

**I'M CURRENTLY WORKING ON:** Aside from acting in *Metropia* and developing a feature film and documentary about diversity, I am developing a project with the Board of Education and others in both the private and public sectors to help underprivileged children. I also teach scene study workshops and work on *United Millennium*, an annual event where artists from different disciplines showcase their work and network in a friendly setting.

**MY PAST PROJECTS INCLUDE:** For three years I was a member of TWN's diversity committee and I am presently a member of the diversity committee of ACTRA Toronto. I am also proud of the short film I directed about love and lust; *Redemption, Tears and Trains*, watched over 1,800 times on CBC's ZeDTV website to rave reviews.

**WHAT IS YOUR RAISON D'ETRE?** Good work.

**WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?** I strive to create an inclusive environment that fosters opportunities for members of diverse communities. I am trying to open my mission to assist the multicultural community, giving it a chance, teaching a skill, and helping people from all backgrounds have opportunities. The program is set up in such a manner as to enable elementary, high school and university students to come to a place after school to engage in extra-curricular activities such as acting, scriptwriting and basic filmmaking techniques in an informal and fun setting. By taking part in this program, I'll be helping children stay out of trouble, learn a skill and reach a goal.

**HOW DO YOU ENVISION YOUR ROLE IN THE FUTURE OF THE INDUSTRY?** I'm not sure what to call my role, but I do want to help people understand human value and complexity, to enjoy, and to build self-esteem through various media such as acting and the computer arts. There is a need for expression in a better society, a united society without the division of colour, ethnic background and sexual preference.

**WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU ENCOUNTERED IN YOUR CAREER?** Many. In the past six months I have appeared in many publications in Canada and the U.S. It's great but it's hard to understand what the media says sometimes. Why am I the first Latino to have a lead role in a series in Canada? Why do the papers say Walter Alza is the changing face of TV and that he represents an emerging trend in Canadian programming? It makes me happy and sad, because there are many talented actors out there that don't get a shot because of their background. It took me 13 years and over 40 parts in almost every TV show and feature film to get to be a lead in a series. I was told I look too Latino, don't look Latino enough, look too Italian, didn't have enough of an accent, or had too much of an accent. It used to be hard to talk about this; now I just look at it and smile.

**HOW DID YOU OVERCOME?** I believed in myself. Believed in the sun at the end of the road. I believed that things would change, and now they have. I have a great family and the help of God to keep me grounded. I said that I wouldn't let my colour or accent or anything be in my way or hurt my vision and my love for the arts. I believe. I think like a boxer sometimes.

**WHO DO YOU RESPECT THE MOST IN THE INDUSTRY?** Tonya Lee Williams

**WHY?** For her hard work and determination to help the cause. There are others that I admire also, but here in Canada, she's the one I look up to.

**ANY WORDS OF WISDOM FOR THOSE WHO WILL FOLLOW IN YOUR FOOTSTEPS?** Do not give up no matter what. Believe that as the tears dry up, there is always a smile, and at the end of the road, there is sun and hope. Believe that there is a new generation with a strong vision that will follow you. Be a boxer.

**HAVE YOU EVER HAD A MAGICAL FESTIVAL MOMENT WHERE SOMEONE YOU MET RESULTED IN A NEW PARTNERSHIP OR PRODUCTION OPPORTUNITY?** I met many friends at *ReelWorld*, some of whom I am creating work with. *United Millennium* was a result of *ReelWorld*. Also in Queens I met my new manager and I was offered two leads in feature films for this year. We need festivals like this.



## WALTER ALZA

Occupation: Actor/Filmmaker/  
New Media Artist/Educator  
Born: Buenos Aires, Argentina  
Live: Mississauga, Ontario

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