



## CRTC: We need more Canada on TV The crisis in Canadian TV drama

- **Direct the CRTC to require private conventional broadcasters to spend 7% of ad revenues on scripted fully Canadian dramatic series, and to air these shows during primetime when audiences are watching.**
- **Direct the CRTC to institute Canadian content requirements for all new technologies such as mobile TV and the internet.**

Canadian drama has disappeared from the primetime TV schedule. Broadcasters have failed to live up to their responsibilities under *The Broadcasting Act* and must be regulated by the CRTC to support and air more Canadian TV drama in primetime.

### **The CRTC 1999 Television Policy has caused a crisis in TV drama**

The CRTC relaxed the rules in 1999, eliminating the drama expenditure requirements and allowing broadcasters to count cheap reality and entertainment magazine TV shows as 'priority programming.' The CRTC also expanded primetime to 7-11 p.m. every night, from 8-11 p.m. Mon.-Fri. So now we see cheaply produced, formulaic American shows like *Canadian Idol* and *ET Canada* instead of *Traders* and *Psi Factor*. Broadcasters are filling their schedules with Hollywood shows instead of Canadian drama and satisfying their Canadian content requirements with cheap reality and entertainment magazine programs instead of airing real Canadian stories on TV.

In 1999, broadcasters aired 12 one-hour fully Canadian dramas on TV, totaling 186 hours of programming. In fall, 2007, there were no 1-hour fully Canadian dramas on either of our national private networks, CTV and Global. Look for your Canadian shows on the schedule – they're now banished to Friday and Saturday nights and in the summer – when fewer Canadians are watching. CTV and Global have no new one-hour Canadian dramas on their fall 2007 schedules.

### **Drama is important**

- **It's culture:** Canadian drama is culturally important to our country.
- **It's popular:** TV drama continues to be the most popular and most watched form of television content. Our airwaves belong to us, the public. Broadcasters exploit them as a privilege. Part of their obligation in exchange for this privilege is to contribute to our cultural identity by supporting, promoting, airing and celebrating fully Canadian stories – shows that are written, directed, performed and produced by Canadians. Even with more entertainment choices than ever before, on the internet and on cell phones, TV is still the most popular and influential cultural medium.
- **It's important:** A majority of Canadians believe it is important to have Canadian drama programs. Source: CRTC Report, *Dramatic Choices, A report on Canadian English-language drama*, by Trina McQueen, 2003.

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### ***The Broadcasting Act* requires more of Canada's stories on TV**

The *Broadcasting Act* states that the broadcasting system is owned and controlled by Canadians, and that it should serve to 'safeguard, enrich and strengthen the cultural, political, social and economic fabric of Canada.' The *Act* states that each broadcaster shall 'make maximum use, and in no case less than predominant use of Canadian creative and other resources in the creating and presentation of programming.' The *Act* requires that private networks 'contribute significantly to the creation and presentation of Canadian programming.'

### **Broadcasters are profitable and can afford to invest in Canadian drama, but they are buying Hollywood programs instead**

Private broadcasters' ad revenue has steadily increased every year to more than \$2 billion in ad revenue in 2006. While program spending has increased, spending on Canadian drama has decreased annually. In 2006, private broadcasters spent \$479 million on foreign dramatic programming, but only \$40 million on English-language Canadian drama. That's 12 times more on Hollywood programs than on Canadian English drama programs. Source: CRTC

### **ACTRA's continued efforts on the TV drama issue**

ACTRA has been raising the alarm since we began our campaign in 2002.

- Organized lobby days on Parliament Hill to educate MPs and ask the Minister of Heritage to direct the CRTC to change its disastrous 1999 Television Policy.
- Appeared before the CRTC at public hearings.
- Formed the Canadian Coalition of Audio-Visual Unions with the Writers Guild of Canada, the Directors Guild of Canada, the Communications Energy and Paperworkers Union and NABET 700 to fight for more drama.
- Involved our stars and our members in our campaign.
- Staged news conferences during federal election campaigns to raise the issue.
- Organized rallies in 2007 outside CTV and Global's fancy events to launch their fall TV seasons to advertisers to demand more Canadian programming.

### **Broadcaster licence renewals key for fixing TV drama crisis**

The CRTC is conducting licence renewal hearings for the private broadcasters in 2009. The drama campaign waged by ACTRA and other organizations comes to a crucial juncture at these hearings. This is the opportunity for the CRTC to impose spending and content rules on broadcasters to support and air fully Canadian TV drama in primetime. Since 2002, the CRTC has recognized there is a problem with the lack of drama on TV. At the CRTC's Diversity of Voices hearings in September, 2007, current CRTC Chair Konrad von Finckenstein said, "Cultural and social objectives cannot be achieved through market forces alone. That is why we need regulation."

### **ACTRA alarmed by CRTC trend to deregulation and market forces**

ACTRA is alarmed by the current focus of the CRTC on deregulation and increased reliance on market forces. Relaxing the regulations has failed Canadians and has led to the disappearance of Canadian drama.

### **ACTRA's demands**

Canadians deserve more original, fully Canadian drama on television in primetime. To achieve this:

- Require private conventional broadcasters spend 7% of ad revenues on scripted drama, and require broadcasters to air drama during primetime when audiences are watching.
- Require broadcasters to air at least two hours of original Canadian drama a week.
- Institute Canadian content requirements for all new technologies such as mobile TV and internet broadcasting, which are currently unregulated.

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