

# VES Awards: 'Apes' Wins Top Live-Action Movie Prize; 'Big Hero 6' Leads All With Five Nods

By [Erik Pedersen](#) and [David Bloom](#) February 4, 2015 10:38pm



[Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes](#) took home the top film prize tonight at the 13th annual [VES Awards](#). The VFX team of Joe Letteri (right), Ryan Stafford, Matt Kutcher, Dan Lemmon, Hannah Blanchini picked up the trophy for Outstanding Visual Effects in a Visual Effects-Driven Photoreal/Live Action Feature Motion Picture during the ceremony at the Beverly Hilton.

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The win puts director Matt Reeves' *Apes* squarely in Oscar's cross hairs as the VES Awards has predicted the Academy Award for Best Visual Effects 10 times in its 13-year history. Interesting to note: One of the years they didn't match up was in 2011, when *Rise Of The Planet Of The Apes* took the VES Award but *Hugo* snared the Oscar. Letteri also was nominated for his team's work on *The Hobbit: Battle Of The Five Armies*.



But the biggest winner by far tonight was Walt Disney Animation Studios' [Big Hero 6](#). Coming in tied for the most nominations with five, the big squishy robot won them all, including Animation in an Animated Feature Motion Picture. Disney's Imagineers also won for their *Ratatouille* ride at the company's Paris theme park.

It's a substantial consolation after winning just once at [last week's Annie Awards](#), for Animated Effects in an Animated Production. *The Boxtrolls* from Laika also had five nominations but went home empty-handed.

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Another great ape also caused quite a stir at the Beverly Hilton: Maya, a photo-real 100% CG orangutan who starred in an ad for energy supplier SSE. The campaign took home three VES Awards for the primate who visits a city and experiences energy in all its manifestations. The ad was set to a wistful Nat King Cole ballad.



[Game Of Thrones](#) dominated the TV side with three wins including Outstanding Visual Effects in a Visual Effects-Driven Photoreal/Live Action Broadcast Program. Tonight's only other multiple winner was *X-Men: Days Of Future Past*, as the society otherwise sprinkled awards widely among live-action films.

VES Executive Director Eric Roth also used the bully pulpit at the start of the evening to demand more respect for the overstressed, overstretched artists and technologists involved in visual effects. VFX workers, he said, "deserve respect for putting butts in \$12 theater seats. The true stars of Hollywood today and around the world are in visual effects and we believe the rest of the world needs to know that."

Patton Oswalt emceed the event again this year, and fired off several entertaining jokes, noting that the society keeps bringing him back because he makes them all feel "tan and thin" by comparison.



He chided WETA, the folks behind *The Hobbit* and *Lord Of The Rings* movies, for not using him instead of more normally proportioned people.

“I’m the Channing Tatum of the digital Shire, and I could have saved you millions,” he said.

Later, technical problems interrupted the presentations by willowy *Vikings* star Alyssa Sutherland, already close to 6 feet tall and perched on 6-inch heels for the night. Oswalt eventually came to her rescue, saying, “They sent a hobbit out to rescue an Amazon. Welcome to the VES Awards.” Then he offered up a prize for Sutherland, “Best awkward gorgeous woman standing at a dimly lit gold podium.”

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