

INTER ACTRA

WINTER 2008

The Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists

High IQ Television

Intelligence, too
smart for CBC?

The critically acclaimed
series has been axed.
The show's creator
predicted its demise;
now any hope for its
future is outside Canada.

See story, page 6

(Right:) Eugene Lipinski and Klea Scott.

(Below:) Ian Tracey, Darcy Laurie,
Shane Meier and John Cassini.





By
Richard
Hardacre

How do I know thee? Let me count the ways.⁽¹⁾

With some taxi drivers there's much more than meets the eye. If, like me, you happen to have conversations with many of them between the Ottawa airport or train station and various Committee rooms, Ministers' offices, anterooms of bureaucrats around Parliament Hill, well then you occasionally might tune into an interesting frequency.

On one slushy, rush-hour, after I began in Canada's other official language, my cabbie inquired about my occupation. It turned out that he had heard there are actors in English-speaking Canada. He asked the usual unsurprising questions. "Are you famous?" "Have you met Brad Pitt?" You know the kind of thing.

I regretted I had to disappoint him on all counts. He was sanguine. He understood how tough it might be. He too had greater ambitions than sitting behind the wheel of a cab with too many kilometres on its clock.

We had about forty minutes in that clapped-out Impala so we talked some more. I told him my reason for being there – a formal appearance the next day in front of the House Committee on Industry, Science and Technology. I was prepping to present ACTRA's argument – the economic boom that would result from the addition of thousands of new jobs to our economy if the private broadcasters could be convinced (read "regulated") to develop a few Canadian drama series. Then they might develop some new ones that would find their legs, be allowed regular scheduling, build audiences, sell advertising and contribute to what could certainly become a strong, dynamic Canadian industry. Some Canadian writers, producers, crews and directors would benefit, and what the heck, quite a few professional performers would find a new world of work opportunities too.

My new acquaintance got my argument. He even got that the deeper 'bottom-line' is that we can achieve, through the creation of our own drama, a solid culture – an identity unique to our country. When I said that this would be how others could learn to know us, he slowed down a bit to look at me better in his mirror.

I had indeed piqued his interest. He told me that he'd been a professional Engineer in his native Morocco. He asked me if I had been on strike last winter, and he wondered what that was all about. When I explained how we could not just accept a 'kiss-off' for our work distributed throughout the globe via new media, and that contrary to the honchos of the associations of producers, there was indeed money being generated on the Internet, he said, "Certainement, mon ami!"

It seems my new friend also knew about the WGA American screenwriters strike. He understood that their issues were of huge import, and he instantly got that their fight was our fight as well. He was impressed when I told him that our union's members hung tough, stayed united, and got a fair deal for themselves – in fact a threshold deal in the film and television industry. He told me that he never would have expected that professional actors – he thinks we might have ambitious egos and be competitive with each other – without the deep pockets of gigantic media conglomerates, would have had the fortitude to fight so hard and be so unified for what we are entitled to be paid.

It's not every day that a cabbie from Tangiers tells me to keep up the fight for what we have earned, and the fight for our distinct culture.

There will be many more hearings in Ottawa before we achieve our goals for Canadian drama, and our goal to give ACTRA members an opportunity to be a part of the conversation to protect our culture. In the meantime, we have lots of really important work to do.

You will be hearing about our second largest contract, the **National Commercial Agreement (NCA)**, that we are negotiating this Winter and Spring. We are already under way with member volunteers from across the country joining our team of professional negotiators and legal counsel. We will bargain for a deal that is realistic and fair in this boundless world where everything can be distributed and advertised via new media. We will be updating you as we go and we will look for your feedback. Above all, our

Negotiating Committee will be counting on your support. We will achieve the very best deal for you that we possibly can – we are not new to this world now.

Negotiating our collective agreements, and building the campaign for Canadian film and television programming are two of the biggest priorities of ACTRA.

As there will also likely be a Federal election looming soon, we will make the issues of foreign ownership limits on our media, Canadian content on our screens, copyright protections for the rights to our performances and tax averaging for self-employed artists, into election issues. We will need the support and actions of our members to bring these issues to the public's attention at candidate meetings, and in our 'face-to-face' questions that need real answers from every candidate and party leader running for office.

The public needs to understand the goals we are fighting to achieve. When they do – and we all can help them get educated – many of them will get behind us. Just like millions of workers (unionized or not) in the United States who understand the fight which the writers of the WGA have been involved in.

And when, one by one, our public understands that the issues we are addressing in our fight are their issues as well, many will join us in the same solidarity that a new Canadian, professional engineer from Morocco, driving a taxi in Ottawa, told me he would now have for Canadian actors. One step at a time, we can make of ourselves a small and vital part of what makes this country proud. And by that... we shall be known.

In solidarity,



Richard Hardacre
ACTRA National President

(1) Apologies to Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Thank you to all ACTRA members who voted in December to approve a change to our dues structure – this puts us on solid ground nationally and in our ACTRA branches to take on the fights ahead.

Letters *InterACTRA* welcomes letters and feedback. Submissions should be no longer than 200 words and may be edited for length. Please send submissions to: interactra@actra.ca

Calling all scribes! Interested in never-ending glory? Want to contribute content to *InterACTRA*? Please contact interactra@actra.ca

Want to receive *InterACTRA* by email? If you'd like *InterACTRA* in your e-mailbox instead of by mail, email us at interactra@actra.ca with your membership number.



Winter 2008 Volume 15, Issue 1

InterACTRA is the official publication of ACTRA (Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists), a Canadian union of performers affiliated to the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and the International Federation of Actors (FIA). *InterACTRA* is free of charge to all ACTRA members.

EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Richard Hardacre, Ferne Downey, Brian Gromoff, David Macniven, Susan Ponting, Kim Hume, Keith Martin Gordey, and Stephen Waddell.

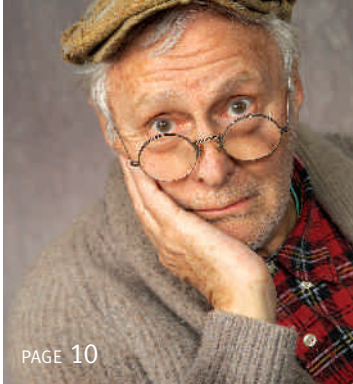
CONTRIBUTORS: Jennifer Blaney, Mike Burns, Marlene Cahill, Jason Chesworth, Chris Cornish, Ferne Downey, Anna Falsetta, Chris Faulkner, David Gonczol, Richard Hardacre, Art Hindle, David Hope, Kim Hume, Don Jordan, Keith Martin Gordey, Lyn Mason Green, Tom McCamus, Susan Ponting, Karl Pruner, Marit Stiles, Theresa Tova, Gary Vermeir, Stephen Waddell, Christine Webber, and Carol Whiteman.

LAYOUT: Joss MacLennan Design www.joss.to
Printed in Canada by union labour at Thistle Printing.

All contents are copyright ©2007 ACTRA. All rights are reserved and contents, in whole or in part, may not be reprinted without permission. The points of view expressed do not necessarily represent those of ACTRA.

Please return any undelivered mail to:
ACTRA, 300 – 625 Church St., Toronto ON M4Y 2G1
PHONE 1-800-387-3516 or (416)489-1311
FAX (416)489-8076
EMAIL interactra@actra.ca
WEB www.actra.ca

Publications Mail Agreement #40069134
ISSN 1705-9496



PAGE 10



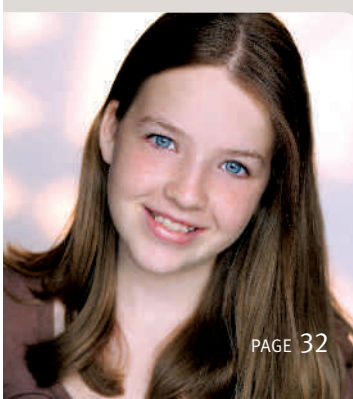
PAGE 14



PAGE 18



PAGE 23



PAGE 32

In this issue of *InterACTRA*...

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE 2
by Richard Hardacre

INTELLIGENCE 6
Keith Martin Gordey interviews
Intelligence creator Chris Haddock
about the challenges of making high
quality television in Canada, and
the show's uncertain future

MEMBER PROFILE 10
Don Harron – a Canadian acting icon
by Lyn Mason Green

MEMBER PROFILE 12
Cory Bowles – From trailer park
to triple threat
by Jason Chesworth

BARGAINING UPDATE 13
The future is here
by Marit Stiles

MEMBER PROFILES 14
Ngozi Paul and trey anthony –
Working out 'da kinks
by Susan Ponting

POLICY ISSUES 16
Coalitions: building strength
and sharing the load
by Kim Hume

ACTRA IN ACTION 17
CAB, WGA strike

BRANCH NEWS 19
Updates from Newfoundland & Labrador,
Maritimes, Montreal, Toronto,
Saskatchewan, and Alberta

APPLAUSE 22
Sarah Polley, Sandra Oh, Ellen Page,
Gordon Pinsent, Linda Kupecek,
Robert Lepage, and Gemini nominees

AFBS STRAIGHT TALK 25
by Ferne Downey

THE ACTOR'S FUND TURNS 50! 26
by Tom McCamus and David Hope

FAREWELL 29
Memories of Don Chevrier, Michael Kane,
Leo Leyden, Barry Morse, Percy Rodriguez
and Don Wittman

BACK COVER 32
Aislinn Paul, Deborah Tennant and
Brian Paul speak with Theresa Tova

ACTRA members gather to support the Canadian Television Fund



Stockwell Day
and *The Trailer
Park Boys*.



Arlene Duncan and Ordena
Stephens-Thompson.



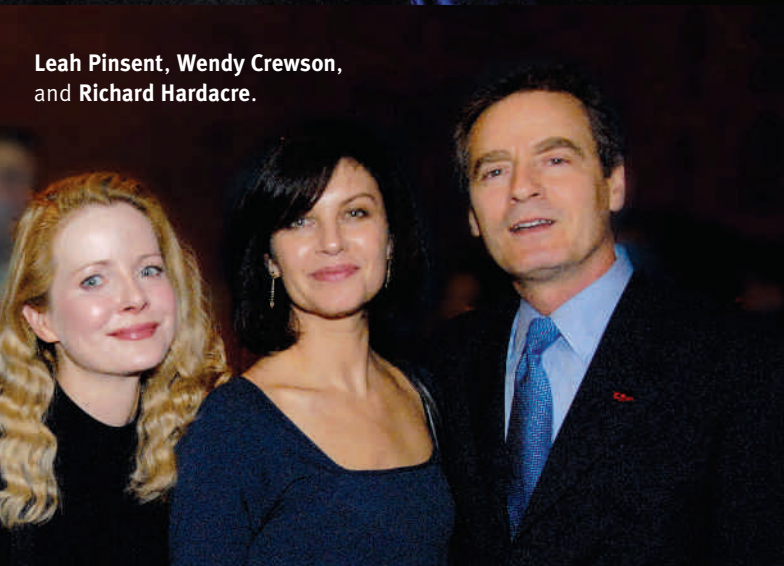
Amy Kalonde,
Natalie Brown, and
Anastasia Phillips.



Nicholas Campbell
and Klea Scott.



Daniel Cook and his
brother Spencer.



Leah Pinsent, Wendy Crewson,
and Richard Hardacre.

ACTRA members went to Ottawa in early February to tell our politicians that we need *More Canada on TV!* The CTF helps make great Canadian television shows. The CTF held a reception on Parliament Hill with politicians who met the stars of many of our current hits including *The Trailer Park Boys*, *Da Vinci's Inquest*, *ReGenesis*, *MVP: The Secret Lives of Hockey Wives*, *Sophie*, *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, *Intelligence*, and *The Murdoch Mysteries*.

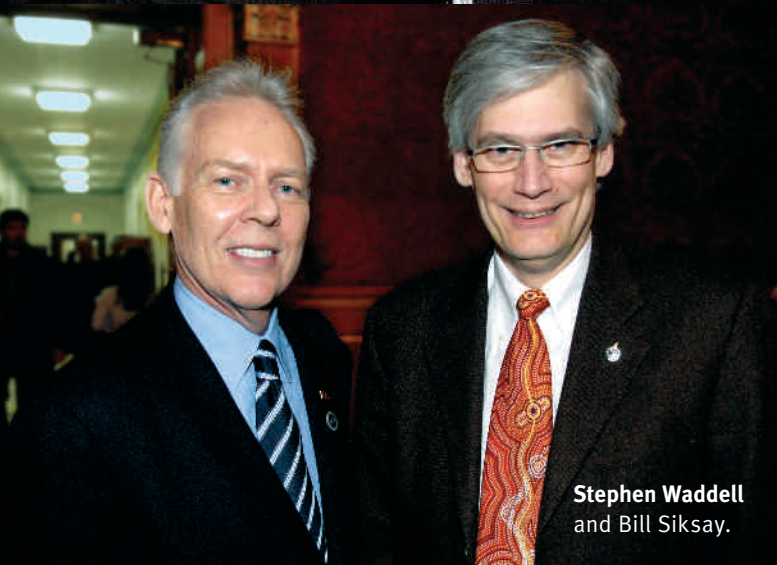
ACTRA supports the Canadian Television Fund (CTF), and so do Canadians – ACTRA was in Ottawa to appear at the CRTC hearings on the CTF, and to release results of a public poll that shows a majority of Canadians want Canadian choices on television, and they want TV programming that comes from a Canadian perspective. The poll was commissioned by ACTRA along with the producers, writers and directors. ■



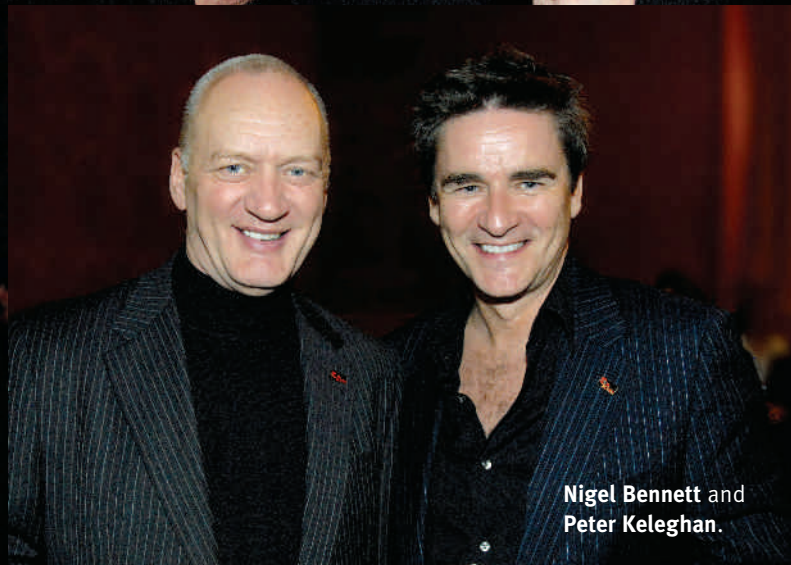
Yannick Bisson and Peter Outerbridge.



