

Red Carpet Romp

Oscar shines on the good, the bad and the ugly

The 73rd Academy Awards tossed honors at a variety of stars...and a couple actors, too. In this year of the uncertain race, nothing came as a surprise as all the films nominated for Best Picture merited at least some recognition. The Best Director category was weighted with the same equally-talented visionaries. Even the Best Acting categories featured deserving nominees.

Julia Roberts' (3) win in the Best Actress category for *Erin Brockovich* will certainly be placed in the hallowed halls of Best Oscar Moments, right next to the Sally Field, Cuba Gooding, Jr., and Roberto Benigni acceptance speeches. She may have been the closest thing to a shoe-in, though her competitors--Joan Allen (*The Contender*), Juliette Binoche (*Chocolat*), Laura Linney (*You Can Count on Me*) and Ellen Burstyn (*Requiem for a Dream*)--turned in notable performances, as well. *Erin Brockovich*, however, managed to achieve the main status that other films like *You Can Count on Me* could not, and box office success is usually a good predictor of a film's, or actor's, chances with the Academy.

A world away from Roberts' charisma and sheer likability is the ice prince, Russell Crowe, who nary cracked a smile during host Steve Martin's playful opening ribs. The Aussie actor picked up the Best Actor award for his work in *Gladiator*.

By Deanna Symoski
photos by TMS



Ang Lee's (1) *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* picked up the award for Best Foreign Language Film, not much of a surprise since it was also nominated for Best Picture. Ridley Scott's *Gladiator*, however, took home the Best Picture award.

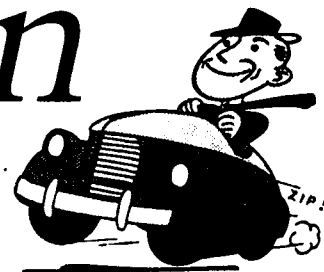
Doubling his chances for Best Director, or cancelling himself out as some critics feared, Steven Soderbergh (4) walked away with the award for his work on *Traffic*. Soderbergh was also nominated for *Erin Brockovich*. Both films were also nominated for Best Picture, making Soderbergh the only director ever to be nominated for two films in the same year that were also nominated for Best Picture.

Best supporting awards went to the Brad Pitt-ish Benicio Del Toro for *Traffic*, and Marcia Gay Harden (2) for *Pollock*, a film directed by Ed Harris about the artist Jackson Pollock.

Fashion shows were abundant, as they are each year, as class is increasingly traded in for notoriety. From sheer, see-through tops to swan feather dresses, the looks were as unique as the personalities who fashioned them. Some celebrities did manage to recapture the elegance of old Hollywood, such as Catherine Zeta-Jones, while others like Angelina Jolie cleaned up and toned down to make a less obvious statement.

R'Erin To Go

by Erin McCarty



ROUND 2

Sequels and remakes abound in an unimaginative Hollywood

I have noticed an interesting trend when it comes to movies these days. I don't know if filmmaking is running out of ideas or if they simply want to ride the wave of past success, but there have been an abundance of movies and videos lately that are either sequels or remakes.

In the past year, Disney has given us *The Little Mermaid II*, *Lady and the Tramp II*, and *102 Dalmatians*. Not to be outdone, Nickelodeon came out with *Rugrats in Paris*. Don Bluth released yet another *Land Before Time* sequel, and the kid-magnet Pokémon is about to bring its third movie to the theaters. Adults, meanwhile, have been given the opportunity to view such films as *Blair Witch II*, *The Nutty Professor II*, and *Hannibal*, not to mention the upcoming *Jurassic Park III* and *The Matrix II*. Recent remakes include *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, *South Pacific*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and *Anna and the King*.

This is, of course, not really a new phenomenon. It seems we have been bombarded with such movies lately, but they've always been around. Disney has always been especially adept at doing a movie to death. Think *The Shaggy Dog*, *The Absent-Minded Professor* (which it also remade a couple years ago as *Flubber*), *The Parent Trap* (also remade recently), *The Love Bug*, *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids*, *Beethoven*... the list goes on. We've seen sequels to *Alien*, *The Blues Brothers*, *Carrie*, *Ghostbusters*, *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, *Rocky*, *Rambo*, *Scream*, *Terminator*, and a myriad of other movies. Hollywood is also constantly cranking out high-tech versions of classics such as *The Nutty Professor*, *Titanic*, and *Godzilla*.

I find it hard to believe that scriptwriters are running out of steam when it comes to thinking up new movie plots. The more likely excuse for these movies is that producers are working with familiar characters because audiences have grown to love them and will rush to see a film which features them, even if it pales in comparison to the original.

At least with remakes, the movie generally puts a new slant on a film intended for audiences in a different generation, modernizing it and presenting it with a slate of actors who are currently in high demand. The trouble is, those original movies were usually extremely well done and have no need to be improved upon. Why mess with perfection?

