



Artists Are Workers Too

Actors call on Ontario politicians for action on behalf of artists

Some of Canada's biggest stars met with Ontario politicians at Queen's Park on April 20th to educate them about the challenges facing artists and to demand legislation that would provide artists with the same rights that other workers in Ontario have.

"Artists are tied to Ontario's economic and cultural well being," said

Heather Allin, President of ACTRA Toronto. "They are the kind of creative workers the government claims are the future. Yet artists lack the basic rights that are standard for other workers in this province."

ACTRA is asking for legislative changes which would help artists. These changes include the implementation of a



Peter Keleghan, Mayko Nguyen and Gordon Pinsent join ATP President Heather Allin at Queen's Park

Photo courtesy of Jag Gindhu

collective bargaining process for the arts sector, the inclusion of artists under the Employment Standards Act and legislation to protect child performers.

Wendy Crewson pointed out that artist organizations need a collective bargaining process that reflects the nature of the way they work and are employed. Artists should be given this tool so they can negotiate a living wage.

Artists should not be excluded from coverage under the Employment

Standards Act just because they are independent contractors. These changes would allow artists to remain independent contractors, but have the same rights and protections that other workers have.

ACTRA and other artists' organizations have been calling for better employment rights for artists for years.

Artists earn 37% less than the average worker in Canada. Many of the changes ACTRA is demanding were recommended in the 2006 Status of the Artist report commissioned by the Minister of Culture, but have yet to be implemented.

The Genies Come To O-Town...

A local performer's perspective

Ottawa's Aviation Museum was the backdrop this year for the 29th annual Genie Awards celebration, and my first major awards show! Steeped in history, endeavour and pride – the museum was an apt location for our industry to celebrate our best in Canadian film. It may not have had all of the Toronto 'glitz' but it was a classy affair where the

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USW 8300



Annual General Meeting

Followed by an evening social

Come to ACTRA Ottawa's Annual General Meeting to catch up on all things ACTRA including a presentation from the CEO of the new Ontario Arts Credit Union.

AGM 7pm

ACTRA Members and Apprentices only

For more information, contact ACTRA Ottawa @ 565-2168

Monday, May 11th



Clock Tower Pub

575 Bank St.

Just South of the Queensway



President's Report

Spring has sprung and with the rising temperature comes a warming on many fronts, including the production front, as things gear up for the summer. The local production scene is seeing a modest increase with a local MOW wrapping and another in production with several in the works. Also, there is good news on the animation front with a new season of Amberwood's "The Secret World of Benjamin Bear" underway.

The stars were out for the annual Genie Awards held for the first time in Ottawa this year with a number of local performers taking part in the show as well as attending various events on ACTRA's behalf. I was pleased to attend the festivities and offer my perspective in this issue.

We rounded out 2008 with a gala evening celebrating our 50th anniversary at the National Arts Centre where acclaimed local members Holly Larocque and Wayne Rostad were honoured with ACTRA Life Memberships. The event was a huge success, thanks to all who helped make the evening such a memorable event. Please see Bill's article on the next page for more on the gala.

In the fall we saw our members get active on the political front, participating in pro-Arts rallies and events during the federal election campaign. Our members took an active roll in a major rally at the start of the campaign that saw close to five hundred people gather for a town hall meeting with local candidates followed by a march on Parliament Hill.

On a sad note we will be bidding long serving council member Bill Luxton a fond farewell as he won't be re-offering for the next council (despite our pleadings) . We will try to impose on him as much as possible to keep him involved. Also, Tori Hammond stepped down in the new year to pursue new challenges, thanks to both for their service and dedication to our members.

I hope to see you at our AGM on May 11th to catch up on ACTRA news and find out about the new Creative Arts Credit Union , and of course, stay and socialize with your fellow performers after the meeting.

In Solidarity,

Guy Buller
President, ACTRA Ottawa

Welcome Aboard!

