

# Many of best Oscar choices overlooked by Academy; several major nominees little-known, inaccessible

By TODD STONE  
Of The Battalion Staff

While you watch the Oscars and share the fun of guessing the winner with millions of movie fans, one question may well dominate your guesswork: Where did these nominees come from?

This year's major nominations are a collection of quality actors, films and filmmakers that were unknown until the nomination announcements last month.

Several films such as "Henry V," "Camille Claudel," "Enemies, A Love Story," "My Left Foot" and "Shirley Valentine" are small in



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Jessica Lange, an Academy favorite, received a "best actress" Oscar nomination for her performance in "Music Box."

terms of audience reach, but they are big in terms of Oscar recognition.

These five films collectively have received 10 major nominations, including best picture, director and actor ("My Left Foot"), best actress ("Shirley Valentine" and "Camille Claudel"), and best supporting actress ("Enemies, A Love Story" with Angelica Huston and Lena Olin and "My Left Foot"). "Henry V" was nominated for best director and actor.

If you live in Bryan-College Station, these films will not appear at your local theater or video store until the Oscar night is long over.

Even if you live in a major movie market such as Dallas, Austin or Houston, the availability of these lesser-known films is still limited. For example, "Henry V," "Camille Claudel" and "My Left Foot" are each playing in only one theater in Houston.

Nominating films in major categories which most people cannot see is a rip-off, because the average moviegoer is excluded from forming an educated opinion about the nominations.

The problem is not that the un-

available films don't deserve Oscar recognition. They are all quality films. However, other great films more widely seen were ignored.

Perhaps the Academy can develop a few more categories to alleviate the obscurity problem. Perhaps it could open a category such as "Best Film, Actor or Director Which is Really, Really Good, But No One Has Ever Heard Of."

Then it could develop another category called "Best Film, Actor or Director People Know About and that Can Be Seen."

For most, guessing the Oscar winners will be a shot in the dark, since many of the films can't be found. If any of these scarcely-viewed films win, there is bound to be a lot of head scratching among plenty of movie fans.

**The Overlooked:**

The following is a list of the Oscar nominees for major film categories. "Solid" is a good pick, "stretch" means others could have been se-



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Michelle Pfeiffer is a solid choice for the best actress nomination. Jeff Bridges, her co-star in "The Fabulous Baker Boys," was not nominated.

lected and "misses" are the "could-have-beens."

**BEST PICTURE:**

*Solid* — "Born On the Fourth of July," "Driving Miss Daisy" and "My Left Foot." *Stretches* — "Field of Dreams" and "Dead Poets Society." *Misses* — "War of the Roses," "When Harry Met Sally," "Crimes and Misdemeanors," and "sex, lies and videotape."

**BEST ACTOR:**

*Solid* — Tom Cruise, "Born On the Fourth of July"; Daniel Day-Lewis, "My Left Foot"; Morgan Freeman, "Driving Miss Daisy." *Stretches* — Kenneth Branagh (because of obscurity), "Henry V"; Robin Williams, "Dead Poets Society" (should have been nominated for Best Supporting Actor). *Misses* — Michael

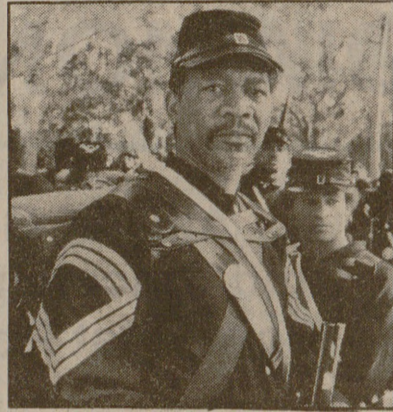
Douglas, "War of the Roses"; Steve Martin, "Parenthood"; Matt Dillon, "Drug Store Cowboy"; and Jeff Bridges, "Fabulous Baker Boys."

