

# ACTRA

WINTER 2015

magazine



THE FUTURE  
OF TELEVISION

# INSIDE

YOUR UNION MAGAZINE

# THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF OUR INDUSTRY



# ACTRA

magazine

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On the cover:  
CBC's  
new drama  
**Strange Empire**  
Photo courtesy of CBC

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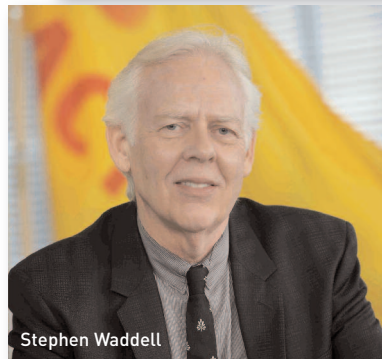
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“ We need to safeguard a broadcast system that we have struggled long and hard to build. It is a system that is crucial to what makes us who we are – proud Canadians. ”

ACTRA National President  
Ferne Downey

## President's Message

# Taking Our Place In Cyberspace by Ferne Downey

**This has been a tremendously busy and fruitful year for our union.**

We have been at the forefront of major policy and regulatory discussions that could dramatically affect our industry and have continued to forge and strengthen alliances with performers' unions around the world, and right here at home. But front and centre in our work has been the creation of a fresh vision for the future of Television in Canada. And, of course, when you talk about the future of TV, what you are really talking about is the future of content delivery on computers, iPads, telephones and communication systems we can barely imagine let alone define.

We are, and have always been, champions for our industry. We know that our industry is a huge contributor to the Canadian economy and we know in this Brave New World of cyberspace we need to continue to be leaders. Our industry needs to be properly nourished and supported because given the right resources, we can make magic.

The CRTC kicked off an ambitious national conversation last year called "Let's Talk TV" and ACTRA was keen to ensure that the voices of artists were a big part of that consultation. Many of you participated through discussion groups or forums and online chats and our voices were heard. In September ACTRA appeared before the Commission to formally present our vision. ACTRA believes the CRTC must balance consumer choice against the costs required to ensure a healthy broadcasting and production sector. We need to safeguard a broadcast system that we have struggled long and hard to build. It is a system that is crucial to what makes us who we are – proud Canadians. But we are at a critical juncture in our industry. New technology is changing not only the way we create but also the way our work is being distributed and seen. Our government and the CRTC need to be on the crest of that wave. So we have been driving the agenda around this issue. We took leading actors to Ottawa in November to speak with MPs and Senators, Ministers and their key staff, to talk about the issues that are front and centre for our 22,000 members. We were clear and passionate about the need for content regulation, significant economic support for the CBC and greater cross-the-board support for Canadian artists.

Ah, the CBC. Our beloved and beleaguered public broadcaster is having a challenging time of it. It has been rocked by scandal, is overseen by a Board sorely lacking in membership from the creative community and dominated by an administrative hierarchy that has floundered as it tries to keep the Corporation's head above water. These problems have roots that go deep into the heart of the organization but above all else are directly tied to a death by a thousand cuts. Year after year sequential governments have failed our national broadcaster. The CBC/Radio Canada, once the crown jewel in our cultural firmament, has been reduced to the role of an impoverished spinster aunt in a Chekhovian drama. Yet we all know, and most Canadians believe, that CBC/Radio Canada must – and can be – the leader in bringing original, distinctive Canadian content to the world. The CBC's job is to help define us as a nation and we know that the key to its success is putting money on screens of all sizes, not into corporate bureaucracy. It is inspiring to see what they have achieved under the most stressful year, perhaps in their entire history. The winter line-up of shows launching on CBC-TV holds great promise from **Stephanie Morgenstern** and **Mark Ellis's** *Company X*, to Lawrence Hill and Clement Virgo's *The Book of Negroes* to **Donald Sutherland's** animated *Pirate's Passage*. And wow, did the brilliant showrunner Laurie Finstad-Knizhnik's bold *Strange Empire* ever shake up the fall schedule. But we believe these accomplishments achieved under duress are not enough.

The most urgent need in our ever-expanding technological universe is content and here in Canada, if we are to keep our place in cyberspace, we need to create even more high-quality, Canadian drama. Our public broadcaster has a unique role to play in daring to reflect Canada back to Canadians. The CBC must be a place where above all else our stories matter. We are hoping that CBC/Radio Canada Executive VP English Services Heather Conway and her entire team can invigorate public broadcasting by behaving like a bold public broadcaster – again.

On our most recent Lobby Days in Ottawa I was teamed with **Mark McKinney**. All up and down the Hill MP's and their aides spoke fondly of his first big show, *Kids in The Hall*. In the late 80s the series was not risk-adverse and went on to do 102 episodes. Under the steady hand of Toronto-

born executive producer Lorne Michaels the show became an internal success. It was a time before the ascent of reality TV at the Mother Corp, before the CBC, driven by decreasing funding drifted into its unfruitful competition with the private broadcasters. My wish for 2015 is that CBC rediscovers a brave approach to content creation and keeps focused firmly on the work.

If we can avoid massive structural mistakes that may destroy the underpinnings that support our industry, Canadian content will always have a significant place in Canadian hearts. The best way to achieve this goal is to let public broadcasting regain its lustre. One key element in this revival must be to focus on gender and cultural inclusiveness. The CBC needs to become a place that includes more women and culturally diverse performers in front of and behind the camera.

ACTRA is a leader in the fight for gender equality. We've also forged alliances with other unions, and through the Canadian Labour Congress, we are united with unions from across the country. We are inspired by our sister union Equity. They are a partner in "Equity in Theatre", a new Canadian initiative that focuses on gender inequities in live performance. We are inspired by our sister union to the south, SAG-AFTRA, who supported the Geena Davis Institute's second annual global symposium on gender representation in NYC, LA and Washington, D.C. We are part of CUES (Canadian Unions for Equality on Screen). We are working with other industry unions and academics to release a second report on gender in the screen-based industries. This fall we joined Canadian women's organizations from across our industry at the St. John's International Women's Film Festival to challenge funding bodies and the industry to step up and ensure women are fairly represented. In the near future we'll be developing tools to encourage those key creative decision-makers to ensure more women are working behind and in front of the camera.

*“Our public broadcaster has a unique role to play in daring to reflect Canada back to Canadians. The CBC must be a place where above all else our stories matter.”*

Although ACTRA's work covers a broad spectrum, much of what we do has a base in the nitty-gritty of our political system. The ever quickening destruction of our public broadcaster is based on political decisions. We are heading into an important federal election year. I believe we can and will elect a new government. We must ensure that the next government respects our institutions, our unions and the self-employed artists who drive our cultural industries. As actors, we have a way of getting folks to listen to us. We can use those tremendous skills, to connect with politicians and voters. We can reach out to all candidates and demand that they speak up, stand up for our rights and we can make individual efforts to make sure that candidates we believe in have the support they need to get elected. I am going to be asking each and every one of you to approach candidates in your riding, to speak with them about why culture matters, about the importance of showing more Canada on all our screens and the benefits of creating a vibrant exciting space in cyberspace for all Canadians. ●



**Ferne Downey and Mark McKinney** at the gates to Parliament Hill where they shook up Parliamentarians during ACTRA's November Lobby Days. Photo: Fred Chartrand

Commission  
Conseil de la radiodiffusion et des  
télécommunications canadiennes

# LET'S TALK

**Katie Boland and Ferne Downey** outside the CRTC's  
"Let's Talk TV" hearings room in Gatineau, Quebec.

Photo: Fred Chartrand.



# Q&A

**What was it like to appear on behalf of ACTRA in front of the CRTC as part of the Let's Talk TV consultation?**

**Katie:** It was firstly, an honour; and secondly, nerve wracking. I wanted to do a good job for ACTRA, for every other member, actors like me that I was representing. I also wanted to be able to converse with the CRTC on, what seemed to me, fairly complicated issues. As a Canadian, it was really exciting to watch and be a part of our democratic process playing out. I remember a strong feeling of 'don't screw this up and do your homework', which is maybe the over-riding feeling of my life, haha! I think ACTRA and the amazing people who work for us, are incredible. After witnessing its inner workings, I felt very heartened. ACTRA is composed of passionate, talented individuals who fight hard for our members. It was a gift to be able to be involved with my union on the front lines.

**Why is Canadian content important to you?**

**Katie:** It is important to me for a number of reasons. Obviously, it is my livelihood and as an industry it is responsible for many people's livelihoods and contributes to our economy in numerous ways. Maybe less obviously, I feel that Canadians need to see more of their stories told and more of ourselves on our screens. Culturally, for our self-esteem as a nation, it is important to continue to fund Canadian content. We are currently making shows (like *Orphan Black*) that are competing in international arenas, are being recognized worldwide, are building a star system and are making Canadians proud. That's not going to happen if broadcasters, online or otherwise, aren't mandated to show Canadian content made by and about our country. Canadians need to be excited about Canadian film and TV and I believe we are getting there. We can't stop now.

**You've worked in conventional television as well as New Media, what's different about these two platforms?**

**Katie:** I would say the creating and shooting of these two platforms are essentially the same. It's the 'before and after' work that's different. When you are an online content creator, you have means at your fingertips to build and continue to engage with

# 'Let's Talk TV' with Katie Boland

your audience once you're online. My web series came out in Canada about a year ago and because it's still available online I am still building an audience and luckily, engaging with people who continue to come across it. Also, I think ensuring success online is less straightforward than on traditional television. On traditional TV, you have a publicist, you have an ad campaign and if you pump money into your show, you have a larger chance to build an audience. Online, you can go viral without really knowing why. Being online is refreshing as a creator because once your work is finished, it's out there; anyone, anywhere in the world, at any time can watch what you made and tell you how they felt about it. That's exciting. Ultimately, I think these two platforms are actually becoming one. Building and monetizing an online audience is challenging for new media. In my opinion, the internet is absolutely the future, if not already the present for exhibiting content; so soon, the "before and after" work for any kind of content will be the same.

## What was it like creating your own digital series?

**Katie:** It was very exciting and fun! At that point in my life, I really wanted to tell my story, to make sense of it. (*Long Story, Short* is about a summer Boland had when she was 21, that she calls, 'The Summer I Lost My Mind') I was surprised that it was a story other women my age could relate to. From a creative perspective, it was satisfying and also hopeful and new because it was something I had never done before. I see being given the opportunity to create *Long Story, Short* as one of the greatest blessings of my life. It started a new phase in my career where I got to have some more control and more say.

## How do we get more Canadian content onto over-the-top platforms? What are the challenges and what are the solutions?

**Katie:** It needs to be mandated. I have learned a lot about how the CRTC works to make sure Canadian content, from production to exhibition, is given dedicated space in the broadcast environment. It's why we, as Canadians, have a common reference point whether we talk about *Hockey Night in Canada* or *Degrassi*. It's only after you realize Americans have never heard of these shows that you realize someone has ensured we know and have access to them. It would be great if we could do some kind of version of that on the internet.

## You're a jack of all trades: a producer, writer, director and actor, how do you reconcile the different parts of your creativity when you're working?

**Katie:** Ultimately, they are all one thing. The part of my brain or spirit that wants to write is what I tap into when I act, so I guess I don't really reconcile them at all, they all feed each other or are the same thing. However, being busy, having a lot on my plate and having a lot I want to say and do, that's stressful. I would be lying if I said finding time for everything isn't overwhelming sometimes. I get run down and sometimes, weighed down when my brain feels heavy with ideas, things I want to do or have to do and haven't yet. So I guess for me the challenge is reconciling life and work, or me and my work as two separate things.

## What are the challenges you're looking forward to in the future? What new projects are you excited about?

“Canadians need to be excited about Canadian film and TV and I believe we are getting there. We can't stop now.”

**Katie:** I hope that we get to keep working and creating Canadian content. I hope a television series I have that's in development moves forward. I hope it becomes a show. I hope more Canadians get to tell their stories, and specifically, more Canadian women. I think we need to keep making things in Canada that are good, that Canadians want to see – and that's a challenge. I am excited about the work I did this year; *Fall, People Hold On, Hunter's Moon*. I am excited to shoot a role in *Born To Be Blue* that stars Ethan Hawke and is about Chet Baker. And I'm excited to start shooting *Renaissance*, a sci-fi, human drama, and to work with my friends **Aidan Shipley** and **Grayson Moore** on a short film that Grayson and I wrote together and that Aidan and Grayson are

co-directing. I am excited about continuing to work with my mom, Gail Harvey and our production company Straight Shooters. I am excited to shoot the *Long Story, Short* movie :). I am excited that media is changing and I am excited to see how it all plays out. ●

*Elle Magazine* declared Katie Boland as one of three "Top Canadians to Watch", *Playback* called her one of 2013's "10 to Watch" and the Toronto International Film Festival as one of their inaugural "Rising Stars" in 2011. Katie has been a professional actor since the age of nine. Her many TV credits include *Murdoch Mysteries*, *The Listener*, *Reign* and *Terminal City* and film credits include *Daydream Nation*, *Sex After Kids*, *Gerontophilia* and *Adoration*. She stars in her webseries *Long Story, Short* which she wrote and created.

