

entertainment

- [: : Home](#)
- [: : News](#)
- [: : Entertainment](#)
- [Music](#)
- [Reviews](#)
- [Listings](#)
- [: : Movies](#)
- [: : Lifestyle](#)
- [: : Driver's Side](#)
- [: : Your Money](#)
- [: : Books](#)
- [: : Workology](#)
- [: : Travel](#)
- [: : Moving Up](#)
- [: : Sports](#)
- [: : Columnists](#)
- [: : Tech](#)
- [: : Special Section](#)
- [: : Letters to the Editor](#)
- [: : Contact Us](#)
- [: : Advertise with Us](#)
- [: : About Metro](#)

Published April 6, 2006

**Jazz greets spark Velvet
1-woman play becomes movie made for TV**



Andrea Menard stars in Velvet Devil, airing tonight on CBC.

Andrea Menard is bringing her devilish side to the small screen. The writer, actress and singer will star in the made-for-television film adaptation of her one-woman Canadian stage play *The Velvet Devil*, set to air tonight on CBC. After hearing the music of jazz legends such as Ella Fitzgerald, Menard became obsessed with a fictitious character she imagined named Velvet Laurent. "I noticed this character started haunting me, this character I wouldn't let myself be in my own life," Menard says of her alter ego. For those who haven't yet experienced her brash style and lyrical grace, Velvet is a 1940s-era Saskatchewan Métis lounge singer who defies the wishes of her family and runs away to Toronto in search of fame. The death of her mother brings Velvet back to reality on the Prairies. Menard — an acclaimed Métis performer who won the best female artist award at the 2003 Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards and whose musical audiences have included the likes of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Phillip — earned her stripes singing in bands, performing on stage and recently acting on the Canadian television series *Moccasin Flats*. She eventually decided to bring her alter ego to Regina's Globe Theatre in 2000 accompanied by a mix of jazz, ballads and blues songs she co-wrote with composer Robert Walsh. Velvet Laurent's legend was born. Ask Menard why the character has touched diverse audiences and critics alike and she points to Velvet's drive to succeed, a quality she feels is common to people of all cultures. "I just tried to write a story that was close to my heart," Menard reflects when asked if she finds the poignancy of her story to be its humanness or its connection to her aboriginal roots. "When you do that you touch everybody's heart because it's universal." *The Velvet Devil* airs at 8 p.m.

CHRIS ATCHISON/METRO TORONTO