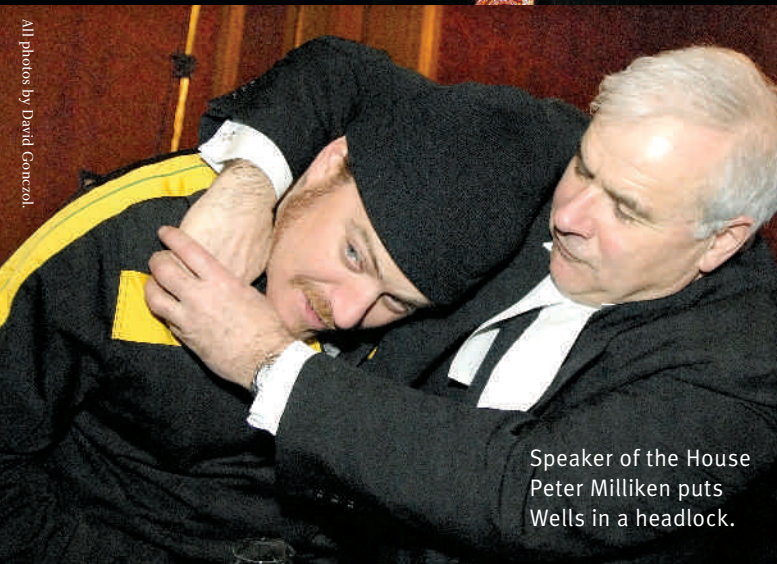
Robb Wells, Richard Hardacre, and John-Paul Tremblay.



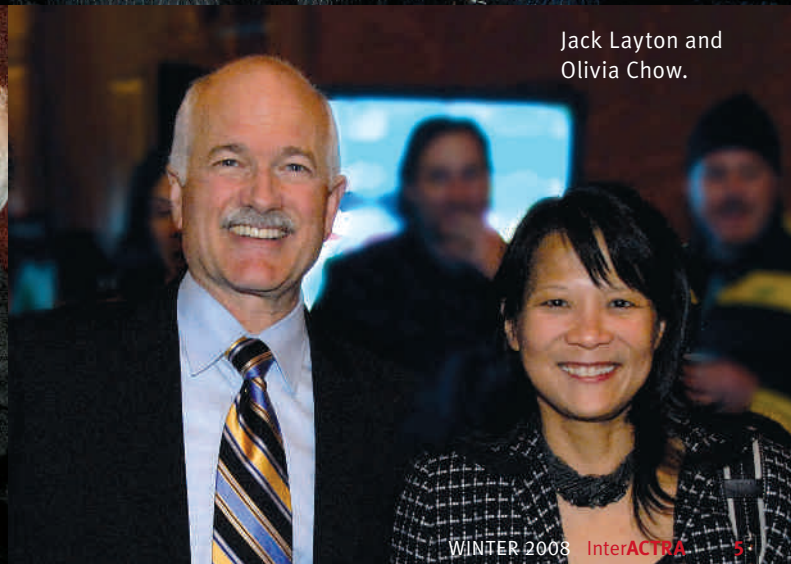
Stephen Waddell and Bill Siksay.



Nigel Bennett and Peter Keleghan.



Speaker of the House Peter Milliken puts Wells in a headlock.



Jack Layton and Olivia Chow.

Intelligent TV

By Keith Martin Gordey

When I set out to write an article on

the brilliant Canadian television series, *Intelligence*, I didn't expect the process would take on the plot lines of an episode of the show, complete with mendacity, half truths, misinformation and hidden agendas. The initial thrust of the article, to celebrate a well-crafted Canadian show, was first called into question when a cast member told me they *may* not be back next year. I was, to say the least, surprised to hear this. Critically acclaimed, the show has a loyal fan base that is growing, and many say it's one of the only shows they make sure never to miss each week. It has worldwide distribution in 143 foreign markets. So, why wouldn't it get picked up for another season by the CBC?

Like *Da Vinci's Inquest* and *Da Vinci's City Hall* before it, *Intelligence* is character driven, and set in present day Vancouver. One sees the grimmer and more unsavoury elements of the City's underworld, but in the context of very human characters dealing with commonplace,

everyday challenges. Placing powerful actors as strong characters in challenging and constantly changing situations is the strength of the show. For example: Mary Spalding (**Klea Scott**), after a difficult day at work finally gets a chance to relax and make love when the phone rings and she wrestles with the decision of whether or not to answer it. Jimmy Reardon (**Ian Tracey**), struggles to reconcile an emotionally out of control ex, a frightened young lover, a daughter caught in the middle, and the demands of his job. Shooting in a style that embeds the viewer in the scene as a silent observer, lends the program a reality more authentic than any reality TV series could hope to achieve. With the large cast of characters, each with their own stories that intertwine with each other, one easily becomes addicted to the show – wanting to know how it all fits and eventually works itself out. Yet, even though there are so many story lines to follow through each season, each episode allows first time viewers a complete experience. With so many characters to cast on the show,

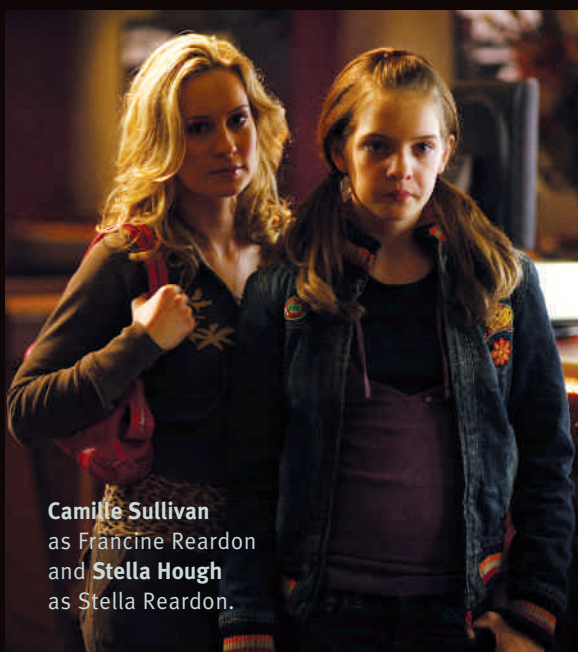
many local actors get to work on it – in the first season, and the pilot movie, there were around 200 actors and all except five or six were local. In the second season that number fell slightly to 160. For an indigenous production, those are significant numbers.

As I write this, the Writers Guild of America (WGA) is out on strike. In Vancouver, the work is starting to dry up. More so than Toronto, we are very much (some 80% of our work) a service industry, and when the Yanks go home, there remains a paucity of Canadian work to fill the void. A series like *Intelligence* is something performers rely on and, as of late, it's almost the only game in town. My concern grew as I read a December 2007 interview with **Chris Haddock**, the creator of *Intelligence*, in *The Tyee* (www.thetyee.ca), where Haddock felt the Network was “gunning to bury” his program. I wanted to understand why he would say this, why he would bite the proverbial hand that feeds him.

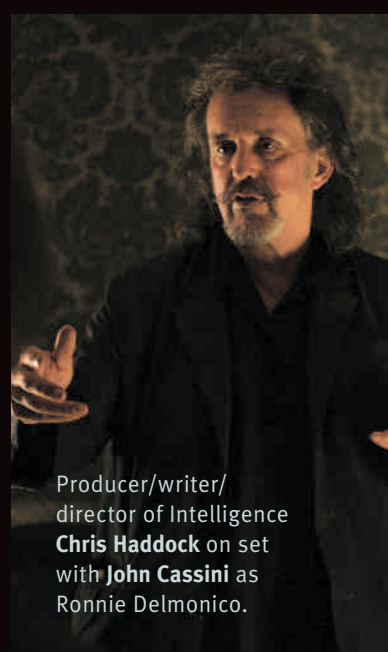
I set out to do my own story and found out interviewing Chris Haddock



Producer/writer/
director of *Intelligence*
Chris Haddock with
actress **Klea Scott** who
plays Mary Spalding.



Camille Sullivan
as Francine Reardon
and **Stella Hough**
as Stella Reardon.



Producer/writer/
director of *Intelligence*
Chris Haddock on set
with **John Cassini** as
Ronnie Delmonico.

"The CBC is the canary in the coal mine, if you buy and split the canary up, we don't know when we are being gassed. And we're being gassed. You know, the average Canadian's being gassed. And I mean that we're being shut off from our supply of cultural oxygen, and it's a necessity."



is, not surprisingly, rather like watching *Intelligence*. He jump cuts from one thing to another, shoots from the hip and is sometimes self-contradictory. One has to piece together assorted fragments of information and begin to assemble a picture that tells the story. The following are bits and pieces of that hour for you to assemble into your understanding.

On why *Intelligence* is structured the way it is:

CH: Partly because of budget restraints and everything we've been, I've been, constrained in kind of the size of things you write. So you're always forced to write for actors anyway, forced to write dialogue because that's the cheapest form of production we can do.

On the importance of actors:

CH: After you write the script and do all the indications and so on, it's really the actor who's the final presenter, and narrator, and singer, and dynamic of the entire process.

On the artist without infrastructure:

CH: The thing we don't have in this country is enough structure for an actor to show up and be creative every day, that's the thing. Actors wake up in the morning and say, "How am I going to invent my entire career today? I've got to wake up, I've got to invent where I'm going to find a job." If you're alone as an artist out there, without structure, you're just whirling in the wind.

On the state of affairs in Canadian television:

CH: My argument with the present state of affairs in Canadian television is that structures are not being built, its infrastructure is not being built.

On the production budget of a Canadian show:

CH: The budgets we have to work with across Canada are very restrictive. It means you can't hire the actors you want to hire or the number of actors you want to hire. One of the things that first starts

is, "Do we really need this one line?" And boom! There you go, budgets are trimmed. Then of course, somebody like me, you know, my producers are wringing their hands saying, "The most expensive item in the budget are the actors for *Intelligence*! Or, "You can't write as many actors. How many parts? You've written thirty-five parts for this episode!" And people are going, "C'mon?" And I'm going, "I'm sorry." What I've always tried to do is emphasize that the show is about actors, the show is about characters, the show is about the story.

On what *Intelligence* provokes:

KMG: Your show talks about the things that the media doesn't talk about and so we think about it and we recognize it as a truth in the dynamic of our lives. Do you think that presents a challenge for the powers that be and that the quality of your show and what you deal with is something they don't want out there?

– continued on next page



Matt Frewer
as Ted Altman.



Ian Tracey, Shane Meier,
Gerard Plukett and
John Cassini.

The thing we don't have in this country is enough structure for an actor to show up and be creative every day, that's the thing. Actors wake up in the morning and say, "How am I going to invent my entire career today? I've got to wake up, I've got to invent where I'm going to find a job." If you're alone as an artist out there, without structure, you're just whirling in the wind.



CH: I actually have mixed readings on it, because I hear from all kinds of people – including Conservative Members of Parliament – one of whom went out of his way to tell me that until he'd seen the show, he couldn't find a justification for English drama on the CBC, but that in seeing the show he suddenly understood. And at the other end of the spectrum, we have a lot of the guys who watch it because it talks about the 'narco-economy', it talks about dope culture. It's a way in for lots of people who don't have shows they can relate to, who see their life being reflected, and the situation of people out here on the coast... yet people inside the network, the CBC, top executives say, "Listen, everywhere I go, people tell me that *Intelligence* is the best thing on television and the only thing on our schedule that they watch." There's an awful lot of people out there who are in positions of power who find the program fascinating and entertaining, and who want it to continue and aren't opposed to it, and think that it's pretty fantastic

that some of these things you're bringing up are actually being talked about in an entertaining way.

On the privatization of the CBC:

CH: There's other big movements at play that have been so for a very long time. With regard to the CBC it's been the gradual privatization and stripping of its assets, and the sending of those audiences and advertisers to the other broadcasters. That's what we're witnessing at the CBC – privatization. The CBC is the canary in the coal mine, if you buy and split the canary up; we don't know when we are being gassed. And we're being gassed. You know, the average Canadian's being gassed. And I mean that we're being shut off from our supply of cultural oxygen, and it's a necessity.

On the future of *Intelligence*:

CH: We are going to see something next year... none of these characters are dead. All these characters are alive,

and they're alive in the imaginations of the Canadian people.

On his deal with Fox:

KMG: You have sold a U.S. version of this to Fox?

CH: Yes.

KMG: So, that would have American actors in an American environment?

CH: It'll have an American environment. Nothing else has been, even remotely...

KMG: I mean, if you're shooting in Los Angeles or San Francisco?

CH: That too has not yet been determined. I would like to shoot the show here.

KMG: And keep the city Vancouver?

CH: No, no, I'd love to shoot it as San Francisco, but shoot it here.



Pascale Hutton
and Ona Grauer.



John Cassini
as Ronnie Delmonico
and Darcy Laurie
as Bob Tremblay.

Intelligent TV

Keith Martin Gordey has been in the biz for more than a quarter century. He continues to make his living as an actor, serves on the boards of PAL Vancouver and the Leo Awards, and is Vice President of UBCP, the BC Branch of ACTRA.



KMG: Would you get a bigger budget per show than you have now?

CH: Oh, yeah.

KMG: Would it be like, three times as much?

