

The 2nd Annual

Toronto Film Critics' Poll

Mort Ransen's *Margaret's Museum* proved to be the audience favourite in 1996, playing 16 weeks on 30 screens, and demonstrating the viability of regional cinema if produced at this level of excellence. Both female leads, Helena Bonham Carter and Kate Nelligan, turn in strong performances, and the film has resurrected the career of a talented director who has been toiling in the trenches of Canadian cinema for over 30 years.

The Toronto critics, however, chose Bruce McDonald's *Hard Core Logo* and Robert Lepage's *Le confessionnal* as the year's best. *Hard Core Logo*, which received the greatest number of votes for Best Film, Best Screenplay and Best Director (shared with Robert Lepage), is McDonald's finest film to date: an innovative mock-documentary from a director working at the top of his form, and although not as widely popular as *Margaret's Museum*, *Hard Core Logo* is a major step forward for McDonald. Robert Lepage was also named top director and his script for *Le confessionnal* was a tight second to Noel S. Baker's *Hard Core Logo*. Lepage has moved easily from stage to film and his reputation in Europe alone assures him of generous funding whenever he decides to venture into theatre or film. The fact that he was able to finance a second feature, *Le polygraphe*, in less than a year after completing his first, has made Lepage a leading figure in Quebec cinema at a critical juncture in that province's history.

Martha Henry and William Hutt, who turn in outstanding, well-rehearsed performances in David Wellington's faithful recreation of the Stratford production of *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, take the acting laurels. Henry's only competition coming from the two women of *Margaret's Museum*; Hutt's from Hugh Dillon and Callum Keith Rennie, the trash-talking punk rockers from *Hard Core Logo*. Peter Mettler's wonderfully evocative film about the Northern Lights, *Picture of Light*, topped out in the documentary category.

1996 saw very strong regional representation with two of the best films emanating from opposite Coasts, *Hard Core Logo* and *Margaret's Museum*; one very promising debut from the Prairies, *The Suburbanators*; Quebec's *Le confessionnal*; and Cronenberg's brilliant and intensely controversial film, *Crash*, from Ontario. Despite this wealth of new and old talent, however, Canadian films still remain marginal in their own market. Greater Toronto, which is the largest market for English-Canadian films in Canada, has 284 screens owned by either Famous Players or Cineplex; over 52 weeks that amounts to 14,768 screens. The 30 Canadian feature films and documentaries tracked by *Take One* in 1996 showed on a total of 260 of them. This amounts to 1.75 per cent. In 1995, the total was 2.8 per cent. This is clearly intolerable. Will something be done about this imbalance before Canadian films sink to less than one per cent in their own market? ■

Wyndham Wise

Take One wants to thank the following critics who participated in this year's poll:

Cameron Bailey, CBC Stereo's "The Arts Tonight," Now; Angela Baldassarro, Word; Pamela Cuthbert, Freelance; Marc Glassman, CJRT "On the Arts," Take One; Steve Gravestock, Festival; Brian D. Johnson, Maclean's; Martin Knolman, The Financial Post; Ingrid Randoja, Now; Rob Salem, Toronto Star; Denis Seguin, Eye; Shlomo Schwartzberg, Festival.

SEE HOW THEY RAN...

In descending order of length of run, here are the Canadian feature films and documentaries that played in Greater Toronto from November 1, 1995, to October 31, 1996. (The first number in parenthesis represents the total number of weeks the film played, the second the total number of screens.)

Margaret's Museum Mort Ransen, Malofilm (16/30)

Le confessionnal Robert Lepage, Alliance Releasing (13/17)

The Kids in the Hall Brain Candy Kelly Makin, Paramount Pictures (7/55)

Long Day's Journey Into Night David Wellington, Cineplex (6/6)

Crash David Cronenberg, Alliance Releasing (4/31)

Curtis's Charm John L'Ecuyer, Cineplex (4/4)

Screamers Christian Duguay, Allegro Films (3/35)

Never Talk to Strangers Peter Hall, Alliance Releasing (3/15)

Blood & Donuts Holly Dale, Malofilm (3/3)

House Laurie Lynd, Alliance Releasing (3/3)

Picture of Light Peter Mettler, Grimthorpe Films (3/3)

