



# **Solidarity into Action**

**ACTRA Toronto 2015-2016 Operating Plan**

**February 2015**

# ACTRA Toronto 2015-2016 Operating Plan

Dear ACTRA Toronto members,

Show business is tough. As professional performers, we compete with each other every day for the opportunity to work in a notoriously difficult and demanding business. The good news is that we all share a very powerful brand, one that is respected by the industry, by government and by our fellow performers around the world.

**We are ACTRA members.** Through our union membership, over 23,000 of us across Canada speak with one strong and confident voice. In these turbulent times, it's nice to know, that whatever challenges the new year brings, we will face them together and, working together, we will find new opportunities to make things better for all performers.

We work together every day to help members get paid fairly and on time, to keep them safe and decently treated on set and to support the skillful negotiating and relentless advocacy that lead to greater stability, prosperity and growth for our members, our union and our industry. Last year is a good example.

Through our work during the National Commercial Agreement (NCA) negotiations, we achieved the restoration of full session fees for new media commercials.

We worked with producers of all stripes to adapt to changing technologies and to bring more work into our union's jurisdiction.

During the Toronto municipal elections, we worked hard to educate all candidates about the importance of keeping Toronto film-friendly. Our new mayor got it and has committed to celebrating our industry in Toronto and to reducing red tape for productions. Toronto's Film Commissioner and Director of Entertainment Industries is Little Mosque on the Prairie star and ACTRA Toronto member, Zaib Shaikh.

Under the minority Liberal Government, we worked hard to get Bill 17 (formerly Bill 71), the Child Performer Protection Act, passed through second reading and committee. [*This is the furthest a piece of Status of the Artist legislation has moved in Ontario to date and we are working hard to get it across the finish line.*]

During the Ontario Provincial elections, we worked constantly to remind all parties and candidates about the importance of the screened entertainment industries to Ontario's economy. The new majority Liberal government at Queen's Park has embraced the importance of the film and TV sector and indicated they will continue to do so.

Working with our national organization and other ACTRA branches across the country, we worked with our strategic partners, our labour and industry allies and other stakeholder groups, to strengthen the case for more Canada on all of our screens.

This year will bring its own challenges and perhaps a few welcome surprises too. Your Council has been working hard to anticipate the struggles ahead and prepare strategies to meet them, head on.

Their work has been informed by discussions about the changing economic, technological, legislative and regulatory environment including the ebb and flow of work opportunities, contract priorities, member services, inclusive casting, funding challenges, pressures to accept minimum rates, compressed budgets, new distribution models, over-the-top services, the future of the “middle-class” actor, and more.

The 2015-16 Operating Plan, titled Solidarity into Action will act as a steering document for both Council and staff as they represent us all in the shifting landscape that is the entertainment industry.

(You can check out the Op Plan online at [www.actratoronto.com/performers/my-union/executive-Council-2/](http://www.actratoronto.com/performers/my-union/executive-Council-2/))

Remember that you also have a part to play in the work ahead in 2015-16. Let the public know who we are, what is produced here, and the value that performers and Canadian productions bring to our city. Let government know there is a wealth of imagination in this country, and that Canadians have a hunger to see their stories and their diversity reflected on their screens. Let producers, new and experienced, know ACTRA is open for business and that there are both artistic and fiscal advantages to working ACTRA. Let Production know that performers bring real value and should be fairly compensated, regardless of the medium in which a production is exploited.

In 2003, while accepting the ACTRA Award of Excellence, Gordon Pinsent said, “ACTRA is the house we have built for ourselves.” In 2015-16, let's keep the foundation strong, by working together to achieve our common goals. Let's put the brakes on non-union production, by continuing to strengthen, build and celebrate our membership. In the 2016 Independent Production Agreement (IPA) negotiations, let's work together to protect the gains we've achieved for performers and to reject efforts by greedy multinationals to tie the value of our work to the latest fad in distribution technology or the size of the screen on which it is viewed.

