



Best Motion Picture

Chicago
Gangs of New York
The Hours

- **The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers**
The Pianist

For the second year in a row, *The Midland* staff has predicted the current "Lord of the Rings" film will take home the coveted Best Picture Oscar. We might have been wrong last year, but that's what sequels are for. The grand and epic scale of "The Two Towers" hasn't been seen on movie screens in this form for quite some time. Amazing special effects, an ambitious multi-threaded story, an excellent ensemble cast and director Peter Jackson's in-depth vision of Middle Earth are all reasons we choose this film. It's better than the last chapter in the series, and we predict it'll win the statue for its efforts.

Best Director

Rob Marshall (Chicago)
● **Martin Scorsese (Gangs of New York)**
Stephen Daldry (The Hours)
Roman Polanski (The Pianist)
Pedro Almodóvar (Talk to Her)

After three previous nominations for Best Director (Raging Bull, The Last Temptation of Christ and Goodfellas), it should be about time that this critically acclaimed director finally receives the award he deserves. His films are generally on the "gritty" side, but the vision Scorsese is able to bring to the screen is often masterfully done.

Best Animated Feature Film

● **Ice Age**
Lilo & Stitch
Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron
Spirited Away
Treasure Planet

I don't know about you, but the guys from "Ice Age" are the weirdest herd I've ever seen. That said, director Chris Wedge's second nomination for an Academy Award should win him another in this new category. Clearly, "Ice Age" is the favorite with the voice talent of Ray Romano, John Leguizamo, Denis Leary, Jack Black, Stephen Root and Cedric the Entertainer. A close competitor is the dark horse film "Spirited Away" from Japanese director Hayao Miyazaki.

Best Actor

Adrien Brody (The Pianist)
Nicolas Cage (Adaptation)
Michael Caine (The Quiet American)
Daniel Day-Lewis (Gangs of New York)
● **Jack Nicholson (About Schmidt)**

You felt sorry for Warren Schmidt, the retired accountant, but you would laugh along too. He worked through definite phases in his life. The vote is a little partial as well because the movie was filmed in Omaha. But nonetheless, Nicholson acted with such precision; he has no faults.

Best Actress

Salma Hayek (Frida)
Nicole Kidman (The Hours)
Diane Lane (Unfaithful)
● **Julianne Moore (Far from Heaven)**
Renée Zellweger (Chicago)

In my opinion, Julianne Moore carries this movie, which shouldn't be missed by Moore fans. As life unfolds before Cathy Whitaker (Moore), she is faced with many choices that will change several lives forever. Moore proves her brilliance in this role and should be awarded an Oscar.

Best Supporting Actor

Chris Cooper (Adaptation)
Ed Harris (The Hours)
● **Paul Newman (Road to Perdition)**
John C. Reilly (Chicago)
Christopher Walken (Catch Me If You Can)

Paul Newman's role in "Road to Perdition" is more than Oscar-worthy. He played the role of a Mafia boss John Rooney. Newman has starred in movies such as "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," "The Color of Money" and "Message in a Bottle." He is a great actor and gave a performance worthy of an Oscar.

Best Supporting Actress

Kathy Bates (About Schmidt)
Julianne Moore (The Hours)
Queen Latifah (Chicago)
Meryl Streep (Adaptation)
● **Catherine Zeta-Jones (Chicago)**

She sings, she dances and she plays an excellent murderer who hopes to be the great performer she was before her arrest. Catherine Zeta-Jones, as Velma Kelley, in "Chicago," should receive this award because she portrays a believable antagonist. Queen Latifah also plays a part, but it is not as demanding in the plot to show her actress skills. Zeta-Jones tapping shoes are on fire.

Best Visual Effects

The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers
Spider-Man

- **Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones**

Let's go with the old classic on this one and say "Star Wars." With the awesome effects it should be a shoe-in to win. From fight scenes with enormous monsters to a thrilling car chase, the effects far surpasses that of its competitors in this category. This should be the year when Lucas and company return to the podium.

Best Song

Burn it Blue (Frida)
Father and Daughter (The Wild Thornberrys Movie)
The Hands That Built America (Gangs of New York)
I Move On (Chicago)

- **Lose Yourself (8 Mile)**

Although the song itself was played only a short time in the movie, the beat and the lyrics make it exactly what Universal Studios and the record label had aimed for. It had a killer effect with its rhythm and style.

The 75th Annual Academy Awards

Academy Award winners as predicted by *The Midland* staff. Actual award results may vary. The Academy Awards will be broadcast on March 23 on ABC.

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