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## 'Kung Fu Panda' rules Annie Awards

### 'Wall-E' goes home empty handed

By [PETER DEBRUGE](#)

"Kung Fu Panda" won big at this year's Annie Awards. And no one was more surprised that the DreamWorks toon pic bested Disney/Pixar's "Wall-E" for the top prize than "Panda" co-director John Stevenson, whose expletive-filled acceptance speech would have earned the Intl. Animated Film Society a fine from the FCC had the event been televised. Many had expected "Wall-E" or Israeli animated docu "Waltz With Bashir" to win (among critics groups, both toons have been feted repeatedly as the year's best film, animated or otherwise). Instead, "Kung Fu Panda" and its related properties, including homevid tie-in "Secrets of the Furious Five" and the Activision game, dominated the awards, winning in 15 of the Annies' 24 categories at the ceremony held Friday at UCLA's Royce Hall.

Results give DreamWorks Animation fresh hope for "Panda's" Oscar chances, as the Annies (voted on by animation industry professionals and fans) have predicted the Academy's animated feature preferences every year but one since the category was introduced. It also marks the first time since 2001's "Shrek" that the studio has seen one of its CG features take the Annies' top prize, which typically goes to Pixar.

Favorites emerged in the smallscreen categories as well, with Adult Swim's "Robot Chicken: Star Wars Episode II" snagging three awards, Nickelodeon's "Avatar: The Last Airbender" taking two and 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment's "Futurama: The Beast With a Billion Backs" earning the org's homevid trophy.

Among the nods drawn by "Robot Chicken" was a voice acting prize to Ahmed Best for reprising his most familiar character, Jar Jar Binks. Accepting his first positive recognition for the role (and his only major accolade since receiving a Razzie for "The Phantom Menace" back in 2000), Best credited director George Lucas with giving him the freedom to define the voice. "I know you're somewhere counting your money," he added.

In the animated shorts category, the group honored Aardman's latest Wallace and Gromit outing, "A Matter of Loaf and Death," with its main prize while celebrating specific contributions associated with Disney-produced "Glago's Guest" and DreamWorks' "Secrets of the Furious Five."

Individual "Panda" prize winners included Dustin Hoffman for voice acting, Tang Heng for production design

and Nico Marlet for character design. Stevenson and co-helmer Mark Osborne shared feature directing honors, while Hans Zimmer and John Powell won for music. In the spirit of collaboration, 27 people crowded onstage to accept the “Panda” feature award.

The night’s special Winsor McCay Award recipients were Wallace and Gromit godfather Nick Park, “Beavis and Butthead” creator Mike Judge and Pixar pioneer John Lasseter.

“I was the schmuck who turned down ‘Toy Story,’ ” Billy Crystal said in introducing Lasseter for the kudo. Crystal thanked Lasseter for immortalizing him as “Monsters, Inc.” character Mike Wazowski in his grandchildren’s eyes.

The evening was hosted by another actor best known for his animated alter ego, “SpongeBob SquarePants” star Tom Kenny.

## **PRODUCTION**

### **Animated Feature**

“Kung Fu Panda,” DreamWorks Animation

### **Animated Home Entertainment Production**

“Futurama: The Beast With a Billion Backs,” The Curiosity Company in association with 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment

### **Animated Short Subject**

“Wallace & Gromit: A Matter of Loaf and Death,” Aardman Animations Ltd.

### **Animated Television Commercial**

United Airlines “Heart,” Duck Studios

### **Animated Television Production**

“Robot Chicken: Star Wars Episode II,” ShadowMachine

### **Animated Television Production Produced for Children**

“Avatar: The Last Airbender,” Nickelodeon

### **Animated Video Game**

“Kung Fu Panda,” Activision

## **INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **Animated Effects**

Li-Ming Lawrence Lee “Kung Fu Panda,” DreamWorks Animation

### **Character Animation in a Feature Production**

James Baxter “Kung Fu Panda,” DreamWorks Animation

### **Character Animation in a Television Production or Short Form**

Pierre Perifel “Secrets of the Furious Five,” DreamWorks Animation

### **Character Design in an Animated Feature Production**

Nico Marlet, “Kung Fu Panda,” DreamWorks Animation

### **Character Design in an Animated Television Production or Short Form**

Nico Marlet, “Secrets of the Furious Five,” DreamWorks Animation

**Directing in an Animated Feature Production**

John Stevenson & Mark Osborne, "Kung Fu Panda," DreamWorks Animation

**Directing in an Animated Television Production or Short Form**

Joaquim Dos Santos, "Avatar: The Last Airbender: Sozin's Comet Pt. 3," Nickelodeon

**Music in an Animated Feature Production**

Hans Zimmer & John Powell, "Kung Fu Panda," DreamWorks Animation

**Music in an Animated Television Production or Short Form**

Henry Jackman, Hans Zimmer & John Powell, "Secrets of the Furious Five," DreamWorks Animation

**Production Design in an Animated Feature Production**

Tang Heng, "Kung Fu Panda" – DreamWorks Animation

**Production Design in an Animated Television Production or Short Form**

Tang Heng, "Secrets of the Furious Five," DreamWorks Animation

**Storyboarding in an Animated Feature Production**

Jen Yuh Nelson, "Kung Fu Panda," DreamWorks Animation

**Storyboarding in an Animated Television Production or Short Form**

Chris Williams, "Glago's Guest," Walt Disney Animation Studios

**Voice Acting in an Animated Feature Production**

Dustin Hoffman, Voice of Shifu, "Kung Fu Panda," DreamWorks Animation

**Voice Acting in an Animated Television Production or Short Form**

Ahmed Best, Voice of Jar Jar Binks, "Robot Chicken: Star Wars Episode II," ShadowMachine

**Writing in an Animated Feature Production**

Jonathan Aibel & Glenn Berger, "Kung Fu Panda," DreamWorks Animation

**Writing in an Animated Television Production or Short Form**

Tom Root, Douglas Goldstein, Hugh Davidson, Mike Fasolo, Seth Green, Dan Milano, Matthew Senreich, Kevin Shinick, Zeb Wells, Breckin Meyer, "Robot Chicken: Star Wars Episode II," ShadowMachine

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