

## Typecastress Interview-February 10, 2022

- 1. How did the idea for this film come to be?** *Bobbi-Lee-*“It was so random. So, I had written this musical for the One Acts Festival at the University of Saskatchewan and it was supposed to be live at the One Acts Festival. Then COVID happened, and it was cancelled, and I didn’t know when I’d get to see it, cause I had been working on it at that point for about 2 years. Then about a year into COVID I was working as a waitress and I served Alex Fallon who is the president of SREDA...he was working on his laptop and I asked him what he was working on. He told me that he’s a writer, and I told him that I was a writer, and we started talking about Typecastress, and he got really, really excited about it...He said he wanted to film it and wanted to use it to promote the city of Saskatoon, and I was like, sure!”
- 2. How did you end up getting involved?** *Raj-*“The way I came in was essentially she needed someone to shoot it, edit, and put it together. So it was being shot on a bridge in Saskatoon, Victoria Bridge was shut down for it one Sunday in September last year. They had pre-recorded all the audio with Sound Lounge by t-bone, and the city shut down the bridge for us. Bobbi and their cast and crew had rehearsed it wonderfully so that I got to come in with another camera operator, Preston, and he and I shot it through the day. We did it twice , the whole show, and then it was left in my hands to edit.”
- 3. How long was the process from beginning to end?** *Bobbi-Lee-*“I think I started it in 2019, no I started writing it in 2018, and then I had a draft ready about 2019, no 2020, then COVID happened. It’s been almost 3 years in the making. It was never really intended to be a film, but when I chatted with Alex he was like, you know, “that would be the best way for my company to put Saskatoon on the map, is if we made it a film on Victoria Bridge to highlight the city’s gorgeous skyline. And because it’s a feminist musical we can also use it as an International Women’s Day promotion”. From then we actually decided, while we have the cast and the momentum of sponsorship, we’re also doing a live production in April!”
- 4. Raj, have you ever shot any musical theatre before?** *Raj-*Well my background is actually musical theatre, so it was a nice-we actually both went to the same University of Saskatchewan Drama Department, I was there a lot longer ago. Then I’ve been in film since about 2005,

*whether it's doing corporate videos or dramatic or documentary, I've got a pretty wide range. I've done some interactive with theatre as well, so it's a language that makes sense to me and we were a good fit that way.*

5. **Bobbi, have you ever thought of working in film before?** *Bobbi-Lee-"I've done a couple commercials, I'm an actor before I'm a writer/director. I don't know, the idea of film scares me because -I love theatre cause it's in the moment and you have those connections, and you know, there's not a permanent record. But I'm not in the film so that helped a lot. Maybe one day I'll try to do a little more as far as film goes. But it was a real different experience for me, it isn't something I had anticipated for this project."*

*Raj-"It's interesting, because we shot it, almost like you would shoot a music video. In that it was a pre-done track, and there were a lot of challenges for the actors in it, because they had not only to sing their music but their dialogue, which is quite a challenge."*

6. **Most of the actors involved seem to have trained elsewhere and returned home. Do you think there is something about Saskatchewan that calls people back?** *Bobbi-Lee-"We lost our lead for the live productions, she's in Toronto now, so I'm actually going to do it, which is exciting! But the rest of the girls, yeah 3 of the girls went through the same program, I think in England, for their Masters in Musical Theatre. So, I mean, that's apparent in their talent and skill level when they auditioned...I believe most of the cast would like to stay in Saskatchewan, but we did lose Jenn, I don't know if she's going to come back eventually or not, but I think she's doing pretty well in Toronto."*

7. **Why this film, and why now?** *Bobbi-Lee-"It's based off of such vulnerable material, and experiences of my own and my friends, and I feel like when I wrote it, it was very much in the moment. Kind of based off of me, as an actor trying to break in to the theatre world, and um, trying to form an identity as a female actor, and what that means in what kind of jobs I'm going to get. Is it easier to just approach it the way that I was taught to approach, that you know, I would go for a leading ladies, when I like don't really have an interest in acting in those roles. I feel like gender is such an important and changing conversation. I think we're always trying to get better at it and create new opportunities, but it should always be a conversation, you know."*

*The cool thing about my show is that literally anyone could be in it. I would love to have a transgender person play Nora, or you know, a 60 year old woman play Nora, it really is quite broad. I think that was the cool thing about doing a film version and a live version, is that the show can be quite different, and that's what we'd like to do for the live version, it make it quite different than the film. So I think that like, why now, like I think that it's an important conversation and it can, I think it can connect with a lot of people in a lot of different ways. So, because it's so versatile, I think it's a better time than ever."*

