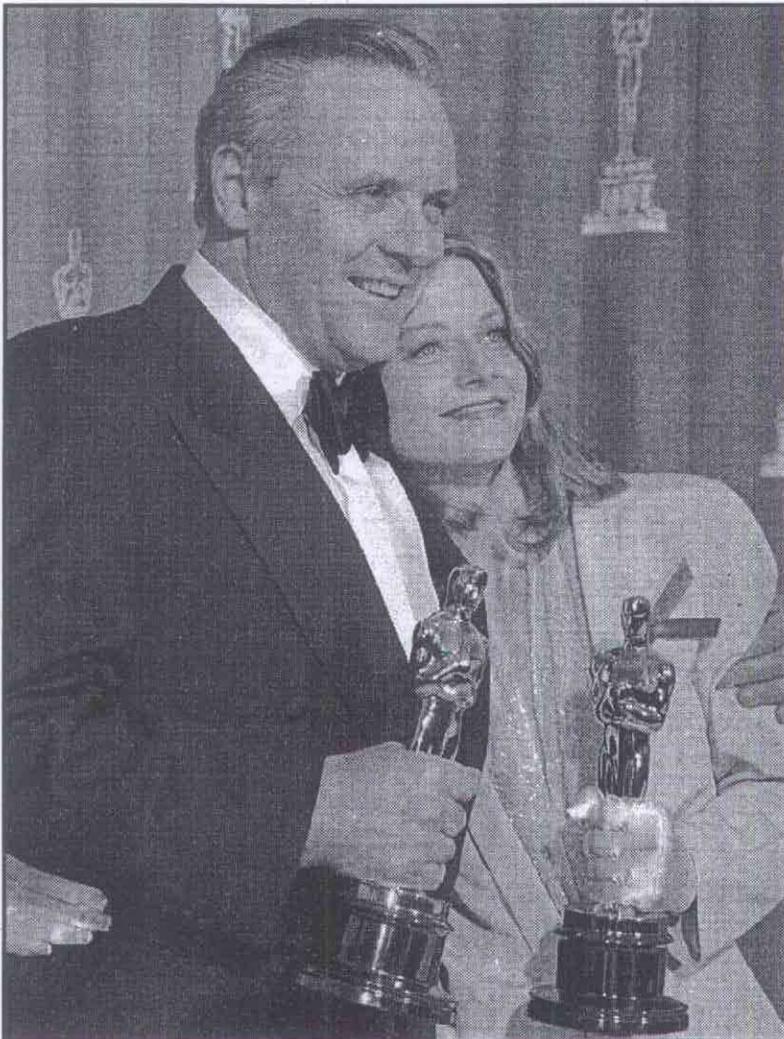


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Movies

Oscar statuettes not likely



"Silence of the Lambs" stars Anthony Hopkins, left, and Jodie Foster show off their Oscars after the Academy Awards on Monday night.

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Being in bankruptcy court didn't stop Orion Pictures from sweeping the Oscars; its "Silence of the Lambs" won the top five awards. Financial difficulty didn't hurt Carolco Productions, either. Its "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" won four.

The question: Will trophies translate into a financial shot in the arm?

The Academy Awards ceremony Monday night was watched by a billion people. That's a good many potential movie-goers.

But Oscars don't necessarily translate into solvency. Orion Pictures, after all, also won big last year with "Dances With Wolves" and still couldn't avoid bankruptcy court. And Hollywood suffers no shortage of Oscar-poor, cash-rich actors and directors.

Those coveted statuettes make little difference because the prize-winning films generally have completed their run.

"It's sort of gallows serendipity," said Art Murphy, an industry analyst for Daily Variety. "It's not significant. The big revenue surges have already occurred."

Struggling Orion, trying to reorganize under Chapter 11 protection from creditors, has earned \$131 million from "The Silence of the Lambs" and the film is already available on videocassette.

"The financial glow will help that film," Murphy said, "but it won't help the overall picture of the company."

Likewise, awards for "Terminator 2" won't do much for Carolco's ledger sheet. The movie, also out on video, has raked in a record \$204.4 million.

Last week, Carolco reached an agreement for \$73.8 million in financing from Le Studio Canal Plus of France, Japan's Pioneer LDCA Inc. and RCS Video Services International of Italy.

The academy estimated 1 billion people in 88 countries saw Monday night's show, including 76 million U.S. viewers.

As expected, "Beauty and the Beast" won the musical Oscars and "Terminator 2" took the technical awards. An array of films took home

to help ailing studios

Show includes some memorable moments

NEW YORK (AP) — Yes, it's still too long. Yes, the acceptance speeches still are mostly obscure or maudlin. And, yes, like it or not, the Academy Awards still are the last bastion of full-throttle live TV entertainment.

Bless the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences anyway, for Monday night it wrapped up the 64th Annual Academy Awards in a shade over 3½ hours.

Those 210-plus, star-studded minutes included a set of one-armed push-ups from best supporting actor Jack Palance, a greeting from the crew of space shuttle Atlantis and four full-bore production numbers.

Best of all, it included the giddily brilliant improvisations of Billy Crystal, in his third year as host.

Crystal was charming from the moment he was wheeled onstage and strolled into the audience wearing the face mask of the demonic Hannibal "The Cannibal" Lecter from "The Silence of the Lambs," which was named best picture.

"I'm having some of the Academy over for dinner," he confided to Anthony Hopkins, who later won best-actor honors for his Lecter role.

Palance, who at 72 won the first Oscar of his 42-year career for his work with Crystal as a crusty trail boss in "City Slickers," showed off his physical prowess on behalf of older actors.

"Billy Crystal," Palance snorted. "God! I crap bigger'n him."

Crystal got the last laugh, improvising and updating Palance's offstage exploits during the

rest of the evening. Palance variously was reported to be bungee-jumping off the Hollywood sign, winning the New York primary and being the father of the many children in one production number.

For all its gentle comedy and spectacular staging, the academy also provided a forum for political statements and had its share of touching moments:

— Comedy producer Hal Roach, age 100, was introduced and received a half-minute standing ovation. (Because of a technical gaffe, Roach was inaudible as he thanked the crowd — and Crystal noted that was appropriate, since Roach began in silent films.)

— Debra Chasnoff, producer of the best documentary short subject, "Deadly Deception: General Electric, Nuclear Weapons and Our Environment," was applauded heartily while she condemned environmental misdeeds of nuclear weapons makers. "Thank you very much, and boycott GE!" she said.

— Red ribbons symbolizing AIDS awareness were worn by most of the awards presenters, including actor Richard Gere, who urged the audience to write their congressmen to divert defense spending into AIDS research.

— "Beauty and the Beast" composer Alan Menken, accepting the award for best score, spoke to the memory of his late partner, lyricist Howard Ashman, who died a year ago of AIDS: "Howard, I wish you could have seen the finished product. . . . I know you would have been proud."

Oscars, including "Thelma & Louise" and "Bugsy."

Barbra Streisand's "The Prince of Tides," nominated seven times, went away empty-handed.

The "Silence" sweep began late in the evening, and the awards it won for best movie, best director, best actor, best actress and best adapted screenplay helped it become only the third film ever take the major Oscars.