

THE CampChuck REVIEWER

A nonprofit subsidiary of CampChuck

THIRTY FOURTH ANNUAL EDITION

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February 18, 2013

Editor, critic, layout, distribution, and general factotum ...



Meryl Streep Co-signs for a CampChuck Retirement Villa

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The 85th ANNUAL ACADEMY AWARDS Nominations

Oscar Night: Sunday, February 24

Best Picture

Amour

Argo

Beasts of the Southern Wild Benh Zeitlin

Django Unchained

Les Misérables

Life of Pi

Lincoln

Silver Linings Playbook

Zero Dark Thirty

Best Director

Michael Haneke

Benh Zeitlin

Ang Lee

Steven Spielberg

David O. Russell

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Predictions Summarized

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Best Actor

Bradley Cooper *Silver Linings Playbook*

Daniel Day-Lewis *Lincoln*

Hugh Jackman *Les Misérables*

Joaquin Phoenix *The Master*

Denzel Washington *Flight*

Best Actress

Jessica Chastain *Zero Dark Thirty*

Jennifer Lawrence *Silver Linings Playbook*

Emmanuelle Riva *Amour*

Quvenzhané Wallis *Beasts of the Southern Wild*

Naomi Watts *The Impossible*

Best Supporting Actor

Alan Arkin *Argo*

Robert De Niro *Silver Linings Playbook*

Philip Seymour Hoffman *The Master*

Tommy Lee Jones *Lincoln*

Christoph Waltz *Django Unchained*

Best Supporting Actress

Amy Adams *The Master*

Sally Field *Lincoln*

Anne Hathaway *Les Misérables*

Helen Hunt *The Sessions*

Jacki Weaver *Silver Linings Playbook*

Indications of Age

Both the youngest and oldest ever nominated for Best Actress vie for Oscar this year (Quvenzhané Wallis, 9 and Emmanuelle Riva, 85).

The only octogenarian to win an acting Oscar was Jessica Tandy at age 80 (male or female, none for Best Supporting). No actor under 20 has ever won a best acting Oscar (male or female, although 3 under 20 won Best Supporting Actress Oscars).

No other application of actors' ages stirs especially into this year's Oscar races. However, some curious observations do pop up from Academy Awards history.

About 75% of the Best Acting Oscars fall into a 20 year age range. For women, the range is 20-39. For men, it's 30-49. For Best Supporting Actor and Actress, the 20 year range tamps down closer to half the awards. While women in their 30s and men in their 40s still tend to have the best chances of winning, women in their 40s become about as likely to win a Best Supporting Oscar.

Actors in their 50s, 60s, and 70s win Best Supporting Actress Oscars evenly. Men, however, win Supporting Oscars twice as often in each of those age ranges.

Gold predictions this year: best actor, age 55; actress, 22; supporting actor, 66; supporting actress, 30.

(Underlined nominees equal CampChuck predictions)

Key Phrase: “Entrusted to Us”

The Kennedy-led moonshot is no longer a sufficient analogy for addressing global climate change. Nothing short of recasting the culture of manifest destiny stands a chance of mobilizing our national character widely enough and soon enough.

The United States expanded from “sea to shining sea” and beyond. We tapped territory and resources as they never had been before. America could realize an evolved version of that manifest destiny. It could lead the world away from consumption run rampant. It could manifest a destiny that sets the standard for tapping resources sustainably. Only a reawakened and revitalized culture will extend life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness from generation to shining generation.

Global climate change, along with crippling depletions and pollutions, threatens our children. No less than the manifest destiny that labeled America great can sustain greatness for generations to come ... though now our destiny must manifest recognition of our relative place in nature.

first use by John L. Sullivan in 1845:

“the right of our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federated self-government entrusted to us”

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CampChuck continues as it has **since 1992, matching every subscription dollar for dollar**. All subscriptions – more than \$31,000 plus CampChuck’s 100% match of \$31,000 -- have funneled through CampChuck to the Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) and Food Banks. Whether you subscribe at the official \$5 level or the average participation of \$30, think sustainable economic practice and the golden rule. And think access to CampChuck’s newsletters.

RMI helps individuals and communities and businesses and governments to make money, yes, make money, by being smart about the environment. By research and science, by education and negotiation, by example, the Rocky Mountain Institute helps us ... and the U.S. ... and the world “us” to make long term economic sense by making long term environmental sense. Also, CampChuck continues its encouragement of the fundamental human sharing embodied by the “Food Banking” concept.

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Manufactured Mailbag

Dear Editor,

Like, you retired. You hired out as contractor somewhere. You retired from that. You went back to HP when they called, then retired again. Man, I’m worried your movie priorities are a meltdown waiting to happen.