## Katie Boland, Tommie-Amber Pirie, and Lauren Collins in *Long Story, Short*.



# THE FUTURE OF CANADIAN TELEVISION



## Destination: Change

The CRTC's Let's Talk TV Policy Hearings and Canadians' Stake in the Outcome

By Stephen Waddell, ACTRA National Executive Director

“If we were to make decisions based on the latest fad or unveiled assumptions, we would find ourselves on a very short pier, rather than an intelligent bridge towards the ‘change’ destination on the other shore.” So said Jean-Pierre Blais, CRTC Chair in an address to the Vancouver Board of Trade (Thursday, November 6th, 2014) referring to his tussle with Netflix and Google during the recent CRTC Let’s Talk TV hearings in Ottawa.

The Let’s Talk TV consultation was an exhaustive year-long process that involved stakeholders from all across the television industry, from consumers, to creators, to broadcasters, providing their comments and analysis regarding how Canadians access the content that matters to them.

In the face of mounting evidence that the explosive growth in technological development has revolutionized the manner in which Canadians view content, this industry-wide consultation was long overdue.

What was remarkable about the CRTC television policy hearings last September following the Let’s Talk TV consultation was the manner in which the issue of over-the-top (OTT) broadcasting sucked up all the media and public attention. The phrase ‘over-the-top’ refers to content broadcast over the Internet through computers, tablets, phones and Internet accessible televisions, rather than through traditional cable, satellite, or over-the-air television. It is literally content that can be viewed anywhere, any time and on any device.





*The danger lies in the intransigence of over-the-top services like Netflix who benefit financially from the existing system, without having to give back to it.*

It was reasonable to expect the Commission knew the central role OTT broadcasting would play throughout the hearings, especially given the Commission's own statistics showing the rapid increase of Canadians self-reporting their consumption of OTT services like Netflix and iTunes. What no one predicted, however, was the three-ring circus the Let's Talk TV hearings devolved into when Netflix presented in front of the Commission on the final day of the hearings.

The hearings ground to a halt when Netflix refused to provide important information, on a confidential basis, to the Commission about the nature and reach of their service. The CRTC was forced to order Netflix to deliver the information when they declined to do so voluntarily. Netflix subsequently refused to provide the information citing confidentiality and competitive concerns.

Netflix's refusal to fully partake in the Let's Talk TV consultation underscores exactly what's at stake for the Canadian broadcast industry, and why it's so important that the CRTC act decisively on the information presented throughout the hearings.

While the CRTC actively regulates conventional broadcasters, ensuring that all players in the system work towards achieving the aims of the Broadcast Act, OTT services are currently exempt from regulation as a result of a New Media Exemption Order exercised by the Commission in the late 1990s on the premise that so-called New Media broadcasting was an emerging medium and needed exemptions from regulation to encourage growth.

ACTRA, along with other stakeholders in the recorded media sector, argued during the hearings that it was long past time to rescind the Exemption Order. Our view is that OTT services should now be subject to the same

regulatory regime as conventional broadcasters. OTT broadcasters should be required to maintain Canadian content minimums, begin creating their own Canadian content, and provide promotional resources to publicize Canadian stories and content to Canadians.

ACTRA's attitude is that content regulation should be platform-neutral and that companies like Netflix, which ACTRA estimates is pulling over \$100,000,000 a year in revenue out of Canada, should be subject to the same regulations and obligations as the rest of the industry.

Unfortunately, Netflix has been given a 'Get out of Jail Free' card. Aside from failing to maintain Canadian content minimums or contribute to the creation of new Canadian production, the service doesn't even have to pay HST when conducting transactions in Canada. Yes, when you pay Netflix \$8.99 per month, there is no HST paid by Netflix. And the Harper government

supports and condones Netflix's free tax ride by publicly stating that the CRTC should not impose a Netflix Tax, modifying the slogan the Harper government used to kill efforts to extend royalties to musicians and singers from copying musical works to digital media – what they called an Ipod Tax.

One of the core messages emerging from the Let's Talk TV consultation is that broadcast television, in its traditional form, is far from being on its last legs as a relevant content delivery medium in Canada.

ACTRA, along with many creators intervening in the consultation, spoke passionately about the need to ensure that Canadian content continues to remain a fundamental element of the broadcast landscape. In fact, the responsibility to foster Canadian content is at the core of the Broadcast Act from which the CRTC derives its mandate.

## WE ARE THE FUTURE OF CANADIAN TELEVISION! TV & WEB SERIES PRODUCTION FROM COAST TO COAST

### Montreal

Montreal's returning TV series include *Helix*, 19-2 and *Mohawk Girls*. *Being Human* finished its fourth and final season and CMJ returned with various docudramas including *Stranger in My Home*. New television series include *Ascension* and *The Lottery* and the new web series *LARPs*. The web series *Heroes of the North* is shooting a second season.

The *LARPs* cast **Jonathan Silver**, **Elizabeth Neale**, **Jon Verrall**, **Charlotte Rogers** and **Scott Humphrey**. The comedic Montreal web series is co-created and directed by ACTRA member **Julian Stamboulieh**.



### Newfoundland/Labrador

Set in St. John's, Newfoundland, the *Republic of Doyle* debuted on the CBC in January 2010 and this year wrapped its sixth and final season. Fingers crossed for another great series replacement to shoot on the Rock.

*Republic of Doyle* cast **Sean McGinley**, **Allan Hawco**, **Krystin Pellerin**, **Rachel Wilson** (standing), **Lynda Boyd** (sitting), **Mark O'Brien** and **Marthe Bernard**.

Photo courtesy of CBC



# THE FUTURE OF CANADIAN TELEVISION

## The CRTC's Let's Talk TV Policy Hearings

Two policy instruments that help deliver on the worthy objectives of the Act are Canadian Programming Expenditures (CPE) and Programs of National Interest (PNI).

ACTRA believes that CPE and PNI are the backbone of Canadian content creation and must be considered vital components in any robust policy as they support a healthy and vibrant broadcast sector as well as the production and exhibition of Canadian programming in a wide variety of genre types.

Any discussion surrounding the Let's Talk TV consultation should carefully note the unprecedented amount of political interference exercised by the current federal government in the regulatory landscape. In the federal government's Speech from the Throne last October the Conservatives made it clear from the outset they intended to unbundle cable packages, under the pretext of lowering Canadians' cable

bills by allowing them to avoid purchasing content in large block of channels and instead only pay for the services they wanted.

Framed as a consumer-friendly position, the issue featured prominently throughout the hearings. The general consensus from industry stakeholders, as well as damning evidence from other jurisdictions, found that unbundling was actually damaging. Unbundling only provided consumers with the illusion of choice and, counterintuitively, could actually cause cable bills to rise.

ACTRA's position on the issue is that the broadcasters are already voluntarily moving towards offering customers pick-and-pay options and that there is no need to unilaterally hasten the process.

We feel that mandating unbundling would send shockwaves throughout the industry and have serious repercussions on the viability of some

niche speciality services, negatively impacting the creation of Canadian programming and imposing unintended financial hardships on Canadians.

In addition to striking a controversial position on unbundling, the Commission also chose to throw into the mix a proposal to eliminate the simultaneous substitution regime that plays a significant role in the continued viability of the Canadian broadcast ecosystem. Long the keystone of the Canadian broadcast system, simultaneous substitution is the practice of replacing the American broadcast feeds with Canadian signals when U.S. shows are being simulcast by Canadian broadcasters, thereby increasing the value of Canadian commercials in those programs.

The Commission estimates that the simultaneous substitution regime could be worth \$200 million dollars annually. While BCE Inc. the

parent company of CTV, valued simultaneous substitution to be in excess of \$450 million.

Simultaneous substitution ensures that money spent on exhibiting advertising is spent on Canadian broadcasters. Financially healthy broadcasters have higher CPE and PNI levels, which in turns means more Canadian programming will be produced and broadcast.

ACTRA and many other interveners raised the alarm that any move away from this regime not only threatens Canadian broadcasters' advertising revenue, but also the Canadian advertising industries' ability to compete and perform.

To that end, ACTRA, along with our industry allies, commissioned a study which found that the removal of simultaneous substitution could result in an annualized loss of \$110.7 million dollars for the Canadian broadcast sector by 2020.

## British Columbia



Louis Ferreira and Kristin Lehman in the B.C. production, *Motive*. Photo courtesy of CTV

A packed slate of returning TV series currently shooting in British Columbia include *Supernatural* (The CW) in season ten, *The 100* (The CW) in season two, YTV's *Some Assembly Required* in season two, Hallmark Channel's *When Calls the Heart* in season two, *Arrow* (The CW) season three, *Bates Motel* (A&E) season three, *Motive* (CTV/ABC) in season three, *Once Upon a Time* (ABC) in season four and *Falling Skies* (TNT) season five. New series include *Backstrom* (FOX), *The Whisperers* (ABC), *The Flash* (The CW), *iZombie* (The CW), *Un-Real* (Lifetime) and CBC's *Strange Empire*.

## Manitoba



Angus Macfadyen, Martha MacIsaac and Jacob Blair in the Manitoba production, *The Pinkertons*. Photo: Allen Fraser

Shooting in Manitoba, *The Pinkertons* airs on CHCH and is syndicated throughout the U.S. Another Manitoba show in production is *Sunnyside*, airing on CityTV.

Much of the push-back surrounding simultaneous substitution seems to come from the spike in complaints to the Commission during the U.S. Super Bowl when some Canadians are frustrated by not being able to see the highly-promoted U.S. commercials that air during the event.

We know that the simultaneous substitution regime can be an irritant to some in the audience, but it's a disproportionate overreaction to remove a policy tool that is so essential to helping provide Canadian programming over a single American sporting event.

With the dramatic increase in the number of Canadians consuming content through OTT services (now estimated to be a third of Canadians), the role of the CRTC in ensuring a healthy and vigorous Canadian broadcast industry is indispensable.

The Commission is ideally positioned to balance the competing interests of stakeholders in the industry and craft a television policy that fosters Canadian content and works in the best interest of Canadian audiences. The danger lies in the intransigence of OTT services like Netflix who benefit financially from the existing system without having to give back to it.

When confronted with Netflix's obstinacy to produce the empirical data the Commission needs in order to make informed policy decisions, the CRTC backed down and refused to hold the service to account. Perhaps they felt enfeebled by the federal government's decision to score cheap political points by declaring they would fight any attempt to impose a Netflix Tax on the service.

In the end, the main losers in the process could be Canadians themselves who are in jeopardy of losing a system that provides programming that reflects our collective heritage, tells Canadian stories, provides jobs to Canadian cultural workers, supports Canadian producers and broadcasters, and helps to promote Canada to the world. ●

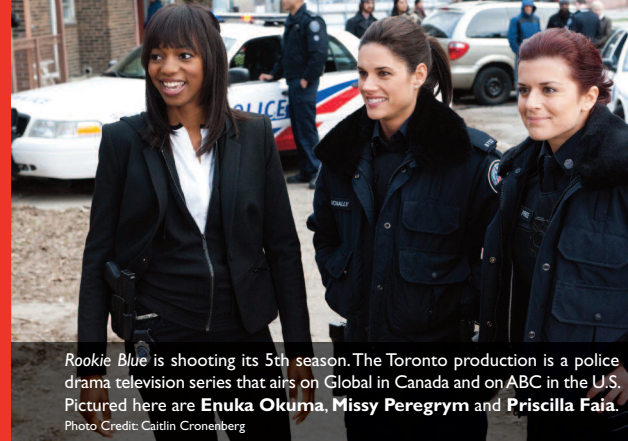


## Alberta



Amber Marshall in *Heartland*. Photo courtesy of CBC.

