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Oscar Preview: Your Winning Ballot (Plus the Best Movies Of 2011)

Posted: 02/24/2012 12:48 pm

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OK, the Academy Awards are Sunday night. It will be long, a little dull, people will be glad to have Billy Crystal back after a long break and the big awards will go mostly to the movies that everyone expects. But someone has to win the Oscar pool and why shouldn't it be you and me?

As with most years, it comes down to a few key categories where the winner is in doubt. Here's my ballot, followed by a description of your options in the races that are too murky or too close to call.

I cap it off with my list of the best movies of 2011. Good luck!

MY OSCAR BALLOT

- BEST PICTURE** -- *The Artist*
- BEST DIRECTOR** -- Michel Hazanavicius for *The Artist*
- BEST ACTOR** -- George Clooney for *The Descendants*
- BEST ACTRESS** -- Viola Davis for *The Help*
- BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR** -- Christopher Plummer for *Beginners*
- BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS** -- Octavia Spencer for *The Help*
- BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY** -- *Midnight In Paris*
- BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY** -- *The Descendants*
- BEST ANIMATED FEATURE** -- *Rango*
- BEST FOREIGN FILM** -- *Monsieur Lazhar*
- BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE** -- *Undefeated*
- BEST ART DIRECTION** -- *Hugo*
- BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY** -- *The Tree of Life*
- BEST COSTUME DESIGN** -- *The Artist*
- BEST EDITING** -- *The Artist*
- BEST MAKEUP** -- *The Iron Lady*
- BEST SCORE** -- *The Artist*
- BEST SONG** -- "Man Or Muppet" from *The Muppets*

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BEST SOUND EDITING -- *Hugo*

BEST SOUND MIXING -- *Hugo*

BEST VISUAL EFFECTS -- *Rise Of The Planet Of The Apes*

BEST DOCUMENTARY SHORT -- *Saving Face*

BEST LIVE ACTION SHORT -- *Raju*

BEST ANIMATED SHORT -- *A Morning Stroll*

MY OSCAR BALLOT -- BREAKING IT DOWN AND NAMING THE POTENTIAL SPOILERS

BEST PICTURE -- *The Artist*

It's hard to believe a B&W foreign film with modest box office success in the U.S. is the front-runner but that has to be admitted at this stage. A film from overseas should have won the Best Picture Oscar many years ago. (I'm still gutted that *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* didn't pull it off.) But for those who find this movie shallow, it could have been worse -- the first foreign film to win Best Picture could have been *Life Is Beautiful*. *The Help* did so poorly in everything but acting, it's not the factor here it might have been. If there's an upset, it will be *The Descendants*. But there won't be an upset.

BEST DIRECTOR -- Michel Hazanavicius for *The Artist*

The Best Picture and Best Director awards don't always go hand in hand, but they probably will here. Hollywood loves a Valentine and they love a gambler who places their own money on a passion project and succeeds. Plus Michel and his star/wife Berenice Bejo are charming as heck and have that great god in tow everywhere they go. The Academy clearly loved *Hugo* as well, but not enough to nominate any of its actors. Still, Martin Scorsese is the only potential upset here and it's not out of the question.

BEST ACTOR -- George Clooney for *The Descendants*

Here's one of the tightest races of the night. Jean Dujardin is the frontrunner for his wonderfully appealing, George Clooney-like work in *The Artist*. He won the SAG award for Best Actor and the smart money is on him. But I keep thinking the Academy is passionate about *The Descendants* (far more than *The Help* and *Hugo*). TV ads for the movie with Clooney breaking down in tears at his wife's bedside are reportedly running nonstop in LA and the movie has been one of the great success stories at the box office this year. I think they want to reward the movie with more than Best Adapted Screenplay and this is the place to do it. If you want to win your Oscar pool you have to do well in the tech categories and pick an upset in the big races. If you like to play it safe, go with Jean. I'm going with George.

BEST ACTRESS -- Viola Davis for *The Help*

Meryl Streep is such a good actress she had us all convinced that her performance in *The Iron Lady* was going to finally win her another Oscar after decades of being an also-ran... even though the movie was poorly reviewed, did poorly at the box office and annoyed the liberal sensibilities of Oscar voters by soft-soaping such a controversial figure. She's very good as always, but the movie just doesn't stay with you. More to the point, *The Help* is one of the big hits of the year and Viola Davis is the heart of the movie (even though in typical Hollywood fashion it deals with the plight of maids in the racist Deep South by telling the story of a white woman who risks her social standing to tell their story). Davis is a terrific actress and Streep will have to give an even better performance when her name isn't called and she tries to look delighted.