Inherit the Wind and *Miracle on 34th Street* are two films which have been remade twice, yet in neither case did the subsequent versions improve upon the original. Sequels are usually worse, though. Too often, they either are largely devoid of a plot or are essentially mirth. The original film. Remember *Home Alone II*? Instead of having to fend for himself and deal with a pair of burglars at home, the kid has to do it in New York. The entire film follows the incidents of the first with only slight variations. *Airplane II* repeated most of the jokes and sight gags from the original but placed it in the context of outer space.

Another major complaint about sequels is that recurring characters are often played by different actors. In the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* series, April was played by a different actress each time. Robin Williams, whose manic performance as Genie in *Aladdin* was a major factor in the film's success, was noticeably absent from the sequel (though they managed to get him back for the third installment). Jodie Foster did not return to her famed role as Clarisse for the highly anticipated *Hannibal*. When an audience comes to identify a character with a particular actor, the portrayal of that character by someone else is enough to ruin the chance of enjoying the movie.

That's not to say that all sequels are bad. Some even manage to outdo the original. But far too many are only made to capitalize on the success of a prior film. Even if the audience figures the movie's not going to be that great and declines to see it in the theater, it still has to deal with dozens of products which the movie spawned, not to mention the frequent presence of a television spin-off series.

The only thing we, as consumers, can do is think carefully before we rush out to see the sequel to a beloved movie. Is it going to uphold the integrity of the original film, or was it just slapped together to make money? I don't know about you, but I wouldn't want to shell out eight bucks to go see a broken record.

McMahon acquires WCW

by Jason Snyder
editor-in-chief

A battered, bruised and bankrupt World Championship Wrestling (WCW) was forced out of existence this past week after a span of three years that found the company running out of storylines, falling behind in ratings and, most importantly, running out of money.

It was WCW which just a few years back decided it was time to compete with wrestling's premier organization, Vince McMahon's World Wrestling Federation. The two engaged in Monday night wars. It got intense, exciting, and personal. The biggest names in the sport jumped ship from Vince's sinking company to Ted Turner's emerging wrestling

business. It was WCW which owned the ratings war and the fans' interest. Today, just four years later, it's the WWF which owns WCW.

The announcement was made last Friday that Vince McMahon's WWF put the finishing move on WCW; not just closing the company down, but buying the company out.

"This is a dream opportunity for fans of sports entertainment," said Linda McMahon, Chief Executive Officer of World Wrestling Federation Entertainment. And it's come at a perfect time for the WWF.

After years of rebuilding his company after the short ratings plummet just a few years ago, McMahon has come to a point where the two biggest names in wrestling history are beginning to decline. Both

Stone Cold Steve Austin and The Rock, two men the WWF marketed itself upon during its climb back to ratings domination, are approaching the end of a reign unmatched in sports entertainment history.

The two will face off at WrestleMania XVII, bringing to an end one era of professional wrestling, while opening up a new one.

"The incendiary mix of WWF talent and WCW personalities potentially creates intriguing storylines that will attract a larger fan base," claimed Linda McMahon.

There's already indication that new storylines involving the two companies are in the works. Storyline #1 took off this past Monday as Vince McMahon announced to the world through a simulcast with TNT's final

Nitro show and his own Monday Night Raw program that he will buy WCW at WrestleMania.

In a shocking move to fans everywhere, McMahon's son Shane McMahon appeared at TNT's Monday Nitro and announced that the contract has been signed with his own signature. It's the beginning of a Vince vs. Shane rivalry which will also kick off at WrestleMania on Sunday.

The storyline will keep the WWF and WCW separate, while keeping open the opportunity for crossed storylines between the companies. It's just another act of genius by McMahon, whose only true competition anymore will be himself.

New Releases

Movies	Video*	Music*	DVD*
<i>Spy Kids</i>	<i>102 Dalmatians</i>	Cappadonna	<i>102 Dalmatians</i>
	<i>Big Momma's House</i>	Ginuwine	<i>Cleopatra</i>
	<i>Frequency</i>	Logic Trance 5"	<i>Five Star Collection</i>
<i>Tomcats</i>	<i>Lawrence of Arabia</i>	Rammstein	<i>Lawrence of Arabia</i>
	<i>The Patriot</i>	Run DMC	<i>Legend of Baggart Vance</i>
	<i>The Replacements</i>	Bruce Springsteen	<i>Nurse Betty</i>
<i>Someone Like You</i>	<i>Scary Movie</i>	Now 6	
	<i>The Whole Nine Yards</i>		

*Release Date: 4/3

That's My Bush!
premieres Wednesday
at 10:30 p.m. on
Comedy Central. The
show is a parody of the
Bush administration,
created by *South Park*
gurus Trey Parker
and Matt Stone