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**ACTRA TORONTO'S YOUNG EMERGING ACTORS ASSEMBLY (YEAA) "ONES TO WATCH"
SPOTLIGHT: JOE DINICOL & BEN WATSON in MUCHMUSIC'S *THE L.A. COMPLEX*, Produced
by Epitome Pictures**

Toronto, ON – **Joe Dinicol**, star of MuchMusic's *The L.A. Complex* (airing Tuesdays at 9pm), is no stranger to the performing arts. The youngest in a line of three generations of Canadian actors (grandson of **John Neville** and son of **Keith Dinicol**), Joe spent his childhood backstage and on stage at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival. Pedigree aside, Dinicol knew he would have to rise to the occasion in order to win the role of "Nick Wagner" on *The L.A. Complex*, a show by Epitome Pictures. The show follows a group of young, struggling artists living in Los Angeles trying to 'make it' in the business. The role sees Dinicol as a stand-up comedian from Edmonton struggling to establish himself, a feeling he can easily understand.

"Stand-up is a profession I do not generally partake in," laughs Dinicol. "I did a number of things [to prepare for the role]...the most terrifying was getting up and actually doing stand-up myself." The result? "When it goes well, it's the greatest feeling in the world. And when it doesn't, there is nothing worse!"

He may not be looking to add 'professional comedian' to his résumé anytime soon but, in other ways, Dinicol perfectly represents the spirit that has been creatively and refreshingly woven into Canada's newest hit series. Having built an impressive résumé for someone so young, he's still the first to admit that, like his character, he'll do whatever he can just to act.

"Even though I made the decision to focus my career in the film and television world, theatre has always been my passion," said Dinicol. "I started a theatre company (The Red One Theatre Collective) with some friends and we specialize in putting conventional theatre in unconventional spaces. We have been kicked out of spaces, extorted by bikers, and even performed shows in the pitch black when we blew the power. But I love what I do and I love to work. And when I don't work, I am happy to do theatre and bus tables to get by. It's an actor's life for me!"

His co-star, **Ben Watson**, can relate to his character's challenges as well. "Tariq" is a struggling hip-hop songwriter from Montreal, working as an intern (read gopher) under an L.A. record producer. "My character goes through some of the same things that I'm dealing with. Having the same aspects in my own life is very interesting," states Watson.

Originally hailing from Jamaica, Watson's family moved to Toronto when he was 10, just as he was discovering his love of the arts. Unafraid to admit that when they were young children, he and his sister used to pretend they were Power Rangers, Watson knew from a young age that acting was where his heart truly belonged.

"My mother wanted me to be a nurse or have some sort of a stable job to provide for myself in the

future but I refused to make a job decision based on money,” says Watson. Despite his parent’s advice, he enrolled in the Acting for Film and Television Program at Toronto’s Humber College.

“There is a bigger picture in the world. For the past few years I have been working with disabled adults through several organizations such as Harmony Place Support Services and Banbury Camp,” Watson explains. “And on Sundays I work with an autistic adult. No matter where I am in the world I always come back to Toronto in December and work at Harmony Place for Christmas. These experiences and organizations give me the power to see the world in a different light.”

Through their vastly different life experiences and backgrounds, Dinicol and Watson wholly inhabit the characters and stories that are the *The L.A. Complex*. Dinicol described the success of the project in the same way Watson might respect lessons learned through his volunteer work. “Hoping a project 'does' something for your career is completely out of your control. But making sure you get something out of it as an actor is always possible. Learning, pushing yourself, and becoming better is the greatest luxury of working on any project.”

ACTRA Toronto is the largest organization within ACTRA, representing over 15,000 of Canada’s 21,000 professional performers working in the English-language recorded media in Canada. As an advocate for Canadian culture since 1943, ACTRA is a member-driven organization that continues to secure rights and respect for the work of professional performers.

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Joe Dinicol photo credit: John Bregar

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