In Alberta, *Heartland* hit the record books with season eight. The 125th episode makes the CBC show the longest running one-hour scripted series in Canadian television history. Other Alberta television production series includes season four of *Blackstone* (APTN), season three for *Tiny Plastic Men* (APTN) and the AMC series *Hell on Wheels*. The APTN series *Delmer and Marta* and Bruce McCulloch's *Young Drunk Punk* (CityTV) are both shooting season one. The FX series *Fargo* is prepping for season two. For web series, *One Hit Die* is scheduled to shoot more episodes next year, the web show *Haunting Melissa* is in its second season and *Dark Hearts* was released in November 2014.



*Rookie Blue* is shooting its 5th season. The Toronto production is a police drama television series that airs on Global in Canada and on ABC in the U.S. Pictured here are **Enuka Okuma, Missy Peregrym** and **Priscilla Faia**. Photo Credit: Caitlin Cronenberg



*The Moblees* left to right: **Matt Nethersole, Chris George, Michelle Bouey, Scott Farley** and **Shannon Hamilton**. Photo Credit: Chris Reardon



## Toronto

Toronto television series include *Roommates* (ABC), *Saving Hope* (CTV) in season three, *Suits* (NBC) in season four, *The Listener* (CTV) in season five and *Degrassi* (CTV) in season 14. Toronto web series include *Doing it...with Brian and Darla, Whatever Linda, Stink-A Rotten, Sex and Dawgs, Heaven Must Be Boring, The Kirby Chronicles, Playing the Rolls, The Amazing Gayl Pile, the Long Story, Short* pilot and season one, two seasons of *Bill & Sons Towing* and three seasons of both *Ruby-Skye* and *Space Janitors*.

## Maritimes

In the Maritimes, *Mr. D* season four on CBC wrapped and *The Candy Show* completed season five for APTN. On *CBC Kids*, season one of *The Moblees* wrapped as did season one of *You & Me. This Hour Has 22 Minutes* celebrates season 22 and the *Trailer Park Boys* are preparing to shoot webisodes for Swearnet. In its second season, *Sex and Violence* is a six hour CIPIP series from Thom Fitzgerald for OUTtv. *The Moblees* is a new interactive musical adventure series for kids aged 3-5. Produced by Boulevard and Shaftesbury in association with CBC.

## Ottawa

Ottawa was happy to welcome a new animated series this fall—*KOOKOO HARAJUKU*. Ottawa's Title Entertainment is servicing the project about a band called HJ5: LOVE, ANGEL, MUSIC, BABY and their inspirational leader G. Featuring the voices of ACTRA Ottawa members **Emma** and **Sally Taylor-Isherwood**.

Photo courtesy of Title Entertainment



# CBC's Strange (and wonderful) Empire

Q&A

with Jani Lauzon and Cara Gee

*Acting is something I do –  
Ojibwe is something I am.*

– Cara Gee

I caught up with **Cara Gee** just after she finished shooting the season finale of *Strange Empire*. Although neither of us favour cell phone interviews, we were able to get deep into the conversation about life, her role as Kat Loving on *Strange Empire* and the future of Canadian television.

*Jani: A few years back we were sipping coffee and discussing the challenges of a touring show you were doing at the time. How does working in episodic TV compare?*

**Cara:** The hours are a lot longer, which can be stressful, but I am so lucky to be a part of this show. It's a dream team from top to bottom. Everyone is amazing; cast, crew, production. And the show's creator, Laurie Finstad-Knizhnik, has been reading the chemistry we have with each other and writing for us with that in mind.

Jani: So she is pulling from the skills and the talents of the actors to help develop the characters?

**Cara:** Yes, and the relationships that are developing between the characters. For example, the Kat/Slotter relationship, it's so complex and layered. Laurie allowed us to really find it – she actually found it with us. She sets the stage for us in the most incredible way. And to be given these kinds of scripts is a complete and total dream come true. Kat Loving, like, who writes Kat Loving?

Jani: In one interview I heard Laurie talking about all the books she had read and all the research she did. I love how part of her goal is to inform the general public about Aboriginal and women's issues. That's a far cry from past writers who were writing our stories but afraid to set foot on a reserve.

**Cara:** Laurie gets it. She isn't afraid to get into the brutal truth. She doesn't shy away from the really scary stuff. It's hard to go there as an actor, it's hard to go where she asks me to go. That's the level we're working at.

Jani: I've also heard Laurie talk about her pitch to the CBC. She didn't think they would actually go for it.

**Cara:** And she was uncompromising; with an "either you want this show or I will shop it somewhere else" attitude. But that's what I mean about dream team from top down. That includes the CBC. The ladies on board with this show are incredible. This show is important. The time is now. This is a completely new direction for the CBC. It's unlike anything they have done. It is so real and it's just so dark.

Jani: Are you feeling the buzz out there that Strange Empire is the glue that is helping to hold the CBC together? Are you feeling that pressure on set?

**Cara:** (laughing) Yeah, don't worry Jani we've got this!

*We both laugh more at the absurdity/truth of that thought; artists holding up corporations.*

**Cara:** But we don't feel that pressure on set. You can't help but hope for the best when you sign on for a show like this. Reading the scripts I knew it was unlike anything the CBC had produced before. But all you can do is act in it. And I believe in the show, so that helps. I am so, so happy to be doing it.

Jani: That's a great point. It won't help to get caught up in all the politics that whirl around you.

**Cara:** I mean, don't get me wrong, hype this up! This is an important story to tell. So, the attention, bring it on! But that's a separate issue. As an actor you have to compartmentalize it, that's all.

Jani: And rightly so, your work is really spectacular and it's so refreshing. The three female leads are well written, they are so different and complex and they are all women, it's fantastic!

**Cara:** This show passes the Bechdel test, (which requires a show to have at least two women who talk to each other about something besides a man) with every single scene! And each female character has such a different perspective. We are not all allies, we are all individuals. It's not a singular female perspective because that doesn't exist. That array of perspectives, which we have come to expect from TV about men, is something that I am really proud of with this show. It's not girl power in the wild west, because that's not real. It's individual women with hopes and dreams and varying degrees of moral fortitude...



STRANGE EMPIRE



STRANGE EMPIRE



Aaron Poole



Tattiawna Jones



Melissa Farman



Melissa Farman, Tattiawna Jones, Cara Gee and Aaron Poole.

**“I have a solid foundation of training and I’ve been working at it for a long time. I do my homework... The harder you work the more of yourself you are able to bring to it. It’s really you that people want to connect with.”**

**Jani:** ...and the continued complexities around navigating identity and survival. We are still dealing with the same issues today.

**Cara:** It wasn’t that long ago, really only a few generations. We are still feeling the ripple effect of that time on so many levels.

**Jani:** I’m intrigued by how critics or people who write about our work conceptualize it. I have seen your work described by others as “an actor who takes risks”.

**Cara:** I don’t know, I think the risk in this particular role is in going to those dark, dark places. Kat Loving is living a nightmare. If I had to face what she is facing, I would be curled up in a ball in the corner.

**Jani:** That’s really interesting Cara, because you’re saying that you couldn’t go through what Kat Loving is going through – but as an actor you are required to go to those places.

**Cara:** But they are brief snippets of time, without any of the real life stuff or death risk. I am keenly aware of it being pretend, which protects my brain from meltdown. And I will often joke around in between takes, I mean not the super, super intense stuff when you have to stay in it to be able to serve the story, but we are creating an illusion of reality. Kat Loving is a composite of real moments that our Ancestors have lived. Every single thing that she goes through is connected to something that someone has experienced at one point in time.

**Jani:** How do you stay grounded from the intensity of the experience, the stressful hours, dark subject matter, shooting schedule?

**Cara:** I have been so fortunate because so many of my friends came out to visit me while I was shooting in Vancouver. And my mom, dad and my brother were also there for me. My family is my real anchor. And I’m so lucky. I have some of the very best friends in the whole wide world. It’s incredible how lucky I am.

**Jani:** So the places you bring Kat Loving, do you rely on actors training and technique to help you?

**Cara:** I have a solid foundation of training and I’ve been working at it for a long time. I do my homework. I think a lot of actors starting out think there is some magic spark, or some magic “it” thing. But that’s the romantic version of being an actor. The harder you work the more of yourself you are able to bring to it. It’s really you that people want to connect with.

**Jani:** In a recent interview you said, “I am an actor who happens to be Native”, which I love. I think that speaks to craft first.

**Cara:** Acting is something I do, Ojibwe is something I am. And thank you. I appreciate your support on this issue because not everyone agrees with me. We have talked about this before and we share a common perspective. I like that we choose to be performers. We are artists. We can bring our ethnicity to it, because that’s who we are but no one says, “So, you are a white actor?” You don’t

**“Life is complicated, which is what makes life so beautiful and worth living to the fullest. I’m trying to do that in my life and my work.”**

**– Cara Gee**



hear, “I am really interested in hearing stories that speak to the white experience.”

*Jani: The beauty of casting you in the role of Kat Loving means that you can bring your experience and your generational memory to the role. Yes, you are an actor first, but what allows you to go to those dark places is that you do have a generational memory or connection to the experience, to the history on some level.*

**Cara:** What I do know is that the history being taught in schools isn’t the whole picture. We are having a chance to tell another version of history – there are many sides. I am able to bring that lifetime of lived experience to the work.

*Jani: I am curious, I get the sense that Kat Loving is alone. Although she has an incredible strength, she has to find a place for herself because she doesn’t belong. She straddles two worlds and fits into neither. It’s the common Métis experience even today.*

**Cara:** Kat’s whole world was moving west to start a ranch with Jeremiah. He was her rock and she has to hope that he is still alive, which might be her undoing. And the audience has to share this hope with her even though everyone around her is like, “girl you’re crazy”.

*Jani: It feels like the production team has achieved incredible things on a shoestring budget.*

**Cara:** We have, it’s true, you can print that! We get two takes of a scene – it happens fast. We did block shooting for the last 6 episodes. It was a BIG challenge. It has been intense and it’s hard on everyone; the cast, the directors, the crew. But everyone is equally invested in this show so that’s why it’s really coming together. It’s insane how collaborative everyone is.

*Jani: I have also heard the show described as “Un-Canadian”.*

**Cara:** I think it’s very Canadian. People just don’t know that yet because they don’t know their own history.

*Jani: The conversation is geared more towards Canada not being able to produce a good, raw, hard-hitting edgy kind of show.*

**Cara:** I think we have just proved them wrong. Sure the show is a risk. And I am really thrilled that CBC is taking that risk. What I hope is that it will pay off for them, for all of us.

*Jani: If we can prove to the world that we can do shows like this then hopefully this is a new turning point for Canadian drama.*

**Cara:** Yeah maybe we won’t have to block shoot season 2! That would be cool. Money means more time. And more time means a better product. We have been able to accomplish some incredible things but more time would allow us all to sit with a single script in one go, as opposed to many scripts at the same time. That would be an incredible luxury.

*Jani: You mentioned earlier that working on this level requires great personal sacrifice.*

**Cara:** The emotional toll of it has been very intense. It is hard, hard work. But I wouldn’t change it for anything in the world.

*Jani: I’ve always appreciated how you take the bull by the horns and make it happen. That can make life complicated.*

**Cara:** Yup, life is complicated, which is what makes life so beautiful and worth living to the fullest. I’m trying to do that in my life and my work.