ACTRA Ottawa is continuing to grow and we are pleased to welcome new members and congratulate those becoming full members.

FULL MEMBERS

Jesse Buck
Jade Carpenter
Steffi D
Teresa Donovan
Kim Guite
Dominic Luckman
Tommie-Amber Pirie
Imran Syed

APPRENTICE MEMBERS

Tori Barban
Mykal Baytaluk
Alex Cardillo
John Doucet
Kieran Gwin
Shaun Kistan
Pierre Luc Lafontaine
Stephen MacDonald
Heather-Claire Nortey
Seamus Patterson
Philippe Perrault-Leduc
Kassidy Verreault
Evan Welchner



ACTRA is now officially 'Twittering'!

Visit and follow us: <http://twitter.com/ACTRANat>. You can also keep track of our tweets on the live feed at actra.ca. It's going to be a busy year with collective bargaining and CRTC hearings galore so we'll have lots to say.



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Bill Luxton
Branch
Councillor

ACTRA Ottawa celebrates 50 Years at NAC Gala

It was a night to remember ...December 4th 2008 ...our 50th anniversary with over 130 members and guests gathering in the fabulous fountain room at the National Arts Centre. It was my pleasure to co-host the event with Catherine Dines, a fellow member of the branch council.

President Guy Buller got things underway with a warm welcome and then it was time to reminisce with Rick Kaulbar's excellent video taking us back to 1958 and the pioneers who blazed the trail on radio, TV and the big screen. ACTRA's National President Richard



Photo courtesy of Tori Hammond

Wayne Rostad and Holly Laroque with Actra Ottawa President Guy Buller

Hardacre was on hand to present Life Memberships to two of our most accomplished and best known members, Holly Laroque and Wayne Rostad.

Two of Holly's puppet friends, "Jacob Bluejay" and "Filo Pastry" popped up to greet her, then it was my turn to roast my old friend Wayne. The gathering also heard passionate presentations from Hassan Yusseff of the Canadian Labour Congress and David Hope the Director of the Actors Fund of Canada who was on hand to receive a \$1000 donation from our branch and ACTRA National.

The celebration continued with music by the Bob Cleall quintet, fine food and socializing by members and guests.



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bi-planes sparked my conversation with an Air Force major about Tiger Moths, which I had the opportunity to fly in a movie a few years ago.

I had to admit that there were more than a few Genie nominated movies that I had never heard of, but desperately wanted to see after that night! The story-lines spoke to my understanding of who I am as a Canadian. It is a shame that English Canadians, for the most part, do not know these stories or the people who give their souls to the characters. We lack a 'star system' while being blinded by the light of others from south of the border.

The obscurity in which we Canadian actors work is a stunning reminder of what it means to be an actor in Canada -- where major characters in Canada's biggest budget films have 'day jobs'. This despite the Genie Awards program having a message from the Prime Minister and Minister of Heritage claiming that

the talent of our performers is a benefit to the country. Are not these the same people who were pushing Bill C-10, the "film censorship" bill, a little while ago and recently turned deaf ears to the plight of our national broadcaster? Actor Joe Dinicol's comments on the hardships that our Passchendaele soldiers faced

However, I did get to meet Gordon Pinsent! As he walked up the red carpet I could not pass up the chance to greet him as 'Quentin Durgens, MP'. He was taken aback by the fact that a 'young fella' would know him as such and mused about the days of climbing the steps of Parliament with a head full of curly black hair.



Photo courtesy of Jag Gindhu

The Canadian Aviation Museum played host to the 29th Annual Genie Awards honouring the best in Canadian Film

W e n d y Crewson spoke out on behalf of all of us on the importance of promoting our stories and talent, as did Sarah Polley. These are my stars! Real actors still

touched a cord in me and I wondered why we are not telling and hearing more of these stories -- our stories that make us the Canadians we are today?

It's a shame the PM and his ministers couldn't show up to celebrate our Canadian film industry -- something that seems to be misunderstood by the present powers that be.

slugging it out for, I might say, a higher purpose.