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR -- Christopher Plummer for *Beginners*

A career award, though his role in the little-seen *Beginners* does press a number of Oscar buttons. The only question is if he'll make some allusion to his most famous film role in his speech, something like "Your applause feels like the sound of music to me." Not likely.

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS -- Octavia Spencer for *The Help*

Like Davis, she's won every guild award in sight. For a while, it seemed like Spencer would be carrying the banner for the film come awards time, but Davis fought off Streep again and again so they both get to win. For all its flaws, thank goodness people have the taste to reward the maids and not the white ladies they worked for. Is there a possible upset here? Melissa McCarthy caused a stir in *Bridesmaids* but I think the movie is too vulgar for Academy voters. Still, this category is often a spoiler and I wouldn't be surprised to see McCarthy or even Jessica Chastain of *The Help* being named. Chastain's win would be an anointing of a new star and recognition for her excellent work in *The Tree Of Life*, *Take Shelter*, *The Help* and several other films this year. Not out of the question but I believe they'll feel it's in bad taste given *The Help's* story and avoid this.

BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY -- Woody Allen for *Midnight In Paris*

BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY -- Alexander Payne, Nat Faxon and Jim Rash for *The Descendants*, based on the novel by Kaui Hart Hemmings

I'm still a little surprised that the biggest box office success of Woody Allen's career didn't snag his usual



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clutch of acting nominations. But the Academy loved this movie -- like *The Descendants*, another major word of mouth hit, especially for the middle-aged voters that dominate the Academy (the media age is roughly 62). I think the major threat is *The Artist*. If it wins here and for Costumes, the movie is sweeping and Clooney can stop worrying about what speech he'll give. For Adapted Screenplay, *The Descendants* will win. I have a nutty idea that *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* might upset, but that's nutty. Stick with the frontrunner.

BEST ANIMATED FEATURE -- *Rango*

How is it that director Gore Verbinski turned to animation for the first time and made by far the best film of his career? *Rango* looks great, makes clear and repeated nods to classic movies like *Chinatown* and the spaghetti western genre, it stars Johnny Depp and made money at the box office. As if that's not enough, Pixar didn't make a good movie this year and wasn't even nominated. A lock.

BEST FOREIGN FILM -- *Monsieur Lazhar*

I hope I'm wrong and that *A Separation* wins the Oscar for Best Foreign Film. Heck, it should have been nominated for Best Picture as well. Do not miss this gripping, exceptionally well-made Iranian film that was good enough to snag a nomination for Best Original Screenplay, a rarity for foreign films. (The screenwriters have great taste and often make smart nominations like this.) But the "obvious" choice is rarely the one that wins in the Foreign Film race, for reasons too complicated to go into right now. My original choice to upset was *In Darkness* because it's about the Holocaust. But that movie is a little too caustic in its approach. So the nutty, leftfield, WTF were they thinking pick is this heartwarming Canadian film about a schoolteacher. The smart money is on *A Separation*.

BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE -- *Undefeated*

Another exceptionally difficult category to call. Do they reward *Paradise Lost 3: Purgatory* for being such a committed project that helped bring justice by shining a spotlight on a remarkable case of railroading teens in a murder case? Do they celebrate Wim Wenders' beautiful 3-D accomplishment and the career of the late, great Pina Bausch? Do they go all feel-good with *Undefeated*, a real-life *Blind Side*? (Though *The Blind Side* was based on a real story.) I've been thinking the media attention for the case would tip the scales in favor of *Paradise Lost 3*. I'd pick the one movie I saw in this category, *Pina*, simply because it's so lovely. But you can't go wrong with the unexpected crowd-pleaser so I'm rather randomly picking *Undefeated*. Your guess is as good as mine.

BEST ART DIRECTION -- *Hugo*

Assuming *The Artist* doesn't sweep and that *Hugo* gets some love in the tech categories it dominated, this one goes to Scorsese's love-fest for the movies.

BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY -- *The Tree of Life*

Again, *The Artist* could sweep and win for its gorgeous black and white look. But the work on *The Tree Of Life* was SO stunning that it should be undeniable. *War Horse* had the *worst* cinematography of the year. If the Academy confuses its kitsch overkill with artistry, the howl of despair you hear will be coming from my apartment.

BEST COSTUME DESIGN -- *The Artist*

Another very tricky category. The traditional pick would be *Anonymus*, because it's a lavish period piece. My friend Howard calls this the Most Costumes award. But that movie truly was anonymous in every sense and has been so thoroughly forgotten it seems unlikely. And when you think of *Hugo*, the costumes do not come to mind. That means it's down to the glamour of *The Artist* versus the realism of *Jane Eyre*. Glamour wins every time. Mind you, the Costume guild gave it to Madonna's movie *W./E.*, which is also period and very glamorous. And this category has been willfully offbeat for the past 10 years. Still, that's not how voters think when they're voting; that's just how we think when we're trying to predict how voters think. Michael O'Connor of *Jane Eyre* won before and that never hurts. But I'm sticking with the "obvious" choice of *The Artist*.

BEST EDITING -- *The Artist*

Sometimes an action film or editing-heavy special effects movie can win here. But there's no tech heavyweight here. It's down to *The Artist* versus the legendary Thelma Schoonmaker and her work on *Hugo*. I think it's a toss-up myself because *The Artist* might sweep, but Schoonmaker is a powerful name who has won three times already. Like Scorsese, I think they'll feel she's won enough already and stick with their heart and go for *The Artist*.

BEST MAKEUP -- *The Iron Lady*

Meryl Streep really did do a marvelous job as Margaret Thatcher and all due credit to her makeup team for giving Streep the tools to deliver that performance. Watch her smile with delight when they win while



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she's secretly wondering if the Academy thinks the makeup delivers the performance and not her. The work on Glenn Close for *Albert Nobbs* was too subtle to win. If the final *Harry Potter* had been nominated for Best Picture I would have seen this as its consolation prize. It still might pull off an upset, but *The Iron Lady* should win.

BEST SCORE -- *The Artist*

This branch should be ashamed of itself for giving the great John Williams not one but two Oscar nominations for his rote work on two disappointing movies. *The Artist* does face some controversy for its use of extended passages from *Vertigo* but that was an artistic choice, not a cheat. The movie is wall to wall score so I think it will triumph. If not, Howard Shore might sneak in with *Hugo*.

BEST SONG -- "Man Or Muppet" from *The Muppets*

The biggest disappointment of the night for me is that we don't get to see Jason Segal and the Muppets perform this charming tune. The song from *Rio* is a group sing-along I can't imagine winning, though voters may be swayed by the name of Sergio Mendes. Still I doubt it. And why the heck did they only nominate two songs? I still haven't heard a good explanation of why. And here's hoping the brilliant idea of having the Muppets host the show some year comes through. Heck, it airs on ABC which is owned by Disney which owns the Muppets, so that should be a no-brainer, especially since their movie was a commercial success. Animal intros the Best Song, Miss Piggy flirts with actors and tries to hog the spotlight, Kermit is gracious and unassuming...the jokes practically write themselves and actors would love to be paired with muppets while presenting awards. Do it!

BEST SOUND EDITING -- *Hugo*

BEST SOUND MIXING -- *Hugo*

One of the most mysterious categories of all for Oscar voters, who have a vague idea of how editing and other tech specialties work but really don't understand sound. Heck, neither do I, particularly. Movies like *Transformers: Dark Of The Moon* often dominate here, but not this year.

BEST VISUAL EFFECTS -- *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*

Here's the most obvious spot for the final *Harry Potter* to get a pat on the back. But I believe the Oscar push for actor Andy Serkis really educated voters on the amazing technical achievement of *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*. It was a ground-breaking leap forward in using motion capture to let an actor create a genuine performance and I think the *Apes* will triumph. If you're really aggrieved *HP7P2* wasn't nominated for Best Picture, you may want to plug for it here because you think Oscar voters will be embarrassed by that omission. But Oscar voters don't really do "embarrassment," so I'm sticking with *Apes*.

BEST DOCUMENTARY SHORT -- *Saving Face*

This seems the clearest winner to me in the shorts categories. It happens to be the best of the shorts, but that's rarely the point. It also juggles several stories gracefully: you get women's rights, a court battle and the charity work of a plastic surgeon all wrapped up in one tale about the horrifying practice of men in Pakistan throwing acid on the faces of wives and women they want to punish. I'll be shocked if this loses.

