

Oscar Picks 2012

by Joe Mulder

All right, folks. You don't want to read this any more than I wanted to write it, but I'm doing my Oscar picks simply because, for about the last decade, I've always done them.

And I know, I know... "because that's the way it's always been" is a really terrible reason, in and of itself, to do something. I mean, people *always* got polio. A field goal in the NBA was *always* worth two points. Young residents *always* worked 36-hour shifts, by the ends of which they were too tired to give a shit whether you lived or died.

Nevertheless. I don't want to look back, decades from now, at a string of nearly unbroken annual Oscar picks columns. I know the movies this year were crap (I haven't really seen any of them, I've just heard). I know that nobody really cares ([AwardsDaily.com](#), the leading Oscar watch site on the entire internet, only bothered to post their annual comprehensive predictions roundup chart late yesterday; any other year there would have been rioting in the streets if they'd waited until three days before the Oscars).

But I won't let 2011 beat me! Besides, there's always the [Onebee.com](#) Oscar pool, run by PoopReading's own Jameson Simmons. In the past I've half-jokingly referred to this Oscar pool as "the only reason to watch the Oscars;" this year I say it zero-jokingly.

All right. Let's get this over with. As always, this is who *will* win, not who *should* win. Since *Warrior* was snubbed in every category except one, and it's sure to lose there, I couldn't care less who *should* win. Seriously, you guys, *Warrior* was so good.

BEST PICTURE

Winner:

The Artist

Other nominees:

The Descendants

Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close

The Help

Hugo

Midnight in Paris

Moneyball (this was the only Best Picture nominee I saw this year, and *Warrior* was so vastly superior you guys, I'm not even kidding...)

The Tree of Life

War Horse

Everyone says it's *The Artist*. It would be interesting to see an even more recent black and white movie win Best Picture, because I'm sure we all thought *Schindler's List* would be the

last one we'd ever see take this category.

BEST DIRECTOR

Winner:

Michel Hazanavicius, *The Artist*

Other nominees:

Alexander Payne, *The Descendants*

Martin Scorsese, *Hugo*

Woody Allen, *Midnight in Paris*

Terrence Malick, *The Tree of Life*

This one is pretty well sewn up, and too bad; as PoopReading's own Jameson Simmons points out, Woody Allen and Terrence Malick never show up at the Oscars, so if this category were wide open there'd be a 40% chance that the Best Director award would be presented to a seat filler.

The biggest lock of the night, though, is that when they show all the directing nominees just before they announce the winner we'll get yet another look at that picture of Terrence Malick in the hat that they've been using since 1997. Seriously, are we sure he didn't turn into a vampire right around the time Elway won his first Super Bowl, and thus hasn't shown up on film since? Has anybody checked on this?

BEST ACTOR

Winner:

Jean Dujardin, *The Artist*

Other nominees:

Demian Bichir, *A Better Life*

George Clooney, *The Descendants*

Gary Oldman, *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*

Brad Pitt, *Moneyball*

This is the lone acting category that seems to be a bit of a race; some think George Clooney could win. Maybe he could. I'm just going to assume that it'll be *The Artist's* night.

How sad that this is what passes for a race these days, too. Remember three years ago, when we had Sean Penn in *Milk* versus Mickey Rourke in *The Wrestler*? How great was *that*? If you'd have told somebody in 1984 that in 2009 Sean Penn and Mickey Rourke would be going up against each other for a Best Actor Oscar, they'd have said "Well naturally they will be." If you'd have told somebody the same thing in 1991, their head would have exploded. Yet there they were. Mickey Rourke in *The Wrestler* was one of the best movie performances I've ever seen in my entire life and I still don't feel like I can totally say that the wrong guy won, is how

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good Sean Penn was. Now *that's* a race.

BEST ACTRESS

Winner:

Viola Davis, *The Help*

Other nominees:

Glenn Close, *Albert Nobbs*

Rooney Mara, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*

Meryl Streep, *The Iron Lady*

Michelle Williams, *My Week with Marilyn*

Out of the five I only saw Rooney Mara's performance, but I'm sure nobody was as good as she was (just like I can guarantee that nobody in the Best Actor category was as good as Tom Hardy in *Warrior*. Seriously, you guys). But it seems to have been called to the Academy's attention they've still only had one black Best Actress winner, so they'll take care of that. Plus I'm sure Viola Davis was great; she's a great actress. I bet she didn't brain a guy with a golf club, though, like Rooney Mara did (if she had, I'd have been a *lot* more likely to have seen *The Help*).

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR

Winner:

Christopher Plummer, "Beginners"

Other nominees:

Kenneth Branagh, *My Week with Marilyn*

Jonah Hill, *Moneyball*

Nick Nolte, *Warrior* (you guys seriously)

Max von Sydow, *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*

Come on. Rick Santorum is surging in the polls; you think those Hollywood pinkos *aren't* going to bestow Oscars on the black lady, and the guy who plays the old gay dude?

Also, throughout most of 2011 it was Ryan Gosling this and Ryan Gosling that; they could have made room for his *Crazy Stupid Love* performance here. You know, if the Oscars were interested in movies that people, like, like. Jonah Hill pretty much just sat there and talked about math all Sorkin-y, for example. I could have done that.

