

■ Movie review

Oscar predictions: **'Million Dollar Baby' vs. 'The Aviator'**

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Unlike last year, when it was obvious that the hobbits and elves would rule Oscar night (and they did), this Academy Awards race looks tougher to call. Associated Press movie writers David Germain and Christy Lemire duke it out over several of the main categories:

**Best Picture**

Nominees: "The Aviator," "Finding Neverland," "Million Dollar Baby," "Ray," "Sideways"

GERMAIN: After eyesawing from "The Aviator" to "Million Dollar Baby," I'm back on board with Martin Scorsese's biopic of Howard Hughes. "The Aviator" may lack the emotional punch of "Million Dollar Baby," but it's an enormously admirable epic on a scale rarely seen today. Clint Eastwood's beautiful "Baby" might steal the trophy. "Ray" will earn its big prize for Jamie Foxx, while "Finding Neverland" is a worthy also-ran.

LEMIRE: "The Aviator" is gorgeous film — a technical triumph on every level — but it's ultimately hollow. You walk out afterward visually dazzled but no different than you were three hours earlier. "Million Dollar Baby" changes every molecule in your body, making you feel as if you've just gone 12 rounds, too. I'd love to see "Sideways" take it — lovely, subtle and poignant, it topped my top 10 list — but it's too small and too talky to win best picture.

**Best Director**

Nominees: Martin Scorsese, "The Aviator"; Clint Eastwood, "Million Dollar Baby"; Taylor Hackford,

"Ray"; Alexander Payne, "Sideways"; Mike Leigh, "Vera Drake"

LEMIRE: "Million Dollar Baby" wins and Eastwood wins. With his trademark spare style, he delivers a complete moviegoing experience, and it's astounding to see a filmmaker at the top of his game at age 74. "The Aviator" is simply not Scorsese's best work.

GERMAIN: "The Aviator" and "Million Dollar Baby" might end up splitting the picture and directing prizes, and if so, it's more likely Scorsese will win here while "Baby" takes best film. "The Aviator" has its flaws, but it's a masterfully orchestrated film, a blend of grand old Hollywood style and modern computer-generated trickery.

**Best Actor**

Nominees: Don Cheadle, "Hotel Rwanda"; Johnny Depp, "Finding Neverland"; Leonardo DiCaprio, "The Aviator"; Clint Eastwood, "Million Dollar Baby"; Jamie Foxx, "Ray"

GERMAIN: Not a weakling among this group (though Paul Giamatti of "Sideways" should have nosed out DiCaprio for a nomination). Cheadle's brought his game to a new level, Depp's a marvel of repressed emotion, DiCaprio's a dashing dynamo and Eastwood would be a lock to win if not for Jamie Foxx and his extraordinary emulation of Ray Charles. It's almost supernatural, how Foxx captured the cadences, body language and spirit of the man. Add in the fond sentiment for Charles, who died last year, and there's no way Foxx can lose.

LEMIRE: This one's easy. With Foxx, you completely forget you're

watching an actor and believe you're watching Ray Charles. He's that good. Cheadle makes a well-deserved name for himself, and Depp will get his due someday.

**Best Actress**

Nominees: Annette Bening, "Being Julia"; Catalina Sandino Moreno, "Maria Full of Grace"; Imelda Staunton, "Vera Drake"; Hilary Swank, "Million Dollar Baby"; Kate Winslet, "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind"

LEMIRE: This one's easy, too. In the rematch between Swank and Bening, which Swank won five years ago with her startling performance in "Boys Don't Cry," Swank wins again. As a feisty female boxer, her character has higher highs and lower lows; it's a more complex role. Bening is glorious to watch as an aging London stage diva, and it's the kind of showy role Oscar voters love, but without her there's not much more to say about "Being Julia." Winslet is delightful and Staunton is gracefully understated and Moreno ... well, it's her first film, and look at the splash she's made. She'll have a long career ahead of her.

GERMAIN: Swank clearly has the edge with a role far suppler even than that of "Boys Don't Cry." The only thing that could spoil her prospects is that some academy voters may hesitate over handing a second Oscar to an actress who doesn't have much of a body of work beyond "Boys" and "Baby." I'll stick with Swank, but the aging-actress theme may resonate on Bening's behalf; who knows when and if her colleagues will have another chance to give her an Oscar?

**Films so bad, they might just be GOOD**

From Ed Wood's "Plan 9 From Outer Space" to more recent flick "Are We There Yet?," terrible movies still rake in millions at the box office

BY RYAN NYBURG  
PULSE EDITOR

When one of the top films in the American box office is one of the most critically lambasted films this year, the question of why people see bad movies will often pop up. "Are We There Yet?," starring Ice Cube, has been called everything from "sour" to "woefully cynical." Yet the film has grossed more than \$61 million, including \$8.24 million last weekend.

While ignorance, boredom or simple bad taste are all possible reasons for why people see bad movies, another might be that some people actively seek out these terrible films.

"Sometimes people just want something that is a no-brainer," Flicks & Pics manager Tammy Depert said. "Some people will just rent anything that is on the new-release shelf. 'Catwoman' is awful, but people rent it. They might not know it's bad, but some of them do and rent it for a good laugh."

Movies that "are so bad that they're good" is a long standing cinema tradition. Ed Wood's cult classic "Plan 9 From Outer Space," considered by some the worst movie ever made, still receives retrospectives and screenings. In January, the DIVA in Eugene showed the film as part of its "Odd Sunday Film Seminar" series to an audience of more than 30 people. Many such films also received new levels of attention during the run of "Mystery Science Theater 3000," a

show where bad movies were given merciless running commentary.

"I had one customer tell me that he liked to see movies that are so bad he could have made them himself," said Matt Stilde, a guest service representative at the Willamette Street Hollywood Video. "Some people also just want escapism or to be anesthetized. After a long day at work or school, they want a movie they don't have to think about."

Stilde cited the "Resident Evil" movies and "Open Water" as recent bad movies that are popular, despite critics' warnings against them.

Videos are not the only venue through which people ingest bad cinema. Often, heading to the theater for the experience of watching a movie on the big screen is preferable.

"We get requests for all kinds of stuff, particularly teen comedies from the 1980s," Bijou Art-Cinemas manager Louis Thomas said. "But when we show them, no one shows up. What is popular is some of our 3-D movies. We're planning on showing some 1970s 3-D porn movies. They're terrible, but they're in 3-D, so it's fun."

Thomas said the attraction to such films mostly rests in humor.

"They have to be bad enough that they are hilarious," Thomas said. "It has to be bad in the acting, the writing, the costumes, the sets — 100-percent terrible. Then it's not a guilty pleasure; it becomes genuinely funny."

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