*Jani: And with Kat Loving, you do just that. ●*

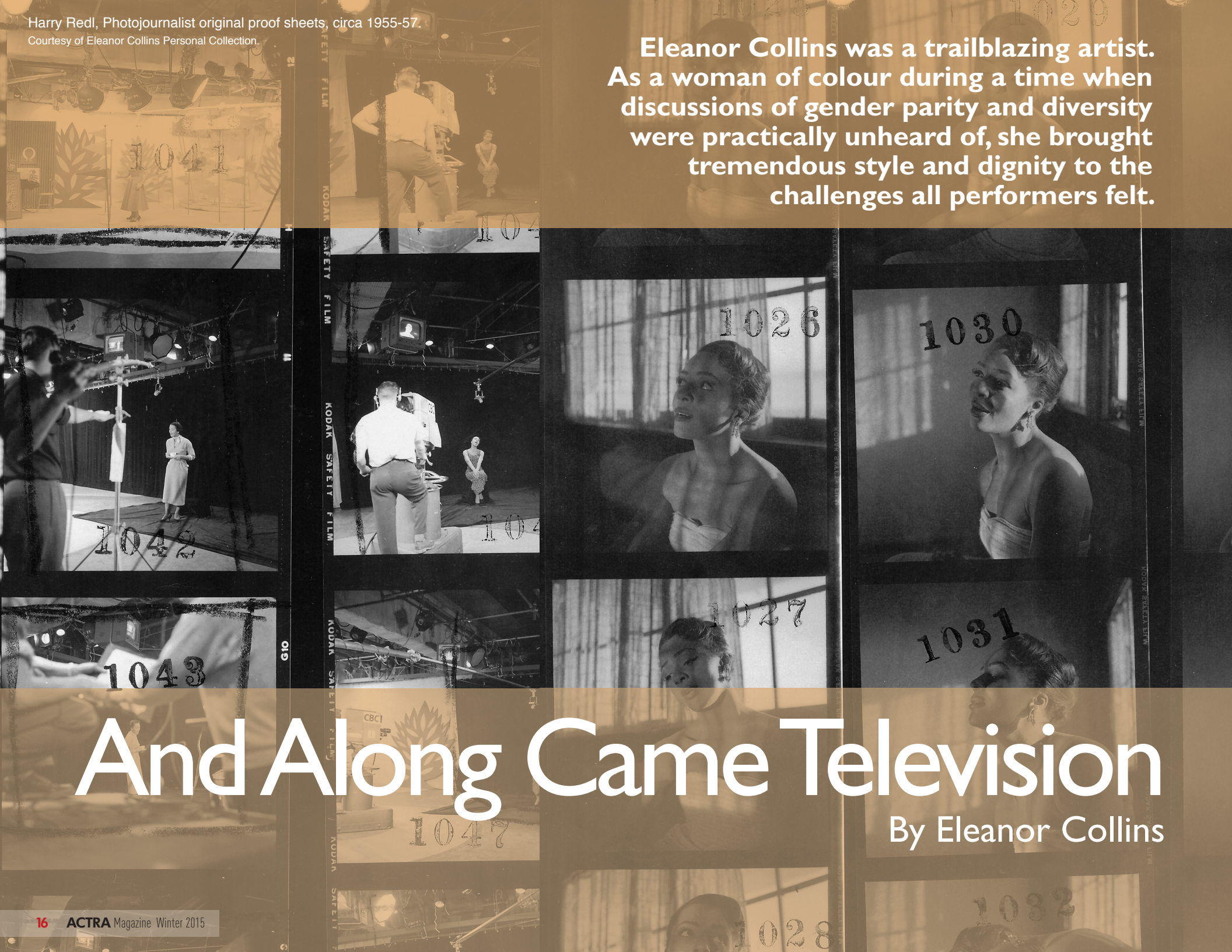
### **Cara Gee**

*Strange Empire* star Cara Gee was born in Calgary, Alberta and raised in Aurora, Ontario. She is also well-known for her lead role in the film *Empire of Dirt*, for which she was nominated Best Actress at the 2014 Canadian Screen Awards. Her acting credits include roles on CBC’s *Republic of Doyle* and *Showcase’s King and Darknet*. In 2013, Cara was named one of the official “Rising Stars” at the Toronto International Film Festival and was named by the Toronto Star as one of the top 13 “People to Watch in 2013”. Cara has a BFA in acting from the University of Windsor.

### **Jani Lauzon**

Jani Lauzon is an ACTRA National and ACTRA Toronto Councillor and Chair of the ACTRA National Diversity Committee. She is an award-winning screen actor, a Gemini Award-winning puppeteer and a Juno-nominated singer/songwriter.

Eleanor Collins was a trailblazing artist. As a woman of colour during a time when discussions of gender parity and diversity were practically unheard of, she brought tremendous style and dignity to the challenges all performers felt.



# And Along Came Television

By Eleanor Collins



## Introduction by Alvin Sanders:

Performers are being overwhelmed by change. It is part of the reality of our industry. In the late 1940s millions of performers worldwide made their living from radio, feature films, live performance and vinyl recordings. But a new medium was emerging... television. Performers worried that people would just sit in their homes looking at images on a glowing screen. There was concern, even fear, that many would lose their livelihoods.

However, a small segment of performers embraced television. They boldly stretched into the unknown, leading others past the fear and into a new realm. A realm full of more opportunity and diversity than anyone ever dreamed possible. A 'golden age' was the outcome of their willingness to accept change and move forward.

We must learn from them. As they did, we must accept change without fear and boldly move forward. One of those early pioneers (who has been a personal inspiration of mine for many, many years) is the forever beautiful, supremely talented **Eleanor Collins**.

A recent recipient of the Order of Canada, Eleanor Collins was a trailblazing artist. As a woman of colour during a time when discussions of gender parity and diversity were practically unheard of, she brought tremendous style and dignity to the challenges all performers felt in dealing with the new medium.

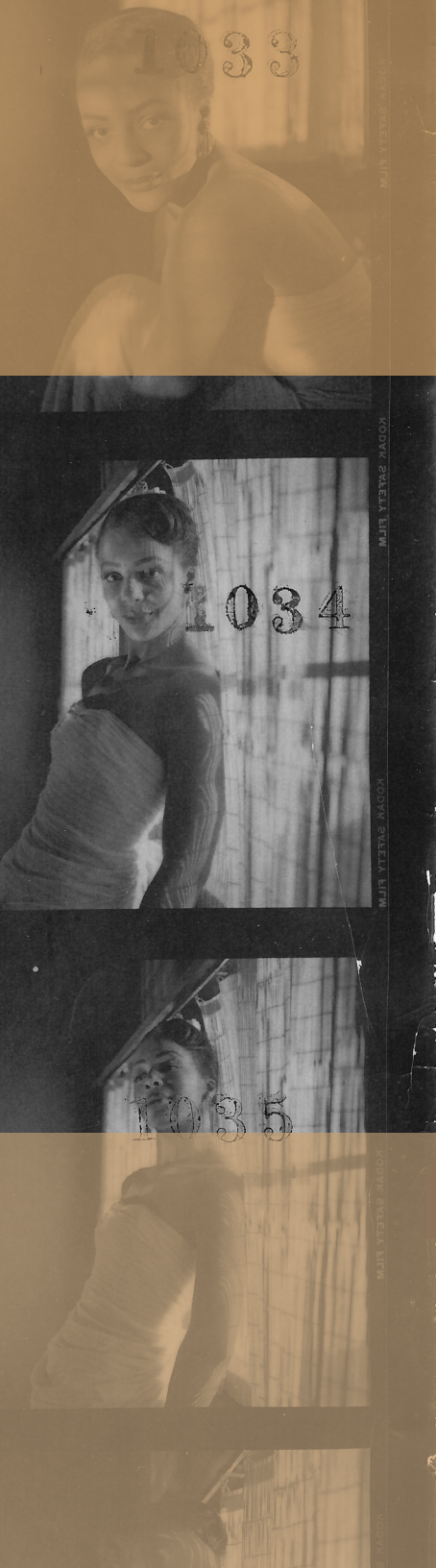
The online web-based digital realm is the new environment we face today. We can learn from the footprints of Ms. Collins and her peers. They stepped boldly into the new frontier. What follows are Eleanor Collins own words as she speaks to us about the exciting, highly creative times known as the 'Golden Age of Television'.

“ A new medium was emerging... television. One of those early pioneers is the forever beautiful, supremely talented Eleanor Collins. ”

CBC on-set photo, circa 1960's.  
Courtesy of Eleanor Collins Personal Collection.



Harry Redl, Photojournalist original proof sheets of publicity photos of Eleanor.



# And Along Came Television



The Collins family photo taken in 1955, L to R: Sons Barry and Tom, husband Dick, daughter Judith, Eleanor, and son Rick Collins.

Photo credit: Harry Redl



photo credit: Ghassan Shanti.

Eleanor Collins

It was my great good fortune to have had a lengthy association with CBC Radio and Television in the late 1930s through the 1970s. It all began after I won a singing contest in Edmonton, where I was born. My first job was on CBC Radio in Vancouver in 1938 as part of the Swing-Low Quartet. I was invited back to sing regularly with the Ray Norris Jazz Quintet.

At that same time I settled in Burnaby with my growing family. I joined the Theatre Under The Stars productions of *Finian's Rainbow* and *Kiss Me Kate*, as both an actor and a singer. My children also had roles in these shows – we performed as a family.

And then, along came television! In 1953 CBUT launched the first television station in western Canada and the producers were looking to produce a musical variety show.

After attending a musical revue at the old Lyric Theatre called *From Cuba to Paris* in which I was a featured performer, they approached **Len Gibson**, a **Katherine Dunham** protégé, and the creator of the production to propose adapting the stage show for television. It became the CBC series, *Bamboula*.

And then came *The Eleanor Show*. Apparently, I was the first music performer in Canada to have a national TV series named for me. The show pre-dated *The Nat King Cole Show* in the U.S. by a year. His show was perceived to be the first in North America with the lead talent being an artist of colour. Now it seems that our show may have really been the first.

I made many guest appearances on CBC variety shows including *Quintet*, *Back O' Town Blues*, *Heritage*, *Blues and The Ballad*, *Riding High*, *Juliette* and *Parade*. I look back with much pride at what we were able to achieve on those early shows.

The studio and the TV medium were all new, but together we managed to create some amazing watershed moments in Canadian television history. Hugely talented producers and directors, such as **Daryl Duke** and **Mario Prizek**, were creative visionaries – using an interracial cast and being fearless with cultural content way ahead of their time. Not only were we rich with music and performance talent, but our crews and technicians were enormously talented as well. I realize now that I experienced a golden age in television.

Despite opportunities for me to go elsewhere with various international artists, I chose to stay in Vancouver to give my family stability. Also, Vancouver at that time was a rich source of fine jazz musicians such as Chris Gage, Doug Parker, Bobby Hales, Dave Robbins and Fraser MacPherson.

In more recent years I have enjoyed making appearances at the annual Orpheum Theatre Remembrance Day Concerts. Also, I took part in a jazz history CD project with the female jazz quintet “Mother of Pearl”; and in February 2014, I joined Marcus Mosely and Leon Bibb for the annual “Stayed on Freedom Concert” at St. Andrew Wesley.

In my 95th year, I am content with my “elder status”. You go merrily along with life feeling you are the same age and person you’ve always been, then one day your kids and family throw you a party to honour you as an “elder”. People from various backgrounds come to you for documentary and heritage projects, and you think, “Hey, I guess I am the oldest one left in the tribe! It’s time for me to share my story and hope it inspires others.” ●

“ Hugely talented producers and directors such as Daryl Duke and Mario Prizek were creative visionaries – using an interracial cast and being fearless with cultural content way ahead of their time. ”

“After its trial by fire, CBUT flourished. Once a month **Daryl Duke** and **Mario Prizek** produced an enormously ambitious and accomplished musical show called *Parade*, starring the ravishing **Eleanor Collins** and the amazing **Don Francks**. It was shot in a small used-car showroom under 11-foot ceilings using extravagant sets created by **Doug Stiles**. Cast and crew were crammed together. To get from one set-up to the next was like fighting your way across a battlefield or an obstacle course. But no one watching the show would have guessed!” – **Allan King**



1955 CBC studio still of **Eleanor** singing.  
Courtesy of Eleanor Collins Personal Collection.



*The Eleanor Show* with guests **Juliette Cavazzi** and **Alan Millar**, and **Eleanor**.



**Eleanor** with long-time pianist **Chris Gage**



**Eleanor Collins** and Orchestra in *The Eleanor Show*

## Eleanor's health secrets:

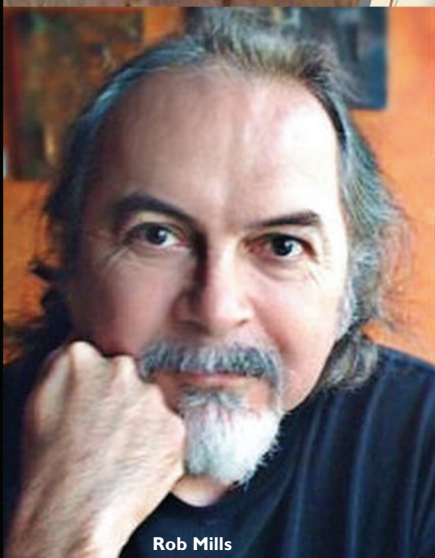
- I try to be in a mental place of gratitude for the blessing that is my life.
- I consume a nutrient dense whole foods diet including live vegetable juicing every morning and some herbal supplements.
- I get as much exercise as I can manage. It used to be tai chi and yoga but now I'm content with chair aerobics.
- My advice is to just try to keep yourself going one day at a time and laugh as much as possible - and of course love, love, love!

All the classics of film, theatre and literature - enacted by Rubber Chickens! Official Selection of the first Toronto WebFest, [www.rubberchickenplayers.tv](http://www.rubberchickenplayers.tv) is written by **Jim Taylor, Fred Stinson** and **Rob Mills** and produced and directed by **Rob Mills**.

