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Why Everyone Is Wrong About The Oscars Show

The New York Times, The New York Post, the LA Times, USA Today -- everyone agrees that the Oscars show is in danger of being irrelevant because of the nominees. And they're all wrong. Here are the myths about the Oscars:

1. It's dominated by tiny little independent films.
2. People don't care about the movies nominated because they haven't seen them.
3. Ratings will drop because there are no blockbusters nominated.
4. *Brokeback Mountain* is controversial.

Let's tackle #1: the Big Nominees are "independent films." Of course, the term "independent film" is almost meaningless. Budget is not a good measuring stick and neither is the studio distributing it. All that really matters are the stars. So of the five Best Picture nominees -- *Brokeback Mountain, Capote, Crash, Good Night and Good Luck* and *Munich* -- I'd say only *Capote* is an independent film in the classic sense. Philip Seymour Hoffman is a recognizable name to aficionados and Catherine Keener just co-starred in the blockbuster *The 40 Year Old Virgin*, but no one in the movie opens films and they're more beloved by critics than known by moviegoers. Frankly, *Munich* with its \$70 million budget and low-key cast is as much of an independent film as any of them. But of course it's directed by the most popular movie director in the world.

But *Brokeback Mountain*? Please. Heath Ledger and Jake Gyllenhaal have starred in a string of high profile movies and appeared in countless interviews and gossip magazines even before this film exploded. And Michelle Williams starred in one of the iconic TV shows of the 90s (*Dawson's Creek*). This is not a no-name movie with unknown actors.

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