

Help Wanted

Well... it seems that Oscar is in need of a host once again.

Yesterday, amid scandal and controversy the producer of next year's Academy Award extravaganza Brett Ratner backed out of his duties. Shortly after, Eddie Murphy stepped down as host.

This morning, I heard two possible contenders being promoted (two being rather subjective). On GMA, there was a huge push for the soon to be returning to the silver screen Muppets to take the gig. What a boon that would be! An instant band for the evening courtesy of Dr. Teeth and the Electric Mayhem.

Comedy provided by Fozzie Bear. Joan Rivers could be joined on the red carpet by the queen of fashion, Miss Piggy. The Oscar parties could be catered by the Swedish Chef. Gonzo could do... Whatever. Even heckling would be provided by the masters, Statler and Waldorf. And of course, your Master of Ceremonies... Kermit The Frog. YAAAAAAAAAAAAA! I cannot wait for the movie to open in time for the holidays. There is even an on-line push for the [Muppets](#) chance at the gig

Later during my morning cup of cocoa (boy it is starting to feel like November), Regis jokingly threw his hat in the ring.

Of course, after next Friday, the Reege will have plenty of time to devote following the final episode of his 28 year run on his morning program. I don't know where they will possibly come up with a worthy successor to his charming, acerbic wit.

Maybe even an unknown... Mr. Philbin's memoir is soon to be on bookshelves everywhere. Of course, he is "**JUST MOVING ON!**" and NOT actually retiring. If memory serves, Regis did serve as the host of a pre-Oscar show a few years ago and did take over on New Year's Rockin' Eve after Dick Clark suffered a stroke. Maybe he should step up to the big show?

Or... dare I say... combine the two.





History With Oscar

If nothing else, last night's Academy Awards made a strong statement that traditional movie making is still preferable to the rise of technology... in the eyes of the voters anyway. *Avatar* may have earned \$567,890,123.45 (that figure may even be low) at the box office but I think it was ultimately the big loser this year at the awards. I really thing Dr. Doogie's kick-off to the evening was the low point, Did anyone else see his song (?) and dance? If not... you will have to hunt yourself. Honestly, I thought he was supposed to be good? But I thought Mr. Baldwin and the ALWAYS hilarious Steve Martin were wonderful!

I knew that the time had come for the first female Best Director even more so than the first African-American (forgive me if that is un-PC). But I think the fact that Ms. Bigelow and *The Hurt Locker* swept the top two categories and was the biggest winner was a bit of a surprise. However, looking back there have been other examples of David-Goliath at the Oscars. Does anyone remember 1977 when a little movie called *Star Wars* was beaten by the less groundbreaking Woody Allen pic, *Annie Hall*? Or 1982 when a little guy trying to "Phone Home" lost to *Gandhi*? So how do we possibly explain the year of the water-logged boat sinking?! A fluke!

I was happy to see *Star Trek* win in one category. It tied with *The Voyage Home* (the one with the whales... very high on my list) for the most noms by a movie in the series. Even *The Motion Picture* (zzz) got three. Last night's Make Up victory was the first win for the 44 year series.

So while I came in 4th in the pool, I did walk away with a nice gift. The ceramic teddy bear banks are adorable, thanks Carol! Always a ball worthy of the best Hollywood can throw!

I still had a difficult time voting for Sandra Bullock. Maybe it's her low opinion of one of her first on screen performances. If you can't be happy about playing the second Bionic Woman (and I'm not talking about the unremarkable series reboot of a few seasons ago) then... and what was with the lipstick... EGAD!