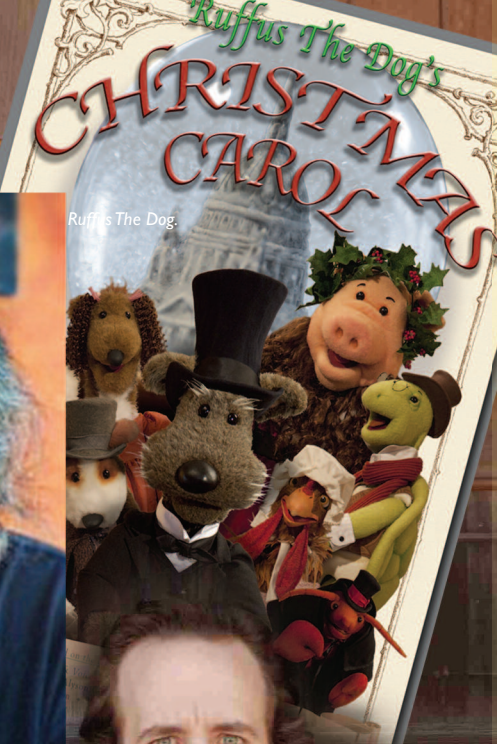


IN A WORLD ...  
WHERE RUBBER CHICKENS  
ARE THE STARS

[www.rubberchickenplayers.tv](http://www.rubberchickenplayers.tv)



Rob Mills



Ruffus The Dog

*Ruffus The Dog*, (top right) produced, written and directed by **Rob Mills**, features a wisecracking canine, performed by Rob. Ruffus lives in a bookshop and acts out the roles from famous fairy tales and classic works of literature. Originally produced for broadcast on YTV, the children's series received multiple Gemini Nominations and a Writer's Guild Award. Check it out at <http://www.ruffusthedog.net/>

*SNOOF Riders* is Ash Catherwood's time travelling, rock-n'-roll comedy currently in development. L to R: **Rick Green, Ash Catherwood** and **Alice Moran**.

Photo: Joanna Haughton



Pictured here in the web series *Microwave Porn*, creator and star **Ash Catherwood**.

# Unlimited Shelf Space

By Jeremy Webb

With the growing use of computers, tablets and phones to view dramatic content, and with the changes that come with viewer demand, it is a good time to look at the so-called web series to discover how they are made. It really can't be that hard, can it? Surely, you just grab your smart phone and point it at your ACTRA talent, upload to YouTube and "budda-bing, budda-boom" – you are a web series producer!

I'm sitting down with web series creators **Rob Mills** and **Ash Catherwood** who can set me on the right path.

Rob Mills has been an ACTRA member and working in the film and television industry (as a performer, writer, director and producer) for over 30 years, and during that time, he tells me, he's seen a lot of changes in the technology being used and how the business itself is run. "Having been an early adopter of the internet," he says, "I was keenly aware of the changes coming down the pipe which would irrevocably alter our creative landscape."

Even when Mills ran his own TV production company he was experimenting with the possibilities that online video content offered. "We're walking around with a mini movie studio in our smart phones - and I have always found that to be very exciting."

Mills' first serious foray into web series was with *Ruffus The Dog*, originally broadcast on YTV, that he had produced back in the late 1990s. "When I left my company for greener pastures, the first thing I did was put all those original episodes online and then start to make more content based on those characters."

There are a bunch of other web series projects he is currently involved in, including *Rubber Chicken Players* and *In The Toobs*.



←  
*Microwave Porn* is a comedy web series about a living, breathing microwave with an addiction to porn, and his roommate Dave.  
 Photo: Bruce William Harper

## A WINNING FORMULA

I ask them if there is a winning formula for a web-series and Catherwood jumps in straight away. “Format is a rapidly changing concept,” he begins. “The standard 22/44 minute broadcast block isn’t necessary when viewers are in control of the viewing experience.”

Mills is quick to answer, with what I see now as his constant state of enthusiastic passion. “There is no winning formula. There is no sure-fire method for making anything ‘go viral.’ Anyone who says there is, is peddling a copious amount of bullshit.”

“It was always “common wisdom” that web series episodes couldn’t be any longer than three minutes in length,” he sneers. “Or six minutes.” He curses at the conformity.

“Broadcast television dictates that shows must be a very specific length... because they have to leave room for the commercials.”

Web series creators do not want to be part of a cookie cutter industry. The story should dictate the episode length, Mills and Catherwood explain to me.

“There are numerous examples of web series creators trying to constrain themselves into any given format,” says Rob Mills. “Tell your story and tell it well. It’s as simple as that.”

The two guys agree that it will be interesting to watch these commonly accepted standards change with the growth of Netflix and other online, non-commercial dependent distributors.

Catherwood has some simple advice for future web-series creators. “Don’t piss off the audience. Don’t alienate the audience. Don’t ignore the audience.”

I am feeling inspired and I am seriously considering making my own web series. So, Rob also chimes in with some solid and direct advice. “Avoid making something that is already available on TV. Do we really need a web version of *Duck Dynasty*? No. We do not.”

For the record my web series will not be a version of *Duck Dynasty*.

“Make something you want to watch,” he continues, “Make something you want to say. Make something that none of the established media outlets will show. At the end of the day you know you’re not alone and there is a large audience out there of people who want to see the same thing as you. So give it to them.”

I ask Rob why he embraced the web series format and he bristles very slightly. “When people call web series a “format” I get a little uncomfortable. It’s not a format. It’s just another way of delivering the same content as movies and television.”

Rob concedes that web series are at least similar to TV, but without the constraints of established viewing schedules and (most importantly), he says, “with none of the limitations of “shelf space” inherent in the existing television model.”

Ash Catherwood, also an ACTRA member, is one of the co-founders and current president of the IWCC (Independent Web-series Creators of Canada), an organization dedicated to furthering the web series industry in Canada – in fact: the world.

For Ash, diving into the world of creating online content was a natural progression. “The importance of self-created work was always hammered into our skulls in school,” he explains. “At the time, buying a camera was cheaper than renting theatre space – that simple economic fact has influenced my career more than anything else.”

He has been creating web series for a solid decade. “My first series, created and released before the days of YouTube and the current massive levels of online video consumption, was born of necessity,” he tells me. “I was a young actor, graduating from a theatre school and frustrated with a sudden drop in ‘structured acting work’. The web series format is near and dear to my heart. Inherently experimental, it satiates the artistic drive.”

It’s that freedom of style that seems to turn these guys on. Catherwood explains “The lack of any gatekeepers in the space frees up the artist to tell the story for the story’s sake, without arbitrary cultural or financial constraints.”

Rob Mills has had years of experience dealing with a variety of broadcasters and distributors and funders who all inhabited the role of these mythical-sounding gatekeepers.

With the advent of web series this has now changed.

“I do not need to ask anyone for permission to make my shows for the web; and that for me is the single underlying factor in why I have embraced this field.”



**Katie Boland** in the web series *Long Story, Short* which she wrote and created.  
<http://longstoryshortseries.com/>

## THE BOTTOM LINE

So, if I am going to now become a fully-fledged ACTRA member-producer of an audience-loving web-series that people are begging to watch, with gloriously unconventional episode lengths, how do I fund my show?

“Good question,” chuckles Mills. “You want to invest?” His smile disappears. He’s serious. “There are as many ways to fund a web series as there are genres and audiences of web series. Some people finance their productions off their credit cards. Others go through the traditional routes of various funding agencies and tax credits.”

“Some garner sponsors who either bookend the show or have their goods featured within the program itself. Some go begging on IndieGoGo or Kickstarter or Patreon. Some choose to use the various VOD options available. It all depends on what you need.”

Catherwood agrees, “Funding a web series is often a series specific exercise, and what works for one won’t necessarily work for the bunch.”

“Currently in Canada we have one fund that is solely dedicated to providing financial support for web series production and that’s the IPF,” adds Mills. He is referring to the Independent Production Fund.

# Unlimited Shelf Space

## Making a web series?

Make your project the best it can be with professional performers. Call your ACTRA Branch to find out how to GO UNION.



*Ruffus The Dog*, produced, written and directed by Rob Mills.

The Independent Production Fund was established in 1991 as a private Foundation with an endowment now valued at \$32 M. The revenues generated by the endowment and recoupment from investments are used to support the production of

Canadian drama series. **The Web Drama Series Program** was undertaken as an experimental project in 2010. As of 2013, this program has been extended indefinitely.

The intent of the fund is to assist independent producers/creators to finance the production of original drama series created initially for the web.

Both the Independent Production Fund and the IWCC (Independent Web Series Creators of Canada) provide very valuable information resources that cover all aspects of web series creation.

Catherwood thinks the trick is to know how much is absolutely needed “And then get creative.” Making a web series requires creative thinking even when dealing with the bottom line. “There are constantly new funding models and avenues being announced and invented.”

“The scale of your production should, of course, be dictated by the stories you’re striving to tell,” concludes Mills. “It really is: ‘Whatever works.’” He looks me right in the eye. “Just go and do it.” It’s hard to argue. So, I don’t.

### ACTRA AND WEB-SERIES

The web series coming out of Canada are highly regarded around the world, garner acclaim and awards and audiences everywhere. Web festivals in Los Angeles, Austin, New York, Marseilles, Australia and Hong Kong are consistently dominated by the outstanding quality of Canadian web series.

Rob Mills has some sobering news for me. “The bulk of these works are non-ACTRA and I believe that needs to change,” he

says. “The members of the web series community (and not just those who are also ACTRA members) are eager to work with ACTRA performers.”

However, it needs to be recognized that web series do not always fit the same established moulds of standard television production. ACTRA has to adapt and get creative to enable our members to take part in these shows, either as performers, or more often, as actively engaged creators themselves.

“ACTRA is essential for the future of web series creation in this country,” says Catherwood. “Canada is the envy of the international marketplace when it comes to independent web series creation, with more funding opportunities, more festival awards, a tighter knit community and an insanely talented workforce.” “There is a danger in such a widespread democratization of the entertainment industry,” he continues. “Literally anyone with a smartphone is capable of producing quality content, and many many, many do. Many of these start-up productions operate outside of any union agreement, and often take advantage of the workforce.”

ACTRA has a very unique opportunity and responsibility in the shaping of the next generation of creators. By making it easier for ACTRA members to create their own content, they are ensuring that the Canadian voice will continue to be heard internationally. By enabling ACTRA members to work in the field, the strength of ACTRA performances will ensure Canada retains its leading edge in the digital platform.

“Over the years, ACTRA has successfully adapted to changes in the business, amending our agreements to respond to new means of production and new forms of distribution,” according to Stephen Waddell, ACTRA’s National Executive Director. “ACTRA’s ongoing interest is in enabling our members to work on ACTRA contracts on all types of production for all screens; and for performers to receive equitable compensation, and ACTRA contract protection for production and use of content on all media platforms.”

As a former president of the IWCC (and still as a current member) Rob Mills has been involved in a series of ongoing information discussions with various web series creators, distributors, broadcasters, guilds and other interested parties (including ACTRA) and he is encouraged by the perspectives and ideas which form the body of these conversations.

Mills is keen to encourage any ACTRA members who are interested in creating web series to inform themselves about the exciting possibilities which lie before them and to become active

in helping ACTRA formulate policies that will help ACTRA members to participate in every level of this very rich opportunity.

### DISTRIBUTING TO THE WORLD

I am not quite through picking the brains of these creators and ask them about what happens after the show is ‘in the can?’ (The irony of using that phrase seems stronger than ever, as cans of film are a thing of the distant past, it seems.)

I want to know what I have to do as a web series producer after post-production? Do I need distribution skills?

“Web series creation is a many-hat field,” Catherwood says. “Marketing and rollout have to be considered and shaped just as the story is considered and shaped. Audience development often begins during pre-production. Web series and web series business will live or die based on the audience alone.” “Understanding a specific audience’s needs, and delivering those needs pointedly will get a creator so much farther than simply finding an online distributor.”

Rob Mills confirms that web series producing is “Much more than just making a show and slapping it online.” Knowing your intended audience is vital. “That way you can seek them out and engage them with your plans, become part of their community,” he pauses.

“Without just being a self-interested slime-ball marketing weasel,” he smiles.

They suggest again that I turn to the IPF and IWCC web sites to find the core information I’ll be needing. Both men are encouraging me on.

“If you are serious about making web series,” says Mills, “Find a partner, build a team. Assemble the people around you who possess the skills or sensibilities you lack in the various areas needed, whether they be technical, financial, artistic, organizational or promotional. Many heads can wear more hats than one.”

