

THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING OSCARS

A week before showtime, a full-on revolt

By **JAKE COYLE AND LINDSEY BAHR**
AP Film Writers

Would anyone — anyone at all — like to thank the academy?

This is normally the time of year when Oscar hopefuls are readying acceptance speeches that almost always begin with a few words of gratitude for the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences. But that sentiment has been hard to come by in the torturous and troubled lead-up to the 91st Academy Awards.

After a litany of public-relations disasters, backtracks and missteps, the latest dust-up surrounds the film academy's plans to remove four categories from the live portion of Feb. 24's broadcast, including cinematography and editing, arguably the two most foundational components of moviemaking. The academy, desperate to reverse sliding ratings, says a shortened show must go on.

On Wednesday evening, dozens of Hollywood heavyweights — including Martin Scorsese, Spike Lee, Brad Pitt, cinematographer Roger Deakins and director Damien Chazelle — issued an open-letter to the academy's leadership blasting the decision to not air the four awards, which also include live-action short and hair-styling and makeup, live on the ABC telecast.

"Relegating these essential cinematic crafts to lesser status in this 91st Academy Awards cere-



Oscar statuettes appear backstage at the 2017 Oscars in Los Angeles.

Photo by Matt Sayles/Invision

mony is nothing less than an insult to those of us who have devoted our lives and passions to our chosen profession," the group wrote. "When the recognition of those responsible for the creation of outstanding cinema is being diminished by the very institution whose purpose it is to protect it, then we are no longer upholding the spirit of the Academy's promise to celebrate film as a collaborative art form."

The academy responded with a letter of its own, blaming "inaccurate reporting and social media posts" for "a chain of misinformation." Signed by academy president John Bailey, a cinematographer, and other officers from the academy's board of governors, the let-

ter sought to assure members that the four winning speeches will be included in the broadcast (just not live, or with a walk to the stage) and that in future years, four to six different categories will be similarly truncated.

After years of #OscarSoWhite backlash, one infamous envelope mix-up and the reckoning that followed the expulsion of Harvey Weinstein from the academy, this year's Academy Awards drama has been self-inflicted. In response to last year's all-time low of 26.5 million viewers, the Oscars — the grandest and most glamorous award show ever created — are shrinking. And nobody likes it.

"People in general have a hard time with change.

Change is sometimes hard to swallow. And I think the way that the news came out, it came out in the wrong way," says Mary Zophres, one of the 54 members of the board of governors and a costume designer nominated this year for "The Ballad of Buster Scruggs." "But there is a need to make sure that the ratings are competitive."

The academy's headaches began after it last summer trotted out the induction of a "popular film Oscar." The plan sparked such outrage (Rob Lowe pronounced the film industry dead, "survived by sequels, tent-poles and vertical integration") that the new award was scuttled within a month.

Then Kevin Hart announced, himself, that he was hosting this year's awards. When many took issue with his old homophobic tweets, the comedian initially "chose to pass on the apology," inflaming the backlash. Within hours, he withdrew as host and, finally supplied an apology to the LGBTQ community. The Oscars are now host-less for only the fifth time in its 91-year history. The most recent, in 1989, resulted in an infamous duet between Snow White and Rob Lowe.

Other plans to tweak tradition also backfired. After first planning to limit the best song nominee performances, the academy confirmed that all songs will indeed be performed. "They

made the right decision to include all the songs," said Diane Warren, a nominee for the "RBG" song "I'll Fight." "It wouldn't be fair to just have two songs. That's basically saying those other songs don't matter."

Some have blamed ABC, which owns the Oscar broadcast rights for the next decade, for pressuring the academy into some of these measures. ABC declined to comment.

Still, the negative response from prominent academy members was more than the academy's leadership was expecting. Alfonso Cuarón, who's nominated for four Oscars including best cinematography, has been among the most vocal critics, declaring: "No one single film has ever existed without CINE-Matography and editing." Guillermo del Toro, whose "The Shape of Water" won best picture and best director at last year's ceremony, said cinematography and editing "are cinema itself."

"I don't like it. I don't think that's a cool deal. I'm an artist so I believe we've all worked really hard, we've nurtured our gifts and we should all be able to celebrate them with the world," says Regina King, a nominee for best supporting actress. "It just doesn't seem like 15 minutes is gonna make that big of a difference."

