

Academy Awards predictions

By SARAH INGERSOLL

Well, here it is once again...time for the movie industry and all of its players, both in front and behind the cameras, to pat themselves on the back. The Academy Awards has proven to be one of the most-watched television shows of all time...yes, we all watch it every year, and every year we complain about some of the choices that have been made.

There sure have been some "dillies" made over the years - Who can forget the year that John Wayne won Best Actor for "True Grit" over Richard Burton in "Anne of a Thousand Days"? Now I know I'll get a lot of boos from John Wayne fans, but (and believe me, I do have respect for the dead) poor old John couldn't act his way out of a paper bag. And it is the general consensus that Burton's performance in "Anne" was his finest.

There have been other 'questionable' choices but I won't go into them. You all know what they are, I just wanted to give you an idea of how I'm going to base my predictions...so here goes:

The choices for Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role are:

Melvyn Douglas *Being There*
Robert Duvall *Apocalypse Now*
Frederic Forrest *The Rose*
Justin Henry *Kramer vs Kramer*
Mickey Rooney *Black Stallion*

This is probably the hardest category to figure out, so I'll do it first and get it out of the way. Melvyn Douglas could very well get it, the reason being he is an excellent actor but also he is getting on in years and may not be around much longer. (Cynical aren't I?) Robert Duvall is very high on the list - he has been nominated before but has never won, so maybe it's time. Frederic Forrest - my figuring is that *The Rose* is one of the movies that a lot of members will not have seen, so Forrest is not a favourite. Justin Henry was so adorable and irresistible in *Kramer vs Kramer* that he just may get it. Mickey Rooney is...well, is Mickey Rooney...what else can I say. He wouldn't get my vote. My fearless prediction is - MELVYN DOUGLAS.

Nominations for Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role are:

Jane Alexander *Kramer vs Kramer*
Barbara Barrie *Breaking Away*
Candice Bergen *Starting Over*
Mariel Hemingway *Manhattan*
Meryl Streep *Kramer vs Kramer*

This is an easy one. While all five of the above women are deserving one shines through...and I don't think I'll get much argument. My prediction - MERYL STREEP.

The five favourites for Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role are:

Dustin Hoffman *Kramer vs Kramer*
Jack Lemmon *The China Syndrome*
Al Pacino *And Justice For All*
Roy Scheider *All That Jazz*
Peter Sellers *Being There*

Here's where it gets touchy. All of the nominees are superb actors and, in my mind, they all deserve awards. But, you know what they say, there can only be one winner. (That word somehow bother me... winner...that means that there will be four losers, and believe me,

none of these guys are losers.) Dustin Hoffman and Jack Lemmon are my two favourites, although Pacino is right up there (God, he's cute!) I think that members will find it hard to acknowledge that Roy Scheider is a very talented musical actor, rather than a dramatic one, so I don't think he'll get it. Peter Sellers is one of the finest comedic actors of all time, and I think that because of this they will misinterpret his role in *Being There* (that of a simple minded gardener whose thoughts are taken to be signs of genius). He is being laughed with rather than at. He is third on my list of favourites for the award. But I feel that it will be between Hoffman and Lemmon. Hoffman has been nominated four times previously but has never won. Lemmon has won two awards already (one for Supporting and one for Leading). That's one for Hoffman. While Hoffman gave a top-notch performance in *Kramer vs Kramer* it was not

anywhere as good as his 'Ritzo' in "Midnight Cowboy". On the other hand Lemmon's performance in *The China Syndrome* is the finest he has ever done. That's one for Lemmon. I think that the subject matter of *Kramer vs Kramer* will appeal to the members of the academy more than that of *The China Syndrome* (Nuclear power is something that a lot of people, especially those who make their money in such things, don't like to talk about). So that's another one for Hoffman. In conclusion I think that Lemmon should get it, but my prediction is - DUSTIN HOFFMAN

The five ladies up for Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role are:

Jill Clayburgh *Starting Over*
Sally Field *Norma Rae*
Jane Fonda *The China Syndrome*
Marsha Mason *Chapter Two*
Bette Midler *The Rose*

While Jill Clayburgh and Bette Midler gave very fine perform-

ances in their respective movies, I don't think either one of them will take the honours. That leaves Sally Field, Jane Fonda and Marsha Mason. First, I don't think Fonda should get it even though I really like her. Her performance was not up to the ones she gave in former winning roles in *Kluge* and *Coming Home*. That leaves Field and Mason to battle it out. Field has two things going against her - she made the transition from television to the big screen, which is something that movie people don't like to admit can happen; and Mason has been nominated before but didn't win. On the other hand, Mason plays herself in *Chapter Two* which, while it is said to be the most difficult thing to do, I think will not appeal to voting members. Even though the signs are in favour of Mason, my prediction is - SALLY FIELD.