It was with honour that I attended the Genie Awards and encourage all in our business to make greater efforts to attend and support each other.

Guy Buller
ACTRA Ottawa President

Councillor Bill Luxton Takes a Bow

When Bill Luxton decided not to seek re-election to ACTRA Ottawa's Branch Council, I was gobsmacked. Ever since he and I first shared Council duties in the '80s, Bill has been a part of my Council experience, and I suppose I thought he always would be. On further reflection, I realized he has also been a part of the fabric of the city and the culture in which I grew up. I'd like to share some of Bill's story with you.

Bill is a multi-talented performer well known to the public in a variety of contrasting roles. To children, past and present, he is that lovable old codger Uncle Willy, to theatre goers he is one of our most accomplished actors, to big band fans he is a popular vocalist, and to television viewers he remains the familiar host of well-remembered interview and variety programs.

Following his army service in 1948, Bill worked as an announcer at CFPA Radio in what is now Thunder Bay, Ontario. It was there that he met his future wife "Toots". After graduating from Lorne Greene's Academy of Radio Arts in Toronto in 1950, he joined the staff of CKWS in Kingston, and Toots and Bill were married that year. During that time Bill also appeared on stage with the International Players and Domino Theatre of Kingston. His radio and stage experience helped him make the transition to television at CKWS in 1955. His early TV assignments honed his interviewing skills.

Bill moved to Ottawa in 1961 to join the staff of Canada's newest TV station, CJOH. Over three decades he hosted a variety of shows, including "Uncle Chichimus", "Take A Bow", "The AM Show", "Town and Country" and finally, "Morning Magazine". Charlotte Whitton and Margaret Trudeau were among his co-hosts. For the young, and not so young, he developed his alter-ego, Uncle Willy, and with his long-time partner Les Lye, created the syndicated "Willy and Floyd Show".

When Bill retired from CJOH-TV in 1987, he left his well-established role as Ottawa's smooth, unflappable TV personality to pursue his life-long interests in music and the theatre. He had maintained an active part-time theatrical schedule during his 26-year career as a broadcaster in the nation's capital. With



early retirement from CJOH, his dream of a professional acting career became a reality.

Since that time Bill has amassed an impressive list of credits, both stage and screen. His film and television credits include Getting Along Famously, Untalkative Bunny, Denis the Menace 2, Punch and Judy, Kiss of Debt, Two's A Mob.

On stage, Bill performed in dinner-theatre productions for Staged Right, including a musical anthology, "Irving Berlin, the First Century", and a nostalgia wartime musical, "We'll Meet Again". Bill also co-starred with Elsa Pickthorne in the comedy-drama, "Handy Dandy", the first play presented at Ottawa's Arts Court. More good reviews came his way at the Upper Canada Playhouse in "The Gin Game" and in the Canadian musical, "Bingo Night".

For many years, Bill was a member of the Board of Directors of the Ottawa Little Theatre. He appeared in a wide range of roles at the King Edward Avenue playhouse, from "The Sunshine Boys" with Les Lye, to Chekov's "The Three Sisters". Bill's performances for the Orpheus Society left his signature mark on a variety of musical roles, in productions such as "The Music Man", "Gigi", "The King and I", "The Sound of Music", "My Fair Lady" and "Annie".

Bill is also the MC and a featured vocalist with the Good Companions' popular big band, The Grey Jazz.

Bill has worked unstintingly on behalf of ACTRA Ottawa, including organizing and hosting many gala events and spearheading our archival efforts. We will all miss Bill's commitment and dedication to his fellow performers and his tireless service to ACTRA. I know he will continue to play an active role in our community for many years to come. It just wouldn't be the same without him!

Bill: on behalf of the Council and the entire membership, thank you for everything.

Barry Blake
National Councillor



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Guy Buller

Vice President
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National Councillor
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Nicole Blundell

Katherine Dines

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