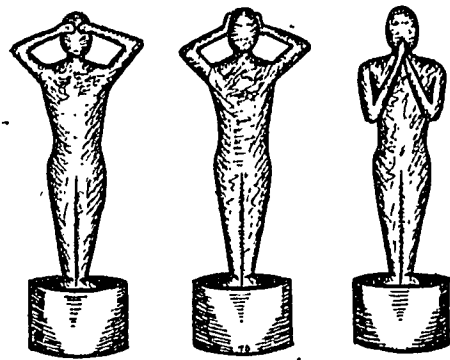


Critic views Oscar's bids

By JOHN WARD
Collegian Staff Writer

The 1976 Academy Award nominations were released on Friday, with two standouts. "Network," one of the year's biggest films, and "Rocky," one of the year's smallest, each guaranteed 10 nominations.

"Network," a controversial satire of the television industry, was nominated in every major category, including two Best Actor nominations. "Rocky," a simple film about a pug boxer's chance at the heavyweight championship, received major bids in all but the Best Supporting Actress category.



Both films were nominated for Best Picture, along with "All the President's Men," "Bound for Glory," and "Taxi Driver."

Nominated for Best Actor were Sylvester Stallone in the title role of "Rocky," William Holden and the late Peter Finch for "Network," Robert DeNiro for "Taxi Driver," and Giancarlo Giannini for "Seven Beauties."

Receiving Best Actress bids were Sissy Spacek as "Carrie," Faye Dunaway for "Network," Marie-Christine Barrault for "Cousin, Cousine," and Liv Ullmann for "Face to Face" and Talia Shire for "Rocky."

Okay, so far, so good. The Academy has stayed away from its usual "sentimental" nominations, going instead for performance. But the supporting categories get a bit hairier.

Nominated for Best Supporting Actor were Burt Young and Burgess Meredith

for "Rocky," Laurence Olivier for "Marathon Man," Jason Robards for "All the President's Men" and Ned Beatty of "Network."

Olivier is a good choice; not so the rest. There were several other performances this year that rated at least consideration, if not a nomination, including "Silver Streak's" Richard Pryor, "Marathon Man's" Roy Scheider and "Taxi Driver's" Harvey Keitel.

Nominated for Best Supporting Actress were Jodie Foster, as "Taxi Driver's" 12-year-old hooker, Jane Alexander for "All the President's Men," Lee Grant for "Voyage of the Damned," Beatrice Straight for "Network" and Piper Laurie for "Carrie."

Nominations for Best Director, were well-selected. They include John G. Avildsen for "Rocky," Sidney Lumet for "Network," Alan J. Pakula for "All the President's Men," Ingmar Bergman for "Face to Face" and Lina Wertmuller for "Seven Beauties."

The last two are foreign film directors, which raises a confusing question. How can they be nominated for a major category while the films are nominated only for Best Foreign Film? Maybe there should be a separate category for foreign film stars and directors.

Several weeks before the nominations were made public, I made my own list of choices. When the real thing was released on Friday, I found that I had agreed with about 60 per cent of the Academy's choices.

Now for the second and more difficult part of the article: selecting each category's winner. It should be noted that most of the choices stem from my viewing of the films. There is one instance, however, where the choice is based on other critics' opinions.

Jodie Foster gets a definite "yes" for Best Supporting Actress. Her portrayal of the pre-teen streetwalker was convincing enough to be frightening.

Lord Olivier is this writer's selection for Best Supporting Actor. He was outstanding as the exiled Nazi in "Marathon Man," creating an entirely unlikeable villain.

Choosing Best Director was tough, but I finally settled on "All the President's Men's" Alan J. Pakula. He had more to do with the pacing and style of the film than any of the other directors had to do with theirs.

Sissy Spacek was my first and only choice for Best Actress. She carried off the title role in "Carrie" with almost unnerving realism. Especially memorable was her split-second transformation from radiant prom to blood-hungry avenger.

