

## The 2012 Academy Award Nominees

Written by Mike Schulz

Tuesday, 24 January 2012 11:16

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Well, I have to hand it to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences: For all of the widespread grouching about its changing the rules regarding the Oscars' Best Picture race for the second time in three years, they did manage to make this morning's announcement of the 2012 Best Picture contenders exciting. And surprising. *Very* surprising.

We already knew that, with films now needing 5 percent of voters' number-one rankings to make the final lineup, anywhere from five to 10 movies could be nominated for the big prize. What we didn't know until this morning, of course, was exactly how many Best Picture nominees there would be. But when Academy president Tom Sherak and actress Jennifer Lawrence began to reveal the contenders, what we *also* didn't know (at least not fully) was which movies were the category's surprise snubs and surprise inclusions until every last title was announced, as the Academy chose – in what turned out to be a rather thrillingly nerve-racking bit of live television – not to have the titles announced alphabetically.

The first Best Picture nominee revealed was *War Horse*, which, I thought, was somewhat unexpected, considering how poorly the film had been faring among the recently announced contenders for guild awards, among them the directors', writers', art directors', and cinematographers' guilds. It turns out that didn't matter; despite no nominations for *War Horse*

's screenwriters, anyone in the cast, or director Steven Spielberg (though, as one of the film's two producers, he is a nominee this year), the equine saga made the lineup, and scored six citations overall.

Following the *War Horse* announcement was the completely unsurprising news that *The Artist* was in the Best Picture hunt – receiving 10 nominations total – and the

*awesome*

news that

*Moneyball*

also made the roster, despite no recognition for director Bennett Miller. (Like

*War Horse*

,  
*Moneyball*

is up for six Oscars, including an expected Best Actor nod for Brad Pitt and a far less assured Best Supporting Actor nod for Jonah Hill.

Yes

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!) Another non-shocker came with the revelation that director Alexander Payne's

*The Descendants*

was a Best Picture nominee, and despite no Best Supporting Actress recognition for Golden Globe-nominated Shailene Woodley, the George Clooney vehicle showed exceptional overall strength with additional nods for Best Actor, Best Director, Best Adapted Screenplay, and Best Film Editing, the latter almost mandatory if a film hopes to eventually win the big prize. (You have to go back to 1980's

*Ordinary People*

to find a Best Picture winner that didn't compete for Best Film Editing.)



In the room where the Oscar nominations were announced, you could hear a sizable gasp from the crowd with the announcement of fifth nominee *The Tree of Life*, clearly a beneficiary of that new 5-percent-or-more rule; those who hate the film – and heaven knows they're legion – hate it, but those who love the film

*lo-o-ove*

it. (Director Terrence Malick also made the Best Director lineup, and Emmanuel Lubezki may as well pick up his Best Cinematography trophy

*now*

.) The sixth nominee was another expected one:

*Midnight in Paris*

, which earned four total nominations, scored Woody Allen his first Best Director nod in 17 years, and marked the first Woody movie up for Best Picture in 25 years. Patience, it appears, *is*

a virtue.

At this point in the nominations announcement, though, I'll admit that I started getting a little edgy: With six titles already announced and still no mention of certain nominee *Hugo*, was *The Help*

actually going to be denied a Best Picture citation, considering that director/screenwriter Tate Taylor had already been stiffed for both of his potential nods? Nope.

*The Help*

got its nomination, as did the film's widely predicted contenders Viola Davis, Octavia Spencer, and Jessica Chastain. And when it was revealed that

*Hugo*

, indeed, made the cut – and scored the morning's highest overall tally, with 11 nods – the Best Picture race seemed tied up with a bow.

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Ah, but it wasn't. When *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*'s Max von Sydow scored a long-shot nomination for Best Supporting Actor, you could hear a few delighted shrieks in the back of the room. (I'm guessing that none of them were from fans of

*Drive*

's Albert Brooks, whose lack of a Screen Actors Guild Award nomination proved sadly prophetic.) But when it was revealed that the film itself was the ninth, and final, Best Picture nominee, the vocal surprise was at least doubled – not that I heard it at first, because I was in a total state of shock. (In truth, I didn't have the 9/11 drama on my list of the

20

most likely top contenders, primarily because I made the mistake of actually

*seeing*

the film.) But while the movie may, in my humble opinion, be the least deserving Best Picture nominee in more than a few decades (possibly since 1974's

*The Towering Inferno*

), I'll admit it: Having the morning's Oscar announcements end on such an unanticipated note was pretty freakin' cool. Well done, Academy.