CH: It wouldn't be three times as much, but it would be healthier for sure. But that's all down the road. You know, I just turned in the first script ahead of the strike deadline, and haven't been doing anything since. Until the strike is resolved I can't even think about it. But that's down the road and it may happen, and it may not. They may order the pilot, they may not. But to me it doesn't matter because I'm striving to keep this show alive up here. And why I've been talking about my fear that the network would prematurely cancel it, is because they've given me every indication, through their treatment of the show, that it's a show they're not trying to keep alive. So that's up to me, it's up to the audience now,

because we have the power to demonstrate its worth. But nobody is aware. I mean some people obviously are, but a lot of people don't have a clue about that because the media's not telling that part of the story.

On the CBC:

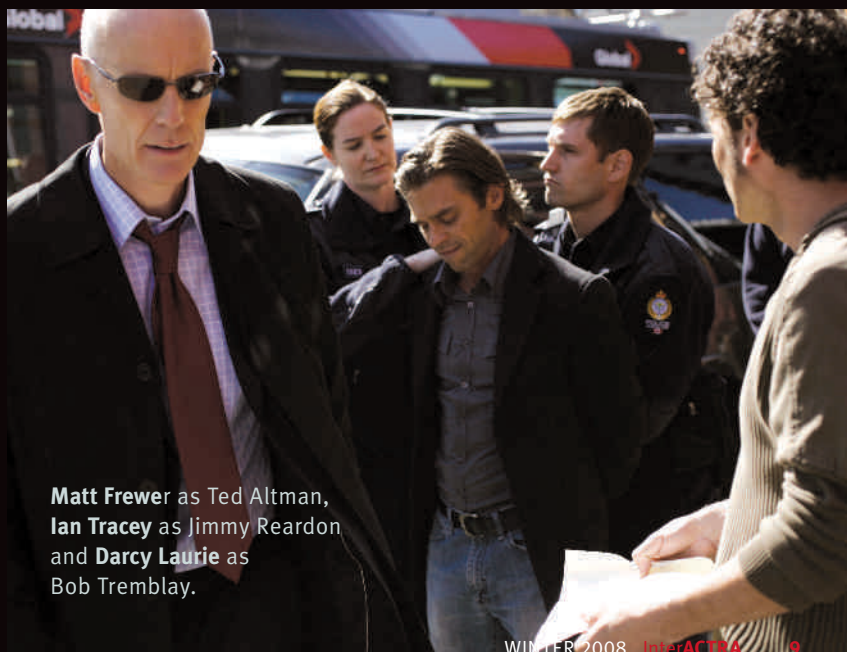
CH: You know I'm a huge supporter of the CBC. I think I value it more than some of the people who are working there and running it. The argument I'm trying to make is that we need better operations out of that public broadcaster. It's the place where generations of Canadians have 'cut their teeth' and it's one of the most outstanding news organizations in the world. We do have to wrestle back the power, and wrestling back the power is only done by ordinary people getting together and wrestling it back. It's never given, no matter how nice you are.

KMG: It's never given, because you're so nice.

I was at a fundraiser for PAL Vancouver the other day, telling an actor friend about my interview with Chris Haddock, and how we'll know in February if they're getting picked up. He looked at me, puzzled, and said "Haddock knows they are not going to get picked up. They've already had the set sale. It's a done deal." I thought wait, here's another twist in the story. 'Cold Squad' had at one time been cancelled too, had a set sale, gave up their studio, and then ended up coming back for another season. So anything is possible, right? Then Jeff Keay of CBC responded to Chris in The Tyee with, among other remarks, the following: "We're happy to see Chris remains a passionate supporter of his show, which we happen to think is pretty good." Pretty good? CBC's Head of Media Relations has gone on record saying one of their shows is, "pretty good?" If that's not damning with faint praise I am not sure what is. By the time you read this you'll know if maybe Haddock was right and the fix was in. ■



John Cassini as
Ronnie Delmonico,
Bernie Coulson as
Michael Reardon and
Alana Husband as Sweet.



Matt Frewer as Ted Altman,
Ian Tracey as Jimmy Reardon
and **Darcy Laurie** as
Bob Tremblay.

Don Harron: This 'Octa-geranium' still blooming

By Lyn Mason Green

He's not exactly what you would expect.

Our much-feted Earle Grey Award recipient of 2007 is a 70-year veteran of radio, television, stage, comedy, writing and directing. He is a former host of CBC's *Morningside*, co-creator of the perennial Canadian favourite *Anne of Green Gables – The Musical*, author of numerous books, and plays the iconic, 'malaprop-ing', tweaker of pompous noses, 'Charlie Farquharson, who pops up at the Toronto Fringe Festival in a production of... wait for it... *Rumpleforeskin*. Yes, you read it right the first time. One would sooner have expected to see Liona Boyd wearing spandex and busking in the subway. There he was, Mr. **Don Harron** himself in his silvery glory, mounting his own fractured version of the fairy tale and having the time of his life playing the irritatingly nomenclatured gnome... as a Jewish Bubbie. What a treat!

Toronto-born Harron, 82, began his professional performing career on radio in 1936 at the ripe age of 11 – just three months before the CBC was born as our national broadcaster. He was already a seasoned pro by the time he started at the University of Toronto where he decided to audition for a play that was directed, ironically, by Earle Grey himself.

Harron recalls, "I was a freshman at U of T coming directly from a summer of working on a farm for \$20 a month. It was my tuition money. I had already been a professional radio performer for almost 10 years by then. So I thought I had a good chance to land a leading role in Shaw's *The Devil's Disciple* at Hart House, which was being directed by Mr. Earle Grey. He greeted me with, '*Ars longa, vita brevis*'. I was later relieved to learn that it meant 'Art is long, but life is short'."

"I was admittedly disappointed to be cast as the Hessian soldier, with no lines. I thought the rather impressive uniform would be a chick magnet, but unfortunately it came with a white curly Harpo Marx wig and bright, rosy-cheeked

Nutcracker-esque make up. At the final rehearsal, which was my first since I had no lines, Earle admonished me for being un-reactive in a scene that had a man on trial for his life. "Speak up!" Earle said. Since the Hessian was German, I had assumed he would not understand the content of the trial, so I looked like a bump on a log up there. At Earle's request, I dug up my one year of German and on opening night I immediately reacted and spoke up, and in German to boot.

In my newly found enthusiasm, I did not notice the rip in my very tight britches heading north from my knee toward my crotch, which distracted the audience from the gravity of the scene. Earle told me not to come back for the remainder of the three-night run. I flopped. So I don't believe I was exactly Earle Grey's 'cup of tea.' And yes, that's a direct quote.

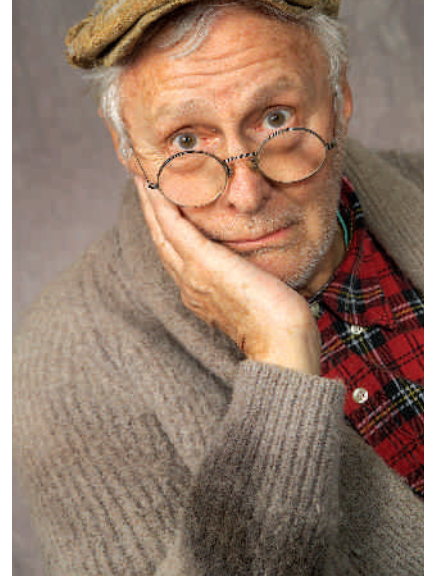
The play finished and World War II interrupted Harron's acting career, and he, like so many others, bravely served his country.

By the 1950's, he was at Stratford under the big tent. Harron says, "Tony Guthrie said to me, 'You are a very interesting actor, but you have a 'pau-city of ges-tyah.' So I went to Britain for a season at the Bristol *Old Vic*. I don't know how much I learned.

What many don't realize about Harron's career is just how accomplished a stage actor he is, having appeared on the world's major stages including London's West End, the Stratford Festival and on Broadway.

He's worked with some of the great names of the theatre including Katherine Hepburn, Maggie Smith, Christopher Plummer, Alec Guinness, Paddy Chayefsky and Joseph Papp. Harron's equally impressive television career bloomed on both sides of the 49th parallel throughout the 1960's, where he appeared in both dramas and comedies.

"When I came home in 1952, **Mavor Moore** told me he was going to 'star' me in



CBC Archives

Don Harron (as 'Charlie Farquharson' in 2003) has won numerous acting awards including the Earle Grey Award, ACTRA Award, Order of Canada, Order of Ontario, North American Volunteer Award, and Doctor of Sacred Letters from Victoria College, University of Toronto.

Spring Thaw, which was a musical revue. I said, 'But Mavor, I can't sing or dance', to which he replied with a heavy sigh, 'Oh Christ, don't I know it.' I'd been away you see, so it didn't matter what I'd done, I was a celebrity. That's the shattering thing. So he told me to go write a monologue," Harron recalls.

"So I remembered seeing Bernard Miles doing a Wessex farmer when he opened for Lena Horne years earlier in Britain, so, thinking of some of the people I'd met working summers on a farm in Southern Ontario, I thought maybe I could do that," he adds.

And so the much beloved, favourite grizzled country wag 'Charlie Farquharson' was born. The character that would become Don Harron's signature creation.

There was much more to come for Charlie. Farmer Farquharson's satirical diatribes were a highlight for 18 seasons on the American sketch comedy TV series, *Hee Haw*, which spawned in turn a raft of books and recordings in 'Farquharson-ese.'

"I did country humour for years," Harron says. "Charlie's political side didn't really start until I was hired by Ross McLean when he was working at *This Hour has Seven Days*. The show was highly political so I thought, 'Why not?.' At that time, Andre Gromyko was the Soviet Foreign Minister and he was invited for an audience with the Pope, so 'Charlie' got on and said, 'They tell me that your serviette

The Earle Grey Award is presented by the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television at the annual Gemini Awards.

The Earle Grey Award recognizes the breadth and scope of an individual's exceptional contribution to Canadian culture.

Previous winners include **Jayne Eastwood** (1999), **Jackie Burroughs** (2001), **Graham Greene** (2004), **Steve Smith** (2005) and **Donnelly Rhodes** (2006).

Minister of yer Fer'ner Affairs Andy Gro-mikey had an audience with yer Pope. Now you take yer average Gro-mikey, he'd be yer cah-mmunist, and yer average Pope he'd be more likely a Catholic. How do you get an audience fer a thing like that?" recalls Harron of his foray into political messaging.

"Charlie could say anything and get away with it. On the radio show, *Morningside*, I would occasionally steal some of Charlie's jokes and get hate mail for it. Charlie never got hate mail. That's the freedom of humour," Harron says.

There is no mistaking Harron's impact on Canadian comedy. His political satire is emulated to this day. As for what Harron thinks about his influence on Canadian comedy? "I don't know how much influence I've had, but some people say that Bob and Doug McKenzie are my illegitimate sons," he laughs.

He continues, "Canadian comedy is pretty good, isn't it? After the war, the big influences were British humour. Wayne and Shuster did sketch comedy with a kind of Jack Benny twist. I think when people laughed at me, it was partly because of the way I said it. They'd never heard comedy with a Canadian accent before. Someone said it was the shock of recognition."

About the future of Canadian comedy Harron is optimistic. He says, "Now there's *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* and *Air Farce* that has had a revival using younger talent. **Derek Edwards** is from Northern Ontario. Gentle but funny. **Russell Peters**, **Shaun Majumder** and others are bringing new voices that are still set in a Canadian context. Canadian comedy is in great shape and Canadians have always and continue to be strong in the U.S. I think the reason Canadians do so well in America is because they've had to do everything up here. They need to be so versatile, and it helps that they have an outsider's 'referee' perspective."

When asked if his motivation for performing had changed all these years he says, "No, not at all. The interesting thing is if you do something and they laugh, you feel great and if they don't laugh you ask

what happened? It's as true now as it was then. I started so young I probably worked the womb before I came out. I'm addicted to the laughs. It's the strongest drug I've ever known. It makes heroin seem like aspirin. It wraps around you like love, even better than applause alone."

Looking back on his career so far, Don counts among his proudest achievements, the quintessentially Canadian musical *Anne of Green Gables*, which was originally written for television. It is now well past its 35th season at the Charlottetown Festival and has won rave reviews in London, New York, Sweden and Japan, as well as here at home. No small accomplishment in a long list of remarkable accomplishments of an outstanding career.

The last word goes to Charlie himself as he comments on Don Harron's Earle Grey Award. He says "The wife and I have relations in Tah-rona whenever we're there. And Don Har'n is one of 'em. He hasn't done any reguhlar work since workin' for that Canadian Broadcorping Castration on yer Morningslide... I dunno what he's doin', livin' of yer avails of wimin. M'ybe. So I guess this Lifetime Perceivment Award is instead of a gold watch... but it's cheaper."

(Photos at right, top to bottom:) Don Harron in *First Edition* in 1964, *Reddick* in 1968, *Riel* in 1979, on the radio in 1981, and on the air as 'Charlie Farquharson'.



Lyn Mason Green

has been an actor for more than 30 years. She is founder and Director of Canadian Actor Online, (www.canadianactor.com),

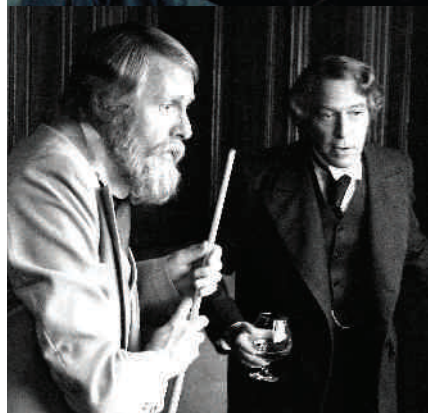
now in its 10th year. Lyn is also co-author of the critically acclaimed book *Standing Naked in the Wings: Anecdotes from Canadian Actors*, Oxford University Press. She serves on ACTRA Toronto Council as VP Communications and on ACTRA National Council.



CBC Archives



CBC Archives



CBC Archives



CBC Archives



CORY BOWLES

From trailer park to triple threat

By Jason Chesworth



Kate Hayler Reid

Cory Bowles is one talented

Haligonian whose work just can't be pigeon-holed. He's a chameleon of sorts, easily moving in and out of his three trades – actor, dancer, musician and sometimes comedian – who rallies behind arts programs in the public school system one moment, and demands more curd be placed in poutine across his native Halifax, the next.

