

# Coming In Loud and Queer: The Gay Superbowl

Now that the straight Superbowl has come and gone, it can mean only one thing: the Oscars. For a while now I've thought of the Academy Awards as the Gay Superbowl because we, as a community, seem to understand the rules and the history of the event, use it as an excuse to have a party, and it's full of added extras we love the way football fans (a.k.a. straight people) like half-time shows and new, expensive commercials.

For example, the best Oscar trivia buffs I've ever met are gay. Gays also love a production, especially if it involves fashion, closet cases, dick-shaped awards (good for fags and dykes!), movies, music, and so on. The things to love at the Oscars are boundless, but usually start (for me) with Joan and Melissa Rivers's inane but wonderful pre-show broadcast on E!

Joan Rivers is the ultimate gal to show a boy like me a good time. She's rich, she's funny, and she acts like she's drunk. Melissa is not as good a daughter/sidekick as say, Tatum O'Neal was to dad Ryan, or as the Judd daughter, but she makes the entire affair more coherent than if her mother did it by herself.

After all the pageantry of the red carpet (rich anorexic closet-case nymphomaniacs on parade), we have to sit through the opening number, the quality of which depends on the host. Billy Crystal always has a song, but I prefer Whoopi Goldberg as a host. Of course, the last time Goldberg hosted, she had to have a pretend conversation with Miss Piggy, but I'm willing to forgive and forget for the sake of the awards.

As far as I can tell, the Academy have a long history of giving the award to the wrong person. Whether due to love affairs



joel  
arthur  
nichols

or old age, very often the golden statue does not go to the person who has produced the "best" work. One category where this favoritism has been particularly clearly seen lately is the screenplay awards, which tend to go to the most famous person nominated in the category regardless of merit. Not that love-of-my-life Matt Damon and his boyfriend

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I would like to give out Oscars based on the drama of it all. Instead of giving out the award a few years ago to Judi Dench for *Shakespeare in Love*, I would have given it to Kathy Bates for *Primary*

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Ben Affleck didn't deserve to win for *Good Will Hunting*, but did the other people nominated with them even have a chance?

I have no problem awarding the Oscars for something other than "best performance," or "best costume design," etc. I'm glad that Julia Roberts won because it was her turn and not because they want us to think that she was really that good in *Erin Brockovich*. There's no way to judge performances against any sort of objective standard; it's acting for God's sake, not figure skating. In all seriousness, though, I don't mind that the awards are given virtu-

ally without respect to the role and performance. What bothers me is that the winners are determined by some weird Hollywood rules and not my own!

I can think of countless examples of how it should have gone differently in past years and know that as soon as the winners are announced this year, I will feel the same way. In response, I'm going to give *Out in the Mountains* my own Oscar opinions in all the fun categories: (I should preface this part of the show by saying that I haven't really seen that many movies this year, but being an informed homosexual, I've heard about all

of them, read reviews, and heard friends talking. I'm going to judge anyway.)

■ **Best Supporting Actor:** I haven't seen any of the movies nominated in this category, but venture that Ian McKellen will win for *The Lord of the Rings*. They have to give *Rings* something, McKellan deserves it after losing to Roberto Benigni in 1999. Plus, he's one of the only out gay actors there is.

■ **Best Supporting Actress:** I've only seen *In the Bedroom* in this category, but feel confident, because of all the hype, that Jennifer Connelly (*A Beautiful Mind*) will win. The two old English women both nominated for *Gosford Park* (Maggie Smith and Helen Mirren) are deserving, but more or less cancel each other out. Kate Winslet (*Iris*) bores me and Marisa Tomei (*In the Bedroom*) already won an Oscar.

■ **Best Actor:** This category is remarkable this year because for the first time two Black actors are nominated (Denzel Washington and Will Smith), last year's winner (Russell Crowe) is nominated again, and there's an awards-show outsider (Sean Penn). The fifth nominee is Tom Wilkinson from *In the Bedroom*. All reports seem to think that Russell Crowe (*A Beautiful Mind*) is going to win, and it wouldn't be the first time that schizophrenia has helped. I'd love to see Will Smith (*Ali*) win because I think he's fantastic, but I hear his performance is too much impersonation rather than portrayal. Sean Penn is a good actor, too, but really should have won in 1996 for *Dead Man Walking*. I have no opinion on Denzel Washington (*Training Day*) and think that Tom Wilkinson's accent was good enough in *In the Bedroom*. It'll probably end

up with Russell Crowe winning his second in a row.

■ **Best Actress:** This category is my favorite and will also disappoint me the most this year. By my reckoning, this year is the year of Nicole. Ms. Kidman divorced Tom Cruise (while he proved his heterosexuality in courts around the world and cavorted with another woman) and had two fantastic roles in two excellent films, *Moulin Rouge* and *The Others*. In my perfect Oscar world, she would have been nominated for *The Others*, but in fact is recognized for her role in *Moulin Rouge*. I think she should win. She's amazing, but all the hype is pointing to Sissy Spacek (*In the Bedroom*), even though she won back in 1981 for *Coal Miner's Daughter*. The actresses nominated are a good bunch, Judi Dench (*Iris*), Renee Zellweger (*Bridget Jones's Diary*), and Halle Berry (*Monster's Ball*). I liked Spacek, but would prefer Nicole. It would be amazing to have Halle Berry win (as the first black lead actress to win an Oscar), but unless something crazy happens, it probably won't happen.

I don't want to talk about Best Director or Best Picture, because Baz Luhrman was not nominated for the best-directed film of the year, *Moulin Rouge*, and Ron Howard (*A Beautiful Mind*) will probably win. At any rate, the Oscars are coming and are the gay event of the season. Let's just hope some of the gays who win are ones who are not ashamed to say so.

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