But the academy is insistent on getting the normally four hour-plus telecast down to three hours. Ratings for all award shows have declined in recent years, but it remains to be seen whether a shorter show will have any effect on larger viewing habit transformations.

WHAT TO DO

FESTIVALS

Prestige Wrestling: Tower of Snakes

•Friday, Feb. 22; 7-11 p.m.
www.prestigewrestling.net
•Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center, 1705 Airport Road, Hermiston

\$15-\$50. Features King Khash, "Filthy" Tom Lawlor, Simon Grimm, DJZ, Sonico, No Lives Matter, Team C4, Mike Santiago, Julian Whyt and more to be announced.

ART, MUSEUMS & AUTHORS

Raven Chacon

•Sunday, Feb. 17; 5-7 p.m.
•Crow's Shadow Institute of the Arts, 48004 St Andrews Road, Mission

www.crowshadow.org
\$10/suggested donation (no one will be turned away). The artist-composer-performer will present prints made during an artist-in-residence, as well as present a matinee performance of a newly commissioned composition. Members of the Nixyaawii Community School Drum Circle also will perform. Reception follows.

"On the Tip of my Tongue"

•Tuesday - Fridays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Saturdays, noon-4 p.m.
•Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St.

www.pendletonarts.org
Free. Features the collage artwork of Cory Peeke, professor of art at Eastern Oregon University and director of Nightingale Gallery. Also, latest work by Emily Taylor Cress is displayed in the Lorenzen Board Room Gallery. Runs through March 2.

"ArtWORKZ Junior Art Show & Competition"

•Monday - Saturdays; 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
•Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute, near Wildhorse Resort & Casino. www.tamastslíkt.org

\$10/adults, \$9/seniors, \$7/youths & students. Youths through age 18 compete for awards. Awards presentation is March 9 at 1 p.m. Exhibit runs through March 30. (Randy Melton, 541-429-7720).

"History in Photos from Wallowa County"

•Monday through Saturdays; noon-4 p.m.
•Joseph Center for Arts and Culture, 403 N. Main St., Joseph www.josephy.org
Free. Highlights historical photos and photographers in Wallowa County. Runs through Feb. 25.

"How it Looks on Paper"

•Monday - Thursdays; 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
•Betty Feves Memorial Gal-

lery, BMCC, 2411 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton.

Free. Features the work of Marie Noorani, who both creates and destroys as she takes apart and reassembles each piece. Gallery also open by appointment by calling 541-278-5952. Runs Feb. 18 through March 14. Artist reception is Thursday, March 14 from 4:30-6:30 p.m.

Chacon creates prints during artist residency

MISSION — People are invited to see the latest creative works of composer-performer-artist Raven Chacon.

The Navajo Nation man has been working with Judith Baumann, master printer at Crow's Shadow Institute of the Arts. Leading up to the world premier of a commissioned piece by Crow's Shadow and the Oregon East Symphony, Chacon has been participating in an artist-in-residence. The fine arts prints are based on his unique compositional notations.

The public can view Chacon's work, as well as hear a matinee performance of the commissioned piece. The event is Sunday at 1 p.m. at Crow's Shadow, 48004 St Andrews Road, Mission. Members of the Nixyaawii Community School drum circle also will perform. There is a suggested donation of \$10. However, marketing director Nika Blasser said no one will be turned away.

Chacon is the recipient of the United States Artists fellowship in music, The Creative Capital award in visual arts, The Native Arts and Cultures Foundation artist fellowship and the American Academy's Berlin Prize for music composition. He lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

MUSIC

Winter Chamber Music Festival

•Saturday, Feb. 16; 6:30 p.m.
•Vert Club Room, 345 S.W. Fourth St., Pendleton

www.oregoneastsymphony.org
\$25/general admission. Presented by the Oregon East Symphony, program features the premiere of a new work by Raven Chacon. (tickets also available via www.brownpapertickets.com).

Harmonious Funk

•Saturday, Feb. 16; 8 p.m. No cover
•Wildhorse Sports Bar, Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off I-84 Exit 216, Mission.

Megs McLean

•Friday, Feb. 22; Saturday, Feb. 23; 8 p.m. No cover
•Wildhorse Sports Bar, Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off I-84 Exit 216, Mission.

Expertease

•Friday, March 1; Saturday, March 2; 8 p.m. No cover
•Wildhorse Sports Bar, Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off I-84 Exit 216, Mission.