Other surprises? Well, Demián Bichir's and Gary Oldman's Best Actor nods were unexpected but happily deserved – can you *believe* that this is Oldman's very first Oscar citation? – and the aforementioned Albert Brooks shunning was a bit of a bummer. I was delighted that

*Margin Call*

's J.C. Chandor was recognized for his screenwriting debut, and

*beyond*

delighted that we can now call

*Bridesmaids*

' Melissa McCarthy and Kristen Wiig Academy Award nominees. (Wiig and Annie Mumolo were cited for the film's script.) Pixar's

*Cars 2*

was rightfully ignored in the Best Animated Feature race, which instead features two titles –

*A Cat in Paris*

and

*Chico & Rita* –

that Oscar completists are gonna struggle to locate before February 26. Oh, and is that Best Original Song category hilarious or

*what*

?! There are only two nominees this year, which I don't think has ever happened before, and the contest pits

*Rio*

's "Real in Rio" versus

*The Muppets*

' "Man or Muppet?" Is there a point to the

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*Rio*

team even showing up at the ceremony?

The full list of 2012 Academy Award nominees is below, along with boldfaced mentions of how I fared in my predictions. (You're welcome to make fun of them by clicking [here](#).) All things considered, and despite my hideous botch of that Best Original Song category, I didn't fare too poorly, and even went five-for-five in Best Supporting Actress ... the category I actually felt the shakiest about. Who needs confidence when you can have dumb luck instead?



### **BEST PICTURE**

*The Artist*

*The Descendants*

*Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*

*The Help*

*Hugo*

*Midnight in Paris*

*Moneyball*

*The Tree of Life*

*War Horse*

**(6/9 correct)**

### **BEST DIRECTOR**

Woody Allen, *Midnight in Paris*

Michel Hazanavicius, *The Artist*

Terrence Malick, *The Tree of Life*

Alexander Payne, *The Descendants*

Martin Scorsese, *Hugo*

**(4/5 correct)**

### **BEST ACTOR**

Demián Bichir, *A Better Life*

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George Clooney, *The Descendants*  
Jean Dujardin, *The Artist*  
Gary Oldman, *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*  
Brad Pitt, *Moneyball*  
**(3/5 correct)**

### BEST ACTRESS

Glenn Close, *Albert Nobbs*  
Viola Davis, *The Help*  
Rooney Mara, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*  
Meryl Streep, *The Iron Lady*  
Michelle Williams, *My Week with Marilyn*  
**(4/5 correct)**



### BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR

Kenneth Branagh, *My Week with Marilyn*  
Jonah Hill, *Moneyball*  
Nick Nolte, *Warrior*  
Christopher Plummer, *Beginners*  
Max von Sydow, *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*  
**(4/5 correct)**

### BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS

Bérénice Bejo, *The Artist*  
Jessica Chastain, *The Help*  
Melissa McCarthy, *Bridesmaids*  
Janet McTeer, *Albert Nobbs*  
Octavia Spencer, *The Help*  
**(5/5 correct)**

### BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY

*The Artist*, Michel Hazanavicius  
*Bridesmaids*, Annie Mumolo, Kristen Wiig  
*Margin Call*, J.C. Chandor  
*Midnight in Paris*, Woody Allen

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*A Separation*, Asghar Farhadi  
(4/5 correct)

### BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY

*The Descendants*, Alexander Payne, Nat Faxon, Jim Rash  
*Hugo*, John Logan  
*The Ides of March*, Georle Clooney, Grant Heslov, Beau Willimon  
*Moneyball*, Aaron Sorkin, Steven Zaillian, Stan Chervin  
*Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*, Bridget O'Connor, Peter Straughan  
(4/5 correct)



### BEST ANIMATED FEATURE

*A Cat in Paris*  
*Chico & Rita*  
*Kung Fu Panda 2*  
*Puss in Boots*  
*Rango*  
(2/5 correct)

### BEST ORIGINAL SONG

"Man or Muppet?", *The Muppets*  
"Real in Rio," *Rio*  
(0/2 correct)

