

# ACTRA TORONTO

 SOLIDARITY  
IN ACTION | ACTRA Toronto  
Operating Plan  
2023 - 2024



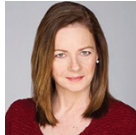
Dalmar Abuzeid



Fuad Ahmed



George Alevizos



Heather Allin



Thom Allison



Sandra Beckles



Martha Chaves



Lisa Michelle Cornelius



Nicola Correia-Damude



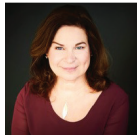
Wendy Crewson



David Gale



Thalia Gonzalez Kane



Linda Kash



Deb McGrath



Tony Nappo



Janet-Rose Nguyen



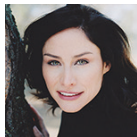
Anand Rajaram



Gugun Deep Singh



Samora Smallwood



Joy Tanner



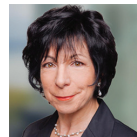
Theresa Tova



Alicia Turner



Louisa Zhu



Jocelyne Zucco

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# Solidarity In Action - ACTRA Toronto Operating Plan 2023-24

## Honouring the Past. Embracing our Future.

*“Even before you’ve earned it, treat yourself and your career with the level of respect that you hope to one day deserve.”*

Catherine O’Hara, ACTRA Toronto member

We experienced some incredible highs in 2022 and met many new and ongoing challenges with compassion and solidarity. The desire to produce award winning content has never been stronger, and the calibre of work done by ACTRA Toronto members is a gold standard worldwide. TIFF in 2022 presented more ACTRA Toronto signatory productions than ever before, and Toronto members continued to shine on small screens and large. We were able to gather again, and when possible, celebrate our achievements. We also faced crushing financial, emotional, and mental blows in 2022. At the time of writing, the illegal lock-out of ACTRA performers continues by the ICA and as a result, many members have had their financial stability ripped from them and their families. We saw a trusted relationship between performers and their talent agency destroyed by the illegal and immoral actions of one man. This despicable action left many with no agent, no funds, and no trust in a broken system. From these adversities, we also saw a coming together of unions, guilds, and associations to say no to these systemic abuses. We saw the public take an interest in precarious workers and the hardships they continue to face.

And so begins a new year where we honour and listen to the past while we carve a new future. A future that embraces needed change and helps to shape an industry that will affect the work of ACTRA Toronto performers for decades to come. We will celebrate the positive moments around which we can rally: a newly ratified Ubisoft agreement which brings significant monetary gains and respect and recognition for the work performers put into video games; ongoing engagement of members through online and in-person workshops; and sustained work opportunities in the industry overall. We will also celebrate in the uniting of unions, such as the meetings championed by BIPOC TV & Film to address systemic injustices in the industry across Canada.

2023 will be a year of future-proofing our work, while we continue to listen to and honour our past. We will look forward to ending the illegal lock-out and completing negotiations of a modernized National Commercial Agreement. We will continue to use the lessons learned in the terrible Compass Artist Management incident to fuel the drive to enact legislation that will regulate and license talent agents in the province of Ontario. We will carry on with the industry wide commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion as we ensure safer sets for all Performers. We will look forward to ensuring continued growth of the industry through the efforts of the ACTRA Toronto Council and Committees in developing our outreach into underrepresented communities.

2022 saw a return to pre-pandemic film and television production volumes in Ontario, a modest increase in membership for ACTRA Toronto and a budget surplus at the end of February 2022.

Fortitude, imagination, and devotion to telling Canadian and international stories are just some of the reasons that Ontario remains a premier filming destination. No matter what 2023 brings, we have no doubt that ACTRA Toronto will continue to rise to meet the challenges ahead with foresight, leadership, compassion, and solidarity.

## Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging - honour the past

ACTRA Toronto continues to be a leader in the industry in promoting initiatives and programs to identify and encourage greater diversity in front of and behind our cameras and microphones. In 2022, we hired a new Manager of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging. With this enhanced focus, ACTRA Toronto will continue to utilize training & education, strategic communications, data and analytics, events & opportunities, advancements in policy, and partnerships with key industry allies to further our Anti-Black Racism, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging agenda.

