

'Silence' makes big noise at Oscars

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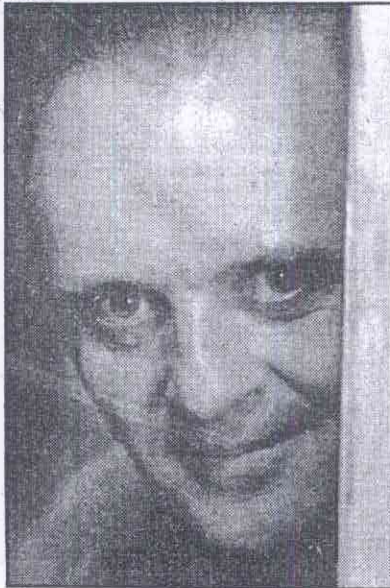
LOS ANGELES (AP) — "Silence of the Lambs," the thriller about a fledgling FBI agent who needs the help of an evil genius, swept the Oscars on Monday night, winning best picture, best director and acting awards for Anthony Hopkins and Jodie Foster.

"My God, I can't believe it!" said Hopkins, who won for his portrayal of Dr. Hannibal (The Cannibal) Lecter and received a standing ovation from the crowd at the 64th Annual Academy Awards show. "I am greatly honored and tremendously moved."

Hopkins becomes the third British performer in a row to win as best actor, following Jeremy Irons for "Reversal of Fortune" and Daniel Day-Lewis for "My Left Foot."

"I'd like to dedicate this to all the women before me who didn't have the chances I had," said Foster, who joins the ranks of repeat Oscar winners. She was named best actress of 1988 for her performance as a rape victim in "The Accused."

"Silence" also brought Oscars to director Jonathan Demme and to Ted



ANTHONY HOPKINS

Tally for best adapted screenplay.

Jack Palance, the crusty trail boss in "City Slickers," and Mercedes Ruehl, the warm-hearted video store

owner in "The Fisher King," won for best supporting performances.

"Terminator 2: Judgment Day," the 1991 box-office champion, outperformed its more prestigious rivals in technical categories. It won four Oscars: makeup, sound effects editing, sound and visual effects.

"Bugsy," Warren Beatty's gangster epic that had the most nominations with 10, picked up early awards for art direction and costume design. Another best picture nominee, "JFK," Oliver Stone's assassination polemic, won for film editing and cinematography.

Callie Khouri won the original screenplay award for the female buddy film, "Thelma & Louise."

"I really want to thank my mother, who taught me everything about love and loyalty that a gal could ever need to know," Khouri said.

Ruehl, a first-time nominee, recounted her early days as a struggling actress, and added, "At this moment, all of those sort of doleful

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Oscar

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memories ... suddenly transformed themselves into nothing more than the sort of charming and amusing anecdotes from my memoirs."

Palance, a sentimental favorite nominated four decades ago for playing villains in "Sudden Fear" and "Shane," demonstrated his fitness by performing several push-ups on stage.

The 72-year-old character actor recalled a director telling him in 1949

that he would win an Oscar, "and 42 years later, he was right."

Composer Alan Menken won the award for best original score for his music for "Beauty and the Beast," and he and his late partner, lyricist Howard Ashman, won a second Oscar for the movie's title song.

Menken paid tribute to Ashman, who recently died of complications from AIDS at age 40.

"Howard, I wish you could have seen the finished product ... you would have been proud," he said.

Menken, like many celebrities who appeared during the show, wore a red ribbon on his lapel, symbolizing support for AIDS awareness and research.

Best foreign film was "Mediterraneo," an Italian comedy set during World War II.

Other best picture nominees included "Silence," which despite its release in early 1991 won the bellwether Directors Guild award for Jonathan Demme, as well as the Writers Guild Award for Ted Tally.