

And the winner is...

by Timm Doolen, Kevin Robinson and Todd Stone
The Battalion

The contention for the best picture Oscar provides some much needed excitement for an otherwise lackluster year for movies.

Then again, the Academy hasn't been too wise in choosing its last few winners - neither "Dances With Wolves" nor "Driving Miss Daisy" were even close to being the best pictures of 1990 or '89.

When it comes down to the final say of who will win this year, it's a tough choice between *Bugsy*, which is reminiscent of the old Hollywood-style film, and *Beauty and the Beast*, a strong candidate because of its uniqueness - it's the first animated feature to be nominated for the top prize.

Both *Silence of the Lambs* and *JFK* have a chance, but both are a bit too controversial in their own right. "Lambs" is a horror film, only the second to be nominated (along with "Exorcist" in 1973), and as such is probably not a popular choice with Academy members. "JFK" has received a lot of criticism in the press, and has generally brought a black cloud over certain parts of the industry, so it also probably won't get the award.

And finally, "Prince of Tides" doesn't have the momentum of the other nominations. When it comes down to the final balloting, our guess is the sentiment will swing to Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*.

However the principle actor in *Prince* seems a safe bet for the best actor award, though Hopkins' chilling portrayal of Dr.

Hannibal Lecter in *Silence* might bring it to him.

Robert DeNiro, Robin Williams and Warren Beatty have all previously received numerous nominations, with DeNiro winning it for *Raging Bull* in 1980.

The actress category is more difficult. Geena Davis and Susan Sarandon may cancel each other out for the actress award, but Sarandon has received a lot of attention from Hollywood insiders.

Jodie Foster might repeat her 1987 award for *The Accused*, but Bette Midler seems like a longshot, in big part due to the fact that the movie, *For the Boys* was a flop. When all the smoke has cleared, Laura Dern might sneak in and take it from her older competitors.

A first for this year is the mother-daughter nomination of Dianne Ladd and Dern. And though it's unlikely both will win, Ladd definitely outshines most of her competitors in the supporting category.

The supporting actor category is another tough one to pick. The two great performances of Ben Kingsley and Harvey Keitel in *Bugsy* will probably cancel out, leaving Jack Palance of *City Slickers* and Michael Lerner of *Barton Fink*. Palance has a good chance as a sentimental favorite. If he does win, it will be the longest period of time for one person to win two Oscars - the first was for his performance in *Shane* 39 years ago.

The direction category is also close. First-time director John Singleton could do what Kevin Costner did last year - steal the Oscar from underneath the noses of veteran directors. That included Barry Levinson, who might be granted the award this year for his work on *Bugsy*. On the other hand, Jonathan Demme might also be rewarded for his 20 years in the film business which have gone virtually unrecognized by the major awards groups.

For original screenplay, John Singleton (*Boyz 'N' The Hood*) seems a logical choice - he is the youngest director nominated and the first black, but Academy members will probably be more willing to give him a screenplay award, which is honestly more appropriate for his talents.

Along similar lines, Oliver Stone will probably not add to his collection of best director trophies, but seems likely to earn one for the adaptation of two books on Kennedy's assassination.

Predicted winners*

Picture: *Beauty and the Beast*

Director: Jonathan Demme

Actor: Nick Nolte

Actress: Laura Dern

Sup. Actor: Jack Palance

Sup. Actress: Dianne Ladd

Orig. Screenplay: John Singleton, *Boyz 'N' The Hood*

Adapted Screenplay: Oliver Stone & Zachary Sklar, *JFK*

* Disregard this if the Academy goes into a "sweep" frenzy, as it has often done, and gives one picture, such as *Bugsy* or *JFK*, most of the awards.



Nick Nolte in a scene from *Prince of Tides*. Nolte is expected to take home the acting Oscar, but the film itself probably won't win best picture. Director Barbara Streisand was notably left out of the nominations in the best director category.

Ceremony details

Time: 8 p.m., Monday

Network: ABC (cable channel 13)

Place: Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Los Angeles

Host: Billy Crystal

Lifetime achievement award: Indian filmmaker Satyajit Ray

Irving J. Thalberg award: George Lucas

Gordon E. Sawyer award for technical achievement: special-effects animator Ray Harryhausen.

Presenters: Anjelica Huston, Annette Bening, Audrey Hepburn, Goldie Hawn and Kevin Costner.

What did Oscar miss?

By Kevin Robinson
The Battalion

Most of the time, it's easy to recognize those films and stars nominated for the big categories: they were the ones that made all money or the press last year. But those that didn't generate controversy were passed over by the Academy without a glance.

There were some great performances on the screen last year, but the majority will be forgotten in the Oscar nominations. Some of these were in films that did not get the press that others received and only spent one or two weekends in the local theater. Others were seen in pictures that have been nominated for awards, but were passed over for nominations in favor of the better recognized name.

