

Vietnamese-French actress wins César

HÀ NỘI — Vietnamese-French actress Phạm Linh Đan won the César Prize for her portrayal of Chinese pianist Miao Lin in the French movie *The Beat My Heart Skipped* (*De Battre Mon Coeur S'est Arête*).

Đan received the prize last Saturday at the movie awards night in Châtelet, Paris.

The film, a remake of independent US movie *Fingers*, tells the story of a young man who must choose between music and a life of crime.

The film's new twist has protagonist Tom receive help from a beautiful young virtuoso Chinese pianist. Miao Lin, a stranger in France who doesn't speak a word of French, inspires Tom by her passion for music. Tom's father is a gangster and his mother a concert pianist, and he takes after both parents: The movie's original title derives from Tom's ability to ball his fingers into a fist to beat money out of his father's reluctant debtors and then uncurl them to tickle the ivories in interpretations of classical masterpieces.

Linh Đan's portrayal of

Miao Lin won the actress the Best Female Newcomer prize at the 31st Césars.

Thirteen years ago, Linh Đan was nominated for the same prize for her portrayal of Camille in the movie *Indochine*, which was Linh Đan's film debut with French movie-star Catherine Deneuve.

Two years later, Linh Đan played the main character in *Jamila*, a movie which was co-produced by Germany and Kyrgyzstan. However, Đan's movie career was against her family's wishes, and she was forced to abandon film acting in 1994.

In 2001, Linh Đan studied at the Lee Strasberg Institute in the United States. She returned to the screen with Lu Ann in the French movie *Les Maîtres Joueurs* (*The Gamblers*) and continued her comeback as Miao Lin in 2004.

"Director Jacques Audiard gave me a second chance," said Đan in an interview in a French newspaper on Sunday. "I present my prize to my parents who are worried about me when I decide to go down the cinema road." — VNS



Fingers: Matt Dillon and Pham Linh Đan pose for photographs at the BAFTA awards ceremony in London on February 19. — AFP/VNA Photo

UK awards young Billy Elliot co-stars

LONDON — Three teenagers who played the title role in *Billy Elliot – The Musical* shared a top acting prize at Britain's premier theatre awards on Sunday, beating film star Ewan McGregor.

James Lomas, George Maguire, both 15, and Liam Mower, 13, picked up the Laurence Olivier award for best actor in a musical at a London ceremony.

They took turns playing the boy from a mining village who defies his strict father to fulfil his dream of becoming a ballet dancer in the stage version of the hit film.

"It's amazing, I am a bit overwhelmed," Maguire told BBC television. "The show has changed my life completely."

The boys were unknown before they were picked from 3,000 hopefuls at an open audition. They had to share the role because of the number of performances each week and the physical demands of the role.

The trio beat *Star Wars* actor McGregor, who was nominated for his role in the classic musical *Guys and Dolls*.

Other winners included veteran American actor Brian Dennehy, whose portrayal of Willy Loman in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* earned him the best actor award.

Young Japanese travelling again before college

TOKYO — The trend for young Japanese to travel overseas before they finish college, which has been sluggish in recent years due to the recession and bad job

Beijing for 32,000 yen.

These trips were popular in the late 1980s and early 1990s when Japan's economy was booming. But with the collapse of the

But things have been improving recently. JTB Corp saw a 2.5-fold increase in its student tours from the previous year.

There are some changes

and concentrated on famous sightseeing spots.

Mari Shimamura, the author of the book *Hello Work of Overseas Trips*, said the days of long trips on a shoe-

people travelling abroad has been decreasing year after year. Justice Ministry figures from 2004 show those in their 20s accounted for 18.5 per cent of the total, down 5