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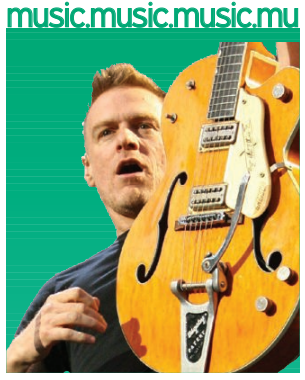

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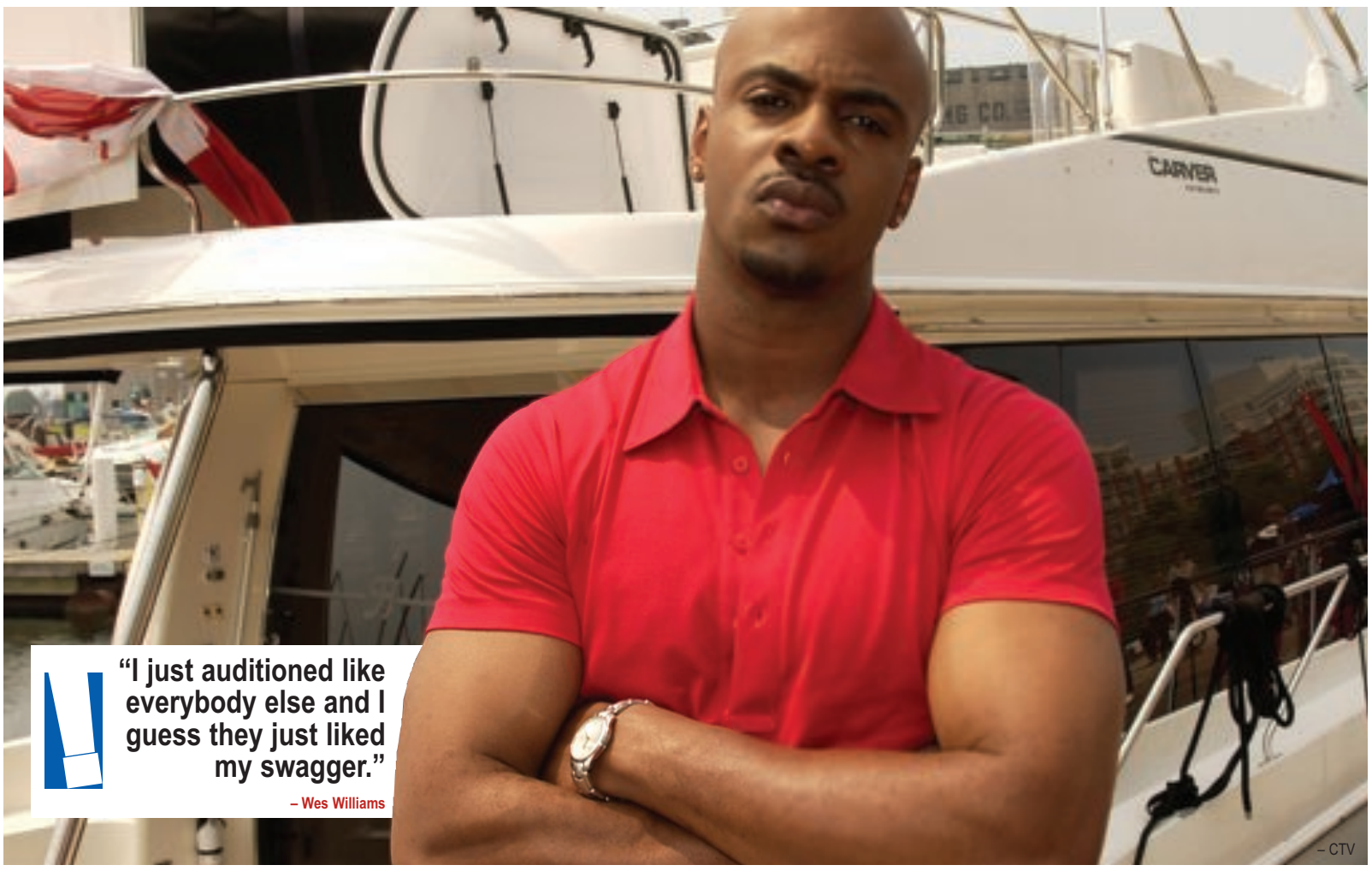

"I just auditioned like everybody else and I guess they just liked my swagger."

– Wes Williams

– CTV

Instant idols

CTV's *Instant Star* is a hotbed of young, fresh talent

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For two relatively new TV stars – one an Ontario starlet and the other a hip-hop artist-turned-actor – *Instant Star* isn't just where they work, it's what they are.

The Toronto-based show is currently airing its second season on CTV and filming its third season. A dramatic take on *Canadian Idol*, *Instant Star* follows the fortunes of a singing prodigy, Jude Harrison (played by Alexz Johnson), after she wins a talent competition.

Laura Vandervoort plays Jude's jealous sister, Sadie. Wes Williams (a.k.a. Maestro Fresh Wes) plays Darius Mills on the program.

Williams only expected to be in one *Instant Star* episode when the show launched in 2004. He ended up appearing in four more episodes that first season, and nine the following season.

"I just auditioned like everybody else and I guess they just liked my swagger, what I was about," he says. "And this season, it looks like I'm in almost every episode, so something's happening, and it's good. It's a beautiful thing, man."

Vandervoort learned the ropes through stints on popular Canadian dramas like *Goosebumps* and *Are You Afraid Of The Dark*, which she describes as boot camp for Canuck thespians.

Her *Instant Star* role led to her first screen kiss, with Tim Rozon (who plays Tommy Quincy, her sister's main squeeze on the show).

