

# Lights, camera, Oscar

Even Detroit adores the Academy Awards

BY NICOLE STAFFORD  
STAFF WRITER

There may be no official red carpet downtown, but Oscar night is more than idle television-viewing in metropolitan Detroit.

In its 75th year, the Academy Awards generates as much buzz and excitement as the Super Bowl. This year's show, Sunday, March 23, with local telecast on WXYZ-TV Channel 7, has local movie fans, film experts and theater managers talking, planning and guessing.

"Part of the attraction of the Academy Awards is its lure as a media event. It's right up there with the Super Bowl," said Lawrence Jeziak of Southfield, a local film expert who teaches film studies at Oakland Community College. "It's part and parcel of the American fascination with watching."

## REALITY WORKS

David MacGregor, a screen writer who teaches at Wayne State University, agrees that the Academy Awards ceremony is a major media event, but goes a little farther on why the public feels compelled to watch. "Because it's real," he said. "It's about genuine human emotion, and it doesn't matter who it is. If an actress is surprised she won an Oscar, that's real."

Indeed, Hollywood stars in true-to-life action seems to be the latest in reality television; just consider the popularity of ABC's *I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here*.

## PICKS AND THE PICKING

Although MacGregor and Jeziak are fairly cynical about the award part of the Oscars — both said the most deserving nominees frequently don't win — they relish making predictions and talking up their favorites.

Jeziak picks *Chicago* to win for best picture. "The first musical to win a best picture Oscar since *Oliver* in 1964," he said.

For best actor, he predicts Adrien Brody's performance in *The Pianist* will win, and for best actress, he's pulling for Julianne Moore in *Far From Heaven*. In the best supporting actress category, Meryl Streep is sure to win, he said.

For best director, he had much to say and a popular belief about the fate of director Martin Scorsese to dispel: "Roman Polanski deserves the Oscar. He won't get it. Martin Scorsese deserved the Oscar in 1991 for *Goodfellas*. The Academy gave the Oscar to Kevin Costner for *Dances With Wolves* — the greatest Oscar injustice of the decade. However, the Academy will not attempt to redeem itself by giving an Oscar to Scorsese this year."

Sorry Mr. Scorsese, Jeziak picks Rob Marshall, director of *Chicago*, to win.

But if you think Jeziak spends too much time in movie land, consider MacGregor's pre-Oscar rituals. MacGregor, a Livonia resident, annually participates in an Oscar pool. Apparently, his predictions annually win the pool, too.

His strategy is a sure-fire mix of up-to-the-minute research and a killer attitude: Keep tabs on current events, surf Internet sites — oscarwatch.com is the best one — and turn a very cold shoulder on films close to the heart.

"I'm brutal," he said. "You have to pick who you think will win, not who deserves to win." So far, MacGregor is leaning toward *Chicago* for best picture and Meryl Streep for best supporting actress. Everywhere else, he's undecided.

"It's early yet," he said. "The odds change daily."

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## FILM BEAT

Film Beat lists what's playing at alternative film theaters, special movie events and local flicks. Offerings and movie schedules may change after press time, so be sure to call ahead. Film beat listings and movie information can be submitted to: Nicole Stafford, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 801 East Maple, Birmingham, Mich. 48009 or e-mail nstafford@oe.hometownlife.com

**DETROIT FILM THEATRE**, Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit, (313) 831-3237, www.dia.org/dft Adult admission: \$6.50, senior citizens: full-time students with valid identification and DIA members: \$5.50. Discount tickets available in book for five for \$25. Films screened Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday. All Monday shows are in the evening.

**March 21-23**, Chihwaeson (South Korea) director Im Kwon-Taeek shared the prize for Best Director at the 2002 Cannes Film Festival for this saga about renowned 19th century artist "Ohwon" Jang Seung-up, his wild lifestyle and struggle to define the border between profitable

and true artistry.

**March 24**, Tosca (France) 2001, director Benoît Jacquot's film translation of the famous opera.

**REDFORD THEATRE**, 17360 Lahser in Detroit, call (313) 537-2560. Regular admission: \$3.  
**March 22-22**, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* 1945, a haunting Oscar Wilde story about a Victorian gentleman who stays eternally young but has an aging portrait of himself in his attic starring Don-a-Road, George Sanders, Hurd Hatfield and Academy Award nominee Angela Lansbury in black and white.

**BREW AND VIEW AT THE MAGIC BAG**, 2770 Woodward Ave., Ferndale, (248) 544-3030, www.magicbag.com, movie nights on Wednesdays and Thursdays in small theater set long with full bar must be at least 21, doors open at 8 p.m., films start at 9:30 p.m., box office hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., \$2.

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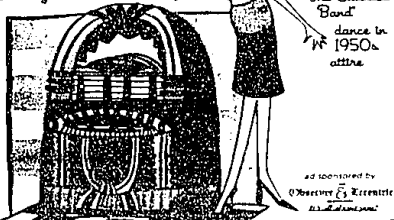
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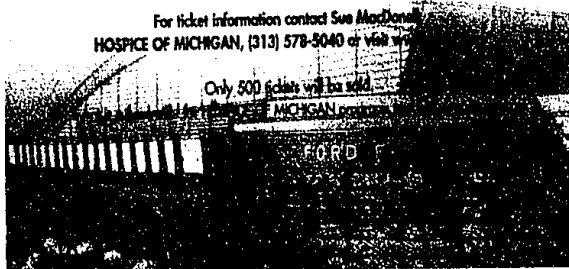
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