

TAKE ONE'S 2003 Survey of CANADIAN CINEMA

BY Wyndham Wise

The year 2003 proved to be exceptional for Canadian movies at the domestic box office. In a country where a million at the box office for an indigenous film is a rarity, four films, all by Quebec filmmakers, did more than \$5 million in business (according to *Playback's* annual box-office survey): Charles Binamé's *Séraphin: Heart of Stone*, Jean-François Pouliot's *Seducing Doctor Lewis*, Denys Arcand's *The Barbarian Invasions* and Émile Gaudreault's *Mambo Italiano*. *Séraphin* played Toronto in 2003, but it only did three weeks at the Carlton cinemas, which is typical for a Québécois film. *Seducing Doctor Lewis* opens outside of Quebec in the spring, and with any luck it will do better. *The Barbarian Invasions* is proving to be a domestic and international hit, and an Oscar winner. *Mambo Italiano*, the only one of the four to be shot in English, has proven to be the biggest English-language Canadian comedy of all time, surpassing the recent *Men with Brooms* (2002).

Three minority Canadian co-productions dominated the two per cent of screen time allotted to domestic product in the Greater Toronto Area, the largest market in the

world for English-Canadian films. *Bowling for Columbine*, a strong hold-over from 2002, never lacked for an audience and sat in Toronto theatres for seven months. One of the great ironies of 2003 was the closing of Salter Street Films shortly after its founder, Michael Donovan, the film's co-producer, was given an Oscar. *Bowling for Columbine* is now the most successful documentary ever made, grossing over \$50 million worldwide. Richard Kwietniowski's *Owning Mahowny*, a Canada/U.K. co-production starring Phillip Seymour Hoffman, was very popular, as was another Canada/U.K. co-production, *The Gospel of John*. *The Gospel* marks the return to film production for Garth Drabinsky, the disgraced theatrical producer who once owned Cineplex.

Of the features that played Toronto in 2003, *Take One's* Canadian film of the year is David Cronenberg's splendid *Spider*. Easily his best film since *Dead Ringers* (1988), *Spider* features some of the most accomplished acting ever seen in a Canadian film, including an absolutely riveting three-character performance by Miranda Richardson.

Séraphin: Heart of Stone

Les Invasions barbares

FEATURES SCREENED IN THE GREATER TORONTO AREA IN 2003

A record 48 features were released in the GTA in 2003 and are listed here in descending order of the number of weeks played (in parenthesis) along with the director. Co-productions and minority co-productions (those not directed by Canadians) are also noted in parenthesis. Those marked with an asterisk indicate a film released in 2002.

- Bowling for Columbine*,* Michael Moore (31)
(Canada/U.S./Germany minority co-pro)
- Owning Mahowny*, Richard Kwietniowski (13)
(Canada/U.K. minority co-pro)
- The Gospel of John*, Philip Saville (10)
(Canada/U.K. minority co-pro)
- Mambo Italiano*, Émile Gaudreault (10)
- Spider*, David Cronenberg (9)
(Canada/France/U.K. co-pro)
- Les Invasions barbares*, Denys Arcand (6)
(Canada/France co-pro)
- Ararat*,* Atom Egoyan (5)
- Marion Bridge*, Wiebke von Carolsfeld (5)
- The Wild Dogs*, Thom Fitzgerald (5)
- Flower & Garnet*, Keith Behrman (4)
- Foolproof*, William Phillips (4)
- Max*, Menno Meyjes (4)
(Canada/Germany/Hungary/U.K. minority co-pro)
- My Life without Me*, Isabel Coixet (4)
(Canada/Spain minority co-pro)
- Blizzard*, LeVar Burton (3)
(Canada/U.S. minority co-pro)
- Dracula: Pages from a Virgin's Diary*,
Guy Maddin (3)
- The Event*, Thom Fitzgerald (3)
(Canada/U.S. co-pro)
- Gambling, Gods and LSD*, Peter Mettler (3)
- Love that Boy*, Andrea Dorfman (3)



