

# 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.

"Who's this one with the long hair? He doesn't fit in at all."

"He's one of the hottest magicians around."

"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

Merv Walker is an art director and free-lance writer in Montreal.



● Toast of the Town, Ralph Thomas and Vivienne Leebosh of the best picture, *Ticket to Heaven*

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 Québécois 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 across a stage. The film clips with the director's comments are well chosen and gracefully edited. There is never the slightest whir or pause or technical bloop. The names of the winners are always correct



● With a little magic and a masterful touch, Doug Henning and Brian Linehan set the pace



● The closer she gets... Actress Jennifer Dale snuggles up to hubby producer Robert Lantow



# AWARDS

and on time when they are flashed on the screen. These are small matters, but they keep the Genies moving as a show.

Not everything is flawless, of course: "What did they do, grease his head?" "No, that's what skin is like if you don't powder it."

"What a sleazoid shirt!" That's Fran. She's suing a film company.

Silence descends when Glen Ford climbs to the podium. By comparison with the well-coached Canucks he seems ill-prepared. His material is old. He stays too long.

We all wonder what Peter Ustinov is doing here. We all agree it doesn't matter: he's a class act. Very international. In fact, most of those accepting awards are deemed a class act too. They express their pleasure with humility. They thank their moms. The savoury exception is the editor who declares that "This was a film made in the editing room."

"That's so bitchy when you think about it. Don't you find?"

*Les Plouffe* wins for art direction, costume design, musical score and original song. It looks like it will sweep up all the awards. But then Saul Rubinek takes best supporting actor for *Ticket to Heaven* and Annie Potts and Margo Kidder carry off best foreign actress and best actress for *Heartaches*.

"I thought Potts was Canadian..." "I thought Kidder was American."

We are surprised and suddenly hushed by the appearance of Frank Augustine and Veronica Tennant. Their *pas de deux* is beautiful and only slightly marred by creative camera work.

The theme for our review is "The Genies as Theatre" and the ballet piece gets high marks for excellence and surprise value.

Doug Henning gets mixed reviews until he saws his wife and assistant in half and mixes the halves before rejoining them.

"How did he do that?" "He's very good this magician." "He should get his hair cut."

The major flaw in the show is the simultaneous translation. Both languages seem to come through at the same volume and we can't understand either. There is constant indecision about what to translate. André Brassard takes the stage. "Bonjour" he says but then continues to speak in English. The translator translates "Good evening..."

Nick Mancuso (best actor, *Ticket to Heaven*) is greeted with delight by the women. "Oh he's gorgeous!" "He's a real sweetie pie."

He thanks his Mom.

*Les Plouffe* has swept up most of the awards and we are expecting it to be named best picture. To our surprise *Ticket to Heaven* wins out.

We haven't seen all the pictures so it's hard to agree or disagree with the Academy, but there does seem to be some justice in spreading the awards around. By my count, of the three major winners, *Les Plouffe* took seven awards, *Heartaches* three and *Ticket to Heaven* four. No one pays any attention: they are reading the credits.

"There it is. The set designer is James Jones."

"Never heard of him."

We didn't recognize too many of the people either in or behind the awards, it's true, but as theatre, we decided, the Genies were a hit. Between them and us we were entertained, and in the process of being entertained we met a whole group of Canadian pros whom we hadn't known existed before. ●



● A festive night for Pierre Lamy (winner of the Air Canada award) and friend Toni Silverman



● Sitting pretty with his mom, best actor Nick Mancuso chats with Alan Arkin



● "Class act" Peter Ustinov presents best director Gilles Carle (*Les Plouffe*) with his genie

## And the envelope please...

While International Cinema Corporation's *Les Plouffe* led with seven awards, *Ticket To Heaven*, produced by Vivienne Leebosh and Ron Cohen, was selected best film at the 1982 Genie Awards March 3 at Toronto's Royal Alexandra Theatre.

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*) 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 supporting actress, William McCrow for best art direction, Nicole Pelletier for best cos-

tume design, and two awards for Stephane 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 Jermy, Andy Malcolm, and Peter Thillay were 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 *P4W: Prison For Women*. Robert Forget's *Zea* 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 Meraska directed, and Jimmy Jones designed the sets. The master of ceremonies was Brian Linehan, assisted by guest magician-par-excellence Doug Henning.

Paul Hoffert is the current chairman of the ACC and Andra Sheffer, its executive director. The ACC reportedly has about 600 active members.

Bruce Malloch ●