### ACTRA Toronto in 2023 will:

- Continue the promotion of ACTRA Toronto's diverse members through the ACTRA Toronto Spotlight feature on social media, and workshops that spotlight specific groups of underrepresented performers in the industry.
- Form a new Committee to focus on the advancement of performers living with a disability.
- Continue our ongoing support of Voice Committee mentorship of members who are Black, Indigenous and people of colour, performers living with a disability, performers with accents, seasoned performers and performers who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+ and are interested in voice work on commercials, animation, and video game productions.
- Further a collaboration between the Diversity & Inclusion Committee and the Stunt Committees to identify and mentor stunt performers who are Black, Indigenous and people of colour.
- Continue to support and build on the work of Working the Scene in Colour, including additional outreach to industry partners and assist the program in expanding nationally.
- Celebrate the Sandi Ross Awards to recognize industry professionals and production companies who have demonstrated a commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- Continue to hold workshops to support performers who are Black, Indigenous and people of colour and performers living with disabilities, interested in producing their own work.
- Work together with ACTRA National and industry partners on collective efforts to address racism including outreach, training, and mentoring of performers and crew.
- Continue the ongoing support to ACTRA National in seeking equal access to skilled Hair and Make-Up artists for performers who are Black, Indigenous and people of colour.
- Work together with ACTRA National and industry partners on collective efforts to address discriminatory practices in wardrobe and make-up for performers living with disabilities.
- Work with ACTRA National and partner unions and guilds to develop a method for an inter-union/guild reporting system for harassment and discrimination.

- Continue to develop and grow partnerships with community and cultural film festivals and emphasize the importance of showcasing projects featuring ACTRA Toronto members including the following festivals:
  - BIPOC International Film Festival
  - Hamilton Black Film Festival
  - imagineNative Film Festival
  - Reel Asian Film Festival
  - Reelworld Film Festival
  - Regent Park Film Festival
  - Toronto Black Film Festival
  - Toronto Jewish Film Festival
- Work with ACTRA National to ensure that organizations that track viewing habits of the Canadian public, do so with full diversity stratification.
- In addition to work challenging racism, the ACTRA Toronto Council and Committees will continue to advance gender equality, diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging through:
- Calling on agencies and government funders to require productions in receipt of tax credits and public monies to collect and report demographic information to measure and track the industry's commitment to gender equality and diversity.
- Reintroduction of the Nell Shipman Award, presented by the Toronto ACTRA Women's Committee (TAWC) that recognizes a female-identifying producer, writer, showrunner, mentor, or programmer who has advanced gender equality in the industry.
- An expansion of Working with Queer Performers, a best practices guide produced by outACTRAto, to further focus on working with trans and non-binary performers.
- A return to in person participation in Ontario based Pride events including participating in the Toronto Pride Parade.
- Continuing to build the profile of ACTRA Toronto's 2SLGBTQIA+ performers in script readings under the banner of Working the Scene in Rainbow.
- Assisting ACTRA National in the creation of a national committee, similar to outACTRAto, that shares initiatives from our branch using the reach of a national committee to affect change in the industry. This type of collaboration was a recent success with the adding of non-binary performance categories to IMDb.
- Continue to develop and grow partnerships with community and film festivals that emphasize the importance of gender equality, advance Queer stories, feature performers from the disabled community and showcasing projects featuring ACTRA Toronto members including the following festivals:
  - Female Eye Film Festival
  - Inside Out Film Festival
  - ReelAbilities Film Festival

- Continued support of the Act Your Age (AYA) Committee on-line skill building and networking sessions for seasoned performers.
- Developing a strong rapport with Young Emerging Actors Assembly (YEAA) members through a series of initiatives that encourage open discussions and utilizing social media to create a tone of relatability and approachability.
- Continued work to prevent sexual harassment including working with industry partners to develop best practices and oversight for acting coaches, educators, and teachers through our involvement with the Canadian Creative Industries Coalition and the Association of Acting Coaches & Educators (AACE).

