Anna Paquin on returning to Canada for 'Bellevue' and 'Alias Grace'

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Oscar-winning actress Anna Paquin of "True Blood" fame says she didn't deliberately set out to work so much in her birth country - Canada - in the past year. Paquin is seen in her role as Detective Annie Ryder, on the set of the show "Bellevue" in this undated handout image. THE CANADIAN PRESS/HO-CBC, Jan Thijs, *MANDATORY CREDIT*

TORONTO - Oscar-winning actress Anna Paquin of "True Blood" fame says she didn't deliberately set out to work so much in her birth country — Canada — in the past year.

The Winnipeg native, who grew up in New Zealand and became a star in Hollywood, says she just goes where the work is good. And right now that's here, with the upcoming "Alias Grace" miniseries and the new CBC drama "Bellevue," which premieres Monday.

"I don't really think about what kind of work I'm doing and where in such a conscious way, as far as, 'Oh, I want to go do TV in this country' or 'I want to do a movie here' or whatever," said Paquin.

"I read material and if I respond to it, that's great. It just so happened that I ended up doing two shows for Canadian television back-to-back.... I just go where the interesting people and material is and right now, that was here in Canada."

"Bellevue" stars Paquin as Annie, a fearless detective with a wild past in a small blue-collar town. When a transgender teen goes missing, Annie goes to great lengths to investigate alongside the police chief, played by Shawn Doyle.

Writer Jane Maggs and veteran producer/director Adrienne Mitchell created the series, which also stars Allen Leech as Annie's on-again, off-again ex.

"I moved back here from Los Angeles in 2010 and it just so happened, when I moved back for the first number of years, I did American projects all over the place, not in Toronto," said Doyle, a Wabush, N.L., native who's made a splash on series including "Lost" and "Big Love."

"And then I guess the trend is shifting in this country and I feel like we're starting to — once again, because it's happened before — that we're starting to take pride in our own stories and that we understand that we can compete on the global marketplace in terms of quality and production value and interesting, great writers we have here,"

continued Doyle, who's also in the new series "Frontier," which was largely shot in Newfoundland.

"We're starting to understand that if we can be specific to a Canadian story, that that specificity will translate universally. Because it's just human stories at the end of the day, so it's really exciting to see that happening, that we're really owning all the colours that we can be here in Canada."

The Canada depicted in "Bellevue" is a bleak mining community that's fallen on hard times and was also struck by a killer 20 years ago. Annie's father was a cop on that case but couldn't solve the crime and ended up committing suicide.

"That had a really profound effect on her and she kind of went off the rails, so to speak, for a while, but has channelled all of that level of risk-taking and passion and need for a high-intensity life into a job where that is actually a benefit — even though it means sometimes she breaks the rules a little bit," said Paquin, who won an Oscar at age 11 for "The Piano."

Shooting on "Bellevue" took place in and around Montreal from September to December.

In her downtime, Paquin was "a prodigious" knitter, said Doyle. Turns out she was knitting pink hats to wear in last month's Women's March in Toronto.

"I find it very soothing," said Paquin, who posted photos of herself at the march on her Twitter account.

"The symbolism of a peaceful protest that is brought together by a whole bunch of people knitting hats, I think is kind of fantastic as far as taking things that are large and terrifying and scary that are happening politically in the world and turning it into something empowering and positive and beautiful."