



Eye on Entertainment

By Sid Adilman

# Confusion abounds in initial voting for ACTRA Awards

The bigger entertainment awards events become, the more confusion and inconsistency they create. A prime local example is preliminary voting for the expanded fourth annual Association of Canadian Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA) Awards which are set for April 23 at Toronto's Hyatt Regency Hotel.

ACTRA hasn't managed to avoid pitfalls annually encountered by the splashier Academy Awards or TV Emmy Awards. For example, Michael Maclear is nominated in a new ACTRA category this year, best newscaster. He is competing with CBC foreign correspondent Joseph Schlesinger and news reader-commentators Lloyd Robertson, Charles Templeton, Jack Dennett, Tom Gould, Montreal's Bob Girolami, Winnipeg's Garth Dawley and Vancouver's Harvey Dawes and John Wilson. Maclear belongs more properly in the public affairs category, his weekly crusading CTV series is strong investigative stuff.

## Into another category

But award nominations, except in the newscaster category, are restricted to ACTRA members, and Maclear isn't one of them. So he gets stuffed into a category with news deliverers. TV public affairs nominees, in the preliminary round, include Adrienne Clarkson, Barbara Frum, Helen Hutchinson, Larry Solway, Carole Taylor (for her CTV Margaret Trudeau interview), Montreal's Don McGowan, Calgary's Marie Hohantz and Vancouver's Jack Wasserman and Wendy O'Flaherty. Does anyone really believe that Maclear does the same kind of work as Lloyd Robertson?

In another category, Malka's CEC-Radio interview with **Joni Mitchell** is nominated for the best radio documentary writing award. The program was a 90-minute interview, and if there were any awards for it then they might be to the interviewer or the editor. But it wasn't scripted, no "writing" was involved.

Preliminary voting was conducted by ACTRA's own members across Canada, and now the 60 nominees in 14 categories will be whittled down to a more manageable group by national judging panels of broadcasters and writers. New this year is an award for best performance in a feature film.

The ACTRA-only-member rule excludes all Quebec movies, an unfortunate situation considering the small number of films made outside that province last year. Nominees are Stuart Gillard and Ken James for *Why Rock The Boat?*; Henry Ramer, for *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*; Andrea Martin, for *Black Christmas*; and Alicia Ammon, for *The Wolfpen Principle*. The hardest job of all falls to the national panel adjudicating yet another new category, best program of the year in either TV or radio.

## Early nominees

Early-round nominees in this most redundant category are, a CBC-Radio play, *That I May Not Weep*; an episode of CTV's situation comedy series, *Excuse My French*, a CBC-TV drama, *Back To Beulah*; Channel 19's documentary, *The Clinton Special*; a segment from CBC-Radio's *This Country in the Morning* show; a CBC-TV rock musical, *Jack*; one of Channel 19's *True North* series; CBC-TV's documentary, *Next Year In Jerusalem*; CTV's *Oscar Peterson* show featuring guest *Cleo Laine*; and a CBC-TV drama, *The Overlanders*. Choosing among them is like deciding between apples and oranges, and is unfair to their producers, directors and performers. ACTRA should learn from mistakes made by the Academy Awards and the Emmy Awards, not slavishly follow them. In all other regards, the ACTRA Awards are a distinguished contribution to this country's entertainment life.