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Oscar race is down to finalists

By Robert Osborne

Barbra, "Bugsy" and/or "Beauty"? Has Oliver's "JFK" been stoned or glorified? What's the fate of "Thelma & Louise," the "Lambs" and "The Fisher King"? Did the needed enthusiasm materialize for "Hear My Song," "Barton Fink" or "Europa Europa"?

Those questions were answered verily early (5:30) this morning

when the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences announced its list of the official Oscar nominees for 1991. (For the complete list of nominees, see Thursday's *The Hollywood Reporter*.)

Guaranteed, in some quarters the champagne has been flowing since sun-up today. In other arenas, it's the Southern California

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Oscar noms

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version of "Bad Day at Black Rock," with medicine chests already emptied of headache pills.

Also guaranteed, there are few folks in town right now who are talking of anything else but those brand new Academy Award nomination choices. Today marks the second most important phase of the whole Oscar process, No. 2 only to March 30 when the Academy's 4,950 voting members will let us know just who will end up with which golden statuette, decisions that will also add new names to the history books of Hollywood.

Nomination Day means the battle lines have been drawn, and the race for the Oscar is on. It also means publicists can plan their final strategies, while advertising agencies do last-minute polishing of ad art that'll start screaming out of newspaper pages and TV boxes Thursday, and remain there for at least the next six weeks.

There are many reasons for the push, even above and beyond the glorification that an Oscar nomination automatically brings its recipi-

ents. This year, especially, there are several films with staggering budgets that could benefit handsomely if enough Academy Award nods are forthcoming, notably Barry Levinson's "Bugsy" and Oliver Stone's "JFK."

Major nominations for Disney's "Beauty and the Beast" could also be an additional b.o. help to that film, despite its hit status, since an Academy endorsement would almost certainly help erase the reluctance of some adults to see an animated feature, usually perceived as a smorgasbord for kids only.

Nominations, if numerous enough or if lofty enough (say, in the best picture, performance or direction categories), could do wonders for Miramax's "Hear My Song," the German-made "Europa Europa," the Coen brothers' "Barton Fink" or several other small-sized releases still making the theatrical rounds.

Other films, like "The Silence of the Lambs," "City Slickers," et. al are already in the videocassette market and any nominations in their direction would primarily help accelerate vid sales and/or

rentals.

For individuals, of course, whether they are actors, producers, cinematographers, directors, editors or anyone else working in the motion picture arena, an Oscar nomination (and, most definitely, an eventual Oscar win) can mean — at least temporarily — prestige, better offers, and more employment, things that have been iffy for Hollywoodians ever since the contract system was basically abandoned by studios in the 1950s.

Most of all, an Oscar nomination means the film, or the individual, is on the road to the real gold at the end of the rainbow: the Academy Award itself. But, sobering fact, not necessarily, not even for films that rack up a whole gaggle of endorsements.

Both "The Color Purple" in 1985 and "The Turning Point" in 1977 received a staggering 11 Academy Award nominations but failed to win a single statue when the Oscars were finally handed out. (By contrast, "Grand Hotel" was nominated for only one Oscar in 1931-32, for best picture of the year, and romped home with it.)

To date, Peter O'Toole has been

nominated no less than seven times for an Oscar as best actor but has yet to ever be Academy Awarded. That dubious distinction was matched by the late Richard Burton, also with a seven nominations-zero wins in the Academy Award tally. Yet many others, including George Burns, Richard Dreyfuss, Michael Douglas, F. Murray Abraham, Whoopi Goldberg, Ginger Rogers, Patty Duke and others have won on their first and only nomination to date.

It's the unpredictability and the foibles that make Oscar what he is, of course. But it's also the glory and the gold that's lurking around every nomination.

From now until March 30, not only Hollywood but a big chunk of the world will be talking of little else. As of today, Oscarmania has officially begun. □

Mail call

The Hollywood Reporter welcomes letters to the editor. The writer's name and phone number must be included. The letters should be sent to 6715 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, CA 90028.

