

valleywood

by **Beth Daigle**



calling all actors

If you've ever dreamed of taking part in an open casting call or simply being an extra for a major film, that dream may not be out of reach.

Angela Peri, owner and founder of Boston Casting Inc., has welcomed the recent growth of the film industry in the area and proudly cast principal actors and extras for as many as seven feature films since 2007.

Though the idea of casting for major films may appear to be exciting and glamorous, the often last-minute nature of the business can be frantic and stressful. Inside the busy offices of Boston Casting, amid stacks of headshots, the sound of ringing phones floods the room. During our conversation Peri multi-tasks as she is on a two-day mission to come up with 40 candidates for each of 10 separate characters. With no time to spare, Peri is optimistic: "You can't complain when you are busy."

In theory the process of casting is simple, but the execution can be daunting. Scripts are received and then broken down by character. Candidates for each character are gathered and presented to producers and directors, who go on to choose their callbacks. Having worked on area films including "Edge of Darkness," "Paul Blart: Mall Cop," "Four Single Fathers" and, most recently, "The Fighter," Boston Casting has been charged with formidable tasks such as finding a whopping 46,000 extras!

Boston Casting held an open call to fill the role of Christian Bale's girlfriend in "The Fighter." Chanty Sok, an aspiring actress from Lowell, landed the part. "It still doesn't seem real," she says. "Maybe it will hit me when I see it on screen."

The growing number of roles to fill gives local actors more opportunities to hone their craft, and the fantastical notion of being "discovered" is indeed a possibility. Peri says she is always on the lookout for talent and is not afraid to go after a person she believes might be a good fit. She recently came across a restaurant hostess who, according to Peri, "just had something about her." Peri passed the woman a business card, and just like that one hostess' world was changed.

On another occasion, Peri was looking to fill a stand-in role for



Top: Angela Peri, owner of Boston Casting, and hundreds of hopefuls at the Open Casting Call for the Mel Gibson film, "Edge of Darkness." Middle: Boston Casting owner Angela Peri (left) and LA Casting Director Sheila Jaffe (right) meet with actors at the Open Casting Call for the Mark Wahlberg film "The Fighter." Bottom: Chanty Sok - Lowell actress cast in the role of Christian Bale's girlfriend in "The Fighter."

Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson during filming of "The Game Plan." When she spotted a striking look-alike on the streets of Boston, a quick tap on the shoulder revealed that her potentially perfect stand-in was Johnson himself, out with his family. An experience like this, while unusual, does take the thrill of our local movie industry to yet another level.

Opportunities to build an acting career in our area are increasing every day, and those looking to advance should pursue acting classes, theater group work and a Screen Actors Guild (SAG) card.

For more information about casting, classes or work as an extra, visit www.BostonCasting.com

Talk back to Beth at bethdaigle@mvmag.net