BEST LIVE ACTION SHORT -- *Raju*

Often, at least two of the three shorts categories are easy to pick if you've seen them. The crowd-pleasers just jump out. Not this year. We've got three light comedies, one serious drama and one muddled effort with the only name actors and name director (*The Shore* with Ciaran Hinds and Terry George). George has been nominated in major categories before so he seems like a frontrunner. But *Raju* has a noble tale of adoption, kidnapping and features white people in India. It's a dead heat but since *The Shore* is pretty lightweight throughout, I'm going to give it to the most "serious" movie on the list. But the name recognition of *The Shore* could be a serious draw for Oscar voters.

BEST ANIMATED SHORT -- *A Morning Stroll*

Another very hard category to call. Many people are predicting the warm but rather long tale *The Fantastic Flying Books Of Mr. Morris Lessmore* and there's no question the elderly crowd I saw it with oohed and aahed over it. On the other hand, Pixar's entry *La Luna* was short and sweet and much punchier with a nice Italian air that makes it feel very different from their many other winners in this category. But *A Morning Stroll* was the cleverest and most ambitious in its tale of a chicken that goes for a morning stroll, revealing the changes in the world via different animated styles and by jumping forward in time by 50 years each time it goes out for a walk. I just wish the "button" at the end were stronger. And *Dimanche* had the most distinctive animation. I'd be surprised by absolutely none of them except the weak *Wild Life*. My heart says *La Luna*, my brain says go with the top pick of others and choose *Fantastic Flying Books* but my gut says this category has been very envelope-pushing in recent years and that *A Morning Stroll* will continue that trend in the absence of a clear front-runner.

So that's my Oscar ballot. Good luck with your pool! Now here are my picks for the best films of 2011.

THE BEST MOVIES OF 2011

1. *The Tree Of Life*
2. *A Separation*
3. *Cave Of Forgotten Dreams*
4. *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*
5. *The Time That Remains*
6. *Project Nim*
7. *Meek's Cutoff*
8. *Take Shelter*
9. *Pina*
10. *Arthur Christmas*
11. *Tuesday, After Christmas*
12. *The Artist*

Honorable Mentions

Win Win
Rise Of The Planet Of The Apes
The Sleeping Beauty
The Black Power Mixtapes
Martha Marcy May Marlene
Bombay Beach
The Muppets

Early Favorites For 2012

The Kid With A Bike
Attenberg
The Footnote
The Fairy
Michael
I Wish I Knew (dir Zhang Ke Jia; no release date set)

Hopefully you'll use this list to check out some movies you haven't seen yet. What were your favorite films of 2011?

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Joseph Tyrrell
14 Fans

11:33 PM on 02/26/2012

Wow, Michael, you get the Oscar for best list of best pictures. I might have snuck "Another Earth," "Margin Call" or "Take Shelter" in somewhere, and I loved "Buck" and "Cinema Komunisto," which has only been around on the festival circuit. But I don't know how I'd edit your choices.

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HUFFPOST BLOGGER
Michael Giltz
freelance writer
127 Fans

01:10 PM on 02/28/2012

Thanks for commenting Joseph. Take Shelter is on my list of course. I liked both margin call and Another Earth, both of which I'd give three stars to (and Another Earth almost made my list). I still need to see Buck, which is on my pile of DVDs to watch and hadn't even heard of Cinema Komunisto. Thanks for the tips.

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Iwalkit
2 Fans

06:37 PM on 02/26/2012

Thank you for leaving Hugo off the 10 Best List. It was one of the worst movies I saw in 2011. Not just me, I turned to my friend when we left the theater after being silent throughout, and we said simultaneously, "What a horrible movie!" The very name of Scorsese must work like crack on critics and cloud their judgement.

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kettlecharlie
13 Fans

10:34 AM on 02/27/2012

You are, of course, entitle to your opinion
but I left the theatre saying to myself
Wow
What a great movie
How enjoyable
and
I bet that somewhere there is someone gnashing teeth and saying What a dreradful movie,
You haven't let me down

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MattBenincasa
36 Fans

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12:09 PM on 02/26/2012

Solid. But you say Arthur Christmas is better than your prediction to win Best Picture--The Artist? Come on now.