In the category for best picture, the Academy made decent choices. *JFK*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *Silence of the Lambs* were clearly top picks for 1991. Some of the other nominations, though, are on pretty shaky ground. Films like *Prince of Tides* and *Bugsy* are hardly best picture material when compared to Kevin Branagh's thriller, *Dead Again*, Jodie Foster's directorial debut in *Little Man Tate*, or more obscure pictures such as *Kafka*.

In 1991, a Spike Lee film once again failed to get a nomination, although *Jungle Fever* matched or surpassed the quality of many pictures nominated. Although Lee was passed over, the Academy did recognize that *Boyz 'N' the Hood* was a fine start to the career of 23-year-old John Singleton.

In the best actor category, many fine performances were missed. Jeff Bridges was Robin Williams' equal in *The Fisher King*. Bridges had to play a convincing jerk and still make the audience empathize with him. Robin just played Robin for most of the movie. Those that saw *Naked Lunch* know that Peter Weller was great in that otherwise silly adaptation. Anthony Quinn was convincing as the stern father in *Jungle Fever*, and last but not least, Larry Fishburne gave one of the best performances of the year in his portrayal of the charismatic (and aptly named) Furious Styles in *Boyz 'N' the Hood*.

In the actress categories, the academy offered good choices for nominees, except for one goof. Jessica Tandy was nominated for supporting actress from *Fried Green Tomatoes*, but the nomination should be for Mary Stuart Masterson, who offered a better performance. The best director category should also have listed some outstanding newcomers. John Singleton used all the craftsmanship of a Hollywood veteran in *Boyz 'N' the Hood*. Similarly, Jodie Foster's first directing job in "Little Man Tate" was impressive, using a subtle touch in a film that easily could have been turned into oversentimental tripe.

There were, however, some interesting variations in the awards this year. The big profile movies, such as *Terminator 2*, *Hook*, and *The Addams Family* were ignored in the top nominations. Oliver Stone hit big with *JFK* but his earlier film of the year, *The Doors* was forgotten for any mention (perhaps rightfully so).

Many of the pictures that received the major nominations this year were those that created controversy or headlines. *JFK* produced a wave of conspiracy mania. And "Thelma and Louise" kicked off a year that seemed to dwell on a battle of the sexes.

In 1991 for a film to be considered important enough for an Oscar, it seems it had to generate a Time magazine cover.

Past winners on video

By Timm Doolen
The Battalion

As the Academy Awards approach, it's a good time to reflect back at some other great achievers the Academy recognized. In this brief sample, we go back in time every ten years, and pick some other favorites through the years.

Chariots of Fire (1981) - One of the few British entries chosen by the Academy, this was a surprise pick ten years ago, and definitely the right choice. The story of two devoted runners who finally go up against each other at the 1924 Olympics is beautifully filmed and exquisitely acted.

The French Connection (1971) - One of the best ever action films, Gene Hackman plays Popeye Doyle, a New York narcotics officer who uncovers a major transatlantic drug deal. The action rarely lets up, and the often imitated car chase is worth the price of rental alone. Based on a true story.

West Side Story (1961) - Possibly the best choreographed musicals, this retake of Romeo and Juliet swept the Oscars in '61 taking 10 home. It's over-romantic, over-dramatic and a little overlong -

but hey, it's also a lot of fun.

An American in Paris (1951) - Along with *Singin' in the Rain*, this was the kind of musical that Gene Kelly will be remembered for. This song-and-dance comedy is loosely based around a love story, but the best parts are the truly cinematic images of Kelly dancing in a surrealistic dream world.

How Green Was My Valley (1941) - John Ford's tale of life in a Welsh coal-mining town beat out the classic *Citizen Kane* to win this year. It's easy to see why director John Ford also went home with the best director award.

Rebecca (1940) - Surprisingly, this was Alfred Hitchcock's only movie to take home the Best Picture award - even more surprising considering his best films were made more than a decade later. Nonetheless, this is a remarkable telling of the Daphne du Maurier novel.

My Fair Lady (1964) - Some of the best songs and funniest comedy are contained in this gem, adapted from the stage play. The direction by George Cukor, and Lerner and Loewe's music have rarely been better.



Robin Williams (left) and Jeff Bridges in a scene from *The Fisher King*. This is Williams' third Oscar nomination in five years.