The Boxoffice

Top 50 4-Day Weekend Gross: \$79,699,526
% Change: +52

This Week	Last Week	Picture (Distributor)	4-Day Weekend Gross	% Change Over Prior Weekend	# Screens This Week	Change in # of Screens	Per Screen Average	# Screens Last Week	Weeks in Release	Total Gross Sales
1	New	Wayne's World (Paramount)	18,122,710	—	1,768	—	10,250	—	—	18,122,710
2	1	Medicine Man (Buena Vista)	8,915,971	+5	1,368	+64	6,518	1,304	1	19,746,093
3	4	Fried Green Tomatoes (Universal)	7,058,390	+13	1,306	+77	5,405	1,229	7	34,263,454
4	2	Hand That Rocks the Cradle (Buena Vista)	6,880,132	+6	1,750	0	3,932	1,750	5	59,814,471
5	3	Final Analysis (Warner Bros.)	6,291,854	-2	1,599	+95	3,935	1,504	1	14,556,023
6	New	Great Mouse Detective (Buena Vista re-issue)	4,126,855	—	1,408	—	2,931	—	—	4,126,855
7	6	Father of the Bride (Buena Vista)	3,280,200	+17	1,574	-71	2,084	1,645	8	76,306,938
8	5	Shining Through (20th Century Fox)	3,180,388	-24	1,417	-16	2,244	1,433	2	15,824,320
9	8	Beauty and the Beast (Buena Vista)	3,144,519	+36	1,500	-80	2,096	1,580	13	110,162,677
10	7	Grand Canyon (20th Century Fox)	2,678,101	-16	1,144	-79	2,323	1,223	7	27,001,352
11	9	JFK (Warner Bros.)	2,336,634	+1	1,317	-34	1,774	1,351	8	60,899,451
12	11	The Prince of Tides (Columbia)	2,177,000	+7	1,416	-79	1,537	1,495	7	61,903,684
13	10	Hook (TriStar)	2,032,340	-3	1,324	-274	1,535	1,598	9	112,382,158
14	16	The Addams Family (Paramount)	1,539,520	+165	925	+329	1,378	596	12	108,325,305
15	12	Juice (Paramount)	1,026,469	-15	632	-272	1,624	904	4	17,868,447
16	13	Kuffs (Universal)	852,395	-18	861	-245	990	1,106	5	18,799,245
17	15	Bugsy (TriStar)	678,480	+2	528	-42	1,285	570	9	40,426,614
18	19	Cape Fear (Universal)	610,005	+18	598	-117	1,020	715	13	74,888,472
19	17	Star Trek VI (Paramount)	584,760	+2	487	-68	1,201	555	10	71,690,907
20	14	Freejack (Warner Bros.)	509,099	-36	554	-472	919	1,026	4	15,784,153
21	20	My Girl (Columbia)	505,066	+10	559	-28	903	587	11	55,738,477
22	41	Mississippi Masala (Samuel Goldwyn)	438,630	N/A	24	+22	18,276	2	1	527,613
23	18	The Last Boy Scout (Warner Bros.)	429,465	-20	476	-148	902	624	9	57,194,570
24	23	American Tall: Fievel (Universal)	309,145	+54	672	+56	460	616	12	20,029,564
25	38	Hear My Song (Miramax)	292,936	+426	40	+34	7,323	6	7	647,330
26	22	Rush (MGM/Pathe)	206,269	-26	352	-120	586	472	8	6,409,479
27	24	Naked Lunch (20th Century Fox)	197,337	-9	102	+13	1,935	89	7	2,070,553
28	29	Europa Europa (Orion Classics)	103,766	+15	29	-4	3,578	33	33	4,248,042
29	33	Double Life of Veronique (Miramax)	96,502	+27	20	+2	4,825	18	12	1,000,022
30	30	High Heels (Miramax)	96,367	+13	29	+2	3,323	27	10	1,309,173
31	31	Black Robe (Samuel Goldwyn)	90,811	+13	86	+15	1,056	101	19	7,907,827
32	27	Kafka (Miramax)	87,674	-19	32	0	2,740	32	10	496,249
33	36	Madame Bovary (Samuel Goldwyn)	84,319	+27	48	+8	1,757	40	7	1,688,557
34	37	Life Is Sweet (October)	77,570	+28	20	-3	3,878	23	19	1,162,006
35	25	For the Boys (20th Century Fox)	77,527	-49	154	-119	503	273	12	17,588,105
36	35	My Own Private Idaho (Fine Line)	77,241	+10	63	+3	1,226	60	20	6,188,961
37	28	Hearts of Darkness (Triton)	76,167	-17	27	-1	2,821	28	11	914,436
38	43	35-Up (Samuel Goldwyn)	74,284	+103	6	+3	12,380	3	4	178,624
39	32	Little Man Tate (Orion)	73,133	-8	146	-26	501	172	17	24,924,699
40	—	Until End of the World (Warner Bros.)	71,705	—	16	—	4,482	—	8	576,233
41	New	Double Trouble (Motion Picture Corp.)	55,000	—	10	—	5,500	—	—	55,000
42	39	The Inner Circle (Columbia)	50,691	-7	13	-6	3,899	19	7	514,309
43	44	At Play in Fields of Lord (Universal)	44,303	+23	23	-2	1,926	25	10	1,051,111
44	47	Mindwalk (Triton)	42,201	-55	14	+4	3,014	10	18	404,035
45	34	Into the Sun (Trimark)	37,659	-49	39	-69	966	108	2	617,434
46	45	The Fisher King (TriStar)	35,200	+6	64	-5	550	69	21	41,783,744
47	New	I Don't Buy Kisses Anymore (Skouras)	30,268	—	4	—	7,567	—	—	30,268
48	49	La Belle Noiseuse (MK2)	22,497	+69	2	0	11,248	2	17	302,344
49	40	Alan & Naomi (Triton)	19,612	-61	19	-25	1,032	44	2	192,287
50	—	Slacker (Orion Classics)	12,759	—	11	—	1,160	44	2	1,191,392