In 2015-16, let's put our **Solidarity into Action**.

**David Sparrow**

President, ACTRA Toronto

# Review: ACTRA Toronto 2014-2015 Operating Plan



Last year's Operating Plan, ***Stand Together***, identified key initiatives that our Council, member committees and staff dedicated themselves to moving forward.

Let's review those key initiatives to see what ACTRA Toronto achieved in 2014 by ***Standing Together***:

## **Bargaining the Best**

Working with ACTRA National and branches across the country:

- We renegotiated the *National Commercial Agreement (NCA)*. Seventeen days of bargaining led to the restoration of full day rates in New Media, a general increase of 2% in each year of the contract (total 6%), and commitments to update the residual structure and simplify the agreement.
- We met regularly in NCA quarterly meetings to push these commitments forward.
- We began meeting with member focus groups to discuss proposals for the 2015 IPA negotiations.
- We held preliminary meetings with the CMPA to explore options for lower budget New Media projects, but found the presence of the big U.S. studios a roadblock to made-for-Canada solutions.
- We finally achieved new agreements with CTV and renegotiated the CBC agreement.
- We negotiated tripartite agreements with Equity, Stratford Festival and Soulpepper.
- We were actively involved in the renewal of the reciprocal agreement between ACTRA and Equity.

## **Organizing**

- We completed the research project on Advancing the ACTRA Advantage, and hired two Industry Relations staff to meet with producers, engagers, agencies, advertisers and studios in the commercial industry to promote the value of professional performers.
- We continued outreach to videogame producers, large and small, working to promote the advantages of working with ACTRA members.
- We met with small and low-budget, web-based producers to explore guidelines that would encourage them to work ACTRA and bust through the myths.
- We continued outreach to performance and film students.
- We continued to educate the parents of children in the business, and provincial legislation to protect all child performers in Ontario.

## **On Set and Off Set**

- We increased our visibility in the workplace through our Performers On Set newsletter and with more ACTRA Toronto On Set Liaison Officer (OSLO) visits.
- We investigated and will adopt a new, hard-plastic, ACTRA Toronto Membership Card that can be electronically scanned and linked to ACTRA's membership system.
- We further developed our visibility online through our website, social media and via CastingDiversity.ca, CastingStunts.ca and CastingBackground.ca.
- We celebrated events, activities, awards, and interesting arts and union stories via our Performers magazine, Performers On Set, Performers Online, and through our website and social media.
- Member conferences were held in the winter and fall to update members about their union's activities and to provide professional skills workshops.
- We worked with Creative Arts Savings and Credit Union (CASCU) to provide a special mortgage offer to members and ACTRA staff; and we promoted our credit union through our member training and events.
- The ACTRA Awards in Toronto were held at the Carlu, where R.H. Thomson received the Award of Excellence and over 1,000 members and friends attended. Terry McGurrin won for Outstanding Performance Voice and Amanda Brugel and Rick Roberts took home awards for Outstanding Performance. We made our Stunt Award part of the Awards night with the first of such awards going to Marco Bianco.
- We marched in the Pride and Labour Day parades as a union committed to inclusion, diversity and workers' rights.

## **Member Education and Membership Caucuses**

- We re-invigorated the Apprentice Caucus. They elected an executive and have been meeting regularly to identify the concerns of their membership category.
- The AABP Caucus elected a new executive and met regularly to discuss the concerns of their membership category.

- We continued member education initiatives for Full and Apprentice members, including offering evening sessions for Apprentices, and addressing respect, harassment and on-set etiquette in our joint workshops with the Directors Guild of Canada (DGC).
- We embarked on the ACTRA Toronto Legacy project to celebrate the volunteers who have over our 70+-year history built this great union. Current and historical photos are displayed on monitors in the membership and reception areas of our office.