Now here's the biggie! Best Picture of the Year nominees are:

All That Jazz
Apocalypse Now
Breaking Away
Kramer vs Kramer
Norma Rae

Right away I will narrow it down to three: *All That Jazz*, *Apocalypse Now* and *Kramer vs Kramer*. I don't think that *Breaking Away* will get it because so few people saw it - now I know that shouldn't

have any bearing on the results, but, remember I'm thinking like they do. *Norma Rae* was a good movie but not as high caliber as the others. Next I will exclude *Apocalypse Now*. There was so much press given this movie during the entire filming (all four years) that the actual movie was a let-down to most. That leaves *All That Jazz* and *Kramer vs Kramer*. Musicals have never fared very well in Academy Awards and the subject matter of *Kramer* is so current and important that my prediction is - *Kramer Vs Kramer*.

Reelspiel

THE LAST REEL
By GERRY LASKEY

"Some Observations on the Year in Film"

In the last *Reelspiel* of the year I would like to share a few personal reflections on the films of the year. Please keep in mind that I am not an expert, nor have I seen all the films that have been nominated for Academy Awards or received other honors and critical acclaim. (such as *All That Jazz*)

Again, like last year when a number of excellent movies, notably *Coming Home* and *The Deer Hunter* made singling out particular acting and other talents difficult, I think there are several films which all deserve to be called "Movie of the Year." The film offerings this year are such different works compared to each other, running on a continuum from *The Muppet Movie* - *Life of Brian* - *Star Trek* - *China Syndrome* - *Apocalypse Now*. When film as an art form produces such different types, subjects, themes and styles, how can they viably be compared for something like a "Picture of the Year Award?" Perhaps a better idea than the various awards ceremonies would be grand celebrations commending all the distinguished work of the year with no silly competitions. Surely a TV program put on by the Academy paying more attention to film clips of great acting performances than to the suspense of the "envelope please," "what will Jane Fonda wear?" and "what will Vanessa Redgrave say?" would score as high in the ratings. There's a lot of crap that could be cut to everyone's relief. But more importantly great talent could be recognized and praised better. Who ever agrees with the decisions and who ever remembers the great performances who were "also ran?"

At any rate, I'd like to single out a few films I think deserve praise. *Norma Rae* was a fine film. This film deserves recognition simply for its good handling of a neglected subject-matter. Real working class people, with their complex of human qualities of both good and bad, are seldom seen in the movies. This true-life story of a struggle for a union and dignity was one such occasion.

...And *Justice For All* will probably be overlooked in the accolades this spring. However it deserves recognition as a great film. A true work of art that explored new ground in satire, straining at the boundaries involved in what it means to stay "sane" in an insane situation. The performance of the lawyer friend of Al Pacino who goes off the deep end after defending a murderer he knows is guilty (who kills again a few hours after his release) particularly since it is by an actor who is usually confined to mindless sit-com TV roles was very memorable to me.

The China Syndrome was excellent, both as an eerily timed (released just at the time of the crisis at Three Mile Island) statement about the political economy and morality of the US nuclear industry and as a great drama in the "thriller" genre. An outstanding performance in a rare, straight, serious role, was Jack Lemmon. Jane Fonda and her associates are one of the healthiest influences in the films today, to my mind. Her "activist" art such as *Coming Home* and *China Syndrome* are not only an articulate social conscience, it's also very fine art.

The picture that will likely win the best film Oscar is *Kramer VS Kramer*. I don't know why. Somehow the film comes off as very believable. There's just something about it that makes it seem limp to me. Maybe the idea of a well-off executive in the Big Apple becoming a "mommy" when he didn't give a damn before. Maybe I'm too cynical, but he'd probably hire a maid in real life.

My personal nomination for motion picture of the year, as some of you MAY have guessed, is *Apocalypse Now*. What more can I say about a masterpiece. The more I read about the REAL Vietnam experience the

more I realize that the film which shows young men mostly interested in music, sports, girls etc, become insane killing machines at the twink of a paranoid eye, really did put you there. The movie was great for three other reasons, for which it may or may not be recognized: 1) the cinematography; 2) the music, both the original electronic score and the skillful use of Vietnamese and period rock music; 3) the acting of Martin Sheen and his haunting and haunted eyes. Unfortunately critics like to pounce on epic life-works of film-makers.

A few other comments about the year that just "flicked" by. Dick van Dyke will probably suffer from the "laugh, clown, laugh," syndrome and not be taken seriously for his powerfully moving role in *Sometimes The Runner Stumbles*. *Life of Brian* deserves some recognition both as great comedy and as satire-critique.

The Oscar media-event will probably have more controversy this year about 'politics vs art.' This is as ridiculous as trying to keep "politics" out of the Olympics. Art reflects and sometimes criticizes life. Give a bunch of actors, all with opinions an audience of millions, and stir in competition - what else is "politics?" Indeed the cost of such 'light entertainment' films as *Star Trek*, escapism like *Alien* or epic sagas like *Apocalypse Now* make art not only a reflection of life, but a large industry in life. Perhaps our society would do well to question the extent of our resources used in the art form. The great films seem to make it all worth while but the profit motive really does produce a lot of mediocre garbage. Let's hope for less garbage and competition and more art.

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