A friend, Los Angeles

Dear friend,

I’ll just say each transpired as appropriate. Here’s a retirement angle my father used to kid about. He told people I essentially retired right after college for several years (about 9) before starting a professional career that substantially shaped about three decades. It somewhat surprised my dad that a professional career, not to mention savings for retirement, would ever be part of my journey.

Ed.

Dear Editor,

Movies on a smartphone or a tablet doesn’t do it for me. I’ll tell you what I want. Project high resolution films from my wireless mini device, not just on walls. Stream them onto a tunable “big screen” in the air in front of me.

Ennis Novaton, Eureka, CA.

Dear Ennis,

A big screen does matter. It seems like there are a few obstacles to overcome. I’d say that science fiction movie plots are already working on it. When it’s time, wait for version 3.0 and driven-down consumer pricing.

Ed.

In the alphabetical list of films below, find brief context for the Oscar predictions in this shorter version of “The CampChuck Reviewer.” (four pages instead of eight, because of a combination of sloth and active engagement in our inaugural re-retirement getaway, snowbirding in southern Arizona for six weeks)

Amour: Picture, Director, Actress

8

An intimate little foreign language film, it and its director Michael Haneke have no chance to win. Neither does the oldest ever Best Actress nominee, Emmanuelle Riva, whose character fades toward death from multiple strokes. The French-style, matter of fact qualities of this film keep it modest. It’s nice that Oscar would tip his hat to the routines of dying and devoted caretaking in “Amour” but winning would be out of proportion with the deserved respect.

Argo: Picture, Supporting Actor

4

Despite a prediction-quavering string of pre-Oscar award wins, only one film since 1932 (“Driving Miss Daisy,” 1989) has won Best Picture without its director being nominated. Ben Affleck’s film works especially well, achieving tension while downplaying typical Hollywood overkill (except for the ending). Alan Arkin flavors “Argo” nicely but doesn’t stand out in the competitive supporting actor category.

Beasts of the Southern Wild: Picture, Director, Actress

9

Being small and poetic toward weird stops any chance to win for this film or its director, Benh Zeitlin, although this is what makes for an interesting, alternative night at the movies. Tugging, almost haunting in her little girl maturity, Quvenzhané Wallis should not be too quickly dismissed for Best Actress Gold just because she’s 9 years old. Alas, her youngest-ever age and the type of film will line her up behind more competitive, better known performances.

Django Unchained: Picture, Supporting Actor

10

Director Quentin Tarantino, again, shows masterful flare, scene for scene. He disregards that more violence doesn’t make a violent movie a better movie. Serious respect for his evocative depictions of slave treatment is undermined by his playful filmmaker core. Christoph Waltz rides his likable edge with the same aplomb he employed playing an Oscar winning villain in Tarantino’s “Inglourious Basterds” – but not enough to Oscar him again.

Flight: Actor

5

Denzel Washington does a marvelous job getting us to root for him despite his character’s alcohol and drug addicted arrogance. After the nail biting airplane crash scene, the Hollywood scripting travels a personal journey that Washington makes especially real. Denzel, however, is one of those A+ actors who won’t get a third Oscar merely because he was excellent in a film that optimized its stock elements.

The Impossible: Actress

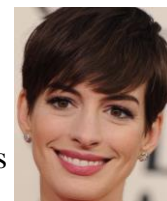
6

It is not quite fair to say that Naomi Watts had an easier time being excellent compared with the other Best Actress nominees. Nonetheless, as a loving doctor, wife and mother suffering a devastating tsunami that nearly kills her, the acting challenge in this stomach-wrenching film is strangely more dismissable compared with the story environments in Jennifer Lawrence’s and Jessica Chastain’s films.

Les Misérables: Picture, Actor, Supporting Actress

11

This sincerely overwrought approach to musical cinema succeeds and drags for the same reason. Delivering the ambitious vision of this filmmaking, Hollywood flavoring will win Anne Hathaway an Oscar and keep it from Hugh Jackman. She’ll win, not merely because she wrings every ounce of pathos out of the economic injustice of early 19th century Paris. She’ll win because penetrating close ups show off not only how well she sings and acts, but also how beautiful she still looks while playing convincingly wretched. You can claim analogous things about Hugh Jackman, but it’s just too tiring to experience his heavily burdened life in this difficult- to-digest operatic format. Both excellent, Anne is a melodic elixir. Hugh is an expository overdose.