8. **You both wear a lot of hats. Do you see certain aspects of film(or theatre) as being more or less accessible to women/non binary folks?** *Bobbi-Lee-"Again, I don't have a ton of experience in film, I think theatre is getting better for sure, we're having more conversations. But even in my training, and I just convicated last year, I felt like a lot of the things I learned had a more traditional backbone to them that I didn't necessarily agree with. I think that it's up to young artists to challenge and suggest new ways of thinking and approaching art. I think that if we want that then it's kind of our job to go get it, and that's kind of what Typecastress is. It's about knowing who you are and what you want, and trying and believing in yourself to do so."*

*Raj-"I think that there's definitely been changes, I think that there's still quite a ways to go obviously to get real parity through all aspects of film, but it's definitely getting better. It's definitely becoming more open to a wide range of everybody. And I think that I've been seeing that much more in the last 3 or 4 years than before that. Like, when I got into this in the early 2000s it was definitely a male dominated environment, and pretty white as well, and that's just the way it was and it's definitely changed a lot now. I think that people want to see a wider range and more perspective."*

9. **Do you think that Saskatchewan has specific challenges when it comes to gender parity in film?** *Raj-"Well I think that our storytelling ability is absolutely on par if not better than a lot of areas. I think that we've got the talent here, but unfortunately what we were just talking about, a lot of people are forced to go elsewhere because that's where the population is, that's where the work is, that's where the creative forces are...Like I said, we have the stories, so I don't think that we're limited there."*

**10. What's next for *Typecastress*?** Raj-*"The release is coming up, the premier is coming up in only a few weeks."*

*Bobbi-Lee- "So we're premiering our film on International Women's Day at the Remai Modern's Sasktel Theatre. It's a little bit of an exclusive event because their seating is limited, but we're doing black tie, photographers, dress up really nice, it will be really exciting. As for ticket sales, I have only reached out to friends and family of everybody in the cast and crew because I want to make sure that everybody's important people are prioritized for seating before we sell anymore tickets. We do have a second viewing at the Roxy Theatre on March 11<sup>th</sup>, that same weekend, that's completely open to the public, and ticket sales will be available through The Roxy's ticket office, probably closer to March is when they'll start selling them."*

**11. What are your hopes with this film going forward in regards to festivals, releases?** Bobbi-Lee-*"I think after the live show, I think we'll probably try to get it on some sort of streaming platform...I would like it to be available for people to watch after we're all done with the project."*

**12. What are the details for the live performance?** Bobbi-Lee-*"That is April 5-9<sup>th</sup> at Persephone's Backstage Stage. We're actually looking into maybe partnering with either spoken word artists, musicians, some kind of relevant material, because it's a one act musical. We're looking at having that done, we might not, we're in a bit of a time crunch so I don't know if we're going to find someone in time."*

**13. What do you want people to take away from the show after they watch it?** Bobbi-Lee-*"I think my biggest thing, just coming from the rehearsal process, I remember the biggest moment for me was when we did our first read through, and all the female actors, my female directors, they were all like "I've felt all of these things that you were writing about, like I've experienced these things. We haven't talked about it, but I know what this feels like". And I think that's the biggest thing I want people to take away from(it), is understanding that perspective. And, you know, for some people feeling heard, feeling seen, feeling um, and realizing that you can be good enough and you can do the things that you want to do, even if you have been told that you should be going in a different direction. I think that's my biggest hope is that people see it and are like 'Yeah, I never considered that fact that this young girl wants to play Hamlet but maybe she*

*would do a really good job. And maybe she does have the experience and the kind of emotional maturity to take on something like that". We don't always have to be Ophelia."*

*Raj-"When we had one screening of the trailer for the first time, a group in there, a lot of the women that were in the room went 'Yep. I've felt this. I've experience this.', and they're not, none of them were actors. They had just experienced this type of thing in their life. I hope that just a lot of people go 'Yeah', they can relate."*

*Bobbi-Lee-"That's the thing about the show, is like, it is told from the perspective of a theatre artist, but at the end of it, it kind of zooms out and is like, this isn't just an issue or feelings that women in theatre feel, these are things women all over the world will feel. So I think that's kind of cool, to make those connections."*