## **Committee Work**

- Committees met to discuss issues, advance initiatives, and promote professional development and advocacy.
- The Young Emerging Actors Assembly (YEAA) attracted record audiences to the screening of YEAA Shorts at ReelWorld and to their event at TIFF.
- We supported the Toronto ACTRA Women’s Committee (TAWC) in their work to promote productions about, by and starring women. We also celebrated the first Nell Shipman Award to recognize the contribution women make to create and nourish an inclusive screened entertainment industry.
- We continued to promote diversity as our strength, and further developed partnerships with cultural film festivals: ReelWorld, ReelAsian, the Toronto Black Film Festival, the Mosaic International South Asian Film Festival and imagineNATIVE.
- The Act Your Age (AYA) Committee developed a new mandate to address ageism, and we supported them in the production of a video series, “Actors don’t retire.”
- We advocated for cultural diversity, gender equality and casting that is reflective of our society.
- We struck a Voice Committee representing those who work in animation, commercial voiceover, narration and/or under the Audio Code.
- We worked with the Stunt Committee to: raise awareness about concussions; advocate for improved insurance benefits; and help performers save and manage their money by developing financial literacy workshops.
- The Full Member Background Committee met regularly to discuss issues important to those Full members working as background performers.
- We met with agents and casting directors to foster better professional relationships and practices. We explored a new and robust code of conduct for a new Background Agents’ Association, the Toronto Talent Agents Association (TTAA).

## **Championing Canadian Culture**

- The film and TV sector make significant contributions to the municipal and provincial economies: \$1.15B in 2013, employing almost 30,000 full-time employees. We made sure our politicians knew it. We took an active role in the CRTC’s re-examination of the broadcasting policy. We made our voices heard on the importance of Canadian stories, performances and productions on all our screens.
- We took part in *Flash conferences* for the CRTC’s consultations, *Let’s Talk TV: A Conversation with Canadians*, where we discussed, along with other industry

stakeholders, the implications of a changing broadcast landscape, including Over-The-Top (OTT) services and increasing digital content.

- We lobbied in Ottawa with ACTRA members from across the country to inform politicians of their responsibility to protect Canadian culture and workers.

## **Fairness Works and Political Action**

- We supported the Canadian Labour Congress's (CLC) **Together Fairness Works Campaign**. The campaign promotes the achievements won by unions on behalf of all workers and their families. Started in 2013, the campaign continued through the 2014 provincial and municipal elections.
- As anti-union legislation continues to challenge our rights, we made sure every politician heard our opposition to any efforts to limit workers' right to organize. Unfortunately, the Senate passed Bill C-525 (Employees' Voting Rights Act) in December 2014.
- During the 2014 provincial election, we ensured that culture, the arts, and our industry's economic contribution were priorities for all political parties. We worked with our industry partners through FilmOntario and our labour allies to achieve these goals.
- During the 2014 municipal election, we identified candidates that supported a strong arts sector. We empowered our members by updating our website with easy to access information that provided members with tools to help them bust myths and talk about our industry with politicians, their friends and families as well as the general public. We suggested a number of important questions to ask candidates to help them make stronger voting choices.

That was the year that was. In the year to come, we will continue to build on our successes and to find new ways to make things better for performers. Let's take a look at the Operating Plan for 2015-2016.

# Solidarity into Action

## ACTRA Toronto Operating Plan for 2015-2016

**These are our union's key priorities for 2015-'16:**

### **A lot more Canada on ALL of our screens**

We will engage our members and the public in a campaign for more Canadian content and support for artists.

- Build public support and an audience for Canadian content.
- Encourage members to vote for candidates in the upcoming federal election who will champion Canadian culture and support cultural workers.
- Build pride in what we put on our screens and airways.
- Use website and social media tools to celebrate national and international award-winning Canadian productions and performers.
- Continue outreach to schools, festivals and community events to showcase Canadian productions and Canadian performers.

### **Contracts that value performers and their performances**

We will work with ACTRA National and branches across the country to ensure our contracts value our members.

