stunt performers	Representatives from the two committees are working on the framework for a mentoring program to be presented to the stunt community for feedback. The orientation program is still in development.
Hold workshops for producers on working with ACTRA	During the pandemic, Industry Relations staff participated in regional and cultural on-line film festival workshops for Producers:  3 workshops - 235 attendees  4 panels - 571 attendees/views
Continue to reach out to production and performer programs in post-secondary institutions on working with ACTRA performers and ACTRA agreements	Post-secondary – presentations to 4 performance and 4 production programs reached 220 students.
Introduce graduating performance program students to ACTRA by inviting them to events and workshops	All ACTRA events went on-line during the pandemic. Recordings of webinars and Town Hall calls are available on the website.
Through the stories of new members joining ACTRA, Illustrate the advantages and benefits of union membership to the health and safety of performers	The ACTRA Spotlight series has highlighted advantages and benefits of being ACTRA members.

## Focus on Bargaining:

Goal:	Status:
Hold focus groups and participate with ACTRA nationally in the renegotiation of the National Commercial Agreement with the goal of increasing competitiveness and work opportunities	The National Commercial Agreement was extended by a year. Terms and conditions remain unchanged.
Work with ACTRA National to renegotiate the CBC and CTV agreements	The CBC agreement was renewed. CTV negotiations are ongoing.
Establish a working group to guide the strategic planning, research and preparation for IPA negotiations including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Review of the compensation and residual model</li><li>■ Provisions and incentives for hiring Canadian performers</li></ul>	On hold until 2021.
Develop and promote guidelines for emerging filmmakers	The ACTRA Toronto Council approved a new Low Budget Guideline which replaces TiP. Our outreach to new and emerging Producers and schools has continued and the new guideline as well as our guideline for web series have been well subscribed. One of the silver linings of COVID has been the growth of on-line audiences for theatre and live performance. We have welcomed dozens of theatre, opera, dance and music productions to ACTRA.

## Focus on Diversity and Inclusion

Goal:	Status:
Support the work of the Council, Advocates and Committees to promote diversity and inclusivity in the union and in the industry through:	
Nell Shipman Awards	TAWC postponed the Nell Shipman Awards until 2021.
Ongoing support of CUES: Canadian Unions for Equality on Screen	Ongoing.
Sandi Ross Awards	The presentation of the Sandi Ross Awards will take place on-line in March 2021.
Support of BIPOC TV & FILM: Black Indigenous People of Colour activities and workshops	Provided support through the pandemic of workshops and actions to increase work opportunities and networking of filmmakers who identify as Black, Indigenous and People of Colour.
Spotlight on diversity and areas that are underrepresented in the membership and on our screens through on-line performer database	Promoted on-line databases and with the support of Ontario Creates, launched a series of performer showcases. The first showcase celebrates Black performers.
Continued outreach and partnerships with cultural and community film festivals	Supported on-line film festivals and workshops: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ TIFF</li><li>■ Reel Asian</li><li>■ Reelworld</li><li>■ imagineNATIVE</li><li>■ CINEFest</li><li>■ Canadian Film Festival</li><li>■ Canada Film Day</li><li>■ Regent Park Film Festival</li><li>■ V.O. North</li><li>■ Mosaic International South Asian Film Festival (MISAFF)</li></ul>

Goal:	Status:
Support the work of the Council, Advocates and Committees to promote diversity and inclusivity in the union and in the industry through:	
Participation in the Pride Parade and activities	ACTRA Toronto participated in on-line Pride events in 2020. outACTRAto released Working with Queer Performers, a guide to encourage a change in the way screenwriters, agents, casting directors, directors, producers and productions treat queer performers.
Joint committee work to help in achieving the goal of inclusion	The Voice Committee partnered with the Diversity & Inclusion Committee to help coach diverse performers in voice-over work for commercials.
Challenging ageism by promoting work and work opportunities for "seasoned" performers	AYA held on-line professional development and networking sessions through the pandemic.
Co-ordination of activities and communication methods	ACTRA Toronto Communications sent out e-blasts with links to events and on-line activities throughout the pandemic.

## Focus on Member Engagement:

Goal:	Status:
Survey ACTRA members on how they prefer to receive information and news from the Union	On hold until 2021.
Using survey results, develop and improve communication tools including use of video and leading "star" ambassadors	See above.
Explore "boosting" social media posts to better target communications	Social media engagement increased significantly in 2020 as performers connected on-line and audiences for content increased worldwide for award winning Canadian productions like Schitt's Creek.

Goal:	Status:
Work with ACTRA National and the Information Technology and Digital Services Department to implement a new membership system, easy digital tools and on-line database.	Consultations on the "specs" for the new membership system continue with ACTRA staff. Looking forward to development in 2021.
Redesign and integrate the ACTRA Toronto website with the new membership system	The new streamlined and accessible website was launched in December.
Promote on-line courses	All courses moved on-line during the pandemic.
Increase activism through political "ACTRAvist" education, lobbying and days of action	Members responded to calls to lobby politicians early in the pandemic to ensure performers were included in the government relief programs.
Recognize and reward ACTRAvism through social media and member benefits	ACTRA Spotlight celebrated member volunteer activities in the Union and the community. See ACTRA Toronto@Home.
In addition to the two member conferences, sponsor "town hall" member meeting(s), and hold professional development workshops through the year at ACTRA Toronto and in Northern Ontario	We may not have been able to meet in-person but members have been engaged throughout this year in unprecedented numbers on-line – through 8 Town Hall meetings, and on Social Media.  The Voice Committee hosted 5 webinars in the first months of the pandemic. Over 940 members attended.
Review Advocate, Caucus and Committee chair positions	On hold until 2021.
Update the ACTRA Toronto By-laws to respond to recommendations from the ACTRA Toronto Election Committee 2019	On hold until 2021.

Goal:	Status:
<p>Work with ACTRA National on the review of ACTRA's Constitution including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Governance</li><li>Membership criteria</li><li>Union finances</li><li>Gender neutral language</li></ul>	<p>Members voted to amend our national Constitution and By-laws, expanding our National Council and Executive to be more representative and accountable through a system of proportional voting.</p>