"It was my first on-screen kiss, so of course like any girl, I was nervous. But it went off without a hitch," she says. "Then we ended up kissing in every episode. We were dating and it became … easier for us. But now, it's kind of kaput."

Vandervoort, who celebrated her 22nd birthday last month, says *Instant Star* is a dream job that allows its primarily Canadian cast to build strength as actors.

"We're really proud of where we come from," she adds.

Williams agrees.

"Sadie, she's very self-absorbed. She's a little more outgoing (than me) and gets what she wants. Pushy ... But we're not actually very similar at all because I am a bit of a tomboy and Sadie is the opposite of that."

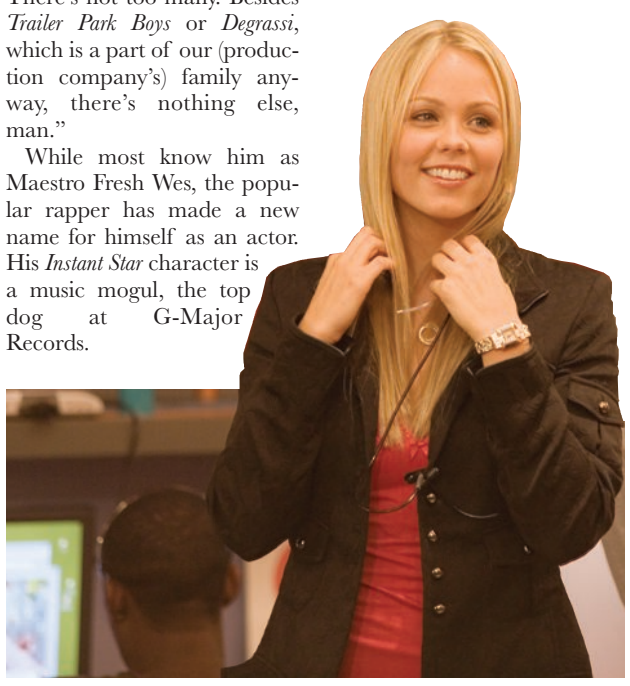
– Laura Vandervoort

"I don't just look at it necessarily as we're Canadian. I look at it as we're great – period," he says. "How many Canadian programs do you know that get aired in America that are more popular in America than in Canada? There's not too many. Besides *Trailer Park Boys* or *Degrassi*, which is a part of our (production company's) family anyway, there's nothing else, man."

While most know him as Maestro Fresh Wes, the popular rapper has made a new name for himself as an actor. His *Instant Star* character is a music mogul, the top dog at G-Major Records.

"I like to have fun with Darius," Williams says. "So obviously he is in a position of power and he screams out on everybody from time-to-time, but, you know, he means well."

STORY, VIDEO: icononline.ca



Q&A with Spencer Rice from Kenny vs. Spenny

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Who can sell more bibles? Who can stay naked the longest? These are some of the challenges on the second season of comedy reality TV series *Kenny vs. Spenny*, airing this month on Showcase. ICON caught up with Spencer Rice to find out what to expect from him and arch- nemesis Kenny Hotz in Toronto's version of MTV's-*Jackass*.

!: How did you two meet each other? How long have you been friends for?

S: Since we were kids (way too long.) Unfortunately, our fathers were friends.

!: Do you think there are other people out there who are best friends doing exactly what you're doing - just not on TV?

S: Surely best friends of both sexes will always compete to some degree, but I doubt, and sincerely hope, that they won't go to the lengths Kenny and I go to. I also hope that, unlike us, they compete fairly.

!: What's been your favourite competition so far, and the one you're looking forward to most this coming season?

S: I enjoyed the competition: "Who can be a better woman?" I know I will be held up to pathetic, macho ridicule for saying that, but it might be the only opportunity in my life where I had the wherewithal to try to understand what it's like to be a woman. If I could have become pregnant and menstruated, I would have. I think more empathy between the sexes would probably be a good thing. I don't really look forward to any of the competitions because I'm competing with a cheater. Perhaps if I competed against a gentleman I might enjoy the process.
But instead, unfortunately, I'm stuck competing against an insecure man-child.

STORY CONT'D ON PAGE 2

Whose life is it anyway? Colin Mochrie's

An Evening with Colin Mochrie & Brad Sherwood gets laughs wherever it goes

You probably know Colin Mochrie from the 60-laughs-a-minute improv show; *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* And perhaps you recall his unforgettable on-the-spot gem as the world's worst defense lawyer: "Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, it's not as if the sheep was underage."

Although Mochrie has worked as a scripted actor, producer and writer, his face is forever stamped on Canadian improv.

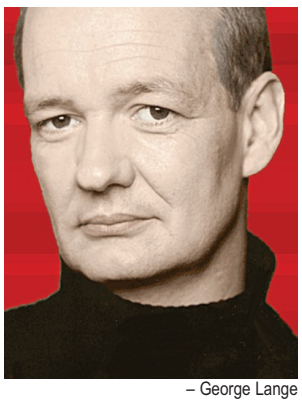
Born in Scotland and living in Montreal and Vancouver before graduating from Second City in Toronto, Mochrie has racked up over 25 years of generating laughs, giggles and guffaws. At one point, Mochrie appeared regularly in six television shows at once, earning the title of "one of the busiest actors in Canada" from ABC. The sitcom *Corner Gas* picked up on this, with a character remarking that the balding funnyman seemed to be on every Canadian show lately, and, right on cue, Mochrie himself walked by.

Mochrie now takes funny on the road, touring Canada and the United States with fellow improviser and *Whose Line?* co-star Brad Sherwood.

An Evening with Colin Mochrie & Brad Sherwood has the two jokers booked well into next year. .

–Nina Dragicevic

FULL STORY: icononline.ca



– George Lange