And my opinion is that The Artist's long run of award success won't continue as heavily as people think tonight at the Oscars. I bet they win 3 or 4 out of 10, and I don't think one of them will be Best Picture. If it is, The Artist won't win Best Director.

I guess I have a hard time seeing a silent black and white film winning the two biggest categories at the Oscars for 2011. I predict Payne wins for The Descendants, Dujardin wins for Best Actor, and Picture goes to either The Artist, Descendants, or The Help. I have a feeling The Help may sneak away with this one--but in the end I wouldn't be surprised if The Artist steals the major awards from the talkies.

JHBH
40 Fans

01:24 AM on 02/26/2012

I liked The Artist but don't see it as the Best Picture of the year; it's a pleasant gimmick. I couldn't stand Hugo and wouldn't give it any awards. But the Academy voters will undoubtedly disappoint me as they so often do. Agree with the kudos for Tree of Life, but my favorites this year in terms of pure entertainment were Drive, Moneyball, and The Descendants.

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HUFFPOST BLOGGER
Michael Giltz
freelance writer
127 Fans

01:11 PM on 02/28/2012

You can always count on the Academy voters to frustrate you!

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PNK
54 Fans

11:28 PM on 02/25/2012

My picks, based on what I think should and would be cool to win:

Best Pic = Artist
Best Director = Artist
Best Actor = Pitt
Best Actress = Mara (nice upset)
Supporting Actor = Plummer
Supporting Actress = Spencer (these last 2 total locks)
Animated = Rango
Orig Screenplay = Midnight/Paris
Adapted Screenplay = Moneyball
Art Direction = Harry Potter (an actually good 'consolation' win)
Cinematography = Tree/Life
Costumes = Artist (so seamless, pun intended)
Editing = Dragon Tattoo
Makeup = Albert Nobbs (kinda a consolation for not awarding Glenn)
Score = Artist
Visual Effects = Harry Potter (undeniable)

Sorry, Scorsese, I'm not feeling Hugo this year.
And why wasn't Fincher nom'd for Best Picture or Director for 'Tattoo'?
Nor the score for 'Tattoo,' that music was amazing!

Billy Crystal is such a yawner choice, who are they trying to attract, sheesh??

Anyway, my ballot is ready, bring on the show!

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MattBenincasa
36 Fans

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12:12 PM on 02/26/2012

If Brad Pitt OR Rooney Mara win, I will let you shoot me in the face.

They each have literally a 0% chance of winning. Seriously, it's been measured. Close and Streep in one category...and then Dujardin and Clooney. It was nearly an outrage that Pitt was even nominated.

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MattBenincasa
36 Fans

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12:12 PM on 02/26/2012

Oh and to qualify that....I am pretty much in love with Rooney Mara and would love if she won. But she won't...maybe in the next few years. Definitely in her lifetime.

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HUFFPOST SUPER USER
Steamboater
Forget hope. Agitate.
3112 Fans

09:07 PM on 02/25/2012

"The Rise of The Planet of the Apes" should have been nominated for Best Picture because it was was. Streep should win Best Actress. The category is not foe Best Film, but Best Actress.Art Direction definitely should go to "Hugo". Simply gorgeous.

I have a large framed poster of that train crashing through the station wall down into the street (yes, it really happened) and at La Gare Montparnasse in 1895. To see the actual photos go to:

<http://iconicphotos.wordpress.com/2009/07/19/laccident-a-la-gare-montparnasse/>

<http://www.worldsfamousphotos.com/2007/12/05/la-gare-montparnasse-1985/>

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TOats99377
74 Fans

05:48 PM on 02/25/2012

I think I agree with you on which films/performers you think will win. I'm so happy I'm not the only one who didn't like "The Help," aside for the performances. At least I don't think it's best picture nomination worthy. Octavia Spencer should certainly win in the supporting category, but Meryl Streep blew me away in "Iron Lady." Her performance is the only reason I stayed awake through the whole thing. I wish Pitt would win best actor, but I Clooney was outstanding as well.

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HUFFPOST SUPER USER
Nancy Lorieau
10 Fans

04:52 PM on 02/25/2012

I can see a genuine Academy-Award-quality silent film any day of the week. The Artist is a gimmick, nothing more. As for the return of Billy Crystal? Yawn. This may be the first year in my long life that I've missed the awards, but I honestly can't see much to look forward to.

