

HOPING FOR HER BIG BREAK

Anne Kyle, The Regina Leader Post

Saskatoon actress Monte Gagne is hoping her feature film debut in the \$4.2-million production of *Falling Angels*, which is being shot at Regina's new soundstage this coming week, will launch her career.

The film won't be released in Canadian theatres until the fall of 2003, but the young actress and the production crew made an impression Monday on Regina residents. Co-stars include leading actress Miranda Richardson, who appeared in *The Crying Game*.

Instead of holding a post-production bash to celebrate at the end of the five-week shot, the film production companies Triptych Media Inc. and Minds-Eye Pictures decided to give something back to the community.

They joined the Saskatchewan Motion Picture Industry Association, SaskFilm, the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation, and Centre of the Arts to host an open house at the Canada-Saskatchewan Soundstage.

"This is my first time on camera. I have a real love for the stage, and I always thought that would be enough for me. But I am really falling in love with the whole film industry," said Gagne, explaining she studied musical theatre at Sheridan College in Toronto and worked on stage for a number of different theatrical productions in Vancouver, Saskatoon, Estevan and the Station Arts Centre in Rosthern.

"Filming of this production has been amazing. Everyone has been extremely kind, thoughtful and willing to answer questions," she said. "Miranda Richardson is excellent to work with."

Gagne, 27, said timing is everything. She had just hired an agent, when they began the process of casting for the film. Her agent type-cast her for the part of Norma Field in the film adaptation of Barbara Gowdy's novel, which has been described by *Time Out* magazine as "Little Women on acid."

She auditioned for the part and was called back twice, before meeting with award-winning director Scott Smith for an hour. "A couple of days later my agent came to see me at work. I was working at two different restaurants in Saskatoon at the time. When she told me I had it, I jumped up and down and screamed and then proceeded in getting people their coffee," she said, explaining it's a big joke in the industry that all rising stars are discovered working as waitresses.

Monday's open house at the soundstage gave residents, who brought in cash and food donations for the Regina Food Bank, an opportunity to tour the *Falling Angels* movie set and to mingle with the stars.

The Regina Food Bank helps 200 families a day, said assistant general manager Gord Barnes, noting the demands on the food bank are always heavy during the Christmas season. "I'm delighted with the support this open house will give us."

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