

JOHN CASSINI



John was born and raised in downtown Toronto to Italian parents who made the long journey to Canada to start a new life. He first caught the acting/filmmaking bug in Grade 8. It was then that Aiko Suzuki (sister of David Suzuki) came to his class and taught a course in super 8 filmmaking. John played his first leading role as a blind boy in a film shot in the then new Spadina subway station.

Nevertheless, it would take some time and a diversion into athletics before John would return to his passion for the arts. After a typical childhood of running the streets of his neighbourhood and a few scrapes with the law, John would eventually find his focus in athletics at Central Tech High School. It is there that he would take his running to the track. John would go on to be part of the record breaking 4x100m relay team alongside Olympian Atlee Mahorn. It was his speed that would catch the attention of the football team and in his senior year he would be awarded an Athletic Scholarship to Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, BC.

It was in the Simon Fraser Theater program that John's passion for acting was ignited. John would waste no time, and after 2 years at the University John made the move to New York to join his older brother Frank to further his studies and commit to acting as a life choice.

By day John studied with acclaimed acting teacher Julie Bovasso. At night John would go to what he calls "one of the greatest jobs I have ever talked my way into" - an usher at the renowned Vivian Beaumont Theater in the beautiful Lincoln Center. Nightly, John would seat his audiences and then get lost in the magic of the theater as he quietly perched at the top of the stairs.

John found his way back to Vancouver where he spent a few years doing plays, a variety of TV and film projects and eventually landed his first big Hollywood Feature Film- *Alive*.

Soon after John was in Los Angeles for the Premiere of *Alive*, and quickly began landing roles, resulting in a permanent move to L.A. It is there that he found what he likes to call his "artistic oasis": The Actors Studio. This prestigious institution run by its current co- presidents Al Pacino, Ellen Burstyn and Harvey Keitel would soon accept John as a life time member.

John Cassini is regarded as one of Canada's most versatile and dynamic actors. This multiple Gemini Nominee (honouring the best in Canadian television) has had the distinction of playing regular series leads on both of Canada's number one television shows. John stars on the award winning and internationally acclaimed drama *Intelligence*, and the critically praised half hour comedy *Robson Arms*. It is John's ability to go from lovable hapless comedic characters, to salt of the earth dads and detectives, to ruthless organized crime figures that keep this veteran of TV, stage and film in demand.

John not only stars on Canada's most popular television series', but on international hit TV shows as well. His small screen credits include recurring roles on CBS's *The Handler*, Fox's *Brimstone*, and Stephen King's *Kingdom Hospital*. John has over 50 Guest Star appearances that

include multiple episodes on *NYPD Blue*, *ER*, *The Practice*, and the new Jerry Bruckheimer CBS drama *Eleventh Hour*. His roles in mini-series' include NBC's *10.5* and *10.5 the Apocalypse* (Beau Bridges), *Traffic*, and *Final Days of Planet Earth* (Gil Bellows and Daryl Hannah)

John also has an impressive list of big screen credits as well. John co-wrote, produced and starred in the award winning independent film *Break A Leg* starring Molly Parker, Jennifer Beals, Sandra Oh, Kevin Corrigan and Eric Roberts. *Break A Leg* went on to win over 10 Best Feature or Audience Awards at various US festivals including Best Actor for John at The Marco Island Film Festival.

His other feature film credits include: *The Game*, *Seven*, *Alive*, *Paycheck*, and *Get Carter*, among others. His independent films include *Female Perversions* (Tilda Swinton), *Vice* (Michael Madsen), *Chaos* (Ryan Phillippe), *Motorcycle Gang* directed by John Milius and *The Whole Shebang* (Stanley Tucci and Giancarlo Giannini).

John's passion for the stage led to him co-founding the 3rd Street Theatre in Los Angeles, where he would perform in such plays as David Mamet's *Edmond*, Sam Shepard's, *Geography of a Horse Dreamer*, *Harold Pinter's*, *One For The Road* and the LA Weekly Award winning original production of *They Shoot Horses Don't They?*

In 2008 John took his talents to Vancouver's prestigious six-hundred seat theatre, the Stanley Stage, playing the male lead, "Howie Corbett" in the Pulitzer Prize winning play, *Rabbit Hole*.

John has dazzled audiences and reviewers alike with his acting range, having one reviewer state, "It's hard to believe this is the same performer who played the steely-eyed, borderline dangerous nightclub manager in *Intelligence*. Leslie Nielson and Cassini's scenes together in *Robson Arms* are the stuff of great comedy." (Can West Service - Alex Strachan).

John has received industry acclaim throughout his career, and has been honored with a Leo award for Best Lead Actor on *Robson Arms* and was nominated for a Gemini Award for Best Lead Actor for *Intelligence*. He also received a Gemini Nomination for his work on the critically acclaimed drama *Davinci's Inquest*.

Despite his busy schedule, John is also on the teaching staff of the renowned Lyric School of Acting where he has mentored many young artists.

Most recently John was cast in the new TV Pilot, "Shattered". John presently splits his time between Los Angeles and Vancouver with his wife and son.