Before he was 20, Bowles's band, *Hip Club Groove*, took Halifax by storm in the mid-nineties. There is one clip on YouTube that is sure to bring back memories for all the teens with their unspent energy and penchant for the down-and-dirty beats heard regularly on the Halifax indie music scene. For the uninitiated, the clip of *Get Off My D****, could be passed off as a bunch of white kids from the Maritimes with no real reference to urban music – but to those 'in the know,' it is a rare three minutes of a respected group of performers – *Jorun*, *Sixtoo*, of *Hip Club Groove* and a very young, mustachioed *Buck 65*, were all breaking new ground in their communities. During the video Cory Bowles, a.k.a. *Cheklove Shakil*, 'busts

in' and begins to rap with a ferocious confidence backed by a killer beat and the exotic sound of a sitar.

Bowles says it's no small wonder why *Murderecords*, founded by Canadian indie group *Sloan*, wanted to pick them up during this exciting time. "We were young and didn't take ourselves too seriously, but (*Sloan*) would come to the shows all the time and then one day one of the guys came up and asked if we would play a couple of shows with them. And when that started we were stuck on the scene and all of a sudden we were getting big crowds," says Bowles.

When their first album *Trailer Park Hop* came out, it debuted at number one in Halifax, and the band only released vinyl. Suddenly, in under a month, they debuted at number eight on the college charts and their records started selling.

As so many new bands experience, their success was not to last. After touring with Len (who had the 1998 hit *Steal My Sunshine*), *Hip Club Groove* fell apart just shy of a very lucrative record deal. Bowles recalls, "I was totally heartbroken because

it wasn't what I wanted at all".

While it may have hurt to leave, the experience helped Bowles venture into other opportunities, which would once again reconnect him to life growing up in a trailer park in small-town Nova Scotia.

Trailer Park Boys' director **Mike Clattenberg**, who directed *Hip Club Groove's* video for their first album, offered Cory a recurring role on the popular TV show, and he jumped at the chance.

Bowles' character, Cory, and his 'partner in crime', Trevor, (played by childhood friend **Michael Jackson**) kept their word to each other and learned everything about the park and the show.

"We didn't feel there was much more to give," explains Bowles. So, in fine *Trailer Park Boys'* fashion, Cory and Trevor left the park to check in to a mental institution.

Bowles' dance card, however, is still full. He mentors the musical groups *Aide de Camp*, *Flux Dynamo*, and of course, *Cheklove Shakil*. In addition to touring as a musician, Bowles continues to work with the *Verve Mwendo Dance Company*, which he co-founded.

Cory Bowles in *Aide-de-camp* (left), and with Greg Bryk (brown hair) and Wes Williams (brown jacket) in *Poor Boy's Game*.





“There’s also that underlying issue of black-on-black racism which is quite common, but often overlooked. The film really took a hard look at a lot of human issues.”

In the recently released *Poor Boy’s Game*, directed by Clement Virgo, Bowles had an opportunity to play a character he has always wanted to explore. “The role of Earl was one of those gems I really wanted from the moment I heard about it. Earl is a very real character, he came with a lot of baggage, I enjoyed finding out about him, and relaxing into exploring the conflict that arises when racial tension happens.” Bowles explains.

Bowles comments that the issues of racism are often something many turn a deaf ear to. “Sometimes you begin to take sides and even lose respect for your own ethnic group,” he says. “There’s also that underlying issue of black-on-black racism which is quite common, but often overlooked. The film really took a hard look at a lot of human issues”.

Bowles revelled in the opportunity to work with actor/activist Danny Glover, and award-winning director Clement Virgo. “Being with Glover was like taking a master class in acting, and Clement’s directing was amazing,” he says. ■

Cory as ‘Cory’ on *Trailer Park Boys*.



Mike Tomkins

BARGAINING UPDATE: The future is here

By Marit Stiles, Director of Research

It seems like every few weeks

a new report is released trumpeting the growth of advertising on the Internet. There’s a veritable labyrinth of information to absorb and sift through – allow me to go through some of the fundamental goals we at ACTRA are working toward, on behalf of our members.

Although Canada was slow – compared to Europe and Asia – to jump aboard the online advertising ‘wagon’, this is changing at breakneck speed. Not surprisingly given the massive growth in social media such as Facebook, MySpace, vlogs, blogs, uploading, downloading, message boards, forums, wikis and podcasts, and the introduction of video pre-roll to the selection of online advertising tools that ad dollars are migrating at an accelerated rate to capture the Internet’s potential.

The increase in VOD (Video On Demand) and DVR (Digital Video Recorder) means advertisers are spending more of their budgets on exploiting every possible opportunity. With the maturation of online video in the next few years, we’ll see this trend continue to climb.

The Canadian Marketing Association released a study in November 2007 which projected that by 2011, advertisers would be spending more of their ad dollars on Internet advertising than on television and telemarketing. PricewaterhouseCoopers concluded in their ‘*Global Entertainment and Media Outlook 2007-2011*’ report that Internet advertising will remain the fastest-growing ad medium and will constitute 14 percent of global advertising in 2011, compared with less than three percent in 2002.

As ACTRA members, you haven’t only witnessed the shift to online advertising, you’ve also been active participants.

Canadian advertising agencies are hiring ACTRA members to perform in several different types of online ads, including targeting advertising to

children through interactive ‘advergames’ – like the member-voiced *Lucky Charms* online game – and online interactive micro sites.

Check out Nestea’s www.plungeandplay.com to see a great example of an ‘advergame’ voiced by an ACTRA performer.

Further along the amazing ride inside the Internet, are commercials used on ‘third party websites’ like the ‘Bridezilla’ commercial for *Sunsilk* that ran on *YouTube* and the pre-roll commercials you have to sit through when you click on a lot of online content. Then there’s the ‘blink spots,’ those five second commercials for radio that are usually placed in between songs.

ACTRA’s in the game, and front and centre when it comes to navigating the maze that is the Internet.

ACTRA was the first performer’s union in the world to negotiate payment for commercials produced for Internet-only use and for commercials originally produced for TV broadcast and ‘moved over’ to the Internet. As a result, we’ve been able to track the number of commercials that fall into these two categories, with performer contract information from Toronto and Montreal.

Between January 2004, and October 2007, the number of commercials produced for the Internet under the **National Commercial Agreement (NCA)** in Toronto and Montreal increased from 56 to 274.

The number of performers employed in those commercials increased from 191 in 2004, to 619 in 2007.

Total performer earnings in 2007 exceeded \$520,000.00 – and that’s only for commercials ‘made-for’ the Internet.

In 2004, only 36 commercials produced under the **NCA** and made-for-TV broadcasts ‘moved over’ to the Internet.

By 2007, that number jumped to 261, representing an additional \$500,000 in performer earnings.

– continued on page 15

"The show is about truth, just heartfelt, always striving for truth. If it doesn't sound authentic to us when we're writing it, it doesn't get to air. We always ask ourselves, 'does this feel right?'"

'da Kink in my Hair **firsts**:

- First television appearances in dramatic roles for **Jully Black**, **Keshia Chante** and **Jarvis Church**.
- First nationally broadcast television show to showcase the vibrant and lively *Caribana Cultural Festival*.
- First time an all-Black cast featured on a private national network in Canada.
- Boasts the first black lesbian kiss (*Episode 108*) ever broadcast on primetime television.

SOURCE: www.globalTV.com

'da Kink's creator **trey anthony** as Joy.



It's all about the hair

By Susan Ponting

A woman's hair carries her truth

and, if you listen, you will hear mystical things. That's what *'da Kink in My Hair* creator **trey anthony** knows about women. "I've always believed that your hair represents what's going on in your life – even for me", she joked. "I can see all the stages in my personal life, if I have had a lot of things to hide from myself, or even from others, then my hair is dry and brittle and very long. If I am starting a new beginning, I cut all my hair off," she explained.

Hair has always held significance for anthony, who remembers as a young girl sitting between her grandmother's legs having her hair braided. That's when her hair became a metaphor for life.

At her grandmother's knee she remembers all the stories coming out about her community, and family. "The stories were all braided into my hair – and my heart," said anthony.

Years later, anthony could not have dreamed that her metaphor for life would end up being her life's work.

'da Kink in My Hair began at the Fringe Festivals and grew to premier at sold-out shows at the *Princess of Wales Theatre* in Toronto and showings at the *Hackney Theatre* in London, England. Now, of course, it has grown into a television series carried on Global Television.

To put it rather mildly, the show

is breaking new ground, and so too is anthony. It hasn't been easy, but anthony has great determination and has always maintained her resolve to be authentic and true to herself. She is a self-described 'black, queer activist, playwright, comedian and actor', and she's riding the wave of her life.

Ngozi Paul is a co-creator on the show, and like anthony, is also one of the stars, "The show is about truth, just heartfelt, always striving for truth. If it doesn't sound authentic to us when we're writing it, it doesn't get to air. We always ask ourselves, 'does this feel right?'"

Perhaps that's why so many viewers are attracted to the program. The truth extends far beyond the story lines, and into the tiniest details.

It's all about the details

From the kind of curling irons and hair dryers positioned at each station, to the paint on the walls, every essence of a salon must feel right.

"Viewers know when something stinks, they know when something's off – we need to make sure people watching the show see the authenticity of it – nothing can be off," said Paul.

Perhaps the best part of *'da Kink in My Hair*, is the new ground being broken telling the stories of our young black youth in

Ordena Stephens-Thompson as Novelette.



Conroy Stewart as Dre.



Canada, “Young girls and women are happy now that they’re finally being portrayed honestly on mainstream television. Even young guys are watching,” said anthony.

Ngozi Paul agrees. She says, “The idea to look at black issues within a mainstream platform is long overdue, this is a really exciting time in Canada for first-generation Canadians to see themselves reflected on television. Canada’s landscape is a plethora of different cultures now.”

anthony says they are dedicated to making sure the show transcends culture and race and hopes that people will see that it deals with human stories. “It’s about a family – and the dysfunction within families, but it’s also about loving each other, and people trying to work their stuff out,” said anthony.

There is a misconception that the show isn’t really a ‘family show,’ but anthony and Paul disagree. “That’s the furthest thing from the truth. Every one can relate to the show, whether you’re black, white, male, female, old, young – we all face the same issues,” anthony says.

Paul and anthony have been criticized for some of the mature content the show deals with. “Those people who have criticized the show are people who haven’t watched from the beginning. Yes we deal with some heavy issues, but because that’s true to life. There’s always a ‘moral to the story.’ We always work it out the best way we can,” said Paul.

Both Paul and anthony say the most difficult part of running the show is also the show’s appeal. “It’s awfully tough to multi-task, but isn’t that what women do best?” asked anthony. And as the show’s actors, writers, producers, and co-creators, trey anthony and Ngozi Paul wouldn’t have it any other way. ■

Richard Fagon as ‘da Kink’s Nigel.



- Series creator Ngozi Paul grew up and went to school in the heart of ‘Little Jamaica’, Eglinton Avenue West – the Caribbean neighbourhood strip that is brought to life in the series.
- Having an aunt as a stylist, trey anthony grew up amongst the hustle and bustle of a hair salon, the backdrop of the play and television series.
- While in NYC for the *Fringe Festival*, Ngozi, trey and the other cast of ‘*da Kink*’ were unable to afford proper rehearsal space and were forced to run lines on a street corner.
- As a teenager, Ngozi spent her summers working and soaking up life at an Eglinton West hair salon. Many of the characters and storyline concepts that appear in the series are inspired by that time in her life.
- In her portrayal of ‘Joy’ in the series, trey anthony drew upon her *Yuk Yuk’s Nubian Comedy Nights* alter ego, ‘Carleen the Dance Hall Queen’.
- In addition to the complimentary tickets given to women’s shelters, homeless youth, and to other disadvantaged parties, trey insisted 20 front row seats be sold at \$20 each night of the play’s run at the *Princess of Wales Theatre* – as a way to ensure that the show remained accessible to the community.

SOURCE: www.globalTV.com

‘da Kink’s co-creator Ngozi Paul as Starr.



BARGAINING UPDATE The future is here

– continued from page 13

It’s not surprising then that advertising in new media will be a major focus at upcoming negotiations between ACTRA, the Institute of Communications and Advertising (ICA), and the Association of Canadian Advertisers (ACA), for a new NCA.

The last agreement was extended by a year – with a 3% rate increase and an additional 1 point to insurance contributions – so that both parties could undertake research and discussion on issues of shared interest, such as online advertising.

From January 2008 through Spring 2008, both sides will meet using ‘interest-based bargaining’ as a process for negotiating that renewed collective agreement. Our shared goals are to maximize Canadian commercial production, and increase opportunities for ACTRA members. As part of that process, we’ll be exploring trends in online advertising.

ACTRA made history in 1999, when we secured that first payment for commercials on the Internet. We set the worldwide standard again in our IPA negotiations in 2007. Just look at the Writers’ Guild of America strike to see our sisters and brothers in the U.S. seeking the same rights we have achieved – we can’t sit idly by waiting for the opportunities to come to us. That’s why we have a National Organizer for Digital Media – **Patricia McCutcheon** – working new media conferences and video game industry conventions, and partnering with local branches across the country to reach out to new media producers. That’s why we track the data in our membership system to ensure our agreements are working effectively for you. That’s why it’s so important we continue to stay in touch to learn what is working for you, and how we can better serve you.

The future is here – and although the Internet is a complex maze, together we are working through it. ■

Get in touch with Patricia at pmc-cutcheon@actra.ca, check out the ACTRA website for news and information about issues in new media, and keep those questions coming!



Coalitions: BUILDING STRENGTH AND SHARING THE LOAD

It's a cold Gatineau morning.

We're standing outside the CRTC buildings where hearings on *CanWest Global's* U.S.-funded takeover of *Alliance Atlantis Communications* are about to begin. Our spirits are high though, and our smiles are wide, despite the gravity of our purpose – to rail against the foreign ownership of our media companies.

