The box-office story of 1998 was the increase in the number of screens in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) versus the static growth in screen time for Canadian features and feature-length documentaries. There was a 14 per cent growth in screens tracked by Take One, from 314 in 1997 to 356 in 1998, and a correspondingly insignificant growth in Canadian screen time, from 1.45 per cent in 1997 to 1.7 per cent in 1998. The long-range plan for the Toronto area is an additional 200 screens on the way over the next two years. This includes a 30-screen cinema with 6,000 seats in the heart of downtown Toronto built by the Kansas City-based AMC chain, which is aggressively moving into the Canadian market with not a peep from anyone (federally or provincially) about allocating some of this additional screen time for Canadian features.

Atom Egoyan’s *The Sweet Hereafter* and Thom Fitzgerald’s *The Hanging Garden* dominated the Toronto screens in 1998. Both were released at the end of 1997 and it is indicative of how popular these films were with the Canadian movie-going public, especially *The Sweet Hereafter* with its two Oscar nominations and a whole slew of Genies. Of the 1998 releases, Don McKellar’s *Last Night* and Francois Girard’s *The Red Violin* were the strongest in terms of the number of screens and the length of run. *The Red Violin* was released late in the year, but the reviews were mostly positive and it seems destined for a decent performance at the box office. Bruce Sweeney’s *Dirty* and John Greyson’s *Uncut* proved popular with limited runs each, and two U.K./Canada coproductions, Richard Kwietniowski’s *Love and Death on Long Island* and Gilles Mackinnon’s *Regeneration* did respectable business. Louis Saia’s *Les Boys*, which did huge box-office in Quebec, performed poorly in Toronto. However, there wasn’t a great effort on the part of the distributor to gear the ad campaign toward an English-Canadian audience. Are we so far apart culturally that a film that does over $5 million in Quebec and plays on 50 screens can only play two weeks on two screens in Toronto? Robert Lepage’s *Nô* seems destined for a longer run, winning as it did the best Canadian film at the Toronto festival over both *Last Night* and *The Red Violin*, and any year that includes the theatrical re-release of Claude Jutra’s *Mon oncle Antoine* can’t be all that bad.

The top 10 films in terms of length of theatrical run in the GTA over the past five years are (director and number of weeks in parenthesis): *The Sweet Hereafter* (Atom Egoyan, 26), *Exotica* (Atom Egoyan, 25), *Margaret’s Museum* (Mort Ransien, 15), *Thirty-two Short Films About Glenn Gould* (François Girard, 14), *The Hanging Garden* (Thom Fitzgerald, 14), *Le Confessionnal* (Robert Lepage, 13), *Air Bud* (Charles Martin Smith, 12), *Crash* (David Cronenberg, 11), *When Night is Falling* (Patricia Rozema, 10) and *Double Happiness* (Mina Shum, 10). — Wyndham Wise

Note: The final figures in this year’s survey are as follows: 33 Canadian films played over 47 weeks on a total of 317 screens. For the purpose of this survey, 356 screens (212 Cineplex; 136 Famous Players; 8 independent) were tracked over 52 weeks for an aggregate total of 18,512. Percentage of Canadian screen time—1.7 per cent. (Totals are based on listings in *The Globe and Mail*, *The Toronto Star* and Now.)