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HUFFPOST SUPER USER
robert horwitz
277 Fans

10:29 AM on 02/25/2012

When I was a kid I really enjoyed watching movies. Not so much anymore. Without me going into a lot of reasons let's just call it a personal preference. Up until the age of nine I used to watch the Oscar's. Then one day I said to myself. Hey all these decisions are pretty much all about politics and money. As far as I can see it, it really doesn't have much to do with the quality of most of the productions. I'm not saying don't watch the Oscar's. Some of the entertainment is really pretty good. All I'm saying is if you expect awards given to the best of the best chances are you will be badly disappointed.

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HUFFPOST SUPER USER
Steamboater
Forget hope. Agitate.
3112 Fans

09:13 PM on 02/25/2012

I'm very selective about even going to a movie theater today. there's so much crap e.g., shoot'em ups and explosions and Sci-Fi crap like those Transformer films. I usually watch at home on DVD and mostly foreign films and those films few films we make that are good. As for the Oscars; it's a guilty pleasure.

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HUFFPOST SUPER USER
dbrockskk
46 Fans

09:49 AM on 02/25/2012

I gave up when Brokeback lost to Crash. Ernest Borgnine didn't even see it and voted against it.

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HUFFPOST BLOGGER

Michael Giltz

freelance writer

127 Fans

01:13 PM on 02/28/2012

That was a very depressing year. indeed.

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HUFFPOST SUPER USER

Jay Robert Harris

27 Fans

06:04 AM on 02/25/2012

Jean Dujardin needs to win Best Actor!

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HUFFPOST SUPER USER

GeorgeGee

90 Fans

04:02 AM on 02/25/2012

Most egregious omission. Albert Brooks in Drive deserved at least a nomination for Best Supporting Actor. He was simply brilliant. How they could nominate Jonah Hill (who I like) instead of Brooks is beyond me.

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Skyseeker1

42 Fans

10:16 PM on 02/24/2012

I do not go to movies. I used to , but got tired of being disappointed. Ms. Daryl Hannah was being interviewed by a talk show host , many years ago. Her reply pretty much says it for me: "I'd rather watch any of the old movies then the best of the new ones".

I'll be watching on Sunday night , but , I'll be channel surfing between Billy Crystal spots.

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iteachulearn

56 Fans

11:29 PM on 02/24/2012

I hear you. TCM and AMC capture my attention more often than not. "The Young Philadelphians" recently aired on TCM and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

I'm not a movie snob, but many films today seem to lack the storytelling of past films, but then, I don't watch every film that is released.

Just like "Midnight in Paris," we sometimes think that things past are much better than things of today...some things. Many in society wouldn't want to return to the past.

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Skyseeker1

42 Fans

09:05 AM on 02/25/2012

" we sometimes think that things past are much better than things of today...some things. Many in society wouldn't want to return to the past."

Yes. Too bad we can't live in the past with the wisdom of the future.

If we could, I certainly would not have wasted all that money on 8 track music cassettes and VHS video tapes. And, the thought of running to the outhouse in the middle of a dark and snowy night , just puts my brain in shudder shock!

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DennyCrane

638 Fans

09:55 PM on 02/24/2012

Clooney didn't even deserve a nomination. Plenty of actors could've played that role. The only time where I saw him do any real acting was when he was running to his friends house.

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Sons
427 Fans

01:02 AM on 02/25/2012

Boy, opinions differ. I thought Clooney was great.

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ptrgamb
782 Fans

06:48 PM on 02/24/2012

The film from overseas that should have been Best Picture several years ago was "Lives of Others" from Germany.

One 2011 movie that too many people missed was "Higher Ground," directed by and starring Vera Farmiga. I only went to it because a friend was involved with making it, but I was extremely pleasantly surprised at what an original and powerful movie it was.

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HUFFPOST SUPER USER
Jay Robert Harris
27 Fans

06:08 AM on 02/25/2012

Actually, "La Grande Illusion" should have won Best Picture in '38. It was actually nominated, but lost to "You Can't Take It With You". Having seen both, I just cannot believe that YCTIWY won over Grand Illusion, it is pure insanity! 'Das Leben der Anderen' was good though, I'll agree with you on that.

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