ACTRA National President **Richard Hardacre** and ACTRA Ottawa Councillor **Barry Blake** hold ACTRA flags and join in the *Communications Energy and Paperworkers* (CEP) Union's protest against this threat to our cultural sovereignty – the takeover of our second largest Canadian media company, financed with 64% of the money from U.S. investment bank Goldman Sachs.

Already, CanWest has fired hundreds of workers from newsrooms across the country. ACTRA is here to support CEP's rally, and to raise the alarm about the threat to Canadian culture and Canadian programming that this deal represents. Other unions joining CEP in this fight include *The Communications Workers of America, Canada* (formerly the Canadian Media Guild), and public sector workers represented by the *Syndicat des Canadiens Fonctionnaires Publiques*. We're fighting for Canadian jobs and Canadian culture. We are a coalition.

There is power in our coalitions

ACTRA has become part of numerous coalitions, all with unwieldy acronyms I might add: CCAU, CFTIC, CCC, to name a few, and many of them don't have the formality of a name, but form on the spot to work on common causes.

Coalitions come by their acronyms honestly, though they are unwieldy and sometimes slow to move. But working in coalition means we all share the workload and costs, and in the process earn credibility with governments and others in the industry.

We speak on issues in unison.

ACTRA has strong credibility in our industry among our campaigns and policy efforts. Lately, we've been the 'go-to' organization when it comes to taking a stand on cultural issues.

Richard Hardacre was the only English-language participant in a major news conference organized by *ADISQ* in Quebec, when 18 cultural organizations came together to demand the government issue a direction to the CRTC on October 29, 2007.

Now, the producers, who ACTRA was on strike against just over a year ago, are asking us to work along-side them with the *Writers Guild of Canada* (WGC) and the *Directors Guild of Canada* (DGC) to form a similar coalition amongst the English-language organizations to push the government and the CRTC yet again, on the drama issue.

ACTRA is a founding member of the *Coalition of Canadian Audio-visual Unions* (CCAU) that came together in 2002, to take on the crisis in Canadian TV drama. We've been working together ever since. The CCAU letterhead lists the following in the coalition: ACTRA, the Directors Guild of Canada (DGC), the Writers Guild of Canada (WGC) and the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians, Local 700 CEP (NABET) the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada (CEP) The American Federation of Musicians – Canada (AFM Canada), Union des artistes (UdA), Association des réalisateurs et réalisatrices du Québec (ARRQ), Association Québécoise des techniciens de l'image et du son (AQTIS), and Société des auteurs de radio, télévision et cinéma (SARTEC). The principal participants are ACTRA, DGC, WGC and CEP. The CCAU has been a crucial coalition to having our voices heard at the CRTC.

Through the CCAU, we have commissioned in-depth studies of our industry, and made substantial CRTC interventions backed by solid research. The work we continue to undertake would be too big a load, not to mention too expensive, for us to undertake on our own.

ACTRA also relied on the strength of the *United Steelworkers* (USW) during our strike and welcomed their lobbying expertise in our joint lobby day on Parliament Hill in 2005.

Coalitions built our *Performing Arts Lodges* in Vancouver and Toronto, and are the backbone of PAL organizations in other centres. ACTRA is currently being approached to work in industry coalitions

to come up with a strategy to deal with the high value of the Canadian dollar, which we fear will be dealing a very hard blow to our industry in 2008.

Copyright reform is underway, and our work in concert with the Creators' Copyright Coalition, brings our voices into harmony and unison so we are heard above the business interests that continually threaten to marginalize the rights of the artist. Also on copyright, ACTRA is co-operating with a slate of music, industry publishing, and other organizations.

Our Campaign for Canadian Programming will be in high gear in 2008, with a possible federal election and with the broadcasters' licences up for renewal. We have an opportunity to get the CRTC to impose spending and exhibition requirements so that we can fix the sorry state of Canadian TV drama and have broadcasters pull up their socks to do the hard work of telling Canadian stories, as they have failed to do in the past seven years.

Coalition work will be the foundation of these efforts, and the key to our success.

Divided we beg. United, we bargain. ■

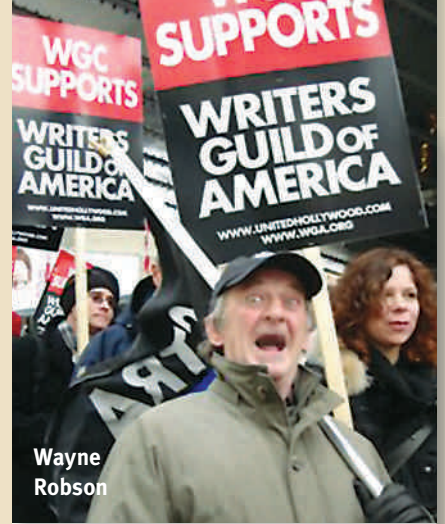
ACTRA's coalition involvement includes

- Canadian Coalition of Audio-Visual Unions (CCAU)
- Canadian Film and Television Industry Coalition (CFTIC)
- Creators' Copyright Coalition
- Media group of the Canadian Labour Congress
- Coalition for Cultural Diversity
- Working with the United Steelworkers and the Communications Workers of America, Canada, on regulatory and legislative issues
- At the Branch level ACTRA works in many coalitions including the *Friends of Canadian Broadcasting and Communications* and the *Energy and Paperworkers' Union of Canada*

International day of solidarity for WGA with WGC

Many ACTRA members turned out for the *International Day of Solidarity*, in support of the WGA strike on November 28, 2007, outside the Sony Centre for Performing Arts to stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the U.S. The WGA in the U.S. went on strike over the same issues we went on strike for at the beginning of last year. Their battle is a familiar one. Writers, actors, and

performers deserve to be compensated for the work they create. As the complex and developing areas of digital new media and broadcasting over the Internet continue to pose more questions than answers, the only thing we know for sure is that ACTRA will continue to fight for your right to be fairly compensated for the work you do, regardless of the medium it's distributed on. ■



Christine Webber

Writers vote to end strike

ACTRA supports our brothers and sisters of the Writers Guild of America who signed a historic deal – that took courage and resolve, and garnered unprecedented public support.

Entertainment is going through a paradigm shift in digital distribution – a new generation now watches productions on iPods, computers, and mobile phones. Writers now have a deserved piece of that growing pie.



Photos by Chris Faulkner

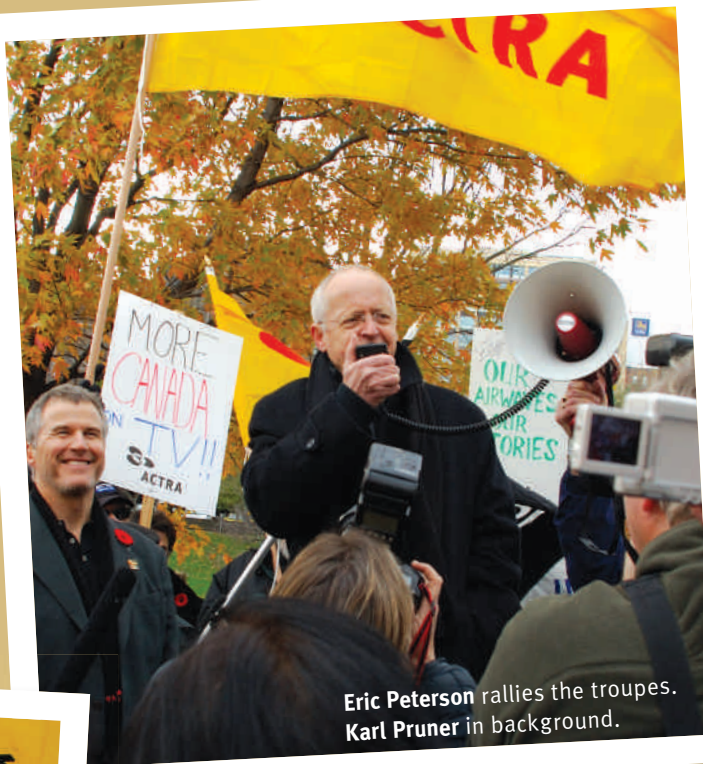
(Above and right:) ACTRA in solidarity with WGA outside the Sony Centre for Performing Arts in Toronto.



We need more Canada on TV!

ACTRA's big demo in Ottawa

The private 'Nets' sure weren't expecting to see us at the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' annual meeting in Ottawa on November 5, 2007. ACTRA members showed up by the hundreds outside the Westin Hotel. Extra security was called in by the networks in anticipation of the rally. CBC Radio aired **Eric Peterson's** speech in its entirety. Eric Peterson, along with **Julie Stewart**, **Robb Wells**, **Richard Hardacre**, and **Karl Pruner** rallied the 'troops' in front of the Westin Hotel – where the conference was held – to demand Canada's private networks hear our voices and give Canadians what they deserve: more Canada on TV! Busloads of ACTRA members from Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa descended on the nation's capital to demand more Canadian content in our programming. We were definitely heard, in spite of the fact that it was the first day of the Writer's Guild of America strike, we received national media coverage of the event on radio, and television and in print. We put the private networks on notice that we're not about to let this drop. Thanks to all who participated! Let's keep at it in '08. ■

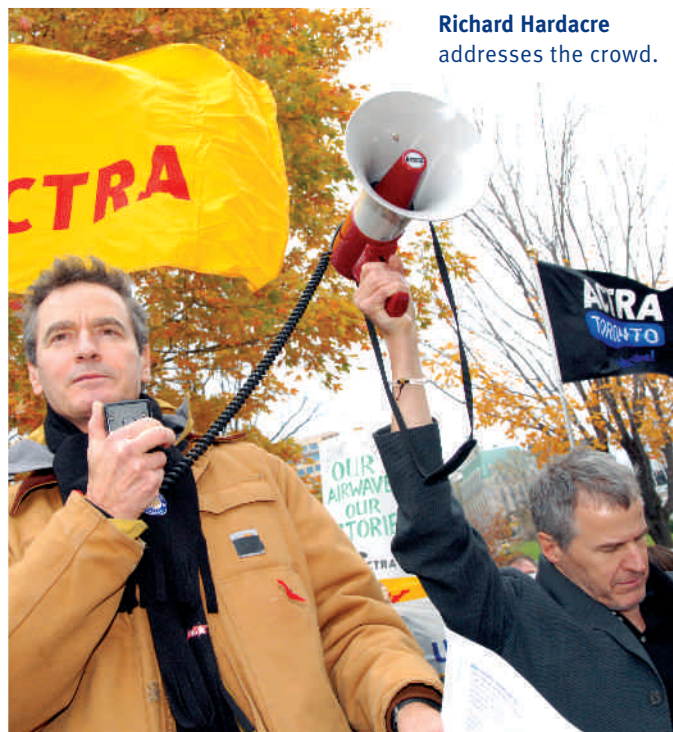


Eric Peterson rallies the troupes.
Karl Pruner in background.

Susan Ponting



Julie Stewart gives a heartfelt speech.



Richard Hardacre
addresses the crowd.

Christine Webber

Newfoundland & Labrador

By Marlene Cahill,
Branch Representative

Production has picked up in Newfoundland this year and the trend is continuing. The unheard of is happening: we will have a MOW in January – all interiors of course.

Stephen Waddell and **Arden Ryshpan**, the new Executive Director of Equity, visited the branch in November to meet with performers and producers. As there are no Equity houses in Newfoundland and few Equity members, we hope this will be the beginning of an Equity presence in the province.

ACTRA Newfoundland has just announced **Paul O'Neill** as recipient of the 2007 ACTRA Award of Excellence. The award recognizes Mr. O'Neill's contribution to Newfoundland & Labrador's actors and his enormous contribution to the development of the local radio and television industry. ■

Maritimes

By Gary Vermeir,
Branch Representative

The fall of 2007 proved to be a disappointing one for the Maritimes. Promised productions didn't arrive and others were pushed at the last minute into 2008. Other than the stalwart shows like *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, and Halifax Film Co.'s animated series, there was very little going on in our part of the world.

To correct this in Nova Scotia, we created an industry association *Nova Scotia Motion Picture Industry Association* (NSMPIA) and were successful in lobbying the provincial government. The result – the best film tax credit in the country! Hopefully that will mean more production in the New Year.

Meanwhile, the NSMPIA has a lot on its plate. A sound stage is now priority number one if we are to replace the disappearing MOWs with features and series.

We are also part of the new *Film Advisory Committee* in New Brunswick and are excited by the amount of work that seems to be slated for that province – as well as new film facilities. The film industry in New Brunswick, with its three

production centres, multitude of locations, and two official languages, has tremendous potential and the new provincial government seems to be aware of this and is very 'pro-film'.

Jamie has been our National Councillor for 10 years and has done our Branch proud. We will miss him at the Council table, but we only have to tune in to the upcoming kids' series, *Mighty Jungle*, to hear his dulcet tones once again.

The commercial sector has been very busy and we have seen a sudden flowering of commercial recording studios and facilities, which bodes well for increased work down the road.

We say a fond farewell to some of our colleagues this fall who are moving on to new adventures. Our administrative assistant **Jeannine Huczel** is leaving us after eight years to pursue new opportunities in northern New Brunswick. Jeannine was a tremendous asset to the Branch and her sunny personality and dedication will be missed by the entire membership. As well, our National Councillor (and National Vice-President) **Jamie Bradley** has decided not to seek the office for the next term. Jamie has been our National Councillor

for 10 years and has done our Branch proud. We will miss him at the Council table, but we only have to tune in to the upcoming kids' series, *Mighty Jungle* to hear his dulcet tones once again. ■



Just Buried.



On the set of Just Buried.

Chris Faulkner

Montreal

By Don Jordan, President,
ACTRA Montreal

While 2007 was something of a rebound year for production in 'La Belle Province', Montreal members, like most performers across the country, are anticipating a much more difficult 2008.

On the Canadian front, we were able to match last year's decent volume – mostly owing to the continued growth of *Muse's* and *Incendo's* production slates. On the service (U.S.) side, ACTRA Montreal members enjoyed a 100% increase in the number of projects which shot here – a total of eight films. With obstacles like the 'turf war' and APFTQ's 'interference' seemingly behind us, some big studio blockbusters like *Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor*, *Death Race* and *Get Smart* rolled into town.

