

2018 Canada's Walk of Fame Inductee: Andrea Martin

Queen *of* Hearts

A BELOVED ACTRESS AND COMEDIAN SHARES
WARMTH AND ENTHUSIASM WITH AUDIENCES

Photo credit: Don Dixon



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One of Andrea Martin's earliest roles was playing the Fairy Godmother in *Cinderella* when she was 11, and she's been stealing scenes and hearts ever since.

She first learned the joy and impact she could have as a performer when she was just three years old. "I had pneumonia and was in the hospital and liked entertaining the other sick children from my crib," she says. "I would sing to them. It made me feel better."

Although she spent her childhood in Maine and went to college in Boston, the role of Lucy in a touring production of *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* led her to Canada early in her career. When she performed in Toronto on tour she decided to stay. "I fell in love with a Canadian boy," she recalls. She landed an agent within two weeks, and then roles. "Toronto was the start of everything for me: career, husband, children, friends, normalcy," she says.

Working as an actress and comedian in Toronto in the '70s meant she was in the right place at the right time to be part of a very special cohort that defined comedy for generations. In a 1972 Toronto production of *Godspell*, she performed with Gilda Radner, Martin Short and Eugene Levy. Then, she worked with the cast of the ground-breaking sketch comedy series, *SCTV*, with John Candy, Dave Thomas, Eugene Levy, Catherine O'Hara, Harold Ramis and Joe Flaherty. She also performed improv comedy with famed troupe The Second City.

"We were kind of a secret society of comedy nerds. Those of us who performed and those of you who watched," she says of her *SCTV* days. She's always enjoyed the camaraderie of theatre and comedy. "Having close friends in a business that is competitive and fickle has given me humility, gratitude and checks and balances on my ego," she says.

Throughout her prolific career, Martin established herself by bringing effusive energy, enthusiasm and what she describes as "giddy appreciation" for every part. "I love acting," she says. "I get to challenge myself and grow."

Audiences adore her because she so thoroughly throws herself into every role. No matter how big or small the part, she'll create a fully realized character. "I like to be very prepared and specific so it seems effortless." Her work inspired a generation of women comedians, including Tina Fey, who professed fervent admiration in a promotional blurb for Martin's 2014 memoir, *Andrea Martin's Lady Parts*.

In addition to her many awards for film and TV, including two Emmys, two Geminis and four ACTRAs, Martin is also celebrated for her continuous work in theatre, both on Broadway and across North America. She's won two Tony Awards and four nominations for her outstanding acting in plays and musicals, including *My Favourite Year*, *Candide*, *Oklahoma!* and *Noises Off*.

"I love live theatre. That's how I started. It's in my blood. I'm a theatre animal," she says.

Martin is happy to share her advice for others coming up in comedy. "Take nothing personally! It's a business. Don't second guess. Trust your instincts. Listen. Be kind. Ask for what you need. And take the note!"

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As for the honour of being inducted into Canada's Walk of Fame, Martin fondly remembers entertaining the country, travelling from coast to coast while touring her one-woman show, *Everything Must Go!* "This honour means a lot to me," she says. "I feel like a queen."