And what happened to the "No thanking" policy? Not to be outdone by the endless Best Actor/Actress presentations. So much for saving time. And apparently, "research" doesn't always help, right C? ☐

Spotlight On... Montages

In attempts to keep the length down to a reasonable amount (showing clips of the 10 films nominated for best picture would seem like it would go on longer than the typical 3-4 hour event), there have been a few strategies put in place for the Academy Awards. First of all, the nominees for best song will not be performed live by the artists. Instead, audiences will be treated to (drumroll, please)... yet another in an array of **MONTAGES**. A short piece from each of each song will be presented throughout the evening with scenes from their respective movie. I don't even recall the nominations for best song nor score so, as a viewer, it may be for the best. However, how about the songwriters of the nominated pieces?

Another attempt to limit the time is a change in the acceptance speeches. Each nominee is being asked to provide two speeches: one signifying what winning the award means to

them. The second is the traditional laundry list of thank you notes which will be actually delivered back stage shown later via internet. I guess there will be no way that someone can forget to thank Fido plus cut down on the emotional impact that may not be as important to the average at home viewer (especially as the evening/early morning wears on).

So... what do you think about the two changes to the gala event?

Should the Best Original Song nominees be allowed their moment in the spotlight? Should the winners be given stipulations on when and what to say? Or is it just the show's producers way of getting all the Best Picture nominees in there? I'd add a poll but I think there are too many possible responses so I'll let the comments speak for themselves.

Doubt

We saw the Oscar nominated film [Doubt](#) the other night. Normally, I like to see as many of the major Academy Award contenders before the awards show airs as it did a few weeks ago, but it's usually not possible to see every single one in time. Even though it didn't win any of the 5 Oscars for which it was nominated, the buzz that surrounded Doubt was so intriguing that we decided to check it out.

For a movie being based primarily on dialogue, it is very fast-paced. I was never bored, which is something I can't say about a Good Will Hunting, an Oscar winning movie we watched last week. Good Will Hunting a long movie, so it took us two nights to watch it, and I fell asleep both nights during the movie. Not that it was a horrible movie; I don't know much about it – I was sleeping!

Ok, back from the Oscar tangent, back to Doubt. This movie is based on a stage play, and the author of the play also wrote the screenplay and directed the film version; which I think is very important so nothing was lost in the translation between stage and screen. The story is compelling; it's about a Catholic school in 1964 where the principal, a nun brilliantly portrayed by Meryl Streep, suspects the priest is having an inappropriate relationship with the school's only African-American student. Amy Adams portrays Sister James, a naive freshman nun who is caught in the middle of the conflict. Amy Adams is one of the actors from this movie who was nominated for an Oscar, and it's understandable when you see what a far cry Sister James is from Adams' purse-selling ex-cheerleader Katy on *The Office* or the character Leslie Miller from her first film, the teen beauty pageant spoof *Drop Dead Gorgeous* from 1999. Phillip Seymour Hoffman was excellent in *Doubt* also; hardly recognizable from the 1990's roles where I saw him previously in the movies *Twister* and *Leap of Faith*. It's easy to see how Viola Davis received her Oscar nomination for *Doubt* as well – she had lines in just one scene in the entire movie, but her performance was excellent, however short on screen time. You win some and you lose some, which explains how those 3 actors walked away without their Academy Awards. Inexplicable, however, is how Meryl Streep did not win an Oscar for *Doubt*. True, I haven't seen *The Reader* with Kate Winslet, the actress who won the Leading Actress Oscar instead of Meryl Streep. I did see *Changeling* with Angelina Jolie who was also nominated, and judging by the phenomenal performances of Streep and Jolie and the fact that Winslet was the winner, I might just have to see *The Reader*. I loved Angelina Jolie in *Changeling*, and I'm not usually a fan of hers, so that says something. I loved Meryl Streep in *The Devil Wears Prada*, but honestly, I used to think Hollywood had a strange habit of sucking up to Meryl Streep. How can she be THAT good, I would wonder... until I saw *Doubt*. She IS "that good".

I can see where this movie would make an excellent stage

play. But after seeing 4 of the most talented actors out there portraying the lead roles on the big screen, who would even want to be compared to that by staging a live theatrical production of Doubt?