

The Living Arts

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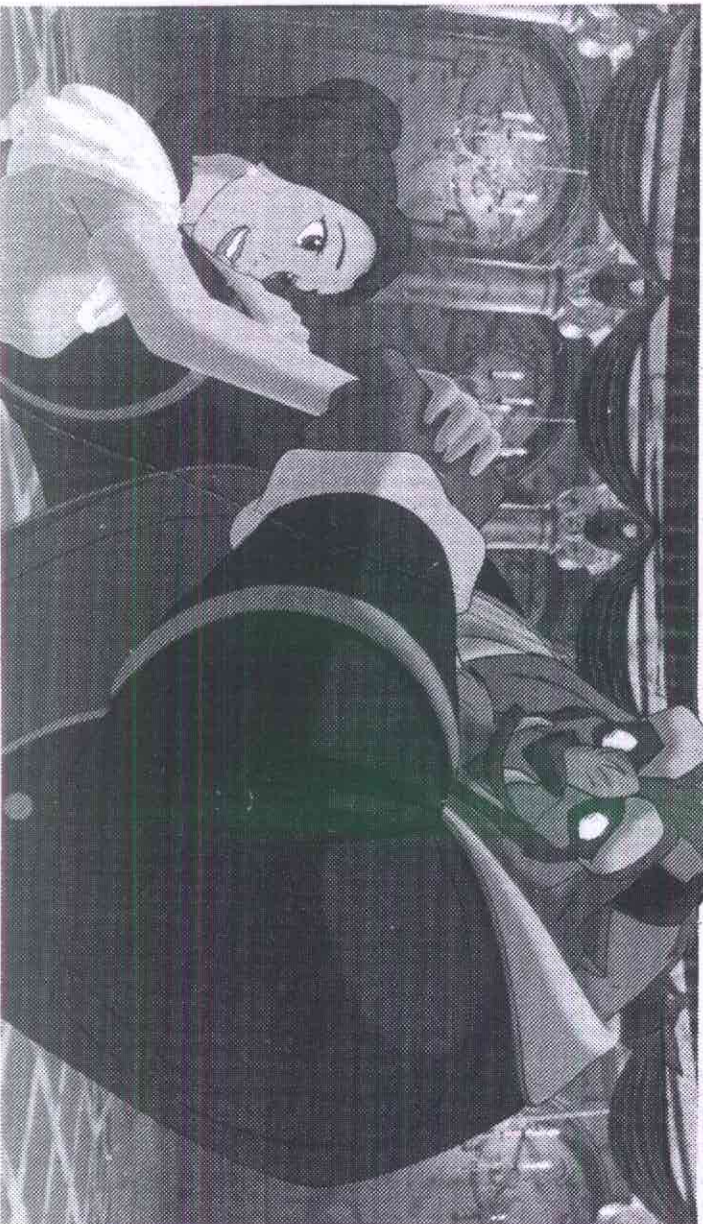
Track Record Polishes Golden Globes' Gleam

By BERNARD WEINRAUB

Special to The New York Times

HOLLYWOOD, Jan. 19 — Barbara and Bette showed up. So did Warren and Annette. And Dustin and Kevin and Arnold and Michelle and Robin and Anjelica and Jodie and just about every other major star and power-broker in town crammed into a hotel ballroom on Saturday night for an old-fashioned Hollywood event that was, by all accounts, the glitziest and most curious awards ceremonies of the year.

The occasion was the 49th annual Golden Globe gala, a Hollywood tradition that is now taken with considerable seriousness — tempered by plenty of private amusement and even derision — in the movie world. "Everyone is in on the joke and we're all dressed up sitting there and, like, in the middle of the dinner you always say, 'Can you believe we're all here?'" said one prominent movie executive who, like numerous others, would only speak on condition of anonymity because the Golden Globes have emerged as increasingly influential



Walt Disney's "Beauty and the Beast" won the Golden Globe award as best musical of the year.

The Walt Disney Company

on the Academy Awards.

The Golden Globes, which were televised live on TBS, are given by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, a group whose 85 members, mostly freelancers, write for an array of overseas journals. The awards' history has been tainted by some unfortunate incidents, including a 1981 award to Pia Zadora as the new comer of the year for her performance in the flop "Butterfly." It was

Awards that were sneered at until they became an Oscar bellwether.

revealed later that Ms. Zadora's producer (also husband), Meshulam Riklis, had flown the group to Las Vegas before the vote for a few days of fun and games.

But those embarrassing days are over, insists Philip Berk, the president of the association, who writes about Hollywood for a group of South African newspapers. "It's amazing how important we've become," he said.

Mr. Berk is right. Because the Golden Globes are awarded, quite deliberately, at the same time that members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences receive their ballots for the Academy Awards — and because the Golden Globes have, especially in recent years, often tracked the Oscars — they are given great attention in the movie industry.

"It's the forerunner of the Oscars," Peggy Stegal, a well-known public relations executive for films and stars who flew in from New York for the event, said this morning. But this year, she said, unlike last year and "Dances With Wolves," there was no clear winner. "They gave something for everybody," she said.