As with everybody else in this business, we are expecting the labour unrest south of the border to have a devastating impact on production levels for the coming year.

As grateful as we are for the work opportunities that U.S. projects afford us, Montreal members know all too well what happens when you let yourself become too dependent on foreign production.

Looking ahead to this year, we are as eager as everybody else to see some substantive changes in the CRTC's policies, as we take aim at reviving our own struggling Canadian television industry. ■

Toronto

By Karl Pruner, President,
ACTRA Toronto Performers

There is a renewed sense of purpose in the halls of ACTRA Toronto these days.

Our recent Council elections have brought fresh blood into the fold. With an ambitious and challenging agenda ahead of us, we're fortunate all of our new councillors have come armed with the energy and determination necessary to get the job done.

Two purpose-built studios are currently being erected in the city and should be up and running within the New Year. These projects will help address concerns about the lack of dedicated studio space in the city and will result in more work

opportunities for our membership.

ACTRA Toronto is also spearheading an initiative that will oversee the formation of a credit union, which will service the financial needs of Toronto's working film and television professionals. The credit union's CEO, **Steve Mumford**, helped to outline the benefits of the venture at our fall members' conference. Steve explained that the idea for a credit union was born out of the wearisome practices traditional financial institutions engage in when dealing with performing artists. Too often, banks view the fact that you are a performer as the end of the conversation, rather than the beginning. Our credit union will give performers a financial experience customized to their personal circumstances.

The credit union's application has been filed with the provincial regulator and we expect to hear about its status shortly.

As well, we would like to extend a special thank you to Sarah Ker-Hornell and Film Ontario for helping to secure important increases to the province's film and television tax credit system. ■

Saskatchewan

By Mike Burns, Branch Representative

ACTRA Saskatchewan celebrated its 40th year with its 5th consecutive year of prosperity. We had four Canadian series shoot in the province this year. For the first time, two of those were based in Saskatoon.

We had seven small features and MOWs, and fifteen IPA productions in total. Our local production community has grown steadily, and now boasts nearly three full crews.

The provincial tax credit scheme has, no doubt, been a large factor in this. In addition, ACTRA membership has grown on an average of 10% per year for the last five years.

As most Canadians know, Saskatchewan is the party capital of the country. In 2007, we hosted the Junos, CCMA (Canadian Country Music Awards), WCMA (Western Canada Music Awards), and the Geminis. The province is still green with pride from the Grey Cup victory in November.

The Branch launched its own website this year (www.actrasask.ca), which is – continued on opposite page



Andrée Menard and Rick Mercer.



Fred Ewanuick of *Corner Gas* and Amy Matysio, Saskatchewan Councillor.



Mike Burns and Wendy Anderson, Ron Maclean in background.

The Saskatchewan Party and Brad Wall are still in their honeymoon phase and have indicated – in private meetings with branch representatives – that they will continue to support our industry. We are hopeful to see things continue with business as usual.

very popular with the membership. A provincial election created a sea change on the political front. The Saskatchewan Party and Brad Wall are still in their honeymoon phase and have indicated – in private meetings with branch representatives – that they will continue to support our industry. We are hopeful to see things continue with business as usual.

The outlook for the New Year is unclear, but we are hearing that at least two small features will go in the early part of 2008.

Our 40th Anniversary celebrations will wrap up at the April 2008 *Saskatchewan Film and Video Showcase* awards.

Best wishes to all our ACTRA brothers and sisters for 2008. ■



At the joint meeting of the ACTRA Edmonton Council and members of the ACTRA Calgary Council. (Left to right:) **Duval Lang** (President, ACTRA Calgary), **Rebecca Starr** (Treasurer, ACTRA Edmonton), **Sonia Donaldson** (President, ACTRA Edmonton), **Don Ast** (National Councillor, ACTRA Edmonton), **Brian Gromoff** (National Councillor, ACTRA Calgary), **James Dugan** (Treasurer, ACTRA Calgary).

Alberta

By Jennifer Blaney,
Branch Representative

17 Emmy nominations have been garnered for two productions that were shot in Calgary last year – *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* and *Broken Trail*. *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford* garnered Oscar nominations as well.

Edmonton has been busy with five television series shot within approximately one year of each other – two Canadian features, and early in 2008 Lionsgate is producing a 13-episode television series called *Fear Itself*.

A slow start at the beginning of the year in Calgary, but they're making up for lost time. **Paul Gross's** *Passchendaele* just wrapped, which is the largest all-Canadian, financed feature film in Canadian history. Calgary also hosted the wonderful television series *Heartland*, among other productions.

Branch Representative **Jennifer Blaney** was appointed by Alberta's Minister of Culture to serve a two-year term on the *Alberta Film Advisory Council* with other industry stakeholders. The mandate of the council is to develop a business case for a long-term sustainable industry in Alberta, which means substantial change to the province's current grant program. In Alberta, in the past, committees such as this have only allowed for a single union voice and vote. Jennifer will serve with her colleague **Damian Petti**, President of IATSE 212 who is also the Industry Co-Chair of the Council. Jennifer is also elected the *Chair of the Alberta Film Partners* – a committee dealing primarily with marketing priorities for the film commission.

ACTRA Calgary has administered the Edmonton branch for a year. The Council and Branch Rep are jointly working on the creation of ACTRA Alberta by-laws with the intent of truly amalgamating the branches to coincide with the fiscal year-end (beginning March 1, 2008). ■



applause

Congratulations to our Genie nominated ACTRA members!

Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role:

★ **Gordon Pinsent** in *Away From Her*
Viggo Mortensen in *Eastern Promises*
Marc Labrèche in *L'Âge des ténèbres/Days of Darkness*
Claude Legault in *Les 3 P'tits Cochons/The 3 Little Pigs*
Roy Dupuis in *Shake Hands with the Devil*

Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role:

Gilbert Sicotte in *Continental, un film sans fusil/Continental, a Film Without Guns*
★ **Armin Mueller-Stahl** in *Eastern Promises*
Guillaume Lemay-Thivierge in *Les 3 P'tits Cochons/The 3 Little Pigs*
Danny Glover in *Poor Boy's Game*
Michel Ange Nzojibwami in *Shake Hands with the Devil*

Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role:

★ **Julie Christie** in *Away From Her*
Béatrice Picard in *Ma tante Aline/My Aunt Aline*
Ellen Page in *The Tracey Fragments*
Anne-Marie Cadieux in *Toi/You*
Molly Parker in *Who Loves the Sun*

Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role:

★ **Kristen Thompson** in *Away From Her*
Fanny Mallette in *Continental, un film sans fusil/Continental, a Film Without Guns*
Marie-Ginette Guay in *Continental, un film sans fusil/Continental, a Film Without Guns*
Laurence Leboeuf in *Ma fille mon ange*
Véronique Le Flaguais in *Surviving My Mother/Comment survivre à sa mère*

Best Motion Picture:

★ *Away From Her*

Achievement in Art Direction/
Production Design:

★ *FIDO*

Achievement in Direction:

★ **Sarah Polley** for *Away From Her*

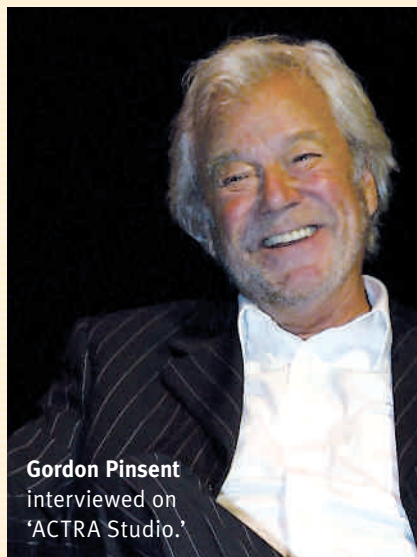
Original Screenplay:

★ *Eastern Promises*

Adapted Screenplay:

★ **Sarah Polley** for *Away From Her*

★ Indicates Genie Award winners.



Gordon Pinsent
interviewed on
'ACTRA Studio.'

'ACTRA Studio' at the Atlantic Film Festival

A very special event in Halifax for the first-ever 'ACTRA Studio' at the Atlantic Film Festival. This year, the 'Studio' featured **Gordon Pinsent** in conversation with **Deb Allen**. "It was a wonderful, funny and inspiring afternoon, and we now look forward to the 'ACTRA Studio' being our marquee event at the AFF," said Maritimes Branch Rep **Gary Vermeir**. The Festival this year featured a raft of Atlantic Canadian films, such as the features *Poor Boys Game* (co-written and co-produced by **Chaz Thorne**) and *Just Buried* (also written and directed by Chaz Thorne).

Superstar-in-the-making, **Ellen Page**, who stars in the hit film, *Juno*, won the Best Actor award for her work in *The Tracey Fragments*. ■

Robert Lepage recognized as artistic visionary

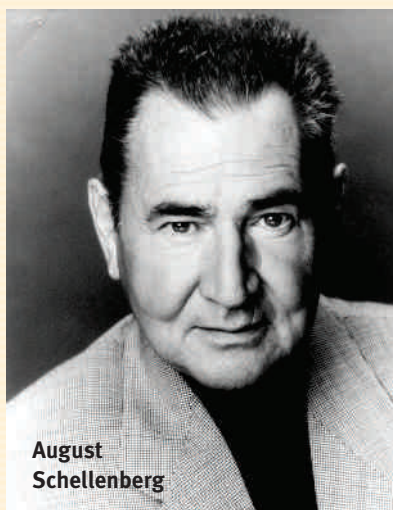
Quebec actor and director **Robert Lepage** was honoured in a gala celebration in Quebec City hosted by the *Canadian Actors Equity Association*, ACTRA, and Uda.

Lepage has worked in Canada and Europe and received the Europe Theatre Prize. Lepage is recognized for being an artistic visionary who has achieved success in nearly all the performing arts – drama, opera, film, and musical theatre.

"Lepage was acknowledged in October, 2007 for his impressive body of work, and for his abilities to push the boundaries of performance and art," said **Richard Hardacre**, ACTRA National President. ■



Richard Hardacre, ACTRA National President, with Quebec actor and director **Robert Lepage**.



August
Schellenberg

An Emmy-nominated performance!

Congratulations to **August Schellenberg** on your Emmy-nominated performance as Sitting Bull in the movie, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*!

The HBO epic movie event is based on Dee Brown's bestseller. The film powerfully explores the tragic impact that the United States' westward expansion had on American Indian culture, and the economic, political and social pressures that motivated it.

Lensed in the wilds of Alberta, Schellenberg's performance was critically acclaimed by *Variety*. ■



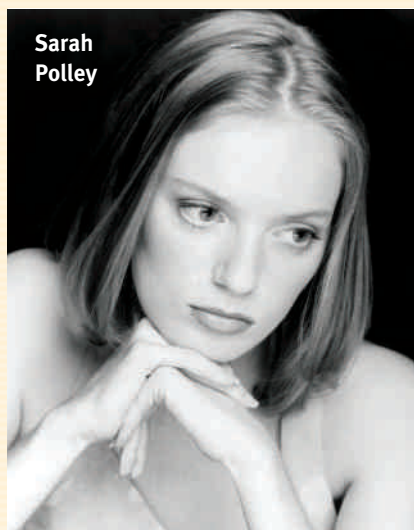
Susanne Boyce, President, Creative Content, Content and Channels, CTV Inc., presents **Sandra Oh** with the CTV International Achievement Award at this year's Crystal Awards.

CTV International Achievement Award presented to Sandra Oh

Since 1988, Women in Film and Television – Toronto has honoured the extraordinary achievements of women in screen-based media through its annual Crystal Awards. Since the inception of these coveted awards, more than 85 of Canada's most accomplished women and men working in film, television and new media have been honoured. Through their achievements, these outstanding professionals have played a key role in advancing Canadian female talent and helped bring issues of diversity to the forefront.

The CTV International Achievement Award is bestowed for unparalleled global success by a Canadian woman working in film and television. ■

applause



Veteran actor, up-and-coming director, Canadian gem

Congratulations go out to **Sarah Polley** on her 2008 Claude Jutra Award, for her lyrically beautiful film, *Away From Her*. The award recognizes outstanding achievement by a first-time director, and was established in 1993 in honour of the late Quebec director, **Claude Jutra**. Polley was presented with the honour at the 2008 Genie Awards in Toronto.

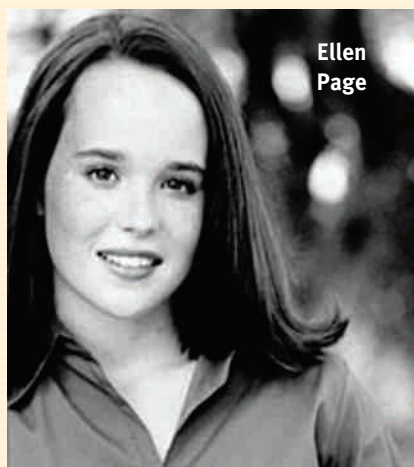
And more kudos to the talented Ms. Polley – actor, director, and writer whose same film, *Away From Her*, was also nominated for an Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay. ■



WIDC success stories

A round of applause to ACTRA members **Gail Maurice** of ACTRA Toronto and **Karen Hines** of ACTRA Calgary who have been selected for this year's WIDC directing ensemble.

And kudos to **Sherry White**, ACTRA Newfoundland member and alumni of the WIDC program, on her short, *Diamonds in a Bucket*, starring Toronto member **Liisa Repo-Martell** and former National Councillor **Glenn Downey**. White wrote and directed the film that was shown at the *Toronto International Film Festival's Short Cuts* and at *L.A. Shorts*. It also played at the Vancouver, Atlantic and St. John's *International Women's Film Festivals* as well as being invited to the *Bahamas International Film Festival*. White is also a co-writer on the current series, *MVP*, airing on CBC Television. ■



Page shines in Juno

A big shout-out to **Ellen Page** on her Oscar-nominated performance in the magical film, *Juno*. The nomination was the first ever for an ACTRA Maritimes member. The Halifax actor stars in Montreal-born director, Jason Reitman's film, written by Diablo Cody (a.k.a. Brook Busey-Hunt) who, when accepting her Academy Award for Best Screenplay, Cody said she would like to thank "the super-human Ellen Page." ■

Could-be dad, **Michael Cera** plays alongside **Ellen Page** in *Juno*.



applause

ACTRA Manitoba celebrates 50 years

The Winnipeg branch was chartered on June 13, 1958. ACTRA Manitoba kicked-off celebrations on January 18 with an annual Open House. Special guest Premier Gary Doer graciously accepted an honorary membership. The first ever ACTRA Manitoba Film Festival touted six shorts and they plan to make the Film Festival a yearly event. ■



Ti Hallas

Manitoba Premier Gary Doer receives honorary ACTRA membership from **Sharon Bajer**, President of ACTRA Manitoba.