**BEST ACTRESS:**

*Solid* — Michelle Pfeiffer, "The Fabulous Baker Boys"; Jessica Tandy, "Driving Miss Daisy"; Jessica Lange, "Music Box"; and Pauline Collins, "Shirley Valentine." *Stretch* — Isabelle Adjani, "Camille Claudel." *Misses* — Sally Field, "Steel Magnolias"; Kathleen Turner, "War of the Roses"; Meg Ryan, "When Harry Met Sally"; Andie MacDowell, "sex, lies and videotape"; and Isabella Rossellini, "Cousins."

**BEST DIRECTOR:**

*Solid* — Oliver Stone, "Born On the Fourth of July"; Woody Allen, "Crimes and Misdemeanors"; Jim Sheridan, "My Left Foot." *Stretches* — Peter Weir, "Dead Poets Society" and Kenneth Branagh, "Henry V." *Misses* — Danny DeVito, "War of the Roses"; Steven Spielberg (the man is way past due for an Oscar), "Indiana Jones and The Last Crusa-



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Morgan Freeman received a "best actor" nomination for his role as an officer during the Civil War in "Glory." He also starred in "Driving Miss Daisy," which is nominated for best picture.

yet to have a film awarded an Oscar in any of the major categories.

Despite the success of the third "Raiders" film and "Always," Spielberg, one of the greatest filmmakers in cinematic history, is once again ignored.

His films are not big productions. They do not have the biggest stars. Yet Rob Reiner continually has made quality films that the Academy ignores.

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The Sure Thing," "Stand By Me," "Princess Bride," and now "When Harry Met Sally," all deserved Oscar recognition. At least the Academy managed a "Best Original Screenplay" nomination for "When Harry Met Sally."

**Oscar Night: It can't get any worse:**

Remember last year's Oscar night, featuring Rob Lowe and Snow White jamming to "Proud Mary"? After that disaster, several changes have been made to prevent a follow-up to that abysmal Oscar night.

Good move No. 1: Getting Billy



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Some of the year's strongest cinematic performances, by Kathleen Turner and Michael Douglas, were not recognized by the Academy for "The War of the Roses." Director Danny DeVito (top) was not nominated either.



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Sally Field's performance in "Steel Magnolias" was overlooked by the Academy. Co-star Julia Roberts (right), however, was nominated for best supporting actress.

Crystal to host the Oscars. Crystal is quick-witted, intelligent and appealing. He should be able to keep the evening entertaining.

Good move No. 2: Recruiting Paula Abdul to choreograph all of the dance numbers at Oscar night. She's the hottest performer in Hollywood now, and she should give the normally stuffy Oscar night an exciting kick in the pants.

Good move No. 3: Putting together some interesting presenters.

Robert DeNiro and George Lucas will be presenters for the first time. DeNiro will appear with Martin Scorsese, and Lucas with Steven Spielberg. Others scheduled to appear include Warren Beatty with Jack Nicholson, Tom Hanks, Jessica Lange, and Kevin Kline.

This group should be more entertaining than last year's forgettable Dudley Moore-Bo Derek pairing. Overall, Oscar night should be more interesting and entertaining than previous ones, because it couldn't get any worse.

## Lay down your bets on *The Battalion* staff's Oscar predictions

Monique Threadgill  
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	Monique Threadgill Managing Editor	Suzanne Calderon Reporter	John Righter Reviewer	Mary-Lynne Rice Entertainment Editor	Todd Stone Reviewer
Best Picture	Born on the Fourth of July	Born on the Fourth of July	Born on the Fourth of July	Born on the Fourth of July	Born on the Fourth of July
Best Actor	Morgan Freeman	Tom Cruise	Daniel Day-Lewis	Morgan Freeman	Tom Cruise
Best Actress	Michelle Pfeiffer	Jessica Tandy	Jessica Tandy	Jessica Tandy	Jessica Tandy
Best Supporting Actor	Martin Landau	Danny Aiello	Danny Aiello	Denzel Washington	Denzel Washington
Best Supporting Actress	Julia Roberts	Julia Roberts	Julia Roberts	Dianne Wiest	Brenda Fricher
Best Director	Oliver Stone	Oliver Stone	Kenneth Branagh	Oliver Stone	Jim Sheridan