Bette Midler won best actress for "For the Boys."



Nick Nolte won best actor for "Prince of Tides."

The major winners this year included "Bugsy," as best picture of the year, as well as "Beauty and the Beast," as best musical (as well as two other awards) and "Europa, Europa" as best foreign film (though a German selection committee of film makers has declined to nominate it for an Oscar; the film deals with Nazi Germany during World War II). Acting awards went to Jodie Foster, for "Silence of the Lambs," Nick Nolte, for "Prince of Tides," Mercedes Ruehl and Robin Williams for "The Fisher King," Bette Midler for "For the Boys" and Jack Palance for "City Slickers." Callie Khouri won for the screenplay of "Thelma and Louise," and Oliver Stone got a prize for his direction of "J. F. K."

Because the Golden Globes give twice as many awards as the Oscars

— and distinguish between comedy-musicals and drama, and because television stars and series are also given statuettes — the evening at the Beverly Hilton is crammed with more celebrities than the Oscars, which will be awarded on March 30. The fact that the Golden Globes are presented by a such a disparate group — some of whose credentials are a little fuzzy — is irrelevant. (The organization lists an array of publications that its members work for. But a spot check with directory assistance seeking local offices for some of the publications — Le Figaro, The London Daily Express, Femme Actuelle, The China Times — found no listings).

In some ways, studio executives say, the organization and its awards are a perfect metaphor for Holly-

wood, where very little endures, where careers, jobs, money, glamour and friendships are ephemeral anyway. So the Golden Globes are part and parcel of the whole environment.

"It's one of the few occasions that's like the old Hollywood, where everyone participates in a kind of silliness, where the fact that the emperor has no clothes is really irrelevant," said one major studio executive. "Unlike the academy, which is serious business, this is one of the few occasions where people actually have a good time. If you sit at a table, there's often a lot of eye rolling, but who cares? In the end Hollywood lives on a social contract: You publicize me, I publicize you."

During the year, the Hollywood

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An Oscar Bellwether Gains Notice

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Foreign Press Association is treated with much deference — and to many free meals — by the studios that screen new movies for them and have major stars appear for unusual press conferences. "We don't do hatchet jobs, and the stars like that," said Marianne Ruuth, the president, who says she writes for French and Portuguese publications. "We don't scream questions. We're very well-behaved. Nobody shouts. Everyone is very pleasant."

What makes the press conferences especially unusual is that at least 15 minutes is allotted so that each member of the association can pose with the movie star. "They bring their Instamatics and line up to take pictures of each other posing with the star," said one studio executive. "Having scarfed down the shrimp cocktail, they'll ask Barbra or Warren some inane questions and then pose with them. They elbow each other to take pictures. It's embarrassing. It's funny. But it's all part of the game. The stars — and usually it's like pulling teeth to get them to do something — actually kind of enjoy it."

The awards ceremony, replete with screaming fans outside the hotel and beefy bodyguards, had movie stars virtually tripping over one another. In the hotel lobby, Dustin Hoffman kissed Barbra Streisand and recalled that they both met in the same acting school in New York in 1960. "They used to laugh at the Golden Globes, like a joke, didn't they?" said Mr. Hoffman. "Then they started to give the same selections as the Academy Awards."

Ms. Streisand said: "They've always been so nice to me. They gave me awards for 'Yentl.' I won't forget." The 1983 film, which Ms. Streisand produced, directed and starred in, was ignored by the academy.

As winners were announced on Sat-

urday night, they dutifully trooped to a hotel suite to meet entertainment reporters. Surprisingly, some of the stars were surprisingly blunt.

Burt Reynolds, who won an award for his television series, "Evening Shade," said his career had virtually collapsed until the show. "I felt like Betty Hutton for a while," he said. "Betty Hutton was waiting on tables. I couldn't even get a job waiting on tables. I made a lot of money, but who stayed with me? My wife and dog."

Looking Forward Into Loss

The most poignant moment after the ceremony came when a noncelebrity from New York, Sarah Gillespie, spoke simply about her brother, Howard Ashman, the lyricist and one of the creative forces behind "Beauty and the Beast." Mr. Ashman died of AIDS last March. "Howard was 40 years old," she said. "When I think of what he could have contributed, it

breaks my heart."

The most candid star turned out to be Bette Midler, who acknowledged that her expensive flop, "For the Boys," left her dismayed and hurt. "It's a big, big shock," she said. "I doubt everything now. The reviews were all right. The performance at the box office was pathetic." The star said she was unsure why the movie failed, but said it could have been the recession, the marketing of the movie, the adult story.

A television reporter asked Ms. Midler what got her through this difficult period.

"What makes you think I'm through it?" she replied.

Asked if she would like to work again on a picture with Nick Nolte — with whom she appeared in "Down and Out in Beverly Hills" in 1986 — Ms. Midler shrugged and said, "Not particularly."