### THE FUTURE?

I wonder what changes they have seen in web series production even in the last few years?

“When I began making web series the small portable screens which are so ubiquitous today were only beginning to find themselves into people’s hands,” Mills reminisces. “The file sharing communities have driven distribution to seriously consider and implement different release strategies to satisfy the desire of the ‘I Want It Now’ audience.”

“If you have a smart phone, take it out and hold it in your hand,”

Mills tells me and I do exactly that with my beaten up iPhone. "That thing there is not a phone. It is, in fact, for the purposes of this discussion, a complete movie studio."

I hold my complete movie studio in my hand, tenderly.

"And the only thing standing between you and that goal is you," he points at me and I believe him. That guy can spot a procrastinator at 25 yards!

"Things are only getting easier," interjects Catherwood, rescuing me from Mills' steely gaze. "It is getting easier and easier to reach a specific audience, with more and more people discovering web series content, and more ways to connect to that audience, it will continue to be easier."

"Competition for web series isn't the same as television – we aren't competing for a time slot. Shows that are very similar often share audience, to each show's benefit. It's a great time to be creating!"

I push them on what's to come, asking for a prediction of the future for web series.

"If I really truly knew what the hell lies ahead I'd be a billionaire already," says Mills. "Oddly (or perhaps not) it always helps to look back in order to see where the future lies. In 1964 Marshall McLuhan wrote in his book *Understanding Media* that: "Old media becomes the content of new media." – and we are seeing that this is so very true." He continues, "Television and film are not going to die – but they are going to transform. The ways and means by which audiences find and enjoy their motion picture experiences is changing – but not the desire and need for that experience. The internet – which includes the world wide web – is much more than just movies and TV and music and porn and funny cats."

It all seems rather hopeful. I came into this conversation expecting to be depressed by how content is created and what that means for an ACTRA member.

Regardless of whatever further technological or funding changes occur between now and the day after tomorrow you can be rest assured that the artists now have a direct connection with their audiences they have never had before.

Mills explains it so well. "As a performer, you do not need to audition for yourself, nor do you need the pat-on-the-head permission of a producer, director or casting agent. If you are so inclined, it is very freeing and inspiring to realize that YOU are now in charge." ●

**Jeremy Webb** is an ACTRA member and National Councillor for ACTRA Maritimes, based in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He has directed and produced a couple of award-winning short films. His web-series, *Shakespeare On Trial*, based on his play has not been made yet, but when Webb re-reads this article he will, no doubt, ask you for financial assistance to get the thing made. With a full cast of talented ACTRA members. **Webb's website is [www.offtheleash.ca](http://www.offtheleash.ca)**



## Siobhan McCarthy

Siobhan McCarthy is an actor, writer, director and as a result, by de-fault: a producer. Her web series, *Parked*, is drawn from experiences in her own home life.

"In 2008 I became a parent," she explains. "As a self-employed artist, there was no official "maternity leave" at the time so I worked contracts teaching, working as a digital media strategist and social media community manager for network television shows." All of which afforded her the time to conceive her own productions and be an involved, hands-on parent.

In the beginning, as affordable childcare was not readily available, McCarthy's son's father shared in the parenting duties. They worked contracts and would co-parent.

"When I would come home from teaching a three-hour class, I would hear stories about his day with our son and how lonely parenting was for him as a new dad." All community programs were geared to new moms.

"In 2009, my co-creator, Adam O. Thomas also became a parent. We had collaborated many years before on a short film that I wrote, directed and produced called, *Happy Meal*. At a friend's party,

## Unlimited Shelf Space (interview) by Jeremy Webb

Adam's wife told me that he was working on an idea for a comedy show about dads." The raw comedy that comes from the ridiculous moments that come with parenting inspired McCarthy to offer to option, develop and produce the property.

"In the spring of 2012 Tracey Mack came on board and we shot a digital pilot/ sizzle reel/ sales tool under the UBCP Ultra Low 20/20 agreement," she explains.

"In a social media campaign to build audience and garner entrance into the CFC media lab's ideaBOOST program, we launched our digital half pilot. Within 24 hours it went viral and made the title page of Reddit, receiving over 100,000 views on YouTube in less than 24 hours. We leveraged that success to a successful IPF (Independent Production Fund) application."

Then came a new challenge. "We had to re-brand due to the launch and fail of another comedy show under the same name with Fox."

In November 2013 shooting began on the newly titled *Parked*. In just three weekends 30 episodes were shot, and then released every week on Dailymotion and YouTube in early 2014.

The web series is a calling card for McCarthy. "As a result of my work on *Parked* and other properties, I was selected as a Bell Media National Fellow in 2014 and short-listed for their Producer Lab Accelerator. I won the Women In Film and Television Banff

Scholarship in 2013 from Vancouver's Chapter and in 2014 from Toronto's Chapter."

"We purposefully created *Parked* in an edgy way and keenly understand it is only suited for Pay/ specialty cable and/or the web."

### UBCP/ACTRA

"We approached UBCP/ACTRA," the producer explains. "We worked with their amazing officers Julie Gil and Lesley Brady to find an agreement that would enable us to work with our incredible ensemble cast of union actors."

"If we can raise enough funds to do it again, it will be determined by how popular our season one is."

"As a team, we have decided that we don't want to change the show or its format in regards to reducing it. We have no interest in producing a smaller, ground down season two. We don't want to compromise our quality. We want to build upon our brand."

"We are constantly working at growing our audience and seeding our show strategically on various platforms. We hope more people will blog about our show, and help share it with their friends, family and networks via social media and beyond."

It would seem that the ACTRA membership has just been issued a happy challenge: check out [www.parkedtheshow.com](http://www.parkedtheshow.com). and persuade McCarthy and her creative team to get back to work! ●



# INTRODUCING



## AIREUM CANADIAN BROADCAST MUSEUM

*"I have been involved as a corporate and personal supporter for this important project for more than 10 years, and it would be a tragedy for this initiative to flounder due to lack of public support."*

-Robert Underwood, AFBS President & Chief Executive Officer

# ON AIR

By Keith Martin Gordey

Aireum is a totally unique on-line museum for Canadians from coast-to-coast-to-coast and everyone around the world to see (and hear) Canada's vast archives of incredible radio and television broadcasts, artifacts and memorabilia.

The site is up and running now (in crowdfunding mode) and will continually be adding audio and visual items to the site as they are collected and digitized.

The Canadian Broadcast Museum Foundation is a non-profit registered charity founded in 2001 by concerned broadcasters, including former CBC writer/producer/performer Lorraine Thomson. AFBS has been an important supporter of this initiative from the onset. It has had financial support in varying degrees from major Canadian broadcasters Rogers, Standard, CHUM, Alliance Atlantis, and especially CTV, as well as individuals such as Gary

Slaight, Jim Waters, Ken Murphy, Andy Pringle and Elmer Hildebrand.

The Foundation works tirelessly to search out, collect and preserve audio and video tapes, paper archives, scripts, memorabilia, physical artifacts, signage – basically anything that relates to Canada's vast broadcast heritage.

Library and Archives Canada for several years chose to include broadcasting in its mandate to preserve this country's documentary heritage. Priorities have changed and LAC no longer has the resources or staff to handle that daunting task.

As a result, The Canadian Broadcast Museum Foundation is the primary Canadian organization with a mandate to collect, preserve and digitize our celebrated broadcast history yet the Foundation hasn't received any financial support from the feds in more than 10 years. ●

**Keith Martin Gordey** is an ACTRA National Councillor, Treasurer of UBCP/ACTRA, Treasurer of Western Gold Theatre, a past President of PAL Vancouver and serves on the board of the Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Foundation of British Columbia.

### It's your history too. Here's how you can help save Canada's broadcast heritage.

Visit the Aireum crowdfunding website this year at <http://www.aireum.ca/> It explains what Aireum is and what it's about. Aireum seriously needs your help and support (and a tax deductible donation wouldn't hurt) to keep our unique Canadian broadcast history from being deleted permanently.

And please contact your MP and ask why the federal government has no plan to preserve our broadcast history. Help spread the word, especially to encourage people to share their artifacts and recordings with the Canadian Broadcast Museum Foundation.



### Did you know?

Canada is the only country in the developed world without a designated, consistent program to preserve our broadcast legacy. Yet around the world governments and private organizations commit significant resources to collect, archive and provide access to original radio, television, film, video, records, CDs and multimedia through many means including retro-digitization.

- Australia** - National Film and Sound Archives  
- \$25 million annually, 185 employees
- Denmark** - State and University Library
- France** - L'Institut nationale de l'audiovisuel's  
- \$150 million annually, 945 employees
- Sweden** - National Archive of Recorded Sound and Moving Images - \$9 million annually, 90 employees
- Netherlands** - The Institute for Sound and Vision,  
200 employees
- Ireland** - Broadcasting Commission Ireland
- Britain** - BBC, BFI, British Library Sound Archive,  
250 employees
- USA** - The Library of Congress' Packard Campus for Audio-visual Preservation acquires, preserves and provides access to the world's largest and most comprehensive collection of films, TV programs, radio broadcasts and sound recordings. It can preserve and reformat all A/V formats including obsolete ones dating back a century, and ensure their long-term safekeeping in a petabyte-level digital archive.





The vintage CBC graphic designs are by Leo Rampen.



## How much of our broadcast history has recently gone in the dumpster?

700 cans of irreplaceable biographical footage documenting remarkable Canadian personalities including:

Charles Best, Norman Bethune, Floyd Chalmers, Ludmilla Chiriaeff, Leonard Cohen, Robertson Davies, Cyrus Eaton, Northrup Frye, Glenn Gould, Group of Seven, Mel Hurtig, Yosuf Karsh, Stephen Leacock, Jean-Paul Lemieux, Raymond Massey, Hugh McLennan, W.O. Mitchell, Wilder Penfield, Gordon Sinclair, Teresa Stratas and Tom Thompson.

...and International figures: Fidel Castro, Marc Chagall, Moyshe Dayan, Henry Moore and Charles De Gaulle. We've lost 54 cans of film of the action at the Battle of Dunkirk, hundreds of cans of Canada's relationship with first nations, the second Quebec referendum, the evolution of the Arctic. 18,000 cans scheduled to follow them into the land-fill...

## The principal challenge is funding preservation/digitization

### What is our history worth?

Self-generated funds will allow the Foundation to continue building and cataloguing the National Broadcast Collection but the cost of preservation/digitization is prohibitive.

- \$130 to digitize a 33 rpm vinyl recording
- \$150 for a 7" reel of audiotape.
- \$65 per 100 feet of 16mm film, plus restoration charges.
- \$160 per hour for restoration of most videotape formats
- \$160 per hour for digitization of videotape after restoration

Digital capture of 3-D artifacts in the National Broadcast Collection requires direction of individual photo shoots, rental of specialized equipment and preservation of images in several formats. Costs will vary according to the nature of the artefact(s) and the time required for each shoot. Digitization of just the priority items currently housed in the National Broadcast Collection is estimated to cost between **\$8-900,000**.

Funding is essential to establish Canada-wide access to the distinctive elements of our heritage. AIREUM is designed to resolve the current gap in broadcast and archive policy, offering both a means to preserve Canada's broadcast heritage and ready public access to it.



# NOW IS A GOOD TIME TO GET YOUR FINANCING IN ORDER

By Theresa Tova

As your National Treasurer I am pouring over past budgets and helping to focus our priorities for the future. As smart business owners and creators I hope you also take the time to strategize YOUR game plan. Where do you want your career to be next year? Do you need a short-term loan to help you write that new show you want to pitch to a network? Do you need a makeover and new headshots? Are you hoping to finally buy a home? The CREATIVE ARTS SAVINGS AND CREDIT UNION is ACTRA's very own financial institution. CASCUS understands the up and down nature of our business. Come and talk to us. We are like a bank, only at CASCUS, being an actor is the beginning of the conversation. <http://www.creativeartscu.com/>

## Managing your money

Workers who "have a chance of profit or risk of loss" are recognized by the CRA as self-employed artists or "small business operators". As such it is vitally important to keep on top of quarterly HST and yearly tax filing. The last thing you need come spring is to have the trouble and expense of a financial audit. For some this will mean sorting through piles of receipts to create a clear and concise ledger of legitimate or allowable expenses followed by a simple mathematical tally. For others, who have both artist and employee income, or income from across provincial or national borders, things become more complicated. Last year we heard from tax specialists that the American IRS and Canadian CRA are starting to share information about artists' earnings. Keep your books in order and consider finding a knowledgeable tax accountant who can file multiple returns and can stick handle the latest requirements for filing. ●

Theresa Tova's career spans film, TV, the Broadway musical stage and Yiddish jazz concerts around the world. She is Treasurer of ACTRA National and ACTRA PRS and ACTRA Toronto Vice-President.