- Renegotiate the *Independent Production Agreement (IPA)* focusing on the value and use of the performance.
- Engage members in the IPA bargaining process through our website and e-communication tools.
- Advance guidelines for low-budget, independent web-based productions.
- Continue to work toward simplifying the *National Commercial Agreement (NCA)*, and developing an easy to understand and apply residual system.
- Work with Equity to monitor and renegotiate understandings for live-to-broadcast productions.
- Negotiate broadcast agreements with CTV and the CBC.
- Enforce negotiated health and safety provisions, protect the security of personal information and ensure dignity and respect on-set.



## **A celebration of Canada's diversity**

Canadians want to see themselves reflected on their screens: women, men, physically and culturally diverse, big, small, older, younger, LGBTQ+. Inclusion is an action word. We will continue to champion inclusion and diversity through the work of the Diversity Committee, Act Your Age (AYA), Toronto ACTRA Women's Committee (TAWC), and the Young Emerging Actors Assembly (YEAA).

- Support efforts to see our diverse population enrolled in performance and production programs; encourage the development of Canadian stories that reflect our diversity; and promote diversity on our screens.
- Participate in presentations to post-secondary performance and production-based programs on the ACTRA advantage.
- Further develop partnerships with cultural film festivals and young filmmakers.
- Recognize and celebrate efforts of women through TAWC's Nell Shipman Award.
- Support performers living with disabilities and promote accessible casting facilities and venues for union events.
- Support performers who are in transition from child to adult performer, as well as from adult to senior performer.
- Organize "go-sees" with casting directors and continue to promote online sites: CastingDiversity.ca, CastingBackground.ca, CastingStunts.ca, and the newest, CastingVoice.ca.
- Support the demand by the Canadian Unions for Equality on Screen (CUES) to hold productions receiving public funding accountable for diversity in front of and behind the camera or microphone.

## **Respect the artist**

Let's make it possible for professional performers to continue to make the films, television series, and digital media we love. We will pursue the basic protections envisioned in UNESCO's Status of the Artist Recommendation (passed in 1980).

- Participate in the Ontario government's review of labour and employment law to gain protections and rights for the self-employed.
- Continue efforts to pass Bill 17 (Child Performers Protection Act, formerly Bill 71) into law.
- Ensure ACTRA Fraternal Benefit Society (AFBS) and the Actors' Fund are meeting performers' needs today, and in the future.
- Promote the Creative Arts Savings and Credit Union (CASCU) as the one-stop-shop for performers' financial services.

## **Stronger relationships with our sister organizations**

Developing partnerships with sister organizations and participating in events outside of the screen-based industry will help build awareness of ACTRA and support Canadian production.

- Identify activities with labour and sister organizations to promote each other, building the Canadian brands of those organizations and increasing the visibility of performers.
- Develop a pilot project with the fashion industry to pair designers with Award nominees.
- Approach broadcast entertainment award shows about involving ACTRA members.

## **Together, we make it happen**

The film and TV industry is a significant contributor to our economy. For the last three years, production volumes in Ontario have surpassed \$1 billion. The workers are unionized and the unions work together with industry partners to lobby for investments and market Ontario as a key production centre in North America.

- Work with FilmOntario on lobbying and marketing initiatives.
- Undertake joint initiatives and support our labour partners' respective bargaining objectives.
- Work with agents to strengthen negotiated contract provisions and communicate the performers' professional responsibilities.
- Encourage labour and industry partners to engage ACTRA talent for all their video and audio projects.
- Stand alongside our strategic alliance partners and promote the contributions unions make to our economy.
- Together with labour partners, support efforts to keep our city healthy, and improve local services.
- Build our presence in the Pride and Labour Day parades.
- Work with ACTRA National to explore an enhanced relationship with Equity.

## **ACTRA Advantage**

We work to create a flourishing production environment that attracts business to Ontario and producers to ACTRA Toronto. We champion members' rights every day and try to help you succeed in the business of performing.