The Suburbanators Gary Burns, Everest Entertainment (3/3)

Salt Water Moose Stuart Margolin (2/29)

Hard Core Logo Bruce McDonald, Everest Entertainment (2/4)

Lulu Srinivas Krishna, Alliance Releasing (2/2)

Mesmer Roger Spottiswoode, Cineplex (2/2)

Michelle Apartments John Pozer, Cineplex (2/2)

Turning April Geoffrey Bennett, Alliance Releasing (2/2)

Power Magnus Isacson, N.F.B. (2/2)

Heavy Metal Gerald Potterton, Columbia Pictures (re-release 2/2)

Lilies John Greyson, Alliance Releasing (1/2)

First Degree Jeff Woolnough, Norstar Releasing (1/1)

Iron Eagle IV Sidney Furie, Norstar Releasing (1/1)

Once in a Blue Moon Philip Spink, Malofilm (1/1)

The Road Home Dean Hamilton, Astral (1/1)

Rowing Through Masato Harada, Aska Film (1/1)

Baseball Girls Lois Seigel, N.F.B. (1/1)

Project Grizzly Peter Lynch, N.F.B. (1/1)

Rude Clement Virgo, Cineplex (re-release 1/1)

Black List Jean-Marc Vallée, Astral (re-release 1/1)

10

BEST FILMS

Take One's TOP TEN CANADIAN FEATURE FILMS of 1996 as chosen by Toronto's Film Critics.

- 1 - **Hard Core Logo** 2 - **Crash**
 3. **Long Day's Journey Into Night** 4 - **Le confessionnal**
 5. **Margaret's Museum / Curtis's Charm**
 7. **Lilies** 8. **Once in a Blue Moon / The Suburbanators**
 10. **Screamers**

Best Directors

- Bruce McDonald**
(Hard Core Logo)
Robert Lepage
(Le confessionnal)
- David Cronenberg**
(Crash)
- David Wellington**
(Long Day's Journey Into Night)
- Mort Ransen**
(Margaret's Museum)
John L'Ecuyer
(Curtis's Charm)
- John Greyson**
(Lilies)
- Gary Burns**
(The Suburbanators)
- Christian Duguay**
(Screamers)
Peter Mettler
(Picture of Light)

Best Screenplays

- Hard Core Logo**
(Noel S. Baker, based on a book of poems by Michael Turner)
- Le confessionnal**
(Robert Lepage)
- Margaret's Museum**
(Gerald Wexler and Mort Ransen, based on a short story by Gerald Wexler)
Long Day's Journey Into Night
(based on the play by Eugene O'Neil)
- Crash**
(David Cronenberg, based on the book by J.G. Ballard)
Curtis's Charm
(John L'Ecuyer, based on the short story by Jim Carroll)
- Lilies**
(Michel Marc Bouchard, based on his own play)
- The Suburbanators**
(Gary Burns)
- House**
(Laurie Lynd and Daniel MacIvor, based on his play)
Screamers
(Dan O'Bannon and Miguel Tejada-Flores)

Best Actors (Male)

- William Hutt**
(Long Day's Journey Into Night)
- Callum Keith Rennie**
(Hard Core Logo)
- Hugh Dillon**
(Hard Core Logo)
- Lothaire Bluteau**
(Le confessionnal)
- Maurice Dean Wint**
(Curtis's Charm)
Tom McCamus
(Long Day's Journey Into Night)
- Brent Carver**
(Lilies)
Elias Koteas
(Crash)
- James Spader**
(Crash)
- Clive Russell**
(Margaret's Museum)

Best Actors (Female)

- Martha Henry**
(Long Day's Journey Into Night)
- Helena Bonham Carter**
(Margaret's Museum)
- Kate Nelligan**
(Margaret's Museum)
- Martha Burns**
(Long Day's Journey Into Night)
- Deborah Kara Ungar**
(Crash)
Mary Elizabeth Rubens
(Michelle Apartments)
Deanna Milligan
(Once in a Blue Moon)
Tushka Bergen
(Turning April)
Kristin Scott Thomas
(Le confessionnal)
- Holly Hunter**
(Crash)



Best Documentaries

- Picture of Light**
- Project Grizzly**
- Baseball Girls Power**

