

connection

Young filmmaker rocks Cat's Cradle

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It can be tough to for a young entertainer to find work in Edmonton.

Despite her many talents as actor, dancer, model and singer-songwriter, Cara Albo wasn't getting the opportunities she wanted, so she decided to make her own movie.

Now 20, Albo is playing the lead role in *Cat's Cradle*, a feature film about a young pop star's coming of age and disillusionment with the entertainment industry.

The film will be released next year by Edmonton-based Skyline Productions. Albo dreamed up the storyline, wrote the music and performed the soundtrack. She also worked behind the scenes raising millions of dollars from investors in her role as executive producer.

"I'm probably, if not the youngest, one of the youngest executive producers in Canada — plus being female. It's a male-dominated world with this business. So for me to even have that title when I'm 20 years old is kind of tough," Albo says.

Cat's Cradle was born in 2005 when Albo began approaching companies for financing.

"I think for every 20 meetings I did, one person invested," she says, recalling tears of frustration after leaving boardrooms empty handed.

With investors from all over Canada, the U.S. and Mexico, Albo was able to raise the movie's \$3-million budget without the help of government grants.

Then she teamed up with Canadian film industry veterans including local director Gilbert Allan.

"She's got all these old, wise, knowledgeable people where she needs them to be in the team," Allan says. "She surrendered herself to the expertise of these people and that shows a great deal of wisdom."

Most of the actors and crew are from the Edmonton area, where the movie was filmed.

20-year-old actress, producer spearheads \$3-million project

The city is posing as an unnamed American metropolis, which Allan says audiences will assume is Los Angeles. Parts of Fort Saskatchewan, Bruderheim, Sherwood Park and Pigeon Lake represent small-town America, where the lead character Cat runs when she leaves her record label.

Some lead roles, both on- and offstage, draw on talent from Los Angeles and Vancouver.

While Albo sought out artists with experience, the spunky producer has had no trouble keeping up, Allan says.

"There are days when I see a girl, there are days when I see a young woman and there are days when I see a 50-year-old, hard-nosed businessman. And I sometimes forget that she's just 20. She's a force to be reckoned with."

Albo says her age hasn't been a real barrier.

"I've always been an old soul," she says. "I've been told that since I was four years old."

In fact, Albo's youth may be on her side as she finds the energy to juggle full-time acting and producing.

"Sixteen hours a day I'm acting and then I get home and I'm returning phone calls and e-mailing till the wee hours of the morning," she says.

Filming on *Cat's Cradle* wrapped up last week and the team will take a break before they begin five months of editing in September.

"I'm actually really sad that it's done," Albo says. "This is my baby."

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PHOTO BY JASON FRANSON

Actress Cara Albo makes her way past the screaming extras while making the movie *Cat's Cradle* at Londonderry Mall.