

TATTLER

N.S. comedian wins spot in CBS showcase

Nova Scotia's Pardis Parker, an award-winning filmmaker, standup comedian and actor, has become the first Canadian ever selected to participate in CBS's prestigious comedy showcase.

More than 3,000 performers were considered for the 13 available spots.

The annual showcase, which has helped launch the careers of Nasim Pedrad (Saturday Night Live) and Wyatt Cenac (The Daily Show with Jon Stewart), gives industry decision-makers — network executives, casting directors, agents, and managers — a sneak peek at Hollywood's fresh faces.

Parker, now living in L.A., was discovered by someone associated with the showcase during a standup comedy show.

"A woman approached me after my set and insisted on setting up an audition for me at CBS. I don't know how often that happens, but I'm pretty fortunate that it did," said Parker, in a news release.

The showcase caps off a whirlwind year for Parker, whose film Afghan won Best Short Film at the ViewFinders Film Festival and earned a berth in the Best of Just For Laughs program. Afghan advanced to the finals of CBC's Short Film Face-Off. His three followup projects, a second short film and two music videos, earned him the distinction of being the only director to have three works screen at September's Atlantic Film Festival in Halifax.

Songwriter wins international award

Nova Scotia native Anthony Burbidge claimed a first place in the Indie International Songwriting Contest for the song Us And Them from his CD The Great Awakening.

The song, which has a Middle Eastern rock vibe, features musicians playing instruments including the Iranian santoor and the Egyptian tabla. The song's lyrics trace humanity's history of international conflict from the Cold War to the present War On Terror, says Burbidge in a news release.

A second song has just been named an official nominee for the upcoming 2009 Empower Posi Awards. Burbidge's song Many Rivers beat out entries from around the world to place as one of three finalists in the Uniting category. The singer will perform at the awards show in Orlando, Fla. on Jan. 19.

Burbidge, now based in Calgary, gave concerts in Halifax and Wolfville in June and says his parents, Robert and Marie, were very excited by the news.

"They've been with me through my struggles recovering from environmental illness and these awards are like a sort of homecoming in their eyes — I've come home to my musical gifts after being away for years. Kind of like my own story of having to leave Nova Scotia in '93 and then returning home to sing this past summer," he says in a news release.