Ti Hallas

Wayne Nicklas, Judy Cook, and Rob Macklin.



Ti Hallas

Jessica Burleson, Daphne Korol, Talia Pura, and Rea Kavanagh.



Jacqueline Samudo

Woman in the Director's Chair

Congratulations to **Jacqueline Samudo**, the inaugural winner of the 2008 MPPIA WIDC Feature Film Award, which represents material support, but also meaningful validation for the artist on her debut feature film, *Bread*. Samuda says, "For any filmmaker, the road from development to production can be a long one. As a female filmmaker with some statistics to climb over, this is a real boost. I'm very grateful to MPPIA, to *Women In the Director's Chair* – which has also provided me with valuable training in the past – and to all the sponsors." ■

Cooking with Kupeczek

Linda Kupeczek, one of the founding members of the ACTRA National Women's Committee, was one of the Canadian authors invited to *Wordfest 2007: Banff-Calgary International Writers Festival*, with her book *The Rebel Cook: Entertaining Advice for the Clueless* (Altitude Publishing, 2006). Linda says she was honoured to be hanging out with the likes of Marina Slewytka, Vincent Lam, Peter Robinson, Louise Penny and Nancy Huston, despite the fact that Linda's book has a rubber chicken on the cover. ■



STRAIGHT TALK: The importance of deadlines and diaries



By Ferne Downey,
AFBS Governor &
ACTRA Treasurer

For this role I am adopting my strict-but-fair persona: slightly 'bossy boots', a titch opinionated (I blame my Celtic Maritime heritage), and full of certainty that every year more members can be cajoled into exercising their insurance options and doing the right thing, so I begin...

Option to maintain insurance coverage

I will sound like a broken record, but do not pass up your annual opportunity to maintain last year's insurance coverage (bronze, silver or gold) for you, or you and your family. You receive your renewal opportunity in the mail every year in March, around St. Patrick's Day. It is a seasonal certainty that is as regular as clockwork. The *Statement of Insurance Benefits* tells what your level of insurance will be for the upcoming year, based upon your earnings. If you fell out of coverage or have lower coverage, you are offered the opportunity to 'maintain your previous benefit level', and your options are clearly spelled out for you.

The deadline for return is 45 days later, which takes us to about April 25, 2008. Let's put it this way – if you've got this nagging feeling you've missed the deadline and it's already Mother's Day – you're right! You've missed it! *Do not miss this deadline.* Program it into your cellphone/PDA/Blackberry – whatever digital device you favour. Write it in your day-timer. Mark it on your wall calendar. Deadlines in the insurance world are real deadlines. If you are far, far away, phone toll-free in North America at **1-800-387-8897** or email **benefits@actrafrat.com** and make arrangements *before* the deadline expires. (The actual deadline will be indicated on your *Statement of Insurance Benefits* and will be posted on the AFBS website.)

Any of us can feel battered about modest earned income in any given year – and this year was a roller coaster ride – but you have the opportunity to buy the same level of coverage as you earned (or bought) last year. And it is subsidized and affordable. AFBS has created numerous

easy payment options: annually by cheque or Visa or Mastercard, or monthly by pre-authorized chequing (PAC) to make it as manageable as possible.



Online... option

The ACTRA Fraternal website – **www.actrafrat.com** is a very straightforward and totally practical place to get a lot of information easily. As is befitting a financial institution, it is also very secure. As creative workers, we can be a challenge to locate – and pin down. We work away from home often and our snail mail may languish awaiting our return, we may have only provided an agency address and the important AFBS snail mail languishes there – you know the picture I'm painting. Dead mail. For people like us, websites are a saving grace. Don't procrastinate a day further – stop reading this story, go online and register. It's 'easy-peasy'.

Green option

Once you have registered, you can check your *Insurance and Retirement Contributions* in your work history. (Note: for all the details of your personal work history you would go to the **www.actra.ca** website, but more on that process in my next story). You also have a green option in regards to your quarterly RRSP statements. On the website you may choose to relinquish your snail mail quarterly RRSP statement and opt to read it on-line instead. You will still receive the all important year-end RRSP statement by mail as it is a legal requirement.

Option to purchase

Affinity programs include optional *Critical Illness* and a *Real Estate Title Fraud*. (Go to **www.actrafrat.com**, click on the Members icon, and select the New Insurance Program 2007 – all Affinity programs are listed in detail.) Any time you're shopping around for competitive prices, start here – see how they stack up. It runs the gamut from affordable one-stop out-of-country medical and travel insurance to *Voluntary Term Life Insurance* to many more highlights.

Option for scholarship: a fraternal benefit

Sixty-thousand dollars per annum is distributed to members of the Society and dependents of members. There are two deadlines per year, spring and fall. While this is of great importance to your studious dependents, don't forget about it for yourself as well. If you're enhancing your education and professional standards in the arts or cultural fields, check it out. More information is available on the AFBS website under the Fraternal Benefits program or by contacting AFBS Member Services. ■

If I can be of any service, please contact me any time at **fdowney@actra.ca**.

Actors' Fund of Canada turns 50!

Emergency fund celebrates golden anniversary by playing a bigger role than ever

By Tom McCamus and David Hope

"I need some help. May I talk to someone?"

For 50 years, **The Actors' Fund** has been on the receiving end of calls like this. Since 1958, thousands of people have approached the Actors' Fund of Canada for help and those conversations start in about the same way.

The fund is focused on providing emergency financial aid to members of the industry whose health, housing or ability to work is in jeopardy. As compassionate an organization as it is, the fund can't always give everyone everything they ask for at all times. Decisions must be made about whether an applicant's circumstances meet the fund's criteria of a financial emergency and how much support it can provide in each case.

A panel of members of the Fund's artist-led Board of Directors reviews each request for assistance. Actor **Tom McCamus** has been one of 13 members of the Fund's board since 2004, and has seen the decision-making process from the inside. Says McCamus of the sometimes difficult challenge of dealing with requests from assistance, "All the decisions we have been involved with, or privy to, come from a caring and deeply humanitarian position. The range of experience board members bring to the table really helps – I've been impressed by how each member can bring their own unique insight into the problem and make suggestions that might offer a solution not seen by anyone else – including the client."

This business is an insecure one, and no one knows this better than McCamus, "It's like a roller coaster – feast or famine – all the phrases we use. Before getting involved with the Actors' Fund, I felt that

a person should be able to see bad times coming and be able to plan for them. I've since learned that's not necessarily so. It's been surprising to see how fast someone can be thrown into a desperate situation."

Vancouver actor **Babz Chula** knows this first hand.

"I was diagnosed with breast cancer five years ago. While in remission, I discovered I also had a rare, incurable blood cancer. I was reeling. My local arts community raised money for the alternative treatments that would save my life. Eighteen months later that money was gone, but I was alive. Then my breast cancer recurred, and I stepped back onto square one. I filled out an application to

unfortunately numerous, but there is no such thing as a hopeless situation. Actors' Fund Executive Director **David Hope**, tells of a major entertainment industry figure who recently called about a friend who was in trouble, but wouldn't apply for help from the Fund because he was too proud to think he needed it. Hope emphasizes that having to apply to the Actors' Fund is not a sign of failure. "Among the people we've helped are some who have gone on to win major awards in Canadian film, television, and theatre. Some have been involved in the leadership of our entertainment industry unions at all levels. We've had clients who have received the Order of Canada and some who are known

around the world for their excellent work", said Hope.

Actor and comedian **Colin Mochrie** is one of those who survived his share of hard times with help from the Fund. "I was assisted by the Actors' Fund of Canada five times between 1982 and 1988 (I missed a year when I was accidentally successful). The support I received is something I will always be grateful for. At a time when I was plagued by severe doubts, I was given a second (and third, fourth and fifth) chance to do what I

love to do. We all feel more comfortable giving help than taking it. Asking for financial assistance can make one feel like a failure. Yet, without the Actors' Fund, I would have surely failed. I like to think the Fund invested in me, so that one day I could return the favour."

Actor **Shawn Doyle** also faced hard times early in his career. He says, "In my early twenties, my empty bank account made it impossible to properly care for



The Actors' Fund of Canada
The lifeline for Canada's entertainment industry

**The fund is focused on providing
emergency financial aid to members
of the industry whose health,
housing or ability to
work is in jeopardy.**

the Actors' Fund and within days I heard assistance had been approved, and I could expect help for three months. Had it not been for the kindness and generosity of the Actors' Fund, I'm afraid to think of what might have been. With incredible swiftness, I was cushioned by support. In a matter of days I was safe again, and able to address the new challenge I faced," said Chula.

The stories of struggle are

Actors' Fund turns 50!

— continued from previous page

things stay the same. Most organizations dedicated to helping people improve their lives look forward to the day that conditions in society will change enough to make the services they provide unnecessary.

'Utopia' for the Fund would mean that illnesses or injuries would never put an artist in jeopardy of losing their home. People in the business would have access to steady, satisfying employment if they wanted it. Families would stay together. Seniors would retire in comfort, with enough retirement savings to sustain them throughout their lifetimes.

"If we could, we'd wave a magic wand and make things permanently better for artists in Canada. Until that happens, we'll be here."

"If we could, we'd wave a magic wand and make things permanently better for artists in Canada. Until that happens, we'll be here," says Hope. The Fund's U.S. counterpart is celebrating its 125th anniversary this year. At 50, the Actors' Fund of Canada looks like it's here to stay. ■

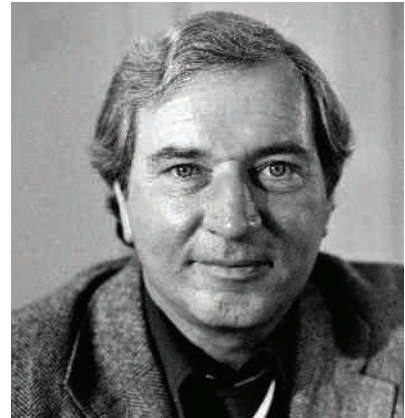
For more information or to make a tax-deductible donation, call (toll-free) 1-877-399-8392 or visit www.actorsfund.ca.



Tom McCamus is an award-winning Canadian film and theatre actor. He recently completed his eighth season at the Stratford Festival, appearing in *The Comedy of Errors* and *An Ideal Husband*. McCamus's film and television credits include *I Love a Man in Uniform*, for which he won a Genie award, and *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, *The*

Sweet Hereafter, *Possible Worlds* and *Waking up Wally: The Walter Gretzky Story*, the latter earning him a Gemini and ACTRA award. McCamus has been a member of the Actors' Fund of Canada's Board of Directors since 1995. He lives with his wife, Chick Reid, near Warkworth, Ontario.

FAREWELL



MICHAEL KANE

Michael Kane was a Canadian original. During his 85 years he lived life to the fullest. He was son, brother, lover, husband, father, grandfather and my uncle.

He was nominated for, and won, acting awards from Peabody, Obie, and ACTRA among many others.

He garnered notoriety by being his own man. He was known as the 'Bad Boy of the CBC'.

After serving in WWII, first in the Ferry Command, then the RCAF, he started acting in his hometown of Montreal.

Kane honed his craft through plays with the *Montreal Repertory Company* and CBC radio dramas.

Eventually, my uncle landed in New York City where his impressive talent led to starring roles in theatre and television.

His version of Hamlet won a Peabody award. He co-founded *Camera Three*, and he was nominated for an Emmy Award for his role in the stage version of Dostoevsky's *Notes from the Underground*.

His performance in James Joyce's *Exiles* won him an Obie Award and the next year he won plaudits for O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*.

Except for starring in the controversial *Trial of the Catonsville Nine*, an anti-war play, off and on Broadway, he spent the rest of his theatre life with his two one-man shows *Man of the World* and *Walt Whitman*.

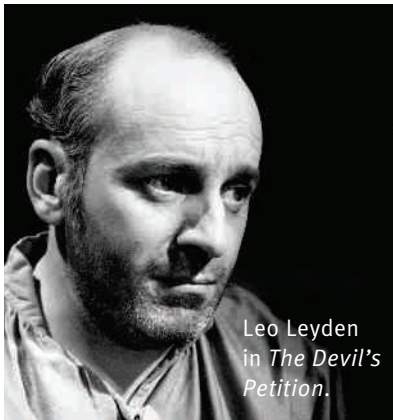
Michael was a brilliant, stubborn, creative soul. He leaves his wife Helen, eight children, two grandchildren, and two nephews. The world was his stage. Farewell, Michael. We hardly knew ye... ■

By Art Hindle



DON CHEVRIER

Popular sports announcer best-known as the original television voice of the Toronto Blue Jays, died on December 17, 2007, he was 69. Chevrier, who was born in Toronto but lived in Palm Harbor, Florida, suffered from a blood disorder and was recently admitted to hospital before being released a few days later. Chevrier was the first on air TV broadcaster who was a part of the foundation of the Blue Jays. Chevrier was also known for his versatility and called football, baseball, curling, hockey, golf, boxing and Olympic sports for the CBC and other networks. ■

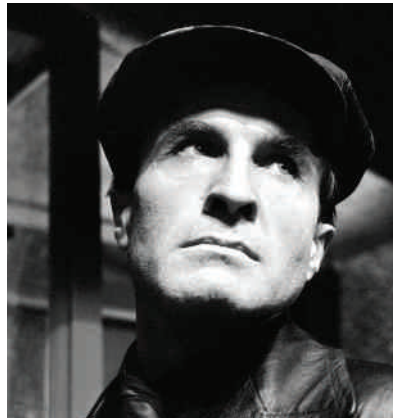


Leo Leyden
in *The Devil's
Petition*.

