

MOVIES

Oscar hopefuls announced, city ready to celebrate

Plan to attend the Detroit Institute of Arts Oscar Night America Gala, 6:30 p.m. Sunday, March 25 at the Rostertail, 100 Marquette Drive, Detroit. Guests of the gala, presented by the DIA's Cinematic Arts Council, will receive an official 73rd Annual Academy Awards program. The event benefits the Detroit Film Theatre and is expected to sell out. Tickets cost \$135. Call (313) 833-7967.

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The 73rd Annual Academy Award nominations announced Tuesday, Feb. 13 didn't come as much of a surprise to the Detroit Film Theatre's curator and resident film expert. Elliot Wilhelm might not agree with all of the choices, but that's all part of the excitement of Oscar time.

This year Tinseltown is talking about *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* — Ang Lee's mystical martial arts film that's crossed over into mainstream America, earning a grand total of 10 nominations. For a foreign language film, it's managed to garner even more attention than the 1998 Italian-subtitled Academy favorite, *Life Is Beautiful*.

"It's a good alternative audience movie," said Wilhelm of *Crouching Tiger*, which is on the verge of becoming the highest grossing foreign language film. "Audiences have indeed responded to it." He added that the foreign language status of the film lends prestige.

Romantic fable

Among those also nominated for the highest honors is the romantic fable, *Chocolat*, Steven Soderburg's *Traffic* and *Erin Brockovich* and Ridley Scott's *Gladiator*. Soderburg will actually compete against himself in the two most coveted categories, Best Picture and Director.

As Best Picture, the film that earns Oscar tends to represent what the Academy hopes to be remembered by in that year, said Wilhelm. "It's the message



Embraced: Laura Linney (shown with Jon Tenney) is nominated as Best Actress for her role as Sammy in "You Can Count on Me." Her competition includes Joan Allen, Juliette Binoche, Ellen Burstyn and Julia Roberts.

they want to send to the world. If you look at the history of the Academy Awards, it's on a kind of graph of socio-political history."

That's something to take into consideration when casting your own votes on Sunday, March 25.

Making a difference

"If Erin Brockovich wins the Oscar," said Wilhelm, "it's not just going to be because it's a pretty good movie, it's going to be because it's the story of a real person making a difference in society." By these standards, *Traffic* doesn't stand much of a chance due to its bleak message about the war on drugs.

"When I think about the Oscars, I see reflections of how society sees itself," said Wilhelm.

The nominees are...

■ Actor — supporting role
Jeff Bridges, *The Contender*
Willem DeFoe, *Shadow of a Vampire*

Benicio Del Toro, *Traffic*
Albert Finney, *Erin Brockovich*

Joaquin Phoenix, *Gladiator*

■ Actress — supporting role

Judy Dench, *Chocolat*

Marcia Gay Harden, *Pollack*

Kate Hudson, *Almost Famous*

Frances McDormand, *Almost Famous*

Julie Walters, *Billy Elliot*

■ Actor

Javier Bardem, *Before Night Falls*

Russell Crowe, *Gladiator*

Tom Hanks, *Castaway*

Ed Harris, *Pollack*

Geoffrey Rush, *Quills*

■ Actress

Juliette Binoche, *Chocolat*

Ellen Burstyn, *Requiem for a Dream*

Laura Linney, *You Can Count on Me*

■ Directing

Steven Soderburg, *Traffic*

Ang Lee, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*

Steven Soderburg, *Erin Brockovich*

■ Screenplay — original

Almost Famous

Billy Elliot

Erin Brockovich

Gladiator

You Can Count on Me

Traffic

■ Screenplay — adapted

Chocolat

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

O Brother, Where Art Thou?

Traffic

Wonder Boys

■ Foreign Language Film

Amores Perros

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

Divided We Fall

Everybody Famous!

The Taste of Others

■ Best Picture

Chocolat

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

Erin Brockovich

Gladiator

Traffic

You Can Count on Me

Wonder Boys

Amores Perros

Chocolat

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