

Budget Plugs for Oscars

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By Steve Pond
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The studios' Academy Award campaigns are underway in earnest, and most years that means the Hollywood trade papers are full of ads suggesting that even the unworthiest films be favored with Oscar nominations. But in these budget-conscious times, most studios seem to be cutting back, and the result is fewer ads that are downright embarrassing—and, in some cases, fewer ads on behalf of deserving films. "Rambling Rose," for instance, would seem to be a likely candidate for campaigns pushing Robert Duvall, Laura Dern and Diane Ladd—but Seven Arts, the company that made the low-budget film, is in a financial bind, so the movie's only promotion will be a handful of ads suggesting Duvall, Dern and Ladd as part of a slate of 15 nominees.

So far, to judge from the ads, the most intriguing competition seems to be in the supporting actor category. It's intriguing not because a tight race is developing, but because this year's strategy is apparently for studios to suggest nearly every actor in a film for this award: Ted Levine, Scott Glenn and Anthony Heald for "The Silence of the Lambs"; Kevin Dillon, Kyle MacLachlan and Frank Whaley for "The Doors"; Stan Shaw, Gailard Sartain, Raynor Scheine, Gary Basaraba and Nick Searcy for "Fried Green Tomatoes"; and, in the most remarkable suggestion of all, 11 actors for "JFK." The men receiving Oscar pushes for Oliver Stone's film range from actors central to the film (Joe Pesci, Tommy Lee Jones) to those with only a scene or two (Walter Matthau, John Candy). The others are Ed Asner, Kevin Bacon, Jack Lemmon, Gary Oldman, Michael Rooker, Jay O. Sanders and Donald Sutherland. Kevin Costner alone is suggested in the best actor competition, of course.

On the other hand, Fox is promoting "Grand Canyon" in an unusual way, suggesting every one of its leading performers in the supporting categories and none of them for best actor or actress. Danny Glover, Kevin Kline, Steve Martin, Mary McDonnell, Mary-Louise Parker and Alfre Woodard are all supporting players, says Fox. Actually, they bill Parker as Mary Louise Parker, while Universal is mentioning her in its "Fried Green Tomatoes" ads as Mary-Louise Parker. Universal is right.

Technical Kudos

Meanwhile, the winners of some Academy Awards have already been chosen. Products and people receiving this year's Scientific and Technical Awards, which are given out in advance of the televised Oscar ceremony, were announced last week. In a relatively unusual move, nobody will be given a Class 1 award, an Oscar statuette handed out for innovations of major benefit to

the movie industry. Instead, nine Class 2 awards (plaques) will be handed out, as well as three Class 1 certificates. Among those receiving plaques are the Panavision team responsible for a zoom lens widely used in "Beauty and the Beast"; last year Panasonic boycotted the ceremony to protest the fact that a similar lens was only given a Class 3 award. Special effects pioneer Ray Harryhausen will also receive a career achievement award.

And the '91 Figures Are . . .

The final box office figures for 1991 are in, and according to Daily Variety the year was down about 3 percent from the previous two years, to \$4.85 billion in total gross. Things would have been worse, but the Christmas season was one of the strongest ever.

The Top 10 films released in 1991, for the record, are "Terminator 2," "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves," "The Silence of the Lambs," "City Slickers," "Sleeping With the Enemy," "The Addams Family," "The Naked Gun 2½," "Beauty and the Beast," "Hook," and "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2." The order will change as "Hook" and "Beauty and the Beast" continue to make money.

'Beast' as Cash Cow

Weekly Variety, meanwhile, tried to determine not which films grossed the most money but which returned the biggest profit to their studios. They say that "Beauty and the Beast" was probably the year's most profitable film, giving Disney about \$30 million more than the studio spent to make, promote and distribute it.

TOP TEN FILMS

The 10 top-grossing movies for the weekend of Jan. 3-5. (in millions)

	Est. Wkly. Gross	Est. Total Gross	Weeks on Chart
1. Hook (TriStar)	\$11.5	\$82.1	4
2. Father of the Bride (Disney)	\$9.0	\$43.2	3
3. Beauty and the Beast (Disney)	\$8.8	\$82.5	8
4. The Prince of Tides (Columbia)	\$8.5	\$31.3	2
5. The Last Boy Scout (Warner Bros.)	\$7.1	\$43.8	4
6. JFK (Warner Bros.)	\$6.8	\$30.9	3
7. Bugsy (TriStar)	\$5.4	\$25.3	4
8. Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country (Paramount)	\$4.7	\$60.5	5
9. The Addams Family (Paramount)	\$4.6	\$98.4	7
10. My Girl (Columbia)	\$3.8	\$48.8	6

SOURCE: Associated Press