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The Academy Awards

Our critic picks her way amongst the garbage and the flowers.

BY ELEANOR MALIN

About the garbage, just a joke, readers. While some films and performances I really enjoyed got lost in the shuffle, and a few nominations seem miscast, still in all, 1985 was a vintage year for films, and filmgoers were treated to more roses than garbage. Memories enriched and sensibilities stretched by the offerings of the year, so it was lots of worthy people got nominated for worthwhile projects. Here are of my favorites:

My choice for *Best Actor* is **Dexter Gordon**, for his masterful portrayal of the

Cinema

saxophone man in *Round Midnight*. A real jazz player, his first big acting job, he rates extra credit for really playing the music, and sweetly, too, as he notes in the film. But he did put in the best work, consistently solid, never overplaying or messing around with the role; rather, delivering it, deftly. As I write this, it comes to me that *Round Midnight* also refers to the time of his life depicted in the film, drawing to a close, bonds broken, formed, extra work produced, situations dealt with in the twilight of his years, the *Round Midnight* of his life. Sweetly.

No big surprise, I cast my vote for **Bertrand Tavernier** as *Best Director*. Just for thinking of the project, he merits thanks. But he also delivers excellent performances from his cast. He chose good people to work on the film — Herbie Hancock for music, who picked James McFerrin to sing over the opening credits, for which he won a Grammy for best male jazz vocalist. Excellent camera work, delicately set and maintained atmosphere. For getting everything right, Bertrand Tavernier, *merci*.

For *Best Film*, (since *Round Midnight* didn't get a nomination) I vote for *Room with a View*. A charming film of E.M. Forster's Victorian novel, in retrospect, it seems strangely *au courant*. Two of the men in the cast are up for *Best Supporting Actor*, pretty people play other parts, lovely settings, a nice balance of story and acting, it holds up well. In a year that gave us Chernobyl, Irangate, a hole in the ozone layer, and more bad news about AIDS, this

film provided some welcome romantic relief.

For *Best Actress*, I choose **Sigourney Weaver**. As Ripley in *Aliens*, she was intelligent, cunning even, strong and assertive, brave, brave, brave. And still she was sexy. Women can be all the good things. She held her own amidst the pyrotechnics, hysteria and monumental special effects. And though *Aliens* is an action adventure, sci-fi and a sequel at that, it is the best film sequel ever made.

For *Best Supporting Actor*, **Dennis Hopper** for *Hoosiers* (really, *Blue Velvet*). Hopper did a lot of good work in films last year, and for his lunatic savagery in *Blue Velvet*, tacked on to his competent handling of a different sort of character entirely in *Hoosiers*, I'm guessing he will win.

For *Best Supporting Actress*, **Diane Wiest** for *Hannah and Her Sisters*. This Woody Allen film could win *Best Film*. A comedy about betrayal, drunken, disorderly, drugged relatives, in a world in which using your intelligence to figure out what's really going on can make you crazy, Allen manages to slip in some interesting thoughts no one else would dare to try on. ("If child abuse is going on in half the homes in America, it must be popular.") He's just kidding, folks.

As *Annie Hall* was a summation of Allen's eye view of dating, *Hannah and Her Sisters*, is the next step. Hannah has had the children, is raising them well, keeps her raggedy-emotioned family together, even as they are all using her, as Allen contemplates aging, mortality, and the universe.

Some other very good films were **Oliver Stone's** *Platoon*, which is up for 8 Academy Awards, with two fine performances by **Tom Berenger** and **Willem Dafoe** for *Best Supporting Actor* among them. I liked this film so well, it deserves a whole review of its own, and, space, time, and fate permitting, there will be one next month.

Also interesting, *Children of a Lesser God*, with good performances by **William Hurt** up for *Best Actor*, newcomer and truly deaf actress **Marlee Matlin**, for *Best Actress* and **Piper Laurie** for *Best Supporting Actress*. William Hurt gets to use double whammy, in that he is signing and speaking all the time, and speaking as Matlin signs.

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