

# And... action!

Production company comes to life thanks to the hard work of one Algonquin student

**By Kaitlin Green**

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Allan Mackey spent this past summer with a professional stage magician and a 15-year-old girl. This might sound like an odd thing to do, but Mackey, a first-year scriptwriting student, would beg to differ.

Before even starting his college education in scriptwriting, he made a bold career choice that many wouldn't dare undertake. With strong writing skills and a business diploma already under his belt, Mackey, 31, embarked on his life-long dream and created his own production company: Valley Wind Productions.

"[It] really blends my writing and business backgrounds and skills," he said. "It was an extension of screenwriting."

He is currently in his fifth year at Algonquin, after previously graduating from computer programming in 1998 and small medium enterprise management in 2003.

"I didn't realize Allan had his own company before he came to the scriptwriting program. It impresses the hell out of me," said Lynn Tarzwell, co-ordinator of the scriptwriting and professional writing program at the college. "He's extremely smart and I think it makes a lot of sense that he should start to organize himself this way."

Mackey launched his company in January of 2008, for the production of his first mini-series called Untamed Lands.

"Things really got

started when I met with Ben Hoskyn and basically said, 'Hey, I'm doing this movie. You interested?' I don't think he knew what he was in for when he said yes," said Mackey.

Ben Hoskyn, 28, a freelance TV producer said that after reading the script, there was no way he could turn down the opportunity.

"[Mackey] is definitely a guy with a huge vision and huge plans and dreams for what he wants to accomplish," said Hoskyn, co-producer, director of photography and post-production supervisor. "A lot of people who are interested in making something would start with something small, but he has a lot of experience with writing already and has been working on the concept for a couple of years."

Untamed Lands is currently in post-production after six months of filming.

"[It] became a real example of what a group of talented people can accomplish when they're passionate about it and dedicated to making it happen."

The theme of the series is a fantasy adventure and has been compared to shows like Hercules and Zena Warrior Princess.

"Everybody was there for the learning experience and exposure, to make use of what they're in to," said Mackey. "There aren't a lot of opportunities for actors in Ottawa. The goal for the company was to provide the opportunity for someone who might not otherwise have had it."

He said his actors and crew were very devoted

to the project and all their work was voluntary.

"We had a really great cast who brought the script to life," said Hoskyn.

Daniel Lavigne, 25, who has been acting seriously for the past four years, heard about Mackey's casting call through his agent.

"[The script] was definitely creative. It's not your everyday typical role, and it was a challenge," said Lavigne. "That's what every actor really searches for."

Although he was not paid for his role in the series, Lavigne said he treated the role as if he were being compensated.

Mackey plans to sell his series online, but is not yet positive on the cost.

"An Internet distribution model lets us control and direct our marketing to where it will do the most good and reach our fans," he said. "It allows us to maximize our exposure."

Mackey plans to release his series in 2009 if all goes according to plan. With all that he has going on with the company he still thinks his program at the college will be vital to his continued success.

"There's always something new you can learn."

His initial goals coming into the scriptwriting program were to network, meet other writers, and get his mind focused on writing again.

"I think he's going to be one of these guys that we're going to say 'I knew him when,'" said Tarzwell. "Ten years from now he's going to be in a really different and I think successful place."