

AWARDS

Leo roars for Stargate empire

B.C. film and television awards honour long-running science fiction series

BY PETER BIRNIE
VANCOUVER SUN

A controversial Canada/U.K. co-production set in Northern Ireland during the worst of what were dubbed “the Troubles” took the top honour for film at Saturday night’s Leo Awards gala, honouring the best achievements in B.C. film and television.

Brightlight Pictures won the coveted prize for *Fifty Dead Men Walking*, directed by Kari Skogland and starring Jim Sturgess as a stoolie caught between the British Army and the IRA.

“It’s wonderful that B.C. has something to help celebrate local film,” producer Shawn Williamson said.

The project, which was shot on location in Belfast, “was fascinating to work on,” said Williamson, who lauded screenwriter and director Kogland.

“It was a marvelous creative experience.”

On the television side, *Stargate Atlantis* swept the top honours.

In addition to capturing Best Program, the popular series also took Leos for best direction (Robert Cooper for the episode titled *Vegas*), best screenwriting (Alan McCullough for *The Queen*) and cinematography (Michael Blundell for *Vegas*).

“We did pretty good, we’re pretty happy with our showing,” producer Brad Wright said.

“Our cast and our crew for Atlantis is among the best I’ve ever had an opportunity to work with. We were too flummoxed to say that on stage last night. We were shocked.

“We’re used to going to award shows and hearing other shows’ names being called. I guess last night was our night.”

Not only did *Stargate Atlantis* also win a slew of the technical awards, presented on Friday evening, but producers Brad Wright and Robert Cooper were honoured with an outstanding achievement award for the entire *Stargate* franchise.

Vancouver’s film and TV community has enjoyed tremendous benefits from this sci-fi monolith, which started (after the initial movie) with *Stargate SG-1*, includes two direct-to-DVD movies (*Stargate SG-1: The Arc of Truth* and *Stargate Continuum*) and carries on after *Stargate Atlantis* with the latest offshoot, a TV series titled *Stargate Universe*, which debuts in the autumn.

The icing on the cake for the *Stargate* team came in the feature-length category, as *Stargate Continuum* also



The producers of the Stargate franchise were honoured with an outstanding achievement award for Stargate SG-1 and the other incarnations of the series.

captured Leos for Michael Shanks (lead actor) and Brad Wright (screenwriting).

Other top honours for feature-length drama went to Anne Wheeler for her direction of *Living Out Loud*, Attila Szalay for his cinematography in the Canada/China co-production of *Iron Road* and Vancouver actress Babz Chula for best actress in *Mothers & Daughters*.

Fifty Dead Men Walking was not only directed by Skogland, but written by her as well.

She based the screenplay on the real-life story of Martin McGartland, who has always insisted that the tips he passed on saved at least 50 lives. He is still in hiding.

The Leo Awards were first presented in 1999.

Sun Theatre Critic
pbirnie@vancouver.sun.com
With files from Denise Ryan, Vancouver Sun

Leo award winners, 2009

- **Best Program, Feature Length Drama:** *Fifty Dead Men Walking*
- **Best Direction:** Anne Wheeler, *Living Out Loud*
- **Best Lead Performance (male):** Michael Shanks, *Stargate Continuum*
- **Best Lead Performance (female):** Babz Chula, *Mothers & Daughters*
- **Best Supporting Performance (male):** Chang Tseng, *Dim Sum Funeral*
- **Best Supporting Performance (female):** Lauren Lee Smith, *Helen*
- **Best Program, Dramatic Series:** *Stargate Atlantis*
- **Best Direction:** Robert Cooper, *Stargate Atlantis — Vegas*
- **Best Lead Performance (male):** Tyler Labine, *Reaper — Coming to Grips*



IAN SMITH/VANCOUVER SUN

Babz Chula, who won the Leo award for best female lead performance, beams on the red carpet at the Leo film and TV awards held at the Westin.

SEE A PHOTO GALLERY AND A FULL LIST OF LEO WINNERS AT VANCOUVERSUN.COM

OBITUARY

Kitsilano poet remembered for sense of humour

Robin Blaser continued to teach rising poets after taking early retirement from faculty at Simon Fraser University

BY KELLY SINOSKI
VANCOUVER SUN

Robin Blaser, a renowned Kitsilano poet whose work was devoted to the avant-garde, has died after a battle with cancer.

His death, at the St. James Cottage Hospice in Vancouver last week, was just shy of his 84th birthday.

“He took the world with him when he went,” friend and fellow poet George Bowering said Sunday. “That’s how I feel ... he really loved the world a lot.”

Blaser, who was raised in a small Idaho town, became one of California’s triumvirate poets, along with Robert Duncan and Jack Spicer. The trio participated in what is known as the Berkeley Renaissance, contributing to post-modern poetry.

In 1966, Blaser moved to Canada af-

ter accepting a position at Simon Fraser University. Nearly a decade later, in 1974, he became a Canadian citizen and met his life partner, David Farwell.

Bowering, who travelled to San Francisco in the early ’60s to meet Blaser, said he had much respect for the erudite poet with a great sense of humour.

Blaser not only received the Order of Canada in 2005 for his contribution to the arts, but was winner of the Griffin Poetry Prize for lifetime achievement in 2006 and the Griffin Prize for Poetry in 2008. He was awarded an honorary doctorate by SFU in March 2009.

Bowering said one of Blaser’s major strengths was as a teacher. Despite taking early retirement from SFU in the 1980s, he continued to teach rising poets in his Kitsilano home.

“Students kept going to Robin’s place instead of to Simon Fraser,” Bowering said. “He was a great teacher for those



STUART DAVIS/VANCOUVER SUN FILES

Kitsilano poet Robin Blaser has died.

who kept going to see him and for those who read his books.”

Bowering noted that even though Blaser was one of Canada’s best poets, “you would have to go a long way to find

an English professor in Ottawa who’s read him.”

He described Blaser’s work as challenging and hard work yet delightful, noting he never wrote straightforward sentences and it was as if he “kicked the hell out of the English language.”

“You’ve got to have a lot of nerve to dig into [Blaser’s] book and all those essays,” Bowering said.

But when you do, he said, lessons can be learned. And in his short essays, Blaser’s “great sense of humour” shines through, especially in his work over the past 20 years.

“He was a guy who could tell you everything and then tell you a joke,” Bowering said.

Blaser is survived by Farwell as well as by his sister Hope Samac and brother Augustus Blaser.

ksinoski@vancouver.sun.com

BOX OFFICE

Star Trek movie beams up \$72.5 million in ticket sales

BY STEVE GORMAN

LOS ANGELES — The new *Star Trek* movie beamed up an estimated \$72.5 million in North American ticket sales its first weekend in theatres, dominating the box office and re-energizing a 40-year-old science-fiction franchise.

That figure far surpassed the opening grosses posted by any of the previous 10 *Star Trek* films, even when adjusted for inflation, and kept up a robust pace for the second week of Hollywood’s summer moviegoing season.

Combined with \$4 million grossed from Thursday evening’s preview screenings, *Star Trek* tallied \$76.5 million in U.S. and Canadian receipts through Sunday, according to Paramount Pictures studio.

Reuters

ONLINE

Shelley Fralic weighs in on the latest celebrity gossip
Read her Social Studies blog at vancouver.sun.com

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Dr. Feelbad’s season finale
A preview of tonight’s episode of House, in which the doctors treat a patient with multiple personality disorder.



TUESDAY

Diana Krall in love with Latin
The B.C. jazz star’s foray into Latin jazz keeps her at the top of the charts.