## Plan ahead, Look out for the AFBS deadlines

Actra Fraternal Benefit Society <http://www.afbs.ca/public/index.php> is a member-owned, federally incorporated Insurance and retirement plan that provides more than 17,000 performers and writers across Canada with the benefit of a drug plan, prescription eye glasses and extended life and health care insurance. AFBS deadlines for voluntary RRSP contributions, voluntary insurance renewals and submissions for expense claims are coming up. **Don't miss out.**

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS WITH THESE IMPORTANT AFBS DEADLINES!

1. RRSP contribution top-up: **MARCH 2, 2015**
2. Selecting an insurance program option: **MARCH 31, 2015**
3. Claims submissions for prior Benefit Year: midnight, **MAY 31, 2015**



## RECEIVE YOUR PRS MONEY... WHEREVER YOU ARE

# Direct Deposit

"I thought I liked the old fashioned 'mail me a cheque' method and did **NOT** want to sign up for PRS direct deposit, but was convinced to give it a try and stand corrected. Direct Deposit from PRS is a no brainer even for someone like me – a 35 year Stunt Veteran who has banged his brain around a bit. The money lands in my bank account before I get an explanation of what it's for shortly after I get an email with all the details. I wish productions were so efficient! We all compare who got what on which show, and I get my payments 7-10 days before those still getting cheques."

**No excuses, just do it!"**

**- Shane Cardwell**

ACTRA stunt performer/coordinator



Performers'  
Rights  
Society

A DIVISION OF ACTRA



If you receive PRS cheques through your agent, TAMAC agencies are on board.

At ACTRA PRS we remain true to our mission to track down the money you are owed and get it to you quickly. Please sign up for PRS Direct Deposit today.

<http://www.actra.ca/main/prs/direct-deposit-for-use-fees/>

# BARGAINING UPDATE

By Jacob Leibovitch  
Director of Research

While the ink is now dry on the renewed National Commercial Agreement (NCA), the follow up work has begun. Instead of waiting for the next round of negotiations to make improvements, the new NCA has a number of ongoing initiatives aimed at monitoring data, creating work opportunities, and exploring new and better ways of serving the membership. Chief among them is a joint working group with the Association of Canadian Advertisers (ACA) and the Institute of Communication Agencies (ICA) set up to look at simplifying the complex residual structure to help attract agencies and advertisers to use the NCA in all commercial productions.

Meanwhile, ACTRA's two largest collective agreements are in the chamber to be renegotiated. First up is the British Columbia Master Production Agreement (BCMPA) expiring on March 31, 2015. The BCMPA is the agreement generating the second largest amount of earnings for performers. UBCP/ACTRA Wages and Working Conditions Committee has met twice, prioritized and refined the proposals being brought to the table with the B.C. branch of the CMPA, and the Alliance of Motion Pictures and Television Producers (AMPTP). Talks are set to begin in Los Angeles in February 2015, and for the second time, ACTRA National Executive Director Stephen Waddell will lead talks as the Chief Negotiator alongside UBCP/ACTRA President Alvin Sanders and Lesley Brady, UBCP/ACTRA Director Film, Television & New Media. <http://www.actra.ca/main/>

## ACTRA and the IPA

ACTRA's largest contract the Independent Production Agreement earned \$140 million for our members in 2013. The agreement expires on December 31, 2015 and preparations have already begun to renew and improve this critical contract. ACTRA, the CMPA, APQM and the AMPTP are finalizing dates to bargain in fall 2015. ACTRA Branches have already started to hold focus groups to survey members and other key stakeholders with a view to drafting proposals. ACTRA's National office will gear up for the selection of the National Bargaining Committee and the Wages and Working Conditions process early this year. Please stay tuned for more information by checking in on [actra.ca](http://actra.ca) and keeping an eye on your email for ACTRA news updates.

## FIA: The labour voice for performers globally



Check out the new website at <http://www.fia-actors.com/> and follow [https://twitter.com/fia\\_actors](https://twitter.com/fia_actors) on Twitter.

I was honoured to represent ACTRA at a series of workshops organized by the International Federation of Actors (FIA) in South Africa, hosted by the newly-formed South African Guild of Actors (SAGA). I was honoured to participate in workshop panels with Dominick Luquer, FIA General Secretary, and Duncan Crabtree-Ireland, Chief Operating Officer and General Counsel, SAG-AFTRA. We spent two full days in Johannesburg and Cape Town presenting and then answering questions from a broad range of South African recorded media industry stakeholders including performers, agents, casting directors and producers. The fledgling Guild has made great strides in making performers and agents more comfortable with a cooperative approach that protects minimum scale rates and the intellectual property of performers in the form of residuals. The passion and commitment of the South African leadership was inspiring. We look forward to continued collaboration and the opportunity to continue to learn from one another. ●



ACTRA's 2014 ratification vote for the NCA and the Local and Regional Addendum marked a milestone for ACTRA: the union's first foray into online voting for a national agreement.

*Nothing compares  
to an unexpected  
round of applause.*

- Frank Shuster

APPLAUSE

## SPIRIT SYNOTT RECEIVES CAROL MCGREGOR AWARD FOR DISABILITY RIGHTS ACTIVISM

**Spirit Synott** is the recipient of the 2014 Carol McGregor Award for Disability Rights Activism awarded by the Canadian Labour Congress. Spirit is an actor, dancer, performer and a member of ACTRA. She has served on the Governance Board of ACTRA Toronto and has spent many years volunteering her time on both the ACTRA Toronto and ACTRA National Diversity Committees. Among her many contributions, Synott worked with ACTRA and the industry to create tools for inclusivity and diversity, including a print campaign on working with Deaf actors, the Accessibility Demo Reel and casting “go-see” forums for casting directors to meet with actors living with disabilities.

The Carol McGregor Disability Award recognizes the outstanding contributions of a worker with a disability who has made a significant and lasting impact on her/his union and/or the community by promoting and defending the rights of persons with disabilities. The Honour was bestowed on December 3, 2014 in celebration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. ●

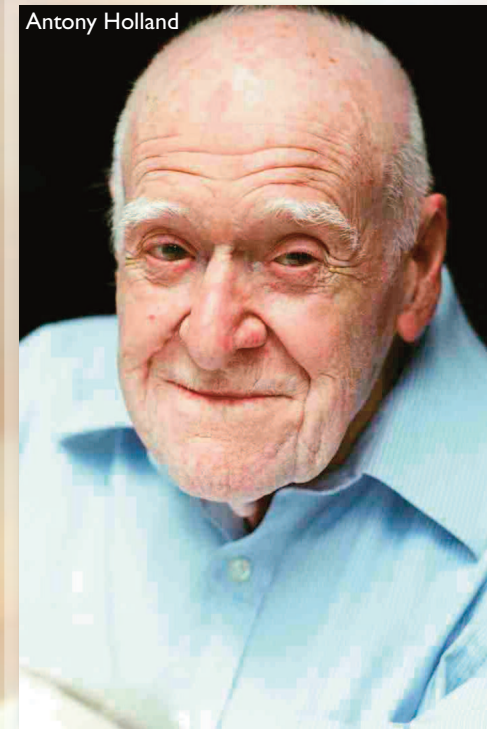


Spirit Synott

## ANTONY HOLLAND NAMED AN OFFICER OF THE ORDER OF CANADA

**Antony Holland** has been named an Officer of The Order of Canada for his achievements as an actor and teacher, notably for founding Langara College's Studio 58 to cultivate the next generation of Canadian performers.

Established in 1967, the Order of Canada is the cornerstone of the Canadian Honours System, and recognizes outstanding achievement, dedication to the community and service to Canada. ●



Antony Holland

Tantoo Cardinal



## TANTOO CARDINAL TO RECEIVE ACTRA TORONTO'S 2015 AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

**Tantoo Cardinal** is being honoured this year by ACTRA Toronto for her body of work and outstanding service to ACTRA. She has worked steadily in film and television on both sides of the border for more than 40 years. Tantoo is known for her roles in *Blackstone*, *Dances with Wolves*, *Black Robe*, *Dr. Quinn*, *Medicine Woman*, *North of 60*, *Legends of the Fall* and *Loyalties*. Her awards include a Gemini Award for *North of 60*, a First Americans in the Arts Awards for *The Education of Little Tree*, an American Indian Film Festival Best Actress Award for *Where the Rivers Flow North*, a Women in Film Award (VIFF) for *Mothers & Daughters*, a Leo Award for *Blackstone* and she shares a Best Ensemble Cast Award (Philadelphia FirstGlance Film Festival) for *Shouting Secrets*.

Tantoo is a Member of the Order of Canada (2009). She holds an Eagle Spirit Award from San Francisco's American Indian Film Festival, the first Rudy Martin Award for Outstanding Achievement by a Native American in Film, an Outstanding Achievement Award from WIFT (Toronto), Harvard's Sun Hill Award for Excellence in Native American Filmmaking, the Peter Ustinov Award from the Banff Film Festival and a National Aboriginal Achievement Award. In 2011 she was named Woman of the Year by the ACTRA National Women's Committee. ●

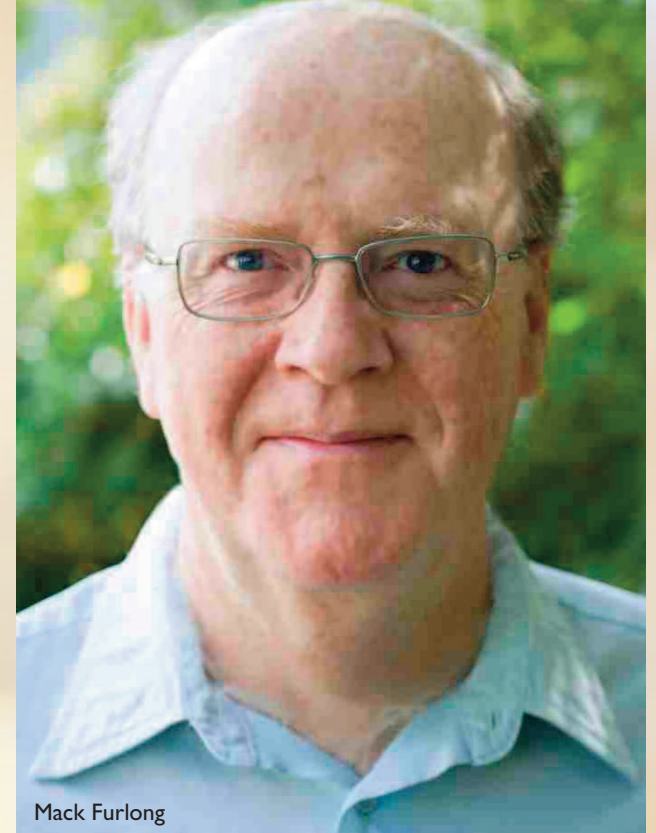
## JOHN R. TAYLOR & BLU MANKUMA RECEIVE SAM PAYNE AWARDS

Sam Payne Awards were presented to two UBCP/ACTRA members at the annual Vancouver event this past May. The Sam Payne Award Winner is **John R. Taylor**. His many years in the business cover every aspect of the performing arts and include generously devoting thousands of volunteer hours to innumerable community theatre and educational productions that have assisted young actors just starting out. **Blu Mankuma** is presented with the Sam Payne Lifetime Achievement Award for his impressive résumé of film, television and theatre credits. Blu is also widely known for his voiceover work in many animated films and television shows.

