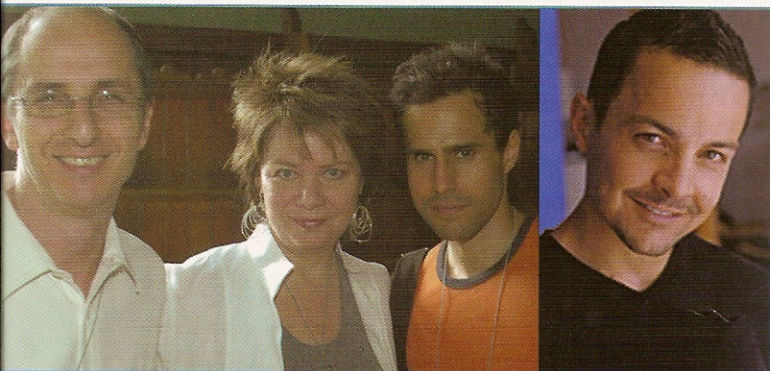


## Pitch the networks

The five finalists for ACTRA Toronto's first-ever **Pitch the Networks** contest were cheered on by a packed room as they pitched their ideas to top-level broadcasters and producers. Robin Neinstein (CBC), Julie Lacey (Shaftesbury), Karen King (Global TV), Lesley Grant (Barna-Alper) and Dave Smith (S&S Productions) were impressed by the ideas and quality of the pitches. The judges complimented the actors on their passion and ability to bring their ideas to life before selecting a winner.



Jack Blum and Sharon Corder with host Marcello Cabezas for the Writing from the Actors' Perspective workshop.

Mark de Angelis' project, *Logo*, won our Pitch the Networks Contest.

The finalists included Michael Mortensen, Cayle Chernin and Leslie-Ann Coles with *Michael Mortensen's Wicked People*; Tanya Fraser, Janet Davidson, Lindsay Stewart with *Aisle 7*; Peter Gorys, Julius Gorys, Beverlee Russell, Antanas Sileika and Ali Mukaddam with *By The Book*; and Matt Austin and Greg Aronowitz with *The Department of Heroes*.

And the winner: Mark De Angelis for his confident sell of his solid series concept for *Logo*. The one-hour dramatic comedy follows the story of an estranged father and son who are forced to work together. Young political activist Che is arrested at an anti-globalization protest. His father makes him work at his corporate No Logo advertising agency to clean up his act before his court date. The series, reminiscent of *The Office* and *The Newsroom*, is narrated by Mike Vernon, a paraplegic hired by the dad as a PR stunt – only he's forgotten to give him an actual job.

Mark's winning pitch scores him prizes from Deluxe Sound & Picture and Precision Transfer. And, the win has opened some doors. "It's been received very well," he says. "*Logo* is in the hands of a few broadcasters right now." Mark has had meetings with Barna-Alper, S&S, The Comedy Network, CBC and The Movie Network. An impressive start, and as he says, "a great contest."

The runner-up, *Michael Mortensen's Wicked People*, has also had success following their pitch. Cayle reports the team had a top meeting with Lesley that went very well. With the exposure and the experience, the team's confident they can approach other broadcasters with projects, be it this one, or their next idea. Leslie-Ann adds "it was a great experience as it afforded us the opportunity to pitch a live audience... Actor-writer-producers are driving the success of many great Canadian comedy and TV dramas, so it's good that ACTRA and the industry recognize this and encourage it!"

### Pitch Tips from the networks

- Don't be afraid to be fun and show your personality as long as it reflects the tone of your project.
- If you have a demo, make sure it is a GOOD demo and that it will do your project justice.
- Follow-up material is more important than the verbal pitch.
- Understand the business and be realistic about your role in it. Don't expect to be the head writer if you've never had a script produced before.
- Don't rely on 'x meets y' comparisons when pitching your idea, it's not always accurate and can be counter productive.
- Don't take rejection personally! Broadcasters and producers are guessing and have different tastes. If one idea doesn't stick, come up with another one!
- Don't sign away your idea – it's yours. Make sure you have some role in the future of the project. If you're a first-time writer, don't expect to be in charge – but make sure you have some role.
- Know the timeslot your series might air in – it tells a producer a lot about the tone and content.
- Be professional – show up on time, have your printed materials ready.
- Make sure your proposal has contact info on every page.

## OCTOBER 2006

ACTRA Toronto's Fall members' conference takes place on Sat. Oct. 21 at Victoria College.

Panellists and moderators include Walter Alza, Tonya Lee Williams, Mag Ruffman, Charmion King, Maria Ricossa, Bruce Hunter and casting directors Tina Gerrusi, Marsha Chesley and Millie Tom. Workshops include Tools of the Trade, on self promotion; Mirror Mirror, a workshop to explore if Canadian screens are accurately reflecting our society in all its diversity; Casting for TV, a behind-the-scenes session with casting directors and producers; Acting Your Age, a master class for seniors; From Sketch to Screen, on stand-up and sketch comedy as a training ground for screen; and Stunts and Your Health and Safety, a return of actor/stunt professional Russell Yuen. Plus, our annual focus on child performers with morning and afternoon sessions for young ACTRA members and their parents.

Tonya Lee Williams



Charmion King



Russell Yuen



Luba Goy



Mag Ruffman