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS

Winner:

Octavia Spencer, *The Help*

Other nominees:

Berenice Bejo, *The Artist*
Jessica Chastain, *The Help*
Melissa McCarthy, *Bridesmaids*
Janet McTeer, *Albert Nobbs*

They kind of had to nominate Melissa McCarthy here, or they'd have looked like even bigger assholes than when they didn't nominate *The Hangover* for Best Picture.

Anyway, this will be Octavia Spencer. She's won every significant award leading up the Oscars, and doubtless plenty of insignificant ones as well.

BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY

Winner:

Woody Allen, *Midnight in Paris*

Other nominees:

Michel Hazanavicius, *The Artist*

Annie Mumolo & Kristen Wiig, *Bridesmaids*

J.C. Chandor, *Margin Call*

Asghar Farhadi, *A Separation*

I don't feel good about this one at all, but I decided I'm just going chalk this year (for the uninitiated, that's a sports term that means "simply predicting that the odds-on favorites will win").

Still, Best Picture winners usually win a screenplay award. And it wouldn't actually shock me if any one of these movies won, except for maybe *Bridesmaids*. And even there, the Academy kind of has a boner for giving screenplay awards to actors (like Kristen Wiig, who starred in the movie).

But then again Woody Allen is an actor too; so let's just play it safe. Go with the favorite. Even if I had *The Artist* to win here, and then changed it. And I really wanted to pick the guy from Iran, because you can hardly go wrong by just assuming that Academy voters fill out their ballots based on the "What would bunch a red state person's panties the most?" system.

But let's go with Woody.

BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY

Winner:

Alexander Payne and Nat Faxon & Jim Rash, *The Descendants*

Other nominees:

John Logan, *Hugo*

George Clooney & Grant Heslov and Beau Willimon, *The Ides of March*

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Steven Zaillian and Aaron Sorkin, story by Stan Chervin,
Moneyball
Bridget O'Connor & Peter Straughan, *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*

Big week for Jim Rash; first they announce that "Community" is coming back on March 15 (he plays the dean of Greendale Community College), then he goes and wins an Academy Award.

Which will be almost as cool as when Walton Goggins from "The Shield" randomly won an Oscar for Best Short Film ten years ago.

And now we come, as we must, to the pee break categories. I'm basically just going to tell you who the majority is picking, and in telling you that, I'll be making my picks as well. If I have anything to add, I'll add it.

BEST FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILM: Generally the rule in this category (and in the Documentary Feature category too) is that if I've heard of the movie before the nominations come out, then it definitely won't win. The documentary category broke that streak last year, though, and the fact that *A Separation* is such a prohibitive favorite in this category leads me to believe I'll finally have heard of a Best Foreign Language Film winner ahead of time, too.

EDITING: This one usually goes either to the Best Picture winner or to Thelma Schoonmaker, who edits all of Martin Scorsese's movies (she's won three times, including the last two times she's been nominated). So it's *The Artist* or *Hugo*; let's just stick with *The Artist* this year.

CINEMATOGRAPHY: or, "Best Pointing of the Camera at Nature." Emmanuel Lubezki, *The Tree of Life*.

ORIGINAL SCORE: Everyone's picking Ludovic Bource for *The Artist*.

ORIGINAL SONG: Only two nominees; everyone's picking "Man or Muppet" from *The Muppets*. Not a great song. If it's going to be like this, in fact, they should probably just not have this category some years.

COSTUME DESIGN: *The Artist*. You're probably OK if you just pick it for most everything; that'll be your best shot to win your Oscar pool.

MAKEUP: *The Iron Lady*. If you can do old people makeup without having it look like somebody's face is melting, you're probably going to get an Oscar.

SOUND EDITING, SOUND MIXING: This year I'm not going to bother to look up which is which, or how often the winners of these two categories match. *Hugo* is the popular

pick for both (*The Artist*, being a silent movie, is sort of N/A).

VISUAL EFFECTS: *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*. Contrary to what the film's title implies, it's my belief that the planet itself does not physically rise.

DOCUMENTARY FEATURE: *Undefeated*. As was noted by me when the nominations came out, and by PoopReading's own Jameson Simmons later on, there was a documentary about Sarah Palin earlier this year that was also called *Undefeated*. This isn't that.

(Although it did lead me to wonder: in what context could anyone consider Sarah Palin *Undefeated*? Since I'd probably have to see the movie to find out, I guess I'll never know)

DOCUMENTARY SHORT: *Saving Face* and *The Tsunami and the Cherry Blossom* are kind of the co-favorites. I'll pick *Cherry Blossom* because it sounds like it's probably about Japan. I might even look that up before the Oscars, to see if that's true.

ANIMATED FEATURE: *Rango*. Which wasn't very good. *Kung Fu Panda 2* was much, much better. But *Rango* is supposed to win, so pick that.

ANIMATED SHORT: *The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore*.

LIVE-ACTION SHORT: *Tuba Atlantic* or *The Shore*. I flipped a brain coin, and it came up *The Shore*.

And there it is, another Oscar picks column in the books... and none too soon. Let's hope February 2013 gets here fast; I'm used to being interested in the Oscars once a year, and I haven't got my fix yet.
