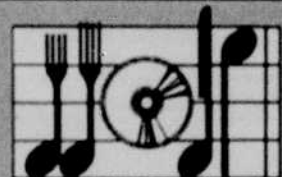


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OSCARS

NOMINATIONS

Continued from Page 7

category. A major oversight if there ever was one.

For Best Costume Design, *Little Women* will most likely take the honors, even though *Priscilla: Queen of the Desert* is far more daring in its ideas.

The mysteries continue in the Cinematography lineup with the pathetic omission of *Pulp Fiction* and inclusion of megadad Wyatt Earp. The main competition in this category lies between *Forrest Gump* and *Legends of the Fall*. Bet on *Gump* to continue its Oscar sweep.

For Art Direction, *Interview with a Vampire* will claim its sole Oscar of the evening. Even though *Gump* is also up for a nomination, it can't hold a candle to the Gothic grandeur of Anne Rice's vision.

The Foreign Picture enclave has me baffled. Since most of the nominees didn't see the light of day in Eugene, I have to side with *Eat Drink Man Woman* for its title alone.

In the screenplay categories, no guessing is needed. The smart money rests with *Pulp Fiction* for Best Original and *Forrest Gump* for Best Adapted. Although both of these sections are crammed with strong competition, these two "favorite sons" of the Academy have nothing to fear.

The Major Awards

Now we get down to the nitty gritty. The awards that everyone waits the whole night to see. By now, most of the audience witnessing the awards in Los Angeles is bombed out of their minds. Hollywood types have gone weird and giddy, and randomly jabber when called forward. It is the peak hour and everyone is ready.

The Sacred Six are at hand. For Best Director, my heart says Quentin Tarantino, the best talent to come out of the woodwork for some time. Though he still may be a bit green around the gills, his accomplishment with *Pulp Fiction* is redefining the way films are viewed. However, my gut tells another story. Look for Robert Zemeckis to steal this one in light of *Forrest*

CATEGORIES

Continued from Page 7

determined that John Travolta and Samuel Jackson both had leading roles," says the IFP's Dawn Hudson. Golden Globe voters and balloting in the new Screen Actors Awards mirrored the Academy selections. So, too, did nominations in Britain's Bafta awards.

Although the Academy's actors branch can put a performer in any category it chooses, Miramax asked it to consider Travolta for the lead and Jackson as a secondary player.

The fear was that if the two actors went head-to-head, their votes would be split and both would be shut out. (Morgan Freeman thus may have knocked Tim Robbins, his co-star in *The Shawshank Redemption*, from this year's best actor race.)

The acting categories have had a few oddities in the past. George Burns was in nearly every scene of 1976's *The Sunshine Boys*, but won for best supporting actor. In the same awards, Louise Fletcher won best actress for *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, even though she played a secondary role.

Timothy Hutton was a relative newcomer before *Ordinary People*, and would have lost badly to Robert De Niro for *Raging Bull* if he had been in the lead category. Hopkins, on the other hand, was a huge presence in *The Silence of the Lambs* — even when he wasn't on screen.

Gump's staggering success.

For Best Supporting Actress, call up the long overdue Dianne Weist for her role in Woody Allen's *Bullets on Broadway*. Uma Thurman (*Pulp Fiction*) also might have an outside chance at this one (I wish), but it's unlikely.

For Best Supporting Actor, no contest. Martin Landau (*Ed Wood*) will take it home for two reasons. One, his role as an aging Bela Legosi is flawless. Two, Landau has one foot in the grave, a hit with the Academy. Can you say Jack Palance?

The Best Actress slot is also a no-brainer. Jodie Foster did everything but speak English in her role as a backwater simpleton in *Neil*. It's another case of the *Rainman* syndrome; an actor holding court with a cinematic handicap is worth the gold every time.

Things get a little sticky in the Best Actor category. Tom Hanks is the most deserving, but his token victory last year for *Philadelphia* might be a little too recent in the minds of the Academy. If this is true, watch for Paul Newman (*Nobody's Fool*) to take the honors.

And finally... Best Picture. Once again my heart and gut are at odds. If the world was a fair place, *Pulp Fiction* would

take this honor hands-down. Tarantino's dark, roller coaster comedy rocked my world and gave me new hope for the future of Hollywood. But the *Gump* juggernaut is not so easily stopped.

In light of the film's staggering success and phenomenal "feel-good" status, *Forrest Gump* will finish its sweep by collecting the Best Picture statuette. Once again, we see the cryptic *Rainman* syndrome coming into play. Every major character in *Gump* suffers from some affliction or handicap. This "gimping for the gold" strategy may be a shameless tactic, but it works.

In the end, *Gump* will take home no less than seven statues, leaving the competition in the dust. Its closest contender will be *Pulp Fiction*, who will collect a maximum of two Oscars, with luck.

Other worthy hopefuls such as *Quiz Show* and *The Shawshank Redemption* will draw complete blanks this year in the shadow of the man they call Forrest.

One disclaimer, however. If by some strange circumstance Tarantino manages to snag the Best Director Oscar, the tides will have turned against *Gump*, and *Pulp Fiction* will receive its rightful due.

Ah well, I can dream can't I.

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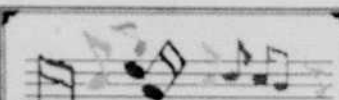
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