NIGHTLIFE

Karaoke w/DJ David

•Saturdays; 8 p.m.
•Riverside Sports Bar, 1501 Sixth St., Umatilla

BRIEFLY

For more information, contact Blasser at 541-276-3954, nika@crowshadow.org or visit www.crowshadow.org. For more about Chacon, go to www.spiderwebsinthesky.com.

Woolery Project event wrangles in Harms Way Band

PENDLETON — A Country Music Experience is set as a benefit event for The Woolery Project.

Featuring Jodi Harms, the singer-songwriter will offer people a chance to kick up their heels. Taking the stage with the western entertainer is the Harms Way Band, who will provide live music for listening and dancing. The Country Cowboy Experience kicks off with a chuckwagon dinner Saturday, March 2 at 5:30 p.m. in the Let'er Buck Room at the Pendleton Round-Up Grounds, 1205 S.W. Court Ave. The music starts at 6:30 p.m. In addition, there will be a no-host bar. Tickets are \$40 and are available at www.eventbrite.com.

The Woolery Project is raising money for a nonprofit event center in Arlington. For more information, contact info@thewooleryproject-inc.org or search Facebook.

Saturday Night Trivia

•Saturdays; 9 p.m.
•Midway Bar & Grill, 1750 N. First St., Hermiston

Free. Show what you know for fun and prizes.

Wino Wednesdays

•Wednesdays, 2-6 p.m.
•Echo Ridge Cellars, 551 N. Thiel-sten St., Echo

Karaoke at the Packard

•1st/3rd Wednesday, 9 p.m.-midnight
•The Packard Tavern, 118 S.E. Court Ave., Pendleton

No cover.

Wine Wednesday

•Wednesday, Feb. 13, 5-7 p.m.
•The Gathering Place at Bellinger's, 1823 S. Highway 395, Hermiston

No cover. Features tasting and music.

Thirsty Thursdays

•Third Thursday; 6 p.m.
•Midway Bar & Grill, 1750 N. First St., Hermiston

No cover. Hosts a local brewery offering tastings and food pairings.

LOL Comedy Jam

•Thursdays; 8 p.m.
•Wildhorse Sports Bar, Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off I-84 Exit 216, Mission.

Main St., Pendleton

No cover. Features martinis, mixology and music.

THEATER, STAGE, FILM & LECTURES

Sensory Friendly Movie

•Saturday, Feb. 16; 10:30 a.m.
•Hermiston Stadium 8 Cinema, 355 W. Theater Lane
www.facebook.com/arcofumatillacounty

\$5.50. In conjunction with The Arc Umatilla County, sensory-friendly screenings with lights up a little and volume down. Doors open at 10 a.m. "LEGO Movie 2: The Second Part."

"The House With A Clock In Its Walls"

•Saturday, Feb. 16; 2:15 p.m.
•SAGE Center, 101 Olson Road, Boardman

www.visitsage.com
\$3/person. Children must be accompanied by an adult. View movie and receive free bag of popcorn with admission. Water is available for purchase.

"Renegotiation of the Columbia River Treaty"

•Wednesday, Feb. 20, 6:45 p.m.
•Echo VFW Hall, 210 W. Bridge St.

Free. Craig Reeder will share about the importance of water and the upcoming discussions to take place about the treaty. The Echo Kiwanis are hosting a lasagna dinner at 6 p.m. for \$5. (RSVP by texting 541-379-6992). People do not have to eat to attend the presentation.

First Draft Writers' Series

•Thursday, Feb. 21; 7 p.m.
•Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St.

www.pendletonarts.org
Free. Features Barbara Drake (retired creative writing professor at Linfield College) and Monica Drake (currently teaches at Pacific Northwest College of Art), mother-daughter writers. Following the headline readings, there will be short open mic sessions for audience members.

HOT TICKETS

•The Rolling Stones. No Filter Tour. May 22, CenturyLink Field, Seattle. Tickets (\$94-\$494+) via www.ticketmaster.com

•Jackalope Jamboree. June 29, Happy Canyon Arena, Pendleton. Early bird tickets (\$35-\$55+) via www.brownpapertickets.com

Want to get your event listed in our calendar? Send information to community@eastoregonian.com, or c/o Tammy Malgesini, 333 E. Main Street, Hermiston, OR, 97838.