

Actonites perform, produce for the big screen

BY KAREN WETMORE
The Acton Tanner

From playing the lead roles in Acton High musicals, Josie Gidman's career has taken her to acting in and producing feature films.

Gidman's audition for a part in a Caledon Films movie 1995 also led her to land the "role" of executive producer for the three-year-old company.

"I've been interested in acting and singing since I was nine years old, but I never had the confidence to pursue it," says Gidman (nee Devirgilio), 32, who now lives in Mississauga.

Gidman's career began in marketing and advertising

and it was these experiences plus acting which qualified her to work for Caledon Films.

The independent film-making company recently completed production on *The Sheppard Boys*, a Canadian film directed by Nick Marciano.

"It's a drama/comedy about a gang of young boys coming of age while living in the suburbs," says Gidman.

Gidman recently completed negotiations with Kaleidoscope Entertainment, a Canadian film distributor, who have acquired the film for distribution. As executive producer, she acts as a liaison between a distribut-

ing company and the film company and oversees the worldwide sale of the movie.

The next project for Caledon Films is a feature gangster film for which Gidman will not only be executive producer but will also play the part of the sister to the two Marconi brothers.

"The brothers keep her under strict tabs - they really repress her," she says of her character. "But her character shows a lot of strength at the end of the movie."

The movie, as yet untitled, will be played in movie theatres and will include some "big-name U.S. actors," who can't be named until contract details are worked out.

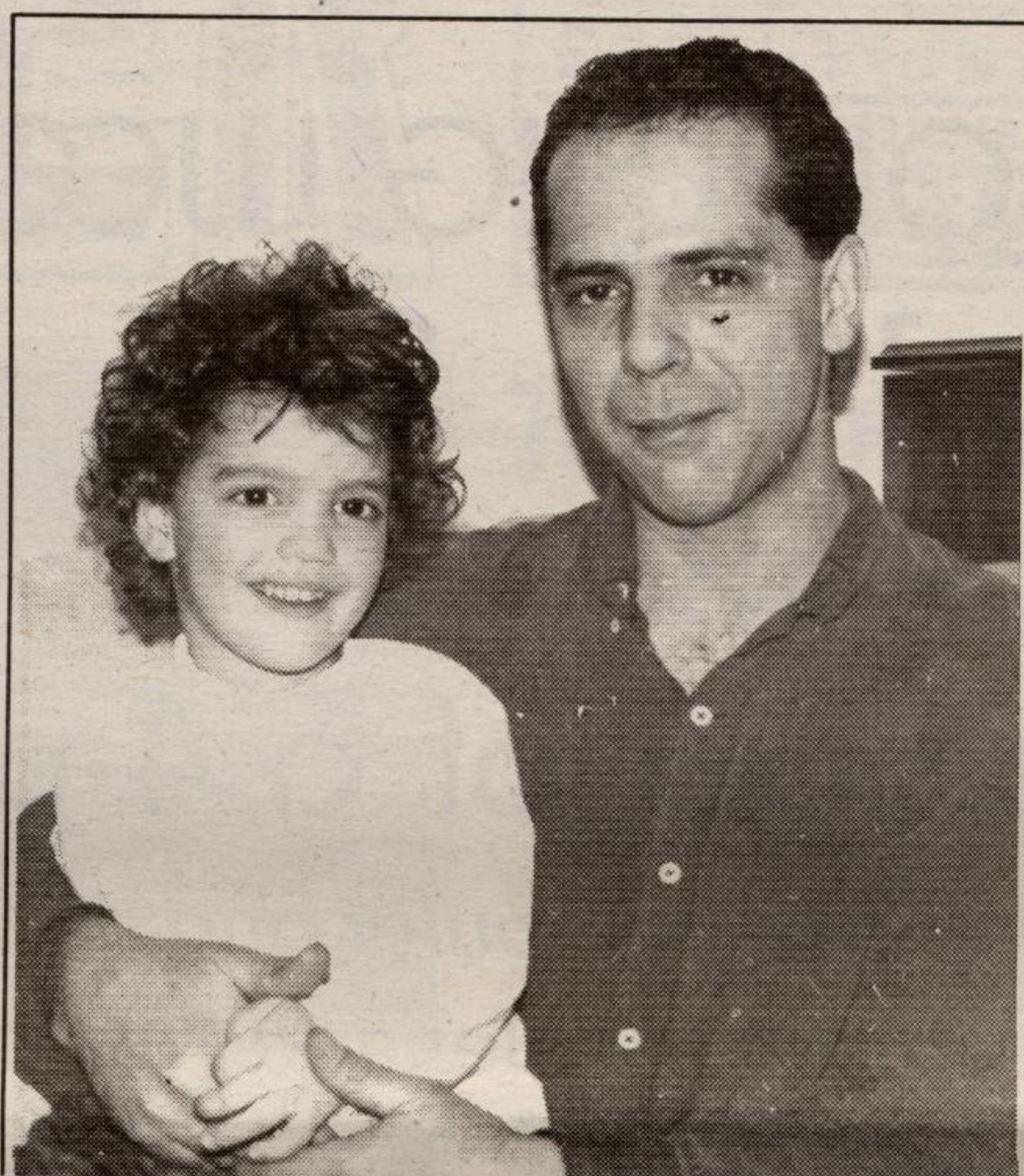
Gidman will also sing one of the songs for the movie's soundtrack - possibly the main title song. It's the first film-acting experience for Gidman, whose Acton High theatrical credits include Sandy in *Grease* and Lucy in a *Charlie Brown* musical.

