

SURVEY

SEE HOW THEY RAN



TAKE ONE'S 1998 SURVEY OF CANADIAN FILMS IN THE GTA

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 François 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 Ransen, 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*.)

In descending order of length of run, here are the Canadian features and documentaries that played in the Greater Toronto Area from Dec. 1, 1997, to Nov. 30, 1998. (The first number in parenthesis represents the total number of weeks the film played; the second the total number of screens.)

The Sweet Hereafter

Atom Egoyan, Alliance (18/57)*

The Hanging Garden

Thom Fitzgerald, Odeon (10/22)*

Air Bud: Golden Receiver

Richard Martin, Alliance (7/100)

Last Night

Don McKellar, Odeon (6/16)

Love and Death on Long Island

Richard Kwietniowski, Alliance (6/9)

Dirty

Bruce Sweeney, Behaviour (6/7)

Regeneration

Gilles MacKinnon, Alliance (4/8)

Uncut

John Greyson, Domino (4/4)

The Red Violin

François Girard, Odeon (3/25)

Cube

Vincenzo Natali, Odeon (3/8)

Kitchen Party

Gary Burns, Odeon (3/5)

Babyface

Jack Blum, Alliance (3/3)

The Fishing Trip

Amnon Buchbinder, Mongrel Media (3/3)

Hang the DJ

Marco and Mauro La Villa, Aska (2/7)

Nô

Robert Lepage, Alliance (2/2)

Les Boys

Louis Saia, Lions Gate (2/2)

Comtesse de Baton Rouge

André Forcier, Red Sky (2/2)

Stolen Moments

Margaret Wescock, National Film Board (2/2)

Hollywoodism

Simcha Jacobovici, Behaviour (2/2)

Joe's Wedding

Michael Kennedy, Astral (2/2)

Stolen Heart

Terry O'Brien, Landed Eagle (2/2)

Dancing on the Moon

Kit Hood, Alliance (2/11)

Kissed

Lynne Stopkewich, Behaviour (2/2)**

Mon oncle Antoine

Claude Jutra, National Film Board (1/1)**

The Wrong Guy

David Steinberg, Lions Gate (1/7)

Can't Beat a Woman

Gail Singer, National Film Board (1/1)

Drive, She Said

Mina Shum, Behaviour (1/1)

Little Men

Rodney Gibbons, Legacy (1/1)

2103: The Deadly Wake

Philip Jackson (1/1)

Stowaways

Denis Chouinard and Nicolas Wadimoff, Astral (1/1)

Exception to the Rule

David Winning, Lions Gate (1/1)

Pale Saints

Joel Wyner, Alliance (1/1)

Rupert's Land

Jonathan Tammuz, Red Sky (1/1)

(* Indicates films released prior to Dec. 1, 1997;

** indicates a re-release.)