

Muse Reviews the Oscars

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The Muse is a geek to be sure but he's also eclectic in the breadth of his knowledge. In between banter about object instantiation and thread management I manage to go to the movies with my wife and kids. I even read a book now and then. My 19 year old daughter Jasmine forces me to stay up on enough entertainment news so I can have more interesting conversations with her at Sunday Lunch. So naturally I was interested in the Oscars. I did indeed watch the whole thing with my wife (actually I watched while I continued my reading of the 19th edition of the "Complete PC Repair and Upgrade Guide"... but it still counts). Here is the Muse review of the 82nd annual Oscars:

- **Length** - New record for tedium. They did a good job of truncating speeches until they got to the big awards, but it still went over by a full half an hour.
- **Best Speech** - Oprah talking about the amazing story of Gabourey Sidibe.
- **Worst Speech** - Elinor Burkett. She's pushy lady who interrupted fellow collaborator Ross Williams in the Documentary Short Category. Is she taking classes at the Kanye West school of stage etiquette? Oy vay!
- **Steve and Alec as Hosts** - Alec Baldwin is a third wheel and Steve Martin is simply funnier playing his own straight man (with apologies again to Neil Patrick Harris). Baldwin looked strangely awkward for such an elegant man. He seemed to be leaning forward like his tux was too tight or he'd eaten an untidy bit of fish or something.
- **Worst Programming Decision** - Having friends for candidate in the best actor and actress category make torturous speeches about the candidate's great talent and kind treatment of the little people (by which they mean us - not extras on the Wizard of Oz). That was a combined 20 minutes of my life I'll never get back.
- **Best picture winner "The Hurt Locker"** - Ok with me. I think it's about time a woman director won. And while I'm at it, it's about time we saw a gritty war drama directed by a woman as well - as long as it isn't Oprah or Rosie O'Donnell I say "you go girl!"
- **Best Actor Jeff Bridges** - Long time coming. I loved his joyful speech. He seemed to understand both how grand and how shallow the moment really was. Loyd would be proud.
- **Best Actress Sandra Bullock** - I'm not impressed. She's a one trick pony as an actress. Call me when she does something courageous like "Monster"... or maybe "Catwoman". And Hollywood folks, can you lay off referring to her as "Sandy" please?
- **Best supporting Actor Christoph Waltz** - Ok so it was a strong performance and he sold it, but does it seem ironic to anyone else that the guild never chooses a comedic performance but is happy to give an award to a guy playing a Nazi?
- **Worst appearance on stage** - Poor Macaulay Culkin. He is a gaunt and sad shadow of his former self. His lines were delivered wistfully as if in memory of a happier time. Sometimes Hollywood chews up child actors. Someday they should make their own version of "precious" set in a Hollywood studio.
- **Least Overlooked** - I'm going with Meryl Streep with George Clooney a close second. It seems no one could stop chattering about the fabulous Ms. Streep. Even Sandy Bullock knew she was not in the same class as the 16 time Oscar

nominee (or as Steve Martin put it "a record number of losses"). And if you saw her as Julia Childe in "Julie and Julia" you would have a hard time voting against her - she was quite simply amazing.

- **Wierdest Moment** - Expecting Alec Baldwin and Steve Martin to do an opening monologue, or perhaps a quirky song, the audience is first treated to Doogie Howser? That's right, the opening act, was *not* Steve and Alec bantering or softshoeing their way through witty inside-jokes, songs and one-liners. Instead it was Neil Patrick Harris (not that there's anything wrong with that) vamping through a Broadway tune containing bawdy insinuations about Alec and Steve and a reference to dropping the soap in a prison shower - all the while cavorting gaily with half-naked show girls. Oh Billy Crystal where art thou??

You might notice a glaring oversight in the review above - not one mention of James Cameron or Avatar. While I absolutely adored the movie and I was struck dumb by its visual tapestry and overwhelmingly realistic effects (I was privileged to see it in I-MAX 3D), I would point out that they already gave an Oscar to the story line in 1990 when the winner was Kevin Costner's "Dances with Wolves". As entertainment Avatar has no equal in our time, but as a story it is fairly predictable. Still, I was surprised to see it overlooked both best picture and best director.