- Educate and communicate with members about the role ACTRA plays in bargaining, servicing, supporting professionalism, and promoting arts and culture in Canada.
- Establish a new Member Services Committee dedicated to raising awareness of health and safety issues; identifying on-set education opportunities; and assessing possible benefits or negotiated provisions to better meet members' needs.

- Support the Stunt Committee’s program to help injured performers return to work, and raise awareness about concussions and the risks associated with head injuries.
- Promote new financial literacy workshops and tips for performers on managing their money.
- Keep better track of work days and demographic information through a new membership card, and pursue a digital voucher system.
- Reach out to new Producers, Engagers, ACTRA and potential new members through promotional materials, publications, videos, on set presence, workshops, online tools and networking.
- Improve systems within ACTRA Toronto to respond to questions, concerns and complaints.
- Meet with new members and production partners in Northern Ontario.
- Pursue opportunities for voice performance in audio books and videogame production.
- Outreach to models and their agents.

## **ACTRA Toronto’s Committees, Caucuses & Advocates**

**ACTRA Toronto Council** is made up of 24 members elected by the Toronto membership for a two-year term. Representing the interests of all 15,000 members regardless of membership or work category, Councillors work with our caucuses, committees and staff to implement our objectives. Please consider getting involved! [David Sparrow, P]

### ***Standing Committees***

**Executive committee:** Elected by your Council, this committee governs ACTRA Toronto between meetings of Council. [David Sparrow, P]

**Awards committee:** Plans and oversees ACTRA Toronto’s annual ACTRA Awards in Toronto production. [David Gale, VP / Maria Del Mar, Chair]

**Conference committee:** Plans and oversees ACTRA Toronto’s Members Conferences. [David Gale, VP / Nicole St. Martin]

**Discipline committee:** Adjudicates discipline cases brought against members by senior staff within the framework of the national discipline rules. [David Sparrow, P / Chris Owens, Chair]

**Finance committee:** Oversees ACTRA Toronto’s budget, financial statements, investments and business arrangements. [David Macniven, Treasurer]

**Magazine editorial board:** Plans and oversees *Performers’ Magazine*, *Performers On Set* and other important member communications. [David Gale, VP / Chris Owens]

**Legacy & Archives committee:** Maintains and builds a history of photographs, recorded member interviews and other important materials from ACTRA Toronto’s 70+ years. [Art Hindle, VP]

## **Caucuses**

**Apprentice Caucus:** Representing the issues of members of the Apprentice Membership category, they report to Council through their Chair who has voice but no vote. [David Macniven, Treasurer/ Larry Robertson, Chair, Paul Whitaker, Vice-Chair. Caroline Puzinas, Secretary]

**ACTRA Additional Background Performers (AABP) Caucus:** Representing the issues of members of the AABP membership category, they report to Council through their Chair who has voice but no vote. [David Macniven, Treasurer / Randi Shelton, Chair]

## **Advocates**

**ACTRA Toronto Ombudsperson:** A trusted and experienced member selected by Council to provide an avenue for members to mediate issues within ACTRA Toronto. [Shawn Lawrence]

**Agents Liaison:** Meets with TAMAC, EIC, TTAA and other associations provides a forum for ACTRA Toronto to connect with and communicate with the agent community. [Theresa Tova, VP]

**Child Advocate:** Outreach to minors, young performers (under 18) and their parents. [Tabby Johnson]

**Diversity Advocate:** Addresses specific concerns and initiatives on behalf of physically and culturally diverse performers. Promotes inclusion, equality and an industry that better reflects society on both sides of the camera. [Jani Lauzon, VP]

## **Stakeholder Committees**

**Act Your Age:** Support and advocacy for senior members. [Theresa Tova, VP / Jennifer Higgin, Chair]

**Diversity Committee:** Promotes diversity on our screens and opportunities for physically and culturally diverse members. [Jani Lauzon, VP / Farah Merani, Sedina Fiati, Co-Chairs]