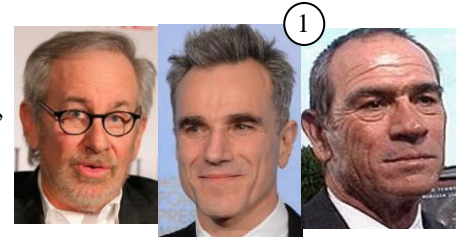
Life of Pi: Picture, Director

13

Once again, it’s worth going to a movie just knowing that Ang Lee is the director. With “Life of Pi” he has risen to a difficult challenge. He’s delivered a brilliant visual rendering of a story that is literally adrift in the ocean. A shipwrecked young man drifts and drifts on a lifeboat with a wild tiger. Other wild animals and scene locations wrap around the storytelling, but staying enriched by this film can’t help but be harder work than it should be.

Lincoln: Picture, Director, Actor, Supporting Actor, Supporting Actress

Steven Spielberg is the best film director alive (or more conservatively, the best commercially remarkable director alive). With Ben Affleck not even nominated, Spielberg will have no difficulty with “Lincoln” becoming his third Best Director Oscar (“Schindler’s List,” 1993; “Saving Private Ryan,” 1998). With Affleck and his “Argo” notching wins in so many other awards venues, a Best Picture Oscar for “Lincoln” is less sure. Stir in the depth and breadth of life that Daniel Day-Lewis breathes into America’s most iconic human being. Count the factors from casting and performances all around, to the historical pith for then and now, to audaciously narrowing the focus of this film to a four month period. Note that only one film has ever won Best Picture without its director even being nominated, “Lincoln” should and will wrest Best Picture Gold from “Argo.” Day-Lewis will surely win his third Oscar. Sally Field will not. However significant her supporting role is, she is ultimately overshadowed by the Abe-ness of the film and more so by the glow of Anne Hathaway in “Les Misérables.” Tommy Lee Jones, more than Field, fuels the historical weight and political muster of the story. Actually, just the visual language in his rumpled expressions says Oscar for Jones this year.



The Master: Actor, Supporting Actor, Supporting Actress

Only Joaquin Phoenix rises above the randomness of this story about a cult guru. Phoenix combines a vulnerable intensity with a unique physical posture that would be a top Oscar contender in a better realized film and a non-Daniel-Day-Lewis year. Philip Seymour Hoffman is always a master actor, but not enough so to pull an Oscar out of a film that only partially gels. Amy Adams adds a creditable turn to a career that is advancing admirably well.

The Sessions: Supporting Actress

Tricky, Helen Hunt plays a professional who offers medically prescribed sex therapy, in this case to a quadriplegic who had never experienced sex. Hunt manages, with grace, one of cinema’s better justified reasons for naked. A stubborn puritanism lingers around screening nudity. This boosts Hunt’s “courage rating” somewhat artificially, perhaps more so because she is now a 49-year-old beauty. Despite all this in a lead actress sized supporting role, the name Anne Hathaway will still emerge from the envelope.

Silver Linings Playbook: Picture, Director, Actor & Actress, Supporting Actor & Actress

The dark horse with Oscar legs this year, this film boasts nominations in all of the major categories. The way it injects mental health issues into a romantic comedy formula, it could have tripped up or at least trivialized itself, but this film works surprisingly well. Bradley Cooper’s performance may be key to lifting the script above formula, but, as with the film and David O. Russell’s direction, he doesn’t seem destined to become classically memorable. Cooper’s regular guy, sex appeal wraps well around the character’s off putting behaviors. It’s impressive, but still in the realm of a People’s Choice award, not the most prestigious film award. Robert De Niro showcases better than he’s been shown in recent years, but not enough above formula. Jacki Weaver runs the most forgettable course in all the acting races. Dark horse legs will only score Oscar for Jennifer Lawrence. Lawrence demonstrates acting range and a nice fit between a sensitive reality in “Winter’s Bone” and a blockbuster heroine in “The Hunger Games.” She’s a darling big talent with something of a quirky appeal. She’s primed to run young to this first Oscar.



Zero Dark Thirty: Picture, Actress

Well done as it is, this film manipulates our curiosity about torture and finally vanquishing Osama bin Laden. This (and some nagging controversy about the source and fact of certain content particulars) somewhat dismisses the snub that Kathryn Bigelow received no director nomination. Anyway, the film doesn’t say Oscar the way it did for her deserving Best Picture/Director coup with “Hurt Locker.” Rising star Jessica Chastain plays a relentlessly focused CIA agent. The role carries a certain “been there, done that” quality *except* that this is a young female agent. Call it fresh for that reason, and Oscar chances brighten. Allow it to be largely irrelevant for that reason, and Oscar chances dim just enough in the face of a more complicated performance by rising star Jennifer Lawrence.

The circled number next to each of the films indicates a CampChuck satisfaction ranking of the thirteen different films in the six major categories.