Spider

Seducing Doctor Lewis

- Séraphin: Heart of Stone*, Charles Binamé (3)
S.P.I.T.: Squeegie Punks in Traffic, Daniel Cross (3)
The Statement, Norman Jewison (3) (Canada/U.S./France co-pro)
The Bay of Love and Sorrows, Tim Southam (2)
The Book of Eve, Claude Fournier (2)
Chaos and Desire, Manon Briand (2)
Expecting, Deborah Day (2)
Falling Angels, Scott Smith (2)
The Favourite Game, Bernar Hébert (2)
FIX: The Story of an Addicted City, Nettie Wild (2)
Leaving Metropolis, Brad Fraser (2)
Long Life, Happiness and Prosperity, Mina Shum (2)
The Nature of Nicholas, Jeff Erbach (2)
Past Perfect, Daniel MacIvor (2)
Prisoner of Paradise, Malcolm Clarke and Stuart Sender (2) (Canada/U.K. co-pro)
*Bollywood/Hollywood**, Deepa Mehta (1)
The Burial Society, Nicholas Raczy (1)
Crime Spree, Brad Mirman (1) (Canada/U.S./U.K. minority co-pro)
Hurt, Steve DiMarco (1)
Ice Cream, Chocolate & Other Consolations, Julie Hivon (1)
Julie Walking Home, Agnieszka Holland (1) (Canada/Germany/Poland minority co-pro)
Kathryn's Place, B. de Burgh (1)
The Last Round, Joseph Blasioli (1)
The Magical Life of Long Tack Sam, Anne Marie Fleming (1)
Le Marais, Kim Nguyen (1)
Moving Malcolm, Benjamin Ratner (1)
A Problem with Fear, Gary Burns (1)
Punch, Guy Bennett (1)
So Far Away and Blue, Roy Cross (1)
deadend.com, Wyeth Clarkson (1/2)

Toronto International Film Festival's 2003 TOP 10

Selected by a 10-member national panel of filmmakers, festival programmers, journalists and industry professionals. Listed alphabetically with the director in parenthesis.

- 20 h 17, rue Darling* (Bernard Émond)
The Corporation (Mark Achbar and Jennifer Abbott)
Dying at Grace (Allan King)
La Face cachée de la lune (Robert Lepage)
Falling Angels (Scott Smith)
Les Invasions barbares (Denys Arcand)
Love, Sex and Eating the Bones (Sudz Sutherland)
My Life without Me (Isabel Coixet)
On the Corner (Nathaniel Geary)
The Saddest Music in the World (Guy Maddin)

TOP 10 at the Box Office

According to a *Playback* survey published November 24, 2003 covering the period from November 8, 2002 to November 6, 2003. The box-office figures are expressed in millions in parenthesis.

- Séraphin: Heart of Stone* (\$9.6)
Seducing Doctor Lewis (\$7.6)
Les Invasions barbares (\$5.9)
Mambo Italiano (\$5.1)
Sur le seuil (\$1.6)
Gaz Bar Blues (\$0.76)
Spider (\$0.62)
Père et fils (\$0.6)
Comment ma mere accoucha de moi pendant sa menopause (\$0.5)
Foolproof (\$0.44)

Les Prix Jutra (Quebec Film Awards)

- Picture:** *Les Invasions barbares* (Denise Robert and Daniel Louis)
Director: Denys Arcand, *Les Invasions barbares*
Screenplay: Denys Arcand, *Les Invasions barbares*
Actor: Serge Thériault, *Gaz Bar Blues*
Actress: Marie-Josée Croze, *Les Invasions barbares*
Supporting Actor: Pierre Collin, *Seducing Doctor Lewis*
Supporting Actress: Clémence Desroches, *Seducing Doctor Lewis*
Cinematography: Allen Smith, *Seducing Doctor Lewis*
Editing: Dominique Fortin, *Seducing Doctor Lewis*
Sound: *Seducing Doctor Lewis*
Art Direction: *Seducing Doctor Lewis*
Costumes: *Seducing Doctor Lewis*
Make-Up: *La Face cachée de la lune*
Musical Score: *Gaz Bar Blues*
Documentary: *À hauteur d'homme; Roger Toupin, épicier varié*
Short Film: *Mammouth*
Animated Short: *Bleu comme un coup de feu*