**Full Member Background Committee:** discusses issues of concern to those Full Members who work as background performers. [David Sparrow, P / Donal Hansman, Constantine Meglis, Co-Chairs]

**Stunt Committee:** Elected by the stunt community to represent stunt performers. [Wendy Crewson, VP / Angelica Lisk-Hann, Chair & Alicia Turner, Vice-Chair]

**Toronto ACTRA Women's Committee (TAWC):** Promoting gender equality and the advancement of women in the industry. [Wendy Crewson, VP / Nicole St. Martin & Freya Ravensbergen, Co-Chairs]

**Voice Committee:** Promotes increased work opportunities for ACTRA Toronto Voice Performers, best practices in the industry and improved working terms & conditions for voice performers working under ACTRA's collective agreements. [David Sparrow, P/Hamish McEwan & Catherine Disher, Co-Chairs]

**Young Emerging Actors' Assembly (YEAA):** ACTRA Toronto members who play 17-27. [David Gale, VP / Clara Pasiaka, Bryn McAuley, Co-Chairs]

**Parade Committee:** Organizes and encourages member involvement in Labour Day and Pride Parade Events. [Jani Lauzon, VP / John Nelles, Chair]

## Budget in brief

(to nearest 1000)

	<i>Actual</i> 2013-2014	<i>Projected</i> 2014-2015	<i>Budget</i> 2015-2016
<b>Revenues</b>			
Basic dues	1,695,000	1,825,000	1,825,000
Working dues	2,171,000	2,190,000	2,190,000
Other income from members	926,000	950,000	950,000
Income from non-members	1,311,000	1,154,000	1,154,000
Other sources	1,785,000	1,436,000	1,439,000
Investment income	847,000	805,000	800,000
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>8,735,000</b>	<b>8,360,000</b>	<b>8,358,000</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Union democracy & advocacy	558,000	514,000	534,000
Executive director's office	319,000	315,000	305,000
Communications	713,000	593,000	592,000
Membership services/Organizing	372,000	629,000	627,000
Film & TV production (IPA)	1,242,000	1,254,000	1,256,000
Commercial production (NCA)	883,000	974,000	983,000
Finance & administration	895,000	894,000	894,000
Reception	207,000	223,000	224,000
Occupancy	771,000	775,000	816,000
Data, statistics and IT	251,000	269,000	270,000
Affiliations	40,000	41,000	41,000
Grievances, arbitrations, litigation	36,000	30,000	30,000
Restructuring	20,000	0	0
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>6,307,000</b>	<b>6,511,000</b>	<b>6,572,000</b>
Operating surplus	2,428,000	1,849,000	1,786,000
Net transfer to ACTRA Nat	(1,980,000)	(1,993,000)	(1,959,000)
<b>Surplus/deficit</b>	<b>448,000</b>	<b>(144,000)</b>	<b>(173,000)</b>

### 2015-2016 Budget highlights:

- 1) We are projecting another strong year for film and television production in Toronto. That means member income will remain steady, reflected in consistent working dues, permits revenue, and administration fees on the film and television side.
- 2) We made some changes to our investment portfolio in 2014 in order to achieve a modest but steady return on our investments.

- 3) 2015 brings us into another council & stunt election year. This year's budget includes resources for online voting.
- 4) Consistent with the priorities set out in this operating plan, this year's budget includes resources to help our working committees to build our union.
- 5) As we enter into another IPA bargaining year, resources have been allocated to support these renegotiations.
- 6) The work of our Industry Relations team will continue within our Membership Services & Organizing Unit.
- 7) At this point in our budget cycle we are forecasting a deficit of \$173,000. Surpluses go into ACTRA Toronto's strike fund (currently worth about \$10 million – an important element of our bargaining power). Any operating deficits are also funded through this fund.

## **In Conclusion**

We look forward to a fantastic year in 2015, working with our ACTRA colleagues from across the country, with our sister unions, and with labour and industry stakeholders to defend the value of performers and Canadian culture while continuing to build a robust creative sector second to none in the world.