## The Future is now – AI, machine learning and performance

Recently, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of machine learning and artificial intelligence, or “AI,” content technologies, and the quality of AI-generated content has drastically improved.

We are already seeing AI technology being used in ACTRA Toronto signatory projects to virtually change the age of characters in a way that is potentially cheaper and doesn’t require countless hours in the makeup chair for the performer. AI is being used to simplify performance capture, potentially eliminating the need for capture suits and head rigs altogether. We are seeing AI used to augment the work of stunt performers, which can provide safety benefits. While there are a number of concerns and unknowns, not all use of machine learning is detrimental to the work of performers, which is why it’s important to understand both the technology and the pros and cons of working with it.

In ADR and dubbing, AI technologies can be used to match an actor’s mouth and facial movements to the dialogue they are speaking. Concerns arise when the same technology can be used to dub the films themselves without using performers. Although this has not yet happened to any large degree, the possibility exists.

In the world of audio books, we have recently seen Apple release a variety of romance and fiction titles narrated by two different AI voices. Apple’s approach to digital narration is the opposite of competitor Amazon’s, whose Audible rules explicitly state that submitted audiobooks “must be narrated by a human.” Technological innovations have historically provided incredible new opportunities for ACTRA members, but we must be aware of the accompanying risks, and ensure that our collective agreements and copyright laws ensure that digital performances and likeness are protected.

### ACTRA Toronto in 2023 will:

- Work with ACTRA National to campaign for strengthened copyright and intellectual property laws for digital performance.
- Continue research into best practices across the industry to strengthen the control of the digital capture of performers work.
- Work with international peers through FIA to ensure an artist first approach to AI and machine learning.

- Consider the human cost of this technology and ensure that it's being used ethically and that performers can control and share the use of their image.
- Ensure we work with legislators to create policies that protect deepfake victims from its more insidious uses, such as pornography.
- Educate members in the use of technology, especially deepfakes, which can be used in three different ways (with the looming potential for more): lip sync fake, face swap fakes and puppet master fakes.

## Plan for the future – Negotiations, Legislation and Solidarity

The last two and a half years have been incredibly difficult for all members, but it has also shown the resiliency of the membership and their union. Many performers have given serious thought to leaving the industry because of the cost-of-living crisis. But if we look at what is driving this crisis, it is record profits for many large corporations, not working, dependent contractors. These record profits are not making their way to the people whose talent is being used, and that requires a change. Those changes also require data, so it was good to see ACTRA National bring an Economist on board to better analyze the finances of the studios and employers that performers work for. It was good to take part in the FilmOntario AGM, which spoke to government officials to show why filming in Ontario is good business and how that business can impact performers. And it will be good to see the ACTRA National census data when released in early 2023. All this data leads to smart proposals for ongoing and future negotiations. At the time of writing, we had just returned to the bargaining table with the ICA to solve the illegal lock out with the NCA. Data is one of the keys to ending the lock out and to ensure performers thrive in the commercial industry.

Legislation and work with government bodies will always benefit ACTRA members. As we saw with the Protecting Child Performer Act, ensuring proper, well thought out legislation helps to future proof the industry for those who follow. In 2023, we will focus on working with the provincial government to ensure performers have protections in place when dealing with talent agents and managers.

Solidarity – noun: unity (as a group or class) that produces or is based on community of interests, objectives, and standards. Solidarity is a union's highest goal and its greatest strength. Celebrating community, building consensus, and taking action to achieve shared goals is what we do and, by working together, we can always do better.

### ACTRA Toronto in 2023 will:

- Work with ACTRA National and Branches to complete the negotiations of the National Commercial Agreement and continue bargaining the Bell Media agreement.
- Continue to take a leading role in the holistic look at payment models and residuals for work done in film, television, and digital media with ACTRA National and PRS.
- Support ACTRA Toronto members industry education by hosting micro-workshops and Town Halls.
- Support ACTRA Toronto members to better understand their union, the Constitution, By-Laws and policies through ongoing micro-workshops and Town Halls.

