

Review Politics make Oscars seem like soap opera fair

By J. Dana Haynes
Of The Print

To begin, this is not a movie review, per se. It's about the Academy Awards nominations, which were announced last week.

Secondly, this is not a list of predictions on winners and losers, per se. It's not even particularly about the awards ceremony, which will be held on Monday, April 9. This is about the nominations, which have proven quite fascinating again this year.

The thing to remember about the Oscars is that politics plays as large a role as talent in the event. "Hollywood" is a living, breathing entity, and it likes some people, dislikes others and has mood swings. These factors come into play in the Academy Awards and, for me at least, they're the soap opera stuff that makes it all so interesting.

The first and most obvious gem of gossip in the nominations is "Yentl" and Barbra Streisand. As you may recall, Streisand wrote, produced, directed, co-wrote the music, starred in and sang all the songs in "Yentl." To the best of my knowledge, she wasn't the best boy or transportation captain.

Surprise! Ms. Streisand received no nominations. Nary a one.

Streisand has never been popular with Hollywood. She's brash, opinionated, New-York based and (reportedly) hard to work with. Consequently, when a movie comes along with this much heart, soul and love, Hollywood turns its back. Pity.

Granted, she probably wouldn't deserve a nomination for producer or best score. But her acting is top-notch, maybe her best ever, and the directing is superior. Streisand managed to bring out great depths from her people and from the script. She's been maligned by the Academy, I'm afraid.

The next tidbit of interest is the category of best actor. Four of the five men up for the statue are English: Michael Caine, Tom Conti, Tom Courtnay and Albert Finney. The only Yank in the bunch is Robert Duvall.

Look to Duvall to win this one, since he's Paid His Dues as they say in Tinseltown. He's been around forever and has often been overlooked. This one may win it for him.

Best actress will also be a fun one to watch and a tough one to pick. Some railbirds are suggesting Shirley MacLaine and Debra Winger will knock each other out of the competition, the theory being that two strong roles in one movie ("Terms of Endearment") tend to cancel each other out (Ditto Albert Finney and Tom Courtnay in "The Dresser," which has yet to be released in Portland. Look for a review two weeks from now in *The Print*).

On the other hand, Meryl Streep probably won't win for "Silkwood," as she won last year for "Sophie's Choice." Jane Alexander hasn't "Paid Her Dues" yet (she's up for "Testament") and newcomer Julie Walters ("Educating Rita") is A) a rookie, B) English, and C) not Hollywood-ish. So that brings us full-circle back to Winger and MacLaine.

Any bets on MacLaine walking away with the statuette?

In the best flick category, "The Dresser" is getting rave reviews in New York and L.A., and may get the nod. But English films won best picture for the last two years with "Gandhi" and "Chariots of Fire." Will England take the category for an unprecedented three years in a row? Probably not, but then I didn't think foreign flicks could win two years in a row, either.

One aspect of this year's bunch and every year's bunch is the no-shows: Those flicks and persons who have been overlooked.

For me, there are two or three movies that should have appeared, but were too small or of the wrong genre for Hollywood.

The first is "A Christmas Story," based on the book "In God We Trust: Everyone Else

ACADEMY AWARDS LIST

Last week, the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences announced the nominees for the 56th annual Academy Awards competition. The following is a sample of some of the races.

Best Film:

"Terms of Endearment"
"The Right Stuff"
"The Big Chill"
"The Dresser"
"Tender Mercies"

Best Director:

Peter Yates "The Dresser"
Ingmar Bergman "Fanny and Alexander"
Mike Nichols "Silkwood"
Bruce Beresford "Tender Mercies"
James Brooks "Terms of Endearment"

Best Actress:

Shirley MacLaine "Terms of Endearment"
Debra Winger "Terms of Endearment"
Jane Alexander "Testament"
Meryl Streep "Silkwood"
Julie Walters "Educating Rita"

Best Actor:

Michael Caine "Educating Rita"
Tom Conti "Reuben, Reuben"
Robert Duvall "Tender Mercies"
Tom Courtnay "The Dresser"
Albert Finney "The Dresser"

Pays Cash" by humorist, columnist Gene Shepard.

"Christmas" is one of those small, obscure flicks that don't get good bookings (it opened here at the Milwaukie Cinema) and are often ignored. It starred Darren McGavin and Melinda Dillon and told the story of a nine-year-old boy growing up in a small town in the 30's, and his mad and brilliant attempts to make sure his folks get him a Red Ryder Carbine Action 200 Shot Range Rifle for Christmas.