"It's unbelievable. Sometimes I have to pinch myself," she says.

During a film's production, Gidman is kept "working around the clock," but is also finishing a Bachelor's degree in psychology at the University of Toronto. Still, the former Acton resident says husband George and 2½-year-old daughter Bianca remain her top priorities in life.



EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: Former Actonite Josie Gidman attended the premiere screening of *The Sheppard Boys* with the film's director, Nick Marciano, last month.



ACTOR DAD: At left, Acton resident Mike Peragine as Vince during a scene in the filming of *The Sheppard Boys* last summer. At right, Peragine relaxes in his Rosemary Street home with his three-year-old son, Cole.

Films a new passion for local actor

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Mike Peragine will soon be appearing at a theatre near you.

The new Acton resident recently played the role of Vince in *The Sheppard Boys*, produced by Caledon Films. He also has a part in an upcoming gangster/Mafia film by the independent film company, which will feature well-known U.S. actors.

In *The Sheppard Boys*, a Canadian film about a gang of youths growing up in the suburbs, Peragine is the father of the lead boy.

"Vince is a hard-working father who works in the construction field," said Peragine. "He's a first-time homeowner in a new neighbourhood, which is a step up for him and his family."

A theatre major at university in New York, Peragine had never before acted in front of a camera. He came upon the role in a rather non-traditional way.

Through knowing members of a band the film's director, Nick Marciano, was interested in having for the soundtrack, Peragine found out there was one part for *The Sheppard Boys* which was still uncast. He met with Marciano, but was originally turned down.

"At first it was "No." I was told I looked too young for a 40-year-old character," said Peragine, 40. "But I was able to do it with some added grey hair, drooping my shoulders and sticking my gut out."

Peragine credits Marciano, whom he describes as "the ultimate dreamer," with bringing back his interest in acting, as he had been focusing more on other projects, including marketing water treatment systems and raising his two children.

"The thought (to act) had always been in my mind, but the action was never there," he said. "Nick came in and dusted off some of my old dreams."

In his next movie with Caledon Films, which will be shown in theatres, Peragine will play the part of Louie,

the right-hand man to the godfather figure.

"Louie's slick - compassionate but very dangerous at the same time. He betrays the family he works for because he's compassionate to his crippled wife," he said.

The biggest acting challenge in doing a film, Peragine says, was having to do a voice-over. The filmed scene is brought up on a computer and the actors have to match their own lip movements with their lines. They also have to match the emotions of the scene, not as easy a task.

Stumbling into the film industry almost by accident, he says it's now something he'll want to continue.

"I think I've been rejuvenated," he said. "I don't think I'll be able to stop after this next film."

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