

THE CEEBS

by Matt Raudsepp

Half Hour Comedy Series

The always blunt Anna Grieg Ables is hired by the CBC for a brand refresh, but its disparate regional departments and lifers start to feel more like a Kraken monster... she just might be the right person to get crackin' on the Can-Con giant.

Context:

Canada's national anthem could include a line about the CBC - "True North Strong TV"...? If the national anthem won't change, the CBC will with a series set in and around its hallowed halls. Canadians have strong feelings about the content and moves of our national broadcaster. We all wonder what goes on in CBC offices, behind closed doors...

The CBC has been taking chances on boundary pushing comedies like Schitt's Creek and Workin' Moms, now it's time to flex their comedic-muscle-within with THE CEEBS: a satirical, self-deprecating, truly Canadian "office" comedy. And what better setting than a company that literally has scores of offices across the country.

Our Lead:

Our lead, Anna Grieg Ables, has been hired by the CBC after a successful stint at a revitalized Scandinavian national broadcaster. Canadian-Norwegian Anna has made a name for herself as a shrewd executive, but is thrown into new territory and a "reverse culture shock" to be home again, navigating the unique CBC ecosystem without a paddle.

Anna is constantly bumping up against a complex corporate structure, modernization, and the scrutiny of the Canadian public. She clashes with old school department heads and constantly deals with front entrance security guards that don't recognize "Canadian Stars" ("I don't watch Canadian TV"). She has to travel to every corner of Canada (from Nanaimo to Nunavut to Newfoundland) to connect with television/news/radio executives and producers that speak a kilometre-a-minute, lunch with the Heritage Minister, and be glad-handed by politicians of all sorts who are pushing their latest agenda.

Characters:

The world is inhabited by characters like the CBC's CEO located in Ottawa, and their assistant who is frustratingly not located in Ottawa; the Head of Radio-Canada in Montréal, who constantly points out that Quebec does have a star system so why not the big bucks; a slippery PR/Propaganda/Social-Media exec; the Head of OTT/Gem, a

forward thinking futurist; the Executive Director of Digital Strategy/Product and Analog Strategy of Theoretical Future Media Ideation, who nobody knows what he does; and the sexiest department of all, Business and Rights. Plus many more regional reps, fresh interns, and CBC lifers.

Pilot:

A scandal in the CBC building becomes international news. Quality Control accidentally lets softcore porn get a hard release on Gem (“How was I supposed to know it was porn, when it’s a tastefully shot period piece starring a young detective?”), inciting riots across Canada and leading to an internal CBC nickname for those black censorship masks covering explicit images: “Nanaimo Bars”.

Sample Episode Ideas:

Anna travels to Nunavut and feels right at home after being in Norway for so long and the regional rep is thrilled that Anna is green-lighting all their proposals. The CBC building is being overhauled into an “ecosystem”, but the renovations are taking forever and nobody seems to be able to find the exit - people are literally falling through the cracks. One assistant’s mission is to find and report every illegal live stream of Hockey Night In Canada, like an athlete in the game of their career - turns out Strombo is behind it all, streaming out of his basement in The House of Strombo. The Prime Minister visits and everyone must be on their best behaviour - even Peter Mansbridge changes a few lightbulbs in the halls.

Tone:

Characters express themselves with rapid-fire dialogue and witty comebacks - think BBC’s “W1A” comedy with “Slings and Arrows” heart. The show will irreverently pay homage to real CBC heroes and celebs, new and old shows, throwback characters, and present-day figures. For example, Annie Murphy and Noah Reid (Schitt’s Creek) are friends that would be happy to make an appearance. And who knows, maybe even Kim Campbell might stop by...

Being sensitive to the real CBC is at the core of this show: poking fun from within, with a highly diverse cast, writers and directors, representing all Canadians. Anna and the CBC itself will experience many pitfalls and triumphs over the course of this series. Like a circus touring small towns across Canada, this show proudly unfurls its flag, ultimately leading our audience to believe in the power of the CBC and homegrown stories - encouraging them to rewrite our Canadian identity on the world stage.