The movie is pure Americana, in the finest tradition of Preston Sturges, Norman Rockwell and Pogo Possum (complete with the line said by every mother in history, "You can't have that, you'll put your eye out!").

Another movie that should have been mentioned was "The Return of the Jedi," the wrap-up to George Lucas' first Star Wars trioka.

"Jedi" is wonderful, and the three-part series will probably go down in history along with "The Wizard of Oz" and "Casa Blanca" as eternal favorites. "Jedi" is most likely the last Star Wars movie and deserved a nomination for best flick.

Walt Disney productions has finally hit home, after a decade or two of dismal drollery. "Something Wicked This Way Comes" was released last summer. It is based on Ray Bradbury's classic tale of ultimate evil and stars Jason Robards as the perfect, small-town, simple hero (a classic American character) and Englishman Jonathon Pryce as Mister Dark (owner of the Cooger and Dark Pan-American Pandemonium and Shadow Show), the essence of Evil (capital E).

Robards and Pryce are sensational as early 20th century, American Othello and Iago. Both should have been nominated as should the movie itself.

Of course, all of this is neither here nor there. Every year, everyone has some complaint about the Academy Awards nominations. But that's part of what makes the Oscars such a joy. It really is soap opera-like, with hidden intrigues, dark horses, sure bets and surprise upsets.

Now that's entertainment!

Buser-Molatore adds welding to sculpture

By Kristen Tonole
Of The Print

a fraction of the equipment we have in welding," Buser-Molatore said.

A new art class is being offered this spring for any students interested in welded sculpture.

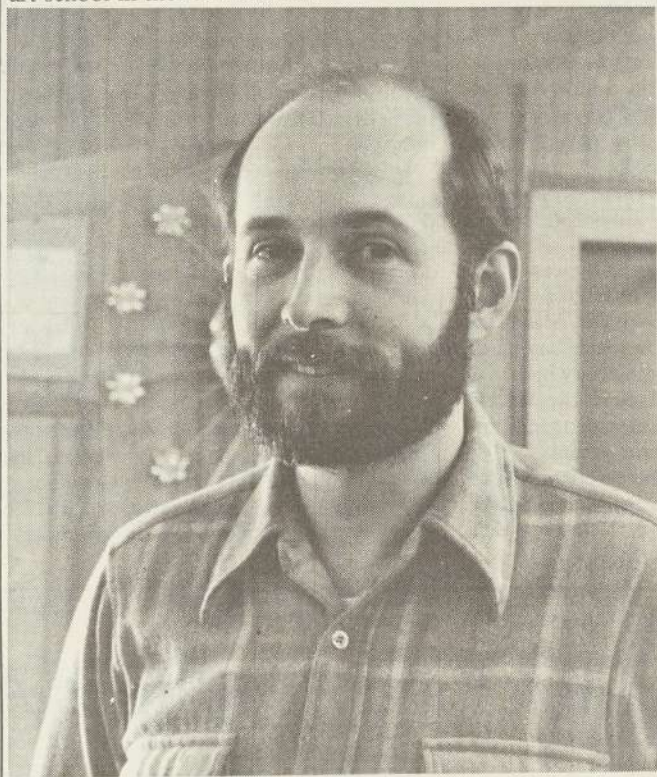
It will be taught by Welding Instructor Jeff Buser-Molatore, who has a degree in sculpture attained at the University of Oregon.

The format for the class will be to have students work out their own designs and adapt them in a way that might be easily executed in steel. They will then learn the necessary skills to weld their sculptures using the equipment in the shop.

"The class is unique in that people will not only be able to work with the welding stuff in the art department, but they will also have access to the thousands of dollars worth of equipment in the welding shop. There is not an art school in the state that has

Buser-Molatore is optimistic about turn-out for the class because it was offered four years ago in the summer and was popular then. Unfortunately, due to a heavy teaching load, he has had no time to offer it since then. "I think it's a good opportunity for students because they will all leave the class with a finished piece of art work to take home, some newly acquired welding skills, and a lot better understanding of the industrial and technological aspects that have become so popular in the art world," he said.

Students who are interested in taking the class can find it in the spring schedule under Art 291-Welded Sculpture. It will be taught on Fridays from 12-4 p.m. and is worth 2 credits of transferable art.



Jeff Buser-Molatore

Photo by Shelley Stone



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