

## Few films shined in '94

By Henry Herx and Gerri Pare  
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — The silver screen glittered during the past year with more cubic zirconia than true screen gems. So slim were the pickings that Tinseltown is said to be whispering about the difficulty of finding Oscar candidates.

The following is a list of some of the year's better efforts, with U.S. Catholic Conference classifications and Motion Picture Association of America ratings:

- **"Forrest Gump:"** Director Robert Zemeckis' story about a slow-witted overachiever (Tom Hanks) never loses focus on the title character's emotional and spiritual development (A-III — adults; PG-13 — parents are strongly cautioned that some material may be inappropriate for children under 13).

- **"Hoop Dreams:"** Documentary follows two black youths from Chicago's inner city whose hopes of playing professional basketball sustain them through the pressures and disappointments of high-school competition (A-II — adults and adolescents; PG-13).

- **"The Lion King:"** Disney production provides an allegory of a lion coming of age and learning to assume adult responsibility (A-I — general patronage; G — general audiences).

- **"Quiz Show:"** Director Robert Redford's reconstruction of the late-1950s TV quiz show scandal probes how basic ethical considerations got shoved aside in favor of greed (A-II; PG-13).

- **"Vanya on 42nd Street:"** Director Louis Malle shifts between the real world and that of the theater in filming Andre Gregory's production of "Uncle Vanya," Anton Chekhov's 1899 play about the domestic tensions and romantic complications within a Russian family (A-II; PG).

- **"The War:"** Director Jon Avnet's anti-war parable about a Vietnam vet (Kevin Costner) who encourages his children to befriend rather than fight some bullies is only partly successful because of its preachy tone (A-II; PG-13).

Among the subtitled imports were several films worth searching for:

- **"Eat Drink Man Woman:"** Three grown daughters weather unexpected romances while living with their Taiwanese father (Sihung Lung), who ex-

presses his love for them by cooking gourmet meals in a movie seasoned with subtle humor and a benevolent view of the human condition (A-III; no rating).

- **"Germinal:"** Social justice themes dominate this adaptation of Emile Zola's novel about the working conditions of 19th-century coal miners who go on a strike (A-III; R — restricted).

- **"La Scorta:"** Drama focusing on the bodyguards assigned to protect a judge from Mafia hit men in this tribute to those who risk their lives to fight organized crime (A-III; no rating).

- **"Sunday's Children:"** This drama about the tensions between an 8-year-old boy and his volatile minister-father provides insights about the lifelong effects a parent's behavior can have on his offspring (A-III; no rating).

Herx is director and Pare is on the staff of the U.S. Catholic Conference Office for Film and Broadcasting.



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