- Publish a Best Practices for Audition Standards guideline including an emphasis on self-tape guidelines.
- Work with industry partners, such as TAMAC, EIC, IATSE, DGC, WGC, CAEA, NABET, ADC and the provincial government to enact regulations and licensing for talent agents and managers.
- Investigate more grassroots opportunities for members to better understand their union and ensure solidarity for all.

## Learning never stops – The house that ACTRA built - Looking within

And of course, the best work done outside of the walls of 625 Church Street is accompanied with work inside the walls. ACTRA members continue to be creative, caring, and resilient. Performers Online will continue to feature interviews and articles about members who should be celebrated. Our committees offered workshops and opportunities for self-improvement. In many ways, 2023 is shaping up to be a successful year of modest growth for the industry. But we must continue to remain connected to our members and find new ways to communicate with them, so they not only hear from their union, but that they feel heard and seen.

### ACTRA Toronto in 2023 will:

- Continue to promote and educate ACTRA Toronto members on the services of the HAVEN Helpline including access to mental health supports and the LifeWorks app.
- Continue to celebrate the work of ACTRA Toronto members through our #ACTRAspotlight.
- Provide for ACTRA Toronto members to opt-in to SMS messaging for important updates.
- Work with all committees and caucuses to ensure members become better engaged and active with their Union.
- Support committees to hold meetings and educational workshops on-line and in-person.
- Continue to develop and offer on-line member education and Respect on Set sessions.
- Hold on-line sessions for stage parents, guardians, agents, and minors about getting started in the business, internet safety and rights and protections under ACTRA's agreements and the law.
- Hold on-line sessions specific to ACTRA Toronto members outside of the GTHA to increase engagement.
- Work with ACTRA National to develop and implement the new membership system.
- Work with ACTRA National to forecast models to ensure a solid financial future.

## It's All About Community- ACTRA Toronto at work

And now we shine the Operating Plan Spotlight on additional work that ACTRA Toronto will continue to do in the community. It's quite the list, but worth ensuring that all of the work of members and staff are recorded.



## In 2023, ACTRA Toronto will continue work with:

- Blood in the Snow Film Festival
- Canadian Film Centre Actors Conservatory program
- Canadian Film Festival
- Canadian Screen Academy
- CANCOM The Foundation for Canadian Comedy
- Casting Director's Society of Canada
- CMPA Prime Time
- CRANK 2023 (Stunt festival)
- Dora Awards
- Durham Region Film Festival
- Durham Region Film & Television Board
- Future of Film Showcase
- Hamilton Arts Council Professional Development
- Hollywood North Film Awards
- Interactive Ontario
- Next Generation Showcase
- Ontario Creates and the Ontario Fam Tour
- Ontario Green Screen
- Ontario Screen Creators Conference
- POV Films
- Reelworld Black Entrepreneurship Program
- Regional film office interaction:
  - Durham Region
  - Kingston
  - London
  - North Bay
  - Sault Ste. Marie
  - Sudbury
  - Timmins
- The Future of Film Showcase
- Toronto International Film Festival -TIFF



- TO Webfest
- Toronto Film School
- Toronto Film, Television & Digital Media Board and xoTO
- VO North

And finally, as we have listened to ACTRA Toronto members over the past year, we know we have more work to do in our own backyard. We must endeavour to ensure clarity and openness and find new, more effective ways to communicate with each other. As members of ACTRA Toronto, we must fully appreciate that what is said in social media is never private. We must all assume everyone in the world will see all our social media posts eventually, and we must continue to make our decisions on what to post with that in mind. The ACTRA Equality statements, which are read before every ACTRA gathering and meeting, are words we must strive to work and live by. For ACTRA Toronto is a great union and we are ACTRA!