

## TAKE ONE

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**T**he *Globe and Mail* (Saturday, July 10) published a list of the top Canadian box-office films of all time. It was a brave but flawed attempt to know the unknowable. Of course, the writer (Doug Saunders) got the top film right. Everyone knows that Bob Clark's Florida-shot *Porky's* is the most successful Canadian film ever made. It's a widely known bad joke of the Canadian canon. But Saunders missed Louis Saia's *Les Boys* for second place and instead put François Girard's *The Red Violin* (which is quoted at \$3.2 million). *Les Boys* did nearly \$6 million in Quebec alone and this fact was known, reported in *The Toronto Star*, if not *The Globe and Mail*, and proudly proclaimed by *Les Boys* producer, Richard Goudreau, at the 1999 Genies. So Saunders missed the boat on that one. He also included Jacques Dorfmann's *Shadow of the Wolf* (1993) on his list of Top-Ten grossers, but in 1993 George Mihalka's *La Florida* and not *Shadow of the Wolf* won the Golden Reel Award, therefore *La Florida* did, domestically, better at the box office. Why wasn't *La Florida* on the list? And where were the other successful Quebec comedies of the past 10 years: Michel Poulette's *Louis 19, le roi des ondes* and Alain Chartrand's *Ding et Dong, le film*? Doesn't Quebec box-office gross count in *The Globe and Mail*? And where was Denys Arcand's *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* which did huge box office in Quebec and did very well in English Canada as well?

Of course, the tracking of Canadian films at the box office is no mean feat. Most results are hard to come by. Many Canadian films perform so poorly at the box office that distributors would rather not issue any figures at all. I don't imagine that many of the box-office figures quoted in the *Globe* article were accurate—more like an approximation. Canadian box-office figures are not an accurate evaluation of a Canadian film's success, anyway, precisely because in most cases they are comparatively small. It would be more accurate to broaden the market to include all of North America, as American films do, and then you would have a rather different list. *Porky's* would still rule and Ivan Reitman's *Meatballs* will always be there, but the list would have to include Tibor Takacs's *The Gate*, Nelvana's *The Care Bears Movie*, Peter Medak's *The Changeling*, Louis Malle's *Atlantic City* and certainly the Gerald Potterton/Ivan Reitman production of the animated *Heavy Metal*. And if you drop the silly nonsense of leaving David Cronenberg's American films out of the Canadian canon, then you have his very successful remake of *The Fly*. Remarkably, certain Canadian features have performed very well at the box office in contradiction to the commonly held belief that Canadian feature films rest in obscurity. It's just that the beast of Canadian cinema is so hard to identify that those who attempt to hunt it down tend to get it wrong.

It's *Take One's* 25th issue and for all of us involved in its publication a significant achievement. Against the odds and without institutional support, *Take One* has remained true to its mandate to be the best (and only) Canadian film magazine devoted entirely to Canadian film and television. Thanks to the support of the Canada Council, our subscribers, readers, corporate sponsors and advertisers, *Take One* continues to publish into its eighth year. I would also like to thank the members of *Take One's* editorial board, the beautiful Geri Savits-Fine, our brilliant designers, Erick Querci and Susan Sinclair, and our tireless ad sales rep, Nardina Grande, without whom *Take One* would not be possible. Here's to another eight years!

W. P. Wise