

Life & Style

Meg's
Movie Review:

The Artist

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I am sorry to say that I agree with the Academy Awards choice for winner of best picture. After their winner last year, and their snub of the two best movies (in my modest opinion) of 2011, Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part II and Rise of the Planet of the Apes, I was determined to hate any decision the Academy made. However, out of the best picture nominees (at least the ones that I have seen) The Artist was the best choice.

The Artist follows silent movie star George Valentin (Jean Dujardin), who is at the height of his career in 1927, when the film begins. However, as talkies become popular Valentin fades away like the silent films he used to act in. Meanwhile, a young new actress, Peppy Miller (Berenice Bejo), who George Valentin worked with on her first movie, is rising in fame and popularity as talkies become the film of choice. The Artist is not only about the production of old films, it feels old-fashioned, but not in a bad way.

The Artist is in black and white, which I was aware of before I saw it. However, I was unaware that it is also a silent film. Needless to say I was surprised at the beginning; but I am happy to say that it is still a perfectly enjoyable film. In fact, it is probably better that I did not know beforehand, because I might have decided to see something else instead, which would have been a mistake on my part.

Jean Dujardin, who plays George Valentin, was excellent, and did not need dialogue to portray his character. Valentin's dog and near-constant companion, a Jack Russell Terrier, was an excellent actor in his own right. I am pleased to report that Uggie, the performing dog, won an award as well (yes, there are now Golden Collar awards for canine actors). It was the performances, human and animal alike, that made The Artist into a film, and not just a gimmick.

One of the most interesting aspects of The Artist is that the viewer forgets they are watching a silent, black and white film. Whether or not the story would have

worked as a "regular" movie, I cannot say. However, the format does not detract from the experience, and in some ways enhances it. This effect surprised me, seeing as I am certainly not a person that thinks older movies are of a higher quality than newer ones. I found the soundtrack a bit tedious at the beginning, but as the film goes on, I became accustomed to it and it became another aspect of the pleasant feeling of having gone back in time.

The Artist is a worthwhile theater experience. The filmmakers took a chance with this movie, it could have been a gimmicky flop, but it paid off. It is a truly quality film that I would recommend to any moderately serious movie-goer.



Photo courtesy of google.com

Oscars 2012! : A Night to Remember!

By Kallie McLaughlin

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On February 26th, the 84th Annual Academy Awards aired, pulling in over 4 million viewers. Stars came out for the most anticipated night in Hollywood, and dressed to the nines! Comedian Billy Crystal was the host for the night, making this his ninth time hosting. He started the night off with a musical number, and some jabs at the nominees of the night, followed up by the first award of the night, which went to the movie Hugo for special effects. Hugo, directed by Martin Scorsese, won a total of five awards throughout the night.

The movie The Artist won a total of five awards also, including best picture. Other awards given out included, best in makeup, screenplay, and effects. The big winners of the night were the best actresses and actors. Meryl Streep took home best actress, her third Oscar win in her career, for her role as Margaret Thatcher in The Iron

Lady. Jean Dujardin won for his role in The Artist, the first silent movie to win a best picture since 1938. Jean is a French actor who just made his American debut in The Artist. Christopher Plummer finally got an Oscar win, after years of acting. At 82, Plummer exclaimed to his Oscar statue, "You are only two years older than me, where have you been all my life?" Plummer is famous for movies like The Sound of Music, and has been acting for over 40 years.

The most memorable win of the night, had to be Octavia Spencer, who won for best supporting actress. Octavia won for her role as a African American maid to a white family in The Help, her first win in her career. Everyone was rooting for Octavia to take home the gold, and the results didn't disappoint. In the end, the director and the cast of The Artist, including the adorable pup Uggie, made their way to the stage to claim their title of best picture of 2011.

The night was certainly spectacular, and ratings went up 2 million viewers than last year, most likely because of the new host. Last year, the producers felt they needed to reach out to their younger viewers, by having actress Anne Hathaway and actor James Franco host. Ratings were extremely low after that show, so producers brought in Oscar alum Billy Crystal to save the show.

Of course, there were those moments everyone was talking about the next day, also! Some of those moments being Jennifer Lopez's dress slip up on stage, and Angelina Jolie's high-slit dress, revealing her whole right leg on stage. Jean Dujardin also made headlines after exclaiming a certain curse word on live television after winning his award, but who could blame him? You'd be excited too if you just won the highest award given in Hollywood! The show also included a "In memoriam" where they honored Hollywood greats who died in 2011-2012, among some of the names were Steve Jobs, Whitney Houston, and Elizabeth Taylor. The show was definitely a night to remember, especially for the stars who took home the coveted golden statue.



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