A magic show!

With sleight of hand and TV wizardry, the 1982 Genie Awards bewitched even the sceptics.

by Merv Walker

Take five people. Pour on a little wine. Toss lightly with quiche and salad. Arrange casually in front of the largest colour TV you can find, and you’re ready for the Genie Awards.

So we thought. But we were not really ready for the Genies at all. Novices all, we’d heard of these affairs and expected some good yuks. We were prepared to see yokels shuffle up to a tacky stage, talk like the Mackenzie brothers and hustle off, awards in hand, to the nearest pawnbroker. The last thing we expected was to be deliberately entertained.

Oh my God! Jacky, hurry up! Come and look at these sets.” That’s Tom. Jacky’s in the kitchen being an exceptionally gracious hostess (considering we’ve commandeered her TV). They are both well-known Montreal decorators. (The names are real, only the people have been changed.)

“They’re fabulous. And they all move too.”

Brian Linehan appears to a chorus of “Who is he?” (And “Who is she?”). He is impeccable. It is a rare pleasure to hear good writing well read.

“Well, that’s different.”

Everything in the show appears to have been carefully thought out. People presenting awards have obviously prepared their routines. Recipients have written acceptance speeches to a uniform length. And, if they are a little less spontaneous than the average Oscar winner, at least no one is tongue-tied or long-winded and fatuous.

“They must have been told what to wear. Have you noticed, everyone is in black and white or red.”

“And glitter. They were allowed glitter.” (In fact, we discovered later, these people were victims of fashion not of a set designer gone wild.)

Denise Filiatrault is pronounced best supporting actress (for Les Plouffe) early on in the show. She appears live, via satellite, from Brussels. It’s a nice clean piece of TV tech and the trouble and expense involved have their own subtle message: it’s not so long ago that the Quebecois scorned these awards by boycotting them or mocking them outright.

The commentary from the couch is non-stop. “I hate it when they break up the screen like that, or get carried away with the star filters…”

“He’s cute, the one on the left, like a young James Dean.”

“The sets are fabulous.”

The pacing of the show, when you compare it to other industry awards like the Oscars or the American Music Awards, is really very good. You don’t have to watch people walk miles on a stage. The film clips with the director’s comments are well chosen and artlessly edited. There is never the slightest whir or pause or technical blooper. The names of the winners are always cornered on Montreal.
And the envelope please...


The split among the Academy of Canadian Cinema voters saw *Ticket To Heaven's* Nick Mancuso and Saul Rubinek honoured as best actor and best supporting actor respectively for their performances as a young schoolteacher brainwashed by a San Francisco religious cult, and his friend who later rescues him. *Les Plouffe's* Gilles Carle won twice, for best director and with Roger Lemelin for best script adapted from another medium, leaving some observers curious as to how a film with the best direction and best script (beating out *Ticket To Heaven*) was not selected best film. Conversely, *Ticket To Heaven* supporters were wondering how voters who selected the film best picture did not award its director. Ralph Thomas.

Other awards to *Les Plouffe* went to Denise Filiatrault for best costume design and two awards for Stephen Venne and Claude Denjean, best song and best musical score.

Ron Wisman won *Ticket To Heaven's* fourth Genie Award for best film editing. *Heartaches* earned three Genies, including Margot Kidder as best actress and co-star Annie Potts as best foreign actress, and Terry Heffernan for best original screenplay.

*Heavy Metal*, an animated rock fantasy produced by Ivan Reitman and the top-grossing film at Canadian box offices last year, won Genies in both categories in which they had been nominated. Dan Goldberg, Austin Grimaldi, Joe Grimaldi, and Gordon Thompson were honoured for best sound, while Peter Jersey, Andy Malcolm, and Peter Thillaye won for best sound editing.

Richard Leiterman won best cinematography for *Silence Of The North*, while Alan Arkin was chosen best foreign actor for *Improper Channels*.

Toronto filmmakers Janice Cole and Holly Dale beat out Harry Rasky to win best theatrical documentary for *PAW: Prison For Women*. Robert Forget's *Zoo* was honoured as best theatrical short. The Air Canada Award for outstanding contributions to the business of filmmaking in Canada was presented to Quebec producer Pierre Lamy, who has participated in 27 feature films and numerous television series, short films, and documentaries during his career see article on page 42.

The Genie Awards were sponsored by the Academy of Canadian Cinema and produced by the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. The telecast, live from the Royal Alexandra Theatre in Toronto, reached about two million Canadians at first count, and lasted just a few minutes longer than two hours.

Bob Gibbons, CBC producer, shared responsibility for the broadcast with Wayne Fenske, chairman of the ACC's Awards Committee. Ron Merasko directed, and Jimmy Jones designed the sets. The master of ceremonies was Brian Linehan, assisted by guest magician-par-excellence Doug Henning.

Paul Huffer is the current chairman of the ACC and Andrea Sheffer, its executive director. The ACC reportedly has about 900 active members.

Bruce Malloch