LEO LEYDEN

Leo Leyden died at the age of 78 in New York City on August 7, 2007. Leyden was a veteran actor, appearing in many West End and Broadway productions. Born in Dublin, Leyden trained at the Abbey School of Acting. In the late 1950's, Leyden emigrated to Canada, and began working at the CBC and appeared in

many Shaw and Stratford productions. His Broadway credits include *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Government Inspector*, and *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* Leyden moved from Toronto to New York in the early 1980s. He is survived by his former wife and companion, Colette Leyden, daughter Vanessa Redfield, sister Phyllis O'Neill and extended family. ■

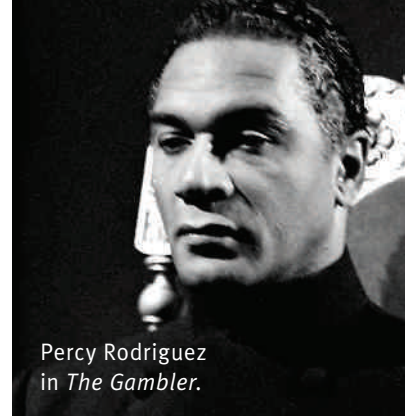


BARRY MORSE

Prolific British-born Canadian actor remembered for pursuing *The Fugitive* across America. Barry Morse died at the age of 89. He was the relentless detective Lieutenant Philip Gerard in *The Fugitive* (1963-67). Morse visited his wife's family here in Canada in the summer of 1951 and he went on to work as an actor and director. Morse's film roles included *Hay in the Goose Steps*, with Peter Ustinov and the role of Har Poon in *The Telephone Book*. Morse's stage credits included directing Charles Dyer's *Staircase*. He was also a regular on *The Adventurer*. Herbert 'Barry' Morse, actor and director, born June 10, 1918; died February 2, 2008. ■

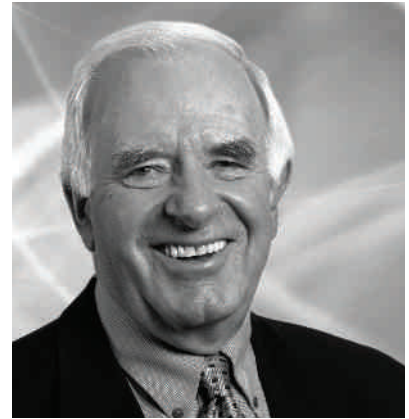
PERCY RODRIGUEZ

Percy Rodriguez passed away in Indio, California on September 6, 2007, at the age of 89. Born in Montreal, Rodriguez enjoyed an illustrious career as a character actor who appeared in many television shows and films from the 1950's to the 1980's. Rodriguez started his acting career in the 1930's appearing in stage plays and television series in Canada. He eventually moved to New York City where he made his Broadway theatre debut in



Percy Rodriguez
in *The Gambler*.

Lillian Hellman's *Toys in the Attic* in 1960. He first gained widespread notoriety in 1968 for his role as neurosurgeon Dr. Harry Miles in the prime time soap opera *Peyton Place*. ■



DON WITTMAN

Veteran sports broadcaster Don Wittman died of cancer in a Winnipeg hospital on January 19, 2008. Wittman called the Munich Olympics for CBC during the hostage tragedy in 1972.

Wittman, 71, will be remembered for his courage and enormous skills as a broadcaster. He was a two-time ACTRA Award winner and was *Sports Media Canada's* 2002 Broadcaster of the Year. He has been inducted into the Canadian Football League Hall of Fame, the Canadian Curling Hall of Fame and is a member of Manitoba's Sports Hall of Fame.

Wittman leaves his wife, Judy, two daughters, Karen and Kristen, and son David. ■

By William Houston

The family biz



Brian Paul



Deborah Tennant



> continued from back cover

DT: It all started because we knew someone who was casting for a little girl. And Aislinn would always be with us at auditions.

BP: Basically, we couldn't get babysitters just for one hour, so Aislinn came right into the room with us. We would put her on a chair over at the side and she'd sit there and watch us do our auditions.

AP: I remember how upset I got the first time my parents told me I couldn't come into the room anymore because I was too old. Watching them audition was one of my favourite pastimes.

DT: There are a couple of things that really stuck out for both of us. The first is that Aislinn is very good focusing from the get go. She also has a great kinetic memory. That's something I've struggled with on film, but she had the natural physical memory for it at a very early age.

TT: When did it shift for you and become work?

AP: There was a feature film project that I sent in a self-tape audition for. The CD actually called my agent and told him that I was kind of bad. So I had some coaching, did it again, and then I was the second choice with three girls in all of Canada. My parents and my agent used to say that was my 'switch,' but I don't think it was. I think my real switch just happened recently. Before I was just 'being there,' and saying the lines and giving reactions that I would probably just give if I was tired. Then something happened, and I put out more instead of holding it in. It's definitely changed now. Harder roles have been coming in. I had to do a girl with multiple personalities – that was interesting.

TT: How do you approach those kinds of roles? Do you coach?

AP: I coach when I have to cry or scream so I can be comfortable with it. And sometimes I'll coach just to see if I can bring up my level a bit. I like coaching. It's fun.

DT: If it's a project with a lot of emotional investment it's better to have an outside coach. If we're having a particular parent-daughter day that's not great, it's hard to put on the hat of the director and the actor. It sometimes gets a bit messy.

BP: It's hard any time, even if we're having a good day, because it crosses a boundary that has never worked for us. I used to give hints, but I realized it got in her way. It actually stopped the things about her that were the best, simply her own naturalness. So I backed off and that was the best move I made.

TT: Have you taken acting classes besides the coaching?

AP: I'm trying one right now. It's interesting to have a scene partner, as well as a teacher. You can have someone on your level to read with, instead of reading with the person giving you the directions, which is always good.

DT: At this age, Aislinn is starting to do more analyses and thinking more about technique. In a class structure you start to learn how to break down a script and how to do it more efficiently. We are also juggling seven dance classes a week, a full load at school, and her social life. And it's really important to me that she still have a 'normal' life.

TT: How do you handle deciding what Aislinn does or doesn't do?

DT: We have turned down auditions we didn't feel comfortable putting her in.

BP: With the L.A. project (*Tell Me You Love Me*) I'm not certain whether Aislinn's ever read a full script. She's had to forgo read-throughs and meeting all the cast because the show is sexually explicit.

TT: Was it a hard decision to get her involved then?

DT: We shot the pilot with Patricia Rozema who was a huge draw for everybody.

AP: I love her. She's an amazing director. She has kids and so it was fun. I was very comfortable doing scenes that under other circumstances would be extremely uncomfortable.

TT: Aislinn, do you think there are things that have taken a back seat because of your acting?

AP: I've had to give up a dance class so that we can do a coaching, but sometimes I just want to work on my job and I have to remind myself that school work always comes first.

DT: Last year, the day we got to L.A., they flipped the schedule on us. Instead of three days it was almost 10 days before we actually did anything. She had just started at this great middle school and had to miss a camping trip. That's something I still regret. Coming up, she'll be auditioning for *Etobicoke School of the Arts* and there's a trip to Montreal in June, so we are planning to be very vocal about her need to have that time.

BP: Aislinn invited two friends to go down to L.A. for a week each. That was a bonus. She came back to Toronto for 10 days. She was going to be in every episode, but Deb was very forward about it and asked for an episode off.

AP: We had to plead for time off so I could go home and hang out for Halloween.



Aislinn and Joely Fisher in *Wild Card*, Season One.



Aislinn on the set of *Do or Die* in 2002.



Aislinn and Ryan Wynott on the set of *Tell Me You Love Me*.

DT: We've had some very good discussions about it and they're aware that our concerns are based on the fact that we want our daughter to be happy.

TT: What is there about being the parents of a child actor that has surprised you?

BP: How little companies actually alter their ways to actually deal with kids. As soon as Aislinn's finished on set they haul her off to tutoring. I have to step in and go, 'Excuse me, tutoring is not a break'. Also the way they schedule younger kids has always bothered me. Why do they start with the adults' scenes or takes? Do the kids stuff when they're fresh!

DT: That's when I realized the idea of kids not doing overtime makes complete sense. It's just ridiculous to even contemplate that they should have to wait a full day before they work.

TT: When Aislinn was seven, you were both cast in *The Sound of Music* at the Stratford Festival. How was that?

DT: I auditioned first, I think?

AP: Twenty kids in the room would all sit in a circle and improvise. It was at my dance studio so I was 10 times more comfortable. I was very confused when we got down to the last couple and I was like 'Why are there only two of us here for Gretl?' And then it was the fifth audition and I was the only one there for Gretl and I was like, 'Where is everybody else?'

DT: It was lucky for all of us the way it worked out. The thing that's most interesting for me was that I had to separate myself. Actually the director Kelly Robinson was very helpful that way. We had a little chat right at the beginning of the rehearsal process and I told him I'm not going to give her notes. It's all up to

you. And then during the run something happened that I was trying to talk to Aislinn about and she got quite enraged at me because I was giving her notes.

BP: (laughing) Other actors don't do that!

DT: Yes well, I breathed for her, and I mouthed all her words, and gradually I was able to let it go.

BP: I saw the show five times and I cried every time. The dress rehearsal was the time when I realized that we might have created a monster. At the point where all the kids march out, turn in place and then step forward and answer to the whistle. At the dress rehearsal there were 2,000 people there and...

AP: I've heard this story many times.

BP: When her whistle sounded, she stepped forward and you could see the terror on her face. It was this amazing look. Then, within half a second, you could see it change because the whole audience went *Ahhhhhh*. They welcomed her.

DT: It's the *Ahhhh*. Gretl is the *Ahhhh* part.

BP: And then she said her name stepped back and the look on her face was completely different. It was like *Oh YEAH!*

AP: Quite frankly I don't remember that at all. What I remember is the joy of being on stage. I enjoyed it so much. I don't even know why.

TT: And after Stratford?

DT: That summer we did the movie *Betrayed* and then *Zoe Busiek Wildcard* with Joely Fisher for two years.

TT: You've had great roles in theatre, in TV series, and in film. Adult actors talk about enjoying one medium over another. What do you feel about that?

AP: I adore anything in front of a camera or an audience. Performing in general is one of the greatest joys in my life. I never realized how much I would miss it if it was gone until this summer when there was a bit of a lull and I didn't have a job for about two months...

(Brian, Deborah and Tova crack up laughing.)

AP: I know, but I was used to working almost every other week. It's like air for me. I need it.

DT: We have always made it clear to Aislinn that if tomorrow she decided she didn't want to act any more, it would be fine.

BP: No problems, because truly we only started this because we're actors. When she's 18, we'll still be actors and we'll still be making as little money as we do now and we would never be able to send her to university. We thought she would do a few commercials and make a college nest egg. We never intended to make her into an actor, and we didn't do that anyway – she did that herself.

AP: When I'm 16 I'm going to be living here. And when I'm older, so long as I'm not living under a rock and I can have one meal a day, and I am working a bit, then I'm definitely going to be an actor. ■



Award-winning actor, writer and singer, **Theresa Tova's** career has gone from film, TV projects, and the Broadway musical stage to concert and Jazz venues

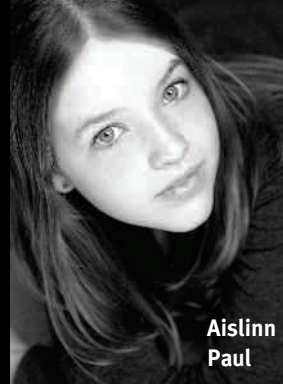
around the world. This year Tova toured to Amsterdam, Weimar Germany, Warsaw Poland, Houston Texas, and New York while still serving the ACTRA membership as a National Councillor, Toronto's VP internal, Children's Advocate. www.theresatova.com

The family biz

By Theresa Tova



Deborah
Tennant



Aislinn
Paul



Brian
Paul

Aislinn Paul is wise beyond her years. It's true, most 21st century kids are sharp, but Aislinn seems to take it to a new level. She's precocious, warm and funny all mixed into one.

Paul loves acting more than anything else in the world. Well, almost anything. She also loves philosophising about life, helping other kids whether they act or do not, and dreams of one day living the high life – in Toronto. She's a determined young girl who, at 13, has already saved for university.

While her parents never intended for her to go into the family business, it's worked out that way, and for the better. **Deborah Tennant** and **Brian Paul** are seasoned performers both with extensive resumé's as long as your arms.

Theresa Tova, who works with many of our young actors, recently sat down with Aislinn and her parents. Tova emerged from the interview like any good interviewer, consumed by her subject and wanting to tell the world all about this little acting dynamo.



Theresa Tova: So, what do you call this life you share?

Aislinn Paul: Definitely a family on the move, I think.

Deborah Tennant: The family business.

Brian Paul: We're just like other people. Some families own grocery stores, we act.

TT: How old were you when you knew what your parents did for a living?

AP: When I was about three years old, my mom left to do a play and I was so confused why she was suddenly gone. I was so mad I wouldn't even talk to her on the phone. I was like, 'Where did you go? Come back!' It made more sense once I got into the business around age four.

TT: Was there a time when you recognized that you were good at it or had a knack for it?

AP: Actually it's never really come to me. I still don't believe I'm good at it. Sometimes I feel like everyone is leading me on. Ever since I was little my friends would say, 'Oh you're such a good actor.' I used to wish they would say something different like, 'You're such a good artist or dancer,' because

those are the things I really work at. But the acting thing has always come naturally, so I don't think I deserve to be told I'm good at it.

TT: Can you believe the calibre of all the producers in L.A., Stratford, and all the series directors you've worked with? For something that you 'don't really work at' – you sure have a lot of experiences.

AP: It's like one big reality show about the terrible actress who had a job and it's going to run forever.

TT: What are the things that frustrate you most?

AP: I want to be a normal kid, but I also work because I have such a passion for this business. Being away from my friends at school is difficult. Being in L.A. is dreary. When I think about going back to L.A. this year it really tears me in half... but working with some of those people is amazing. So it's a really hard decision.

TT: Deborah and Brian, how do you help Aislinn balance all this? You obviously decided to start her out at a very early age.

– continued inside on page 30

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT #40069134



ACTRA
www.actra.ca