

# Spielberg snubbed by Academy

By Michael Giltz

This year's Academy Awards (which airs on Mon., March 24) is certain to be the most unpredictable in recent times. While I will be surprised if none of my predictions come true, I will be even more surprised if they all come true. The voters have nominated quite a few interesting combinations, creating several races that are almost too close to call.

The big news was the snubbing of Steven Spielberg in the "Best Director" category. He is only the second director in the history of the Academy Awards not to be nominated after his film received 11 or more nominations. When he was named "Best Director" by the Director's Guild Association of America, he became the third person to win that honor and not receive an Academy Award. He was also the first person not to even be nominated.

If any good can be said to come out of the Academy's inexcusable action, it is that Spielberg's non-nomination has made a few of the categories easier to call. For example, the "Best Picture" category has now become a consolation prize.

Yes, *The Color Purple* will win next Monday. The public outcry over the Academy's discrepancy will give that movie the sympathy vote, an added edge that it desperately needs since there is still a three-horse race between it, *Out Of Africa* and *Prizzi's Honor*.

Though the voters are rarely concerned with such details, *The Color Purple* is also the movie that deserves to win. If there is an upset, it will be *Prizzi's Honor*, which was directed by the venerable and very popular John Huston.

The "Best Actor" category is probably the most difficult call of all. Jack Nicholson had the early lead but more and more people

are mentioning William Hurt. Nicholson's recent "Best Supporting Actor" win for *Terms of Endearment* is still fresh in the voters' memory, so that hurts his chances.

Besides, though this is technically Hurt's first nomination, he has given many fine performances that have been well thought of and the Academy would like to recognize that by giving him an Oscar. Hurt's job was risky, daring, completely successful, and well-deserving of the massive praise that it received. He deserves to win and he will.

Once again, Meryl Streep has been nominated for an Academy Award. Though the "Best Actress" category is considered to be a race between her and Geraldine Page, Streep doesn't stand a chance because voters have grown tired of seeing her name. Such is the burden of giving one great performance after another.

However, the voters' questionable reasoning won't seem quite so unfair if it means an Oscar for Page. Her performance is certainly on the same level as Streep (which can hardly be said for Lange or Bancroft), and she has been nominated seven previous times without being allowed to make the trip to the podium. This time, at least, eight's the charm.

Most likely, Klaus Maria Brandauer will also be making that trip to the podium. He gave a very distinguished performance in the type of film that the Academy loves. Since they won't be giving *Out of Africa* any other major awards, this is their chance to recognize it.

With the help of Daddy's prestige, Angelica Huston will win the "Best Supporting Actress" Oscar. The voters are enamored with the idea of giving Oscars to both a father and daughter. It's an opportunity they almost never have, and the Academy is certain

to make the most of it.

Who deserves to win this award? Who doesn't? Huston was very good and Margaret Avery was equally memorable as Shug in *The Color Purple*. Amy Madigan gave a powerful performance that deserves to be recognized as much as the incredible job by Meg Tilly as the confused and possibly innocent nun, Agnes, not to mention Oprah Winfrey, who simply burst onto the screen in one of the most memorable debuts in years. It would be very difficult to decide who was the best, but, as I said, the outcome is certain.

The father half of that father-and-daughter team is also a shoo-in. Huston is one of the most respected directors ever, and though he's reaching the end of his career, he is still producing films worthy of recognition.

But my vote goes to Kurosawa. He is an unpopular director with the Japanese establishment, and the Academy's voting procedure for foreign films allowed them to shut out *Ran*, a towering masterpiece if there ever was one, from the "Best Foreign Film" category. If anyone can beat Huston, he can.

No one can ever tell what the Academy will choose for "Best Song," but the consensus seems to be that they'll pick "Say You, Say Me." Though it is a good tune, I don't think it deserves to win, any more than "The Power Of Love" or "Separate Lives."

They're all excellent songs, but I tend to prefer music that was actually written for the film, as opposed to being plugged in. However, "Surprise, Surprise" was not even in the original classic score of *A Chorus Line*.

That leaves "Miss Celie's Blues," a song penned by Lionel Richie. It's a wonderful tune that perfectly compliments *The Color Purple*.