The Best Actor decision was a close one. DeNiro gave a riveting performance, as did Finch, but Stallone merits the award more than any other for almost single-handedly bringing "Rocky" to the screen. I admit to not having seen "Rocky" yet, but so much has been written about Stallone's solo achievement that he cannot be ignored.

Lastly, I cast my vote for "All the President's Men" as the Best Picture of 1976. As a social commentary of today, as an example of a cast making the most out of their roles, and as a great suspense film, it is without equal.

The Oscars are scheduled to be handed out on March 28, over a month away. We'll have to wait until then for the final verdict, but you may rest assured that no matter who wins, somebody will exclaim, "No! The real winner should have been..."

the Collegian arts

Complex mystery ably solved

'Veronica' production's 'stunning'

By KAREN GOTTENBERG
Collegian Staff Writer

The identity of those in "Veronica's Room" is the key to a mystery. It is no mystery that the play is a stunning production of a worthy property.

A young girl, played by Debbie Studer, is lured into a Boston mansion by an old couple and a young man. The year is 1973. They convince her to pretend she is a girl named Veronica for the sake of easing the conscience of someone who is about to die.

The young girl changes into Veronica's clothes and discovers that the old couple and young man have changed too. They tell her it is 1935 and that she really is Veronica — the Veronica who killed her sister and will be kept in a locked room for her crime.

The story ends in a frightening revelation of identities. The most outstanding feature of the production is the high level of talent exhibited on stage. Debbie Studer plays a terrified, confused girl who impotently reasons with her captors as the suspense mounts. She so fully explores all levels of her character that she and the audience begin to question her identity.

play review

Peg French is amazingly versatile portraying the older woman in the story. She begins by playing a sweet old woman with an Irish brogue and lures the audience into her confidence as well as her young victim. She is a perfect spider setting her web for the unsuspecting fly. Later, when she pretends to be Veronica's mother and torments the girl to ease her own guilt, French is marvelously evil, yet restrained.

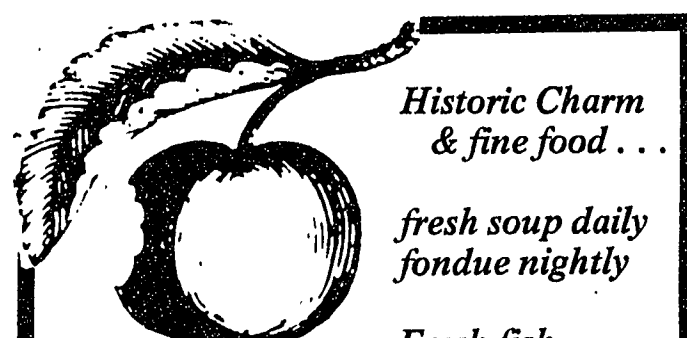
Peder Melhuse also begins his performance with a lovable Irish brogue, then he turns into Veronica's father. Melhuse portrays a character far older than himself with apparent ease. His flawless performance explores the confusion of a man who can no longer stomach what he does but is involved too deeply to turn back.

John Homa provides the audience with some subtle clues to the mystery by conveying nervous uncertainty. He plays a young man who is as much a victim of Veronica's room as the young girl he has helped lure there.

Director Steven Adler is to be commended for the dynamic staging of the play. He not only overcomes the obstacle of Kern's small stage but turns it into an asset. The audience can feel the characters trapped in the room and in their own torment. The audience, too, is trapped, yet not against its will, because anyone watching this play is held spellbound by the fast pace and gripping drama.

The set design, by Jacqueline Watts, is workable and quite attractive, with set pieces like a brass bed and authentic Victrola. The puzzling plot of the play is reflected in the border design on the walls of the set, painted to look like pieces of a picture puzzle.

A highly complex and dramatically delightful mystery, "Veronica's Room" is a jewel of a production.



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