

# SUN SHOWBIZ



## Conan bows out

What happened on Conan O'Brien's last gig hosting The Tonight Show? Go to [canoe.ca/Conan](http://canoe.ca/Conan) to find out

# 'Wow' factor

## Canadian actress Tatiana Maslany a real Grown Up Movie Star

PARK CITY, Utah — In Hollywood, you're only nobody until you're the next somebody.

Just ask Canadian Tatiana Maslany, whose Sundance debut is earning ecstatic — if daunting — comparisons to some now-famous festival alumni.

"She's a major talent," raves Sundance director John Cooper. "I'd never heard of her before and watching her, it's kind of amazing. It's like Ellen Page (in *Hard Candy*) or Carey Mulligan in *An Education*. She just popped onto the scene, and you think, 'Wow.'"

Told this, the 24-year-old Maslany, who moved from Regina to Toronto three years ago, is elated. And disbelieving. "Really? That's insane. I can't even imagine that. Those girls are phenomenal ... Ellen Page is so uniquely herself and so is Carey Mulligan. In Hollywood, there's always pressure to be a certain way. But not all girls fit into a mould."

Nor do all films. *Grown Up Movie Star*, from first-time director Adriana Maggs, stars Maslany as Ruby, a Newfoundland adolescent abandoned by her mother, who discovers her ex-hockey player father (Shawn Doyle of TV's *Big Love*) is gay.

For Sundance, which has announced a return to its low-



KEVIN WILLIAMSON  
at Sundance

glam roots as a beacon of fresh cinematic talent, *Grown Up Movie Star* is an ideal fit. "I'm a huge Robert Redford fan," Maslany says. "Just to know that this is his baby, I love the idea of being part of it."

It wasn't long ago that Maggs, a television writer and producer, was left wondering if anyone would even see her movie after it was rejected by the Toronto International Film Festival last year.

"I thought no one would see it after that. It was scary," says the Newfoundland-born filmmaker. "I wouldn't be talking to you if it wasn't for this. Being a selection at Sundance is the best possible thing."

Especially in the wake of effusive critical praise for Maslany.

Maggs acknowledges she had doubts about whether the actress, best recognized from such CBC series as *Heartland*, was too old for the role, but auditioned her anyway on Doyle's recommendation.

"He had worked with her and just adored her. She was unbe-

lievable. She's just amazing."

As far as Maslany was concerned, the external transformation into a teenager was, in fact, the simple part. "I've always played younger. I don't look my age. For me, it's opening up a side of playfulness and innocence. Ruby is so different from me. It's about going back to those places when you're learning everything, and keeping that openness."

The question now for both Maslany and Maggs is whether the Sundance buzz will translate into larger audiences when the film opens next Friday in Toronto, and in other Canadian markets later on.

Maslany thinks so. Canada, after all, has an unfortunate history of ignoring its own artists until they're lauded in the U.S.

"We seem to struggle within our community to take pride in what we do. There are a lot of amazing films that don't get seen. We need to support our stuff."

[kevin.williamson@sunmedia.ca](mailto:kevin.williamson@sunmedia.ca)



More from Sundance at  
[jam.canoe.ca](http://jam.canoe.ca)



Tatiana Maslany has drawn favourable comparisons to Ellen Page and Carey Mulligan for her debut festival performance. "She's a major talent," raves Sundance director John Cooper.

## Focus on impact of 3D

PARK CITY, Utah — Robert Redford doesn't view 3D through rose-tinted glasses.

"Horrible film," he says of the first 3D movie he saw during Hollywood's brief flirtation with the format in the 1950s — complete with a spear that leaped out at the crowd. "But now it's come back 50 years later."

Has it ever. The 3D digitally-rendered *Avatar* is on track to become the first \$2-billion worldwide blockbuster. Add to that its probable Oscar windfall — over Sundance sleeper *Precious*, among others — and it would seem to signal troubling news for the creators of low-budget films that lack

the same wow factor. With the industry — and apparently audiences — enraptured by spectacle and sensation, what does that mean for the independent cinema Redford cherishes?

"3D is powerful. We've had it here," he says, referring to the concert film *U23D* that played Park City in 2008. But

as for its potential impact, he adds, "I just don't have an answer."

Festival director John Cooper, though, doesn't believe Hollywood's pursuit of big-budget grandeur is a bad thing for independent filmmakers, comparing it to the opposing spectrums of Broadway and off-Broadway.

"It's healthier when both of us do what we do. I think audiences want both."

Which isn't to suggest he's turning his nose up on 3D, either. They even have one in this year's festival: *Cane Toads: The Conquest*, a documentary about a cane toad infestation in Australia.

— Kevin Williamson