### BEST FOREIGN-LANGUAGE FILM

*Bullhead* (Belgium)  
*Footnote* (Israel)  
*In Darkness* (Poland)  
*Monsieur Lazhar* (Canada)  
*A Separation* (Iran)  
(3/5 correct)

### BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE

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*Hell & Back Again*

*If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front*

*Paradise Lost 3: Purgatory*

*Pina*

*Undefeated*

**(3/5 correct)**



### BEST ORIGINAL SCORE

*The Adventures of Tintin*

*The Artist*

*Hugo*

*Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*

*War Horse*

**(4/5 correct)**

### BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY

*The Artist*

*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*

*Hugo*

*The Tree of Life*

*War Horse*

**(4/5 correct)**

### BEST FILM EDITING

*The Artist*

*The Descendants*

*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*

*Hugo*

*Moneyball*

**(4/5 correct)**

### BEST ART DIRECTION

*The Artist*

*Harry Potter & the Deathly Hallows: Part 2*

*Hugo*

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*Midnight in Paris*

*War Horse*

**(3/5 correct)**



### **BEST COSTUME DESIGN**

*Anonymous*

*The Artist*

*Hugo*

*Jane Eyre*

*W.E.*

**(3/5 correct)**

### **BEST SOUND EDITING**

*Drive*

*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*

*Hugo*

*Transformers: Dark of the Moon*

*War Horse*

**(3/5 correct)**

### **BEST SOUND MIXING**

*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*

*Hugo*

*Moneyball*

*Transformers: Dark of the Moon*

*War Horse*

**(2/5 correct)**

### **BEST VISUAL EFFECTS**

*Harry Potter & the Deathly Hallows: Part 2*

*Hugo*

*Real Steel*

*Rise of the Planet of the Apes*

*Transformers: Dark of the Moon*

**(4/5 correct)**



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### **BEST MAKEUP**

*Albert Nobbs*

*Harry Potter & the Deathly Hallows: Part 2*

*The Iron Lady*

**(1/3 correct)**

### **BEST DOCUMENTARY SHORT**

*The Barber of Birmingham: Foot Soldier of the Civil Rights Movement*

*God Is the Bigger Elvis*

*Incident in New Baghdad*

*Saving Face*

*The Tsunami & the Cherry Blossom*

### **BEST LIVE-ACTION SHORT**

*Pentecost*

*Raju*

*The Shore*

*Time Freak*

*Tuba Atlantic*

### **BEST ANIMATED SHORT**

*Dimanche/Sunday*

*The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Norris Lessmore*

*La Luna*

*A Morning Stroll*

*Wild Life*



### **TOTAL NUMBER OF NOMINATIONS**

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*Hugo* – 11  
*The Artist* – 10  
*Moneyball* – 6  
*War Horse* – 6  
*The Descendants* – 5  
*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* – 5  
*The Help* – 4  
*Midnight in Paris* – 4  
*Albert Nobbs* – 3  
*Harry Potter & the Deathly Hallows: Part 2* – 3  
*Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* – 3  
*The Tree of Life* – 3  
*Transformers: Dark of the Moon* – 3  
*Bridesmaids* – 2  
*Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* – 2  
*The Iron Lady* – 2  
*My Week with Marilyn* – 2  
*A Separation* – 2  
*The Adventures of Tintin* – 1  
*Anonymous* – 1  
*Beginners* – 1  
*A Better Life* – 1  
*Bullhead* – 1  
*A Cat in Paris* – 1  
*Chico & Rita* – 1  
*Drive* – 1  
*Footnote* – 1  
*Hell & Back Again* – 1  
*The Ides of March* – 1  
*If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front* – 1  
*In Darkness* – 1  
*Jane Eyre* – 1

*Kung Fu Panda 2* – 1  
*Margin Call* – 1  
*Monsieur Lazhar* – 1  
*The Muppets* – 1  
*Paradise Lost 3: Purgatory* – 1  
*Pina* – 1  
*Puss in Boots* – 1  
*Rango* – 1  
*Real Steel* – 1  
*Rio* – 1  
*Rise of the Planet of the Apes* – 1

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*Undeclared* – 1

*W.E.* – 1

*Warrior* – 1

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