

# Enter Genie, son of old Etrog

## Canadian Film Awards finally coming of age

By Duart Snow

**JOURNAL REPORTER**  
 Enter Genie — son of Etrog the Controversial.  
 The Genie Awards — to be handed out for the first time in nationally-televised ceremonies in Toronto Thursday night — have grown out of the Etrog's, the Canadian Film Awards that so many in this country's once-invisible film industry loved to hate in the 1970s.

The Genies — the creation of the one-year-old Academy of Canada Cinema — also materialized out of last year's unprecedented, \$150-million production boom which lifted Canada's film industry from invisibility to the position of number-two producer in the world, after the U.S.

### Growing pains

Like any newborn, the awards are suffering growing pains. But they also share many of the problems and beg many of the same questions as the federal tax incentive-induced film boom.

For about three decades, the Canadian Film Awards were run almost yearly by various filmmakers' and performers' craft guilds and associations. Winners were selected by juries.

However, as the industry began to grow in the last decade, so did conflict over the Etrog's, named after the trophy itself, designed by sculptor Sorel Etrog.

In 1973, a group of Quebec filmmakers decided to refuse any awards as a protest against slumping production. That led the CBC to cancel its telecast and the awards weren't presented again for two years.

### Pleased no one

As well, various combinations of international and Canadian juries seemed to please no one with their selections. "The awards became less and less meaningful to the industry," says Andra Sheffer, executive director of the academy.

Late in 1978, a group of filmmakers decided to try the same academy-style voting system used in the U.S. to select Oscar winners, and began recruiting members.

After a brief struggle between the new academy and the old awards committee, the two joined forces to present the Genies this year. There were no awards presented last year.

The Toronto-based academy has some 500 members, about 300 of them in Toronto — the film boom's centre — with most of rest in Montreal, Los Angeles and Vancouver.

Although Etrog's trophy has been retained, its name was changed to "Genie" to emphasize the break with the old awards system and, as Sheffer puts it, "to symbolize the magic of filmmaking and the genius of the filmmaker."

Despite mixed reactions to the name — or perhaps because of them — Sheffer says it has caught on better in the last year than "Etrog"

did in the previous decade. A total of 19 feature films have been nominated for awards in 17 categories. In each category, five finalists were chosen earlier this winter by ballot among members of the corresponding craft group: actors vote for best actor, directors for best direction, and so on. All academy members vote in the final selection.

However, the nominations themselves reflect what remains a serious problem for the Genies, and more importantly, for the film industry as a whole: Only about a third of them have been released commercially in Toronto.

For example, of the five nominees for best motion picture — *The Changeling*, *Cordelia*, *Jack London's Klondike Fever*, *Meatballs* and *Running* — only the last three have been released. This reflects an unhappy situation in the industry at large: As critics of the tax incentives complain, producers may write off huge production costs while distributing their films poorly because there are no follow-up distribution or exhibition incentives. A number of recent productions have been seen by few moviegoers or not seen at all.

As a result, the academy faced logistical problems of arranging screenings for members.

### Few Canadians

It also means fewer Canadians are likely to care much about competition among films they haven't seen and might never see.

The academy does insist that next year, only commercial releases will be eligible. Another question that must be asked is what nominated films like the popular *Meatballs* and the disaster *Running* could possibly have to do with life in Canada?

Aimed at an American audience — far bigger and more lucrative than that here — they boast some Canadian talent and input, but reflect a decidedly American style and sensibility.

*Running*, for example, might just as well have been nominated for best performance by an Air Canada jet, or by Montreal's Olympic stadium, for all its relevance to Canada.

The problem of the Americanization of the Canadian industry is obviously far bigger than the Genie Awards and cannot be easily solved. But the awards do reflect the strongly American feel of the incentive productions.

### Foreign stars

And the academy's decision to establish a separate category for best performance by a "foreign" (read "American") actor — aimed at attracting familiar American stars and consequently, media and public attention — only underscores the truth behind the criticism levelled at producers for using Americans and other foreigners in leading roles at the expense of talented Canadians.



A scene from smash box office hit *Meatballs*, one of leading contenders for the new Genie

## Feature film nominations

### Best Motion Picture:

*The Changeling*, *Cordelia*, *Jack London's Klondike Fever*, *Meatballs*, *Running*.

**Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role:**  
 Geoffrey Bowes (*Something's Rotten*), Robin Gammell (*Jack London's Klondike Fever*), Thomas Hauff (*Summer's Children*), Stephen Lack (*Rubber Gun*), Christopher Plummer (*Murder by Decree*).

**Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role:**  
 Micheline Lanctot (*Mourir A Tue-Tete* — *A Scream from Silence*), Kate Lynch (*Meatballs*), Louise Marleau (*L'Arrache-Coeur* — *Heartbreak*), Claire Pimpare (*Yesterday* — *Gabrielle*), Louise Portal (*Cordelia*).

**Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role:**  
 Harvey Atkin (*Meatballs*), Lawrence Dane (*Running*), Chris Makepeace (*Meatballs*), Gordon Pinsat (*Jack London's Klondike Fever*), Saul Rubinek (*Agency*), Bob Silverman (*The Brood*).

**Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role:**  
 Helen Burns (*The Changeling*), Genevieve Bujold (*Murder by Decree*), Patricia Collins (*Summer's Children*), Barbara Gordon (*Wild Horse Hank*), Frances Hyland (*The Changeling*).

**Best Performance by a Foreign Actor:**  
 Michael Douglas (*Running*), Bill Murray (*Meatballs*), Will Sampson (*Fish Hawk*), George C. Scott (*The Changeling*), Rod Steiger (*Jack London's Klondike Fever*).

**Best Performance by a Foreign Actress:**  
 Susan Anspach (*Running*), Samantha Eggar (*The Brood*), Sally Kellerman (*It Rained All Night the Day I Left*), Cloris Leachman (*Yesterday*), Irish Van Devere (*The Changeling*).

**Best Achievement in Art Direction:**  
 Carol Spier (*The Brood*), Trevor Williams (*The Changeling*), Denis Boucher, Vianney Gauthier (*Cordelia*), Seamus Flannery (*Fish Hawk*), Wolf Kroeger (*It Rained All Night the Day I Left*), Roy Forge Smith (*Yesterday*).

**Best Achievement in Costume Design:**  
 Louise Jobin (*Cordelia*), Francois Barbeau (*Eclair Au Chocolat*), Linda Matheson (*Fish Hawk*), Patti Unger (*Jack London's Klondike Fever*), Julie Ganton (*Something's*

*Rotten*), Julie Ganton (*Tanya's Island*).

**Best Achievement in Cinematography:**  
 Miklos Lente (*Agency*), John Coquillon (*The Changeling*), Pierre Mignot (*Cordelia*), Reginald H. Morris (*Murder by Decree*), Laszlo George (*Running*).

**Best Achievement in Direction:**  
 Don Shebib (*Fish Hawk*), Peter Carter (*Jack London's Klondike Fever*), Anne Claire Poirier (*Mourir A Tue-Tete*), Bob Clark (*Murder by Decree*), Eric Till (*Wild Horse Hank*).

**Best Achievement in Film Editing:**  
 Marcel Pothier (*L'Arrache-Coeur* — *Heartbreak*), Jean Beaudin (*Cordelia*), Ron Wisman (*Fish Hawk*), Debra Karen (*Meatballs*), Stan Cole (*Murder by Decree*), George Appleby (*Wild Horse Hank*), Debra Karen (*Yesterday*).

**Best Achievement in Sound Editing:**  
 Ken Heeley-Ray (*Agency*), Patrick Drummond, Dennis Drummond, Robert Grieve (*The Changeling*), Marcel Pothier (*Eclair Au Chocolat*), Ken Heeley-Ray (*Murder by Decree*), Brian French, Michael Clark (*Wild Horse Hank*).

**Best Music Score:**  
 Howard Shore (*The Brood*), Alain Leroux (*It Rained All Night the Day I Left*), Hagood Hardy (*Jack London's Klondike Fever*), Carl Zittler, Paul Zaza (*Murder by Decree*), Paul Hoffert (*Wild Horse Hank*).

**Best Original Screenplay:**  
 Mireille Dansereau (*L'Arrache-Coeur* — *Heartbreak*), Len Blum, Dan Goldberg, Janis Allen (*Meatballs*), Marthe Blackburn, Anne Claire Poirier (*Mourir A Tue-Tete*), Stephen Lack, Allan Moyle, John Laing (*Rubber Gun*), Steven H. Stern (*Running*), Jim Osborne (*Summer's Children*).

**Best Screenplay Adapted From Another Medium:**  
 William Gray, Diana Maddox (*The Changeling*), Jean Beaudin, Marcel Sabourin (*Cordelia*), Jean Salvy, Jean-Claude Lord (*Eclair Au Chocolat*), Ted Allan (*It Rained All Night the Day I Left*), R. J. Dryer, Martin Lager (*Jack London's Klondike Fever*).

**Best Achievement in Overall Sound:**  
 Joe Grimaldi (*The Brood*), Joe Grimaldi, Austin Grimaldi, Dino Pigat (*The Changeling*), Richard Lightstone, Gary Bourgeois (*Meatballs*), Joe Grimaldi (*Murder by Decree*), Owen Langevin, Joe Grimaldi, David Appleby (*Running*).



no Bruno Gerusht hosts CBC awards special