If we picked the Oscars

Staffers pick who they would like to see win top awards

Reviewer Category	Timm Doolen	Kevin Robinson	Todd Stone	Comments
Picture	<i>Beauty and the Beast</i>	<i>JFK</i>	<i>Silence of the Lambs</i>	Kevin: With <i>JFK</i> , I thought Oliver Stone did something unique with the way he crafted the picture, merging documentary footage and his own film. They took what could have been a dry collection of facts and theories and molded it into a gripping thriller.
Director	Jonathan Demme <i>Silence of the Lambs</i>	Oliver Stone <i>JFK</i>	Oliver Stone <i>JFK</i>	
Actor	Anthony Hopkins	Anthony Hopkins	Nick Nolte	Timm: Anthony Hopkins played Hannibal Lecter so well that it has revitalized his entire film career.
Actress	Laura Dern	Jodie Foster	Jodie Foster	Todd: As a rookie FBI agent, Foster comes up with her strongest performance since <i>The Accused</i> .
Sup. Actor	Harvey Keitel	Harvey Keitel	Jack Palance	Todd: Palance's gruff and gritty cowboy is one of this year's most memorable performances.
Sup. Actress	Mercedes Ruehl	Mercedes Ruehl	Juliette Lewis	Kevin: For a change, a supporting character was one of the most interesting people in the film.
Original Screenplay	John Singleton <i>Boyz 'N' The Hood</i>	John Singleton <i>Boyz 'N' The Hood</i>	Richard LaGravenese <i>Fisher King</i>	Todd: Fantasy, romance and the Holy Grail - in New York City! The most imaginative story of the year.
Adapted Screenplay	Ted Tally <i>Silence of the Lambs</i>	Oliver Stone and Zachary Sklar <i>JFK</i>	Ted Tally <i>Silence of the Lambs</i>	Timm: What more can be said about a chilling movie from a chilling original book.



Among the possible winners Monday night are (from l) Barry Levinson (director), Mercedes Ruehl (sup. actress), John Singleton (director, screenplay), Lawrence Kasdan (screenplay) and Bette Midler (actress).

Academy Nominations List

Picture: *Beauty and the Beast*, *Bugsy*, *JFK*, *The Prince of Tides*, *Silence of the Lambs*

Director: John Singleton, *Boyz 'N' the Hood*, Barry Levinson, *Bugsy*; Oliver Stone, *JFK*; Jonathan Demme, *Silence of the Lambs*; Ridley Scott, *Thelma and Louise*

Actor: Warren Beatty, *Bugsy*; Robert DeNiro, *Cape Fear*; Anthony Hopkins, *Silence of the Lambs*; Nick Nolte, *The Prince of Tides*; Robin Williams, *The Fisher King*.

Actress: Geena Davis, *Thelma and Louise*; Laura Dern, *Rambling Rose*; Jodie Foster, *Silence of the Lambs*; Bette Midler, *For the Boys*; Susan Sarandon, *Thelma and Louise*.

Supporting Actor: Tommy Lee Jones, *JFK*; Harvey Keitel, *Bugsy*; Ben Kingsley, *Bugsy*; Michael Lerner, *Barton Fink*; Jack Palance, *City Slickers*.

Supporting Actress: Dianne Ladd, *Rambling Rose*; Juliette Lewis, *Cape Fear*; Kate Nelligan, *Prince of Tides*; Mercedes Ruehl, *The Fisher King*; Jessica Tandy, *Fried Green Tomatoes*.

Original Screenplay: John Singleton, *Boyz 'N' the Hood*; James Toback, *Bugsy*; Richard LaGravenese, *Fisher King*; Lawrence and Meg Kasdan, *Grand Canyon*; Callie Khouri, *Thelma and Louise*.

Adapted Screenplay: Agnieszka Holland, *Europe Europa*; Fannie Flagg and Carol Sobieski, *Fried Green Tomatoes*; Oliver Stone and Zachary Sklar, *JFK*; Pat Conroy and Becky Johnston, *The Prince of Tides*; Ted Tally, *Silence of the Lambs*;

Foreign Film: Children of Nature (Iceland), The Elementary School (Czechoslovakia), Mediterraneo (Italy), The Ox (Sweden), Raise the Red Lantern (Hong Kong).

Art Direction: Barton Fink, *Bugsy*, *The Fisher King*, *Hook*, *The Prince of Tides*

Cinematography: *Bugsy*, *JFK*, *The Prince of Tides*, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, *Thelma and Louise*

Costume Design: *The Addams Family*, *Barton Fink*, *Bugsy*, *Hook*, *Madame Bovary*

Film Editing: *The Commitments*, *JFK*, *Silence of the Lambs*, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*, *Thelma and Louise*

Makeup: *Hook*, *Star Trek VI*, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*

Original Score: *Beauty and the Beast*, *Bugsy*, *The Fisher King*, *JFK*, *The Prince of Tides*

Sound: *Backdraft*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *JFK*, *Silence of the Lambs*, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*

Visual Effects: *Backdraft*, *Hook*, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*

Other categories: Documentary Feature, Short Documentary, Animated Short, Live Action Short, Sound Effects editing, Original Song.