Created to honour the memory of one of the most loved men of the theatre in Canada, recipients of the Sam Payne Award are recognized for their creative talents as well as for their personal attributes that most mirror those of Sam Payne; including humanity, artistic integrity and encouragement of new talent. ●



**Blu Mankuma** (left) and **John R. Taylor** receiving their Sam Payne Awards.



Mack Furlong

## ACTRA'S 2014 JOHN DRAINIE AWARD PRESENTED TO MACK FURLONG

**Mack Furlong** was honoured by ACTRA National with the 2014 John Drainie Award at a reception in St. John's on October 15. Mack is an acclaimed and passionate performer. Billed as Newfoundland's "cultural magazine", Mack starred on the CBC Radio comedy *The Great Eastern* from 1994 to 1999. Mack's awards include a CBC Radio Award for Programming Excellence and a Writers Guild of Canada Award for *The Great Eastern*. He served on the board of directors of the Resource Centre for the Arts, on ACTRA's National Council and on the board of governors for the Actra Fraternal Benefit Society. He currently sits on the Branch Council of ACTRA Newfoundland and Labrador and is the co-artistic director of Sound Symposium, a bi-annual international celebration of all aspects of sound. ●

# APPLAUSE

## DUVAL LANG WINS BETTY & CRITICS AWARD

This year **Duval Lang** received a Betty Award for best actor for his role in *You Will Remember Me*. The Alberta Theatre Project play was also recognized as best new play. The Betty Award is named after Calgary theatre pioneer **Betty Mitchell** and 2014 marked its 17 year anniversary. Duval also received the Calgary Critics' Award for best actor, also known as the "Critter Award", for the same play. Duval Lang is the founding Artistic Director of Quest Theatre and has spent 25 years making theatre accessible, meaningful and enjoyable to young audiences. In 2009, the Duval Lang Theatre for Young Audiences Award was established in his honour. Duval is the President of ACTRA Alberta. ●

Duval Lang



## ACTRA AWARDS IN MANITOBA

ACTRA Manitoba has awarded the 2014 Performance Awards, pictured here, left to right: **Darcy Fehr** (*Euphoria*), **Brooke Palsson** (*Euphoria*), **Ross McMillan** (*Less Than Kind*) and **Nancy Sorel** (*Less Than Kind*). The award winners were selected from a list of 20 nominees. A special award was presented to **Carole Vivier**, CEO and Film Commissioner of Manitoba Film and Music, for her outstanding and ongoing contribution to the film industry in Manitoba. ●

Photo: Allen Fraser



## RACHEL MCADAMS & RYAN REYNOLDS RECEIVE STARS ON CANADA'S WALK OF FAME

**Rachel McAdams** and **Ryan Reynolds** are among the 2014 Canada's Walk of Fame inductees. Canada's Walk of Fame recognizes those who have made significant cultural or historical contributions to the country through their profession, with previous inductees ranging from **Sarah Polley** and Shania Twain to Wayne Gretzky and Alexander Graham Bell. **Jason Priestley** served as host for the special ceremony, which took place at the Sony Centre for Performing Arts in Toronto. ●

Rachel McAdams and Ryan Reynolds

Photo: David Lee



# THE UBCP/ACTRA AWARDS

The UBCP/ACTRA Awards honoured performers from across British Columbia this past November in Vancouver. **Sara Canning** won the Best Actress Award for her work in *(Remedy: Scary Bears)* and the Best Actor Award went to **Ian Tracey** for *(Continuum: Second Last)*. The Best Newcomer Award went to **Taylor Hill** for her work in *Leap 4 Your Life* and the Best Voice Award went to **Andrea Libman** for *(My Little Pony: Friendship Is Magic)*. The Best Stunt Award went to **Leif Havdale** for his Stunt Driver work on *(Arrow: City of Heroes)*. In addition to the five performance awards, the John Juliani Award of Excellence was presented to **Jay Brazeau** and the **Lorena Gale** Woman of Distinction Award was presented to **Gabrielle Rose**. ●

Photos by Josh Curran



**Gabrielle Rose** is awarded the Lorena Gale Woman of Distinction Award.

**Ian Tracey**



**Jay Brazeau** is the recipient of the John Juliani Award of Excellence.



# ACTRA AND THE CANADIAN ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION SIGN NEW RECIPROCAL AGREEMENT

ACTRA is pleased to announce the conclusion of an update to the longstanding Reciprocal Agreement with Canadian Actors' Equity Association (Equity). A joint committee of ACTRA and Equity Councillors met to sign the updated document on December 8, exactly 43 years to the day after the original agreement went into effect.

This modernized version simplifies and clarifies the language. More significantly, it also removes the mandatory joining requirement, so that members of one union working in the jurisdiction of the other now have access to the full range of member or permit options that would ordinarily apply to any engagement.

ACTRA and Equity have enjoyed a long and collaborative relationship, and this renewed commitment to reciprocal recognition and assistance is designed to serve our memberships well into the future. Both National Councils have also committed to ongoing discussions aimed at greater opportunities for connection and collaboration. ●

*“Over the forty-plus years since we first signed a Reciprocal Agreement, our associations have changed dramatically, along with our industry. This agreement reflects that change.”*

– **Ferne Downey**, ACTRA National President

**Sitting:** Arden R. Ryshpan, Equity Executive Director; CAEA President Allan Teichman; Ferne Downey, ACTRA National President; Stephen Waddell, ACTRA National Executive Director;  
**Standing:** Howard Rosenstein, Equity Councillor; Theresa Tova, ACTRA National Treasurer; and David Sparrow, ACTRA Toronto President.



# Labour Day

At Labour Day parades and events ACTRA members joined in the celebrations of Canadian workers across the country. To learn more about all the positive work that unions do, follow on Twitter <https://twitter.com/canadianlabour> and check out websites <http://www.canadianlabour.ca/> and <http://fairnessworks.ca/>



UBCP/ACTRA



ACTRA Manitoba



ACTRA Saskatchewan





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**ACTRA National**



**@ACTRANat** <https://twitter.com/ACTRANat>



**www.ACTRA.ca**



**1.800.387.3516**

## ACTRA BRANCHES ACROSS CANADA

**UBCP/ACTRA** | 604.689.0727 | www.ubcp.com

**ACTRA Alberta** | 403.228.3123 | www.actraalberta.com

**ACTRA Saskatchewan** | 306.757.0885 | www.actrasask.com

**ACTRA Manitoba** | 204.339.9750 | www.actramanitoba.ca

**ACTRA Toronto** | 416.928.2278 | www.actratoronto.com

**ACTRA Ottawa** | 613.565.2168 | www.actraottawa.ca

**ACTRA Montreal** | 514.844.3318 | www.actramontreal.ca

**ACTRA Maritimes** | 902.420.1404 | www.actramaritimes.ca

**ACTRA Newfoundland/Labrador** | 709.722.0430 | www.actranewfoundland.ca



ACTRA Alberta



ACTRA Toronto

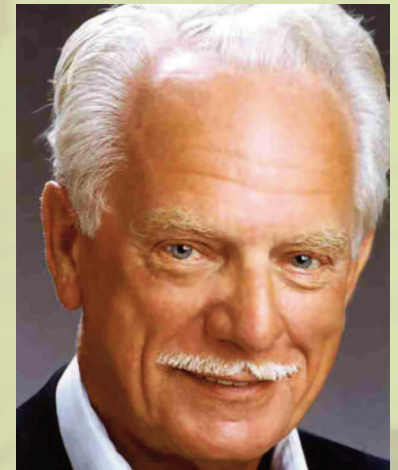


ACTRA Ottawa



ACTRA Maritimes





## George Knight 1917 - 2014

**George Knight** was possibly one of ACTRA's oldest working background performers. He was a handsome man with impeccable manners. I first met him on the set of *Captive*, standing beside a grave in the pouring rain. As always, he was impeccably dressed, urbane and completely unfazed by the commotion all around.

George appeared in over 400 films and 200 commercials. One magazine used him for a 7 page spread. He was still acting on the set of *Gerontiphelia* at the age of 95. All who knew George will miss him greatly. He will be long remembered. ●

Roy Elliott

# Farewell

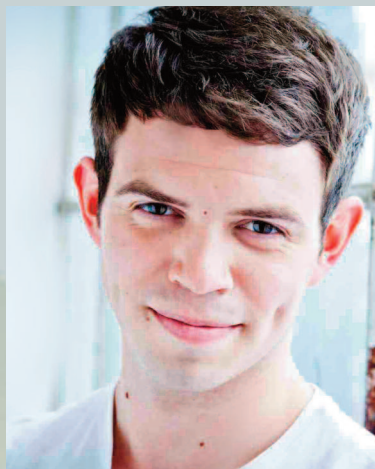


## Walter Massey

1928 – 2014

A 60 year veteran of television, radio and theatre, **Walter Massey** was part of the inaugural production of Joseph Papp's New York Shakespeare Festival, playing Brutus in *Julius Caesar*. He enjoyed great success with roles at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, National Arts Centre, Manitoba Theatre Centre, Citadel Theatre, Fredericton Playhouse, Centaur Theatre, Saidye Bronfman/Segal Centre and the Mountain Playhouse in Montreal, for which he also served as resident Director. Among Walter's many screen credits are his roles as Doc Stewart in the Canadian classic, *Lassie*, Tom Temple in the long-running courtroom TV series, *Family Court*, and the voice of Principal Haney in the Emmy Award winning children's TV series, *Arthur*.

As a staunch supporter of performers' rights, Walter helped establish Canadian Actors Equity Association and the Montreal branch of ACTRA. Walter was honoured with Life Memberships from both unions, as well as the Larry McCance Award (CAEA) and ACTRA Montreal's Award of Excellence. He will be sorely missed by all of those whose lives he touched. ●



## Kent Nolan

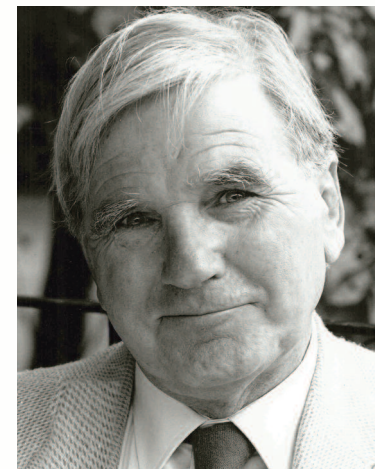
1990 - 2014

**Kent Nolan** was one the kindest people I have ever known. He was also one of the hardest working. He was quiet about his talent, letting his work speak for itself. He was loud about his love for other people. He complimented freely, was truly supportive and genuinely curious. He always wanted to know what was new with you. What made him a good friend is what made him a good filmmaker; he was always honest. I loved his big and beaming smile.

Kent and I were the same age and I think at this age, you find your tribe. As an actor, at around twenty-five, you connect with the people you will work, commiserate and celebrate with for the rest of your professional lives. I felt upon first meeting that Kent and I were tied. I am sad that I won't get to witness what would have been a remarkable career. I am sadder that we won't find each other's eyes across a crowded party, silently promising to meet at the bar in a few minutes and laugh at the absurdity that is the film business. We were supposed to be in each other's corner forever.

I miss Kent today and I will miss Kent everyday. As we go forth as a community, I hope we remember that we have the opportunities that he deserved. I hope we all work a little harder. I hope we make the world a little better for those that love us. Like Kent was, I hope we are always grateful that we get to do what we love. ●

Katie Boland



## Gerard Parkes

1924 - 2014

**Gerard Parkes** is known for his roles on the hit children's series *Fraggle Rock* and the movie *The Boondock Saints*. Born in Dublin, Gerard came to Canada in the 1950s and launched his show business career on CBC Radio. He appeared in the 1960s CBC series *The Forest Rangers* and popular children's shows *The Littlest Hobo* and *Shining Time Station*.

Winner of a Canadian Film Award for his performance in the 1968 feature film *Isabel*, Gerard also won a Dora award for his performance in a 1999 theatre production of *Kilt* and several awards for radio dramas.

Despite his lengthy and diverse achievements, Gerard is probably best known for playing "Doc" on Jim Henson's popular TV series *Fraggle Rock*. When asked what Parkes would think about being remembered most for acting with puppets, Gerry Jordan, Gerard's agent of 30 years said "he'd love it. He had a thrill doing that show. Jordan got loads of fan mail from kids and adults around the world. He was a magical man and a terrific performer." ●

# IT'S AN ELECTION YEAR!

## OUR CULTURAL INDUSTRY MATTERS.

**LET'S ALL STEP UP TO GET CULTURE ON THE AGENDA AND ELECT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT THAT WE DESERVE. GET INVOLVED – JOIN OUR CONVERSATIONS ON TWITTER AND FACEBOOK AND BE SURE TO VISIT ACTRA.CA!**

This past November ACTRA performers met with over 40 MPs at Parliament Hill, including Leaders of the Official Opposition and Green Party, Heritage Critics and Key Committee members.

Front left to right:

Alvin Sanders, Cary Lawrence, Theresa Tova, Tyrone Benskin, Ferne Downey, Angelica Lisk-Hann, Adamo Ruggiero, Tantoo Cardinal and Amy Matysio.

Back left to right:

Julian Richings, Tristan D. Lalla, Benjamin Ayres, Jamie Spilchuk, David Sparrow, Peter MacNeill, Art Hindle, Mark McKinney and Salvatore Antonio.

Photo: Fred Chartrand.



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