

Upcoming Oscars celebrate year's best films

By CARL YIN

With the Oscars coming up on Feb. 24, Hollywood and the world is abuzz as the best movies of the past year hurdle toward undying praise. Here are some thoughts and predictions for the upcoming ceremonies:

Best Picture

From the release of the Oscar nominees in December, Spielberg's *Lincoln* has been considered the consensus frontrunner for the award. However, *Argo* has emerged as a favorite for the award, after surprising many by winning Best Picture at the Golden Globes on Jan. 10. It has only further supported its cause by winning another prestigious award for outstanding motion picture from the Producers Guild.

Argo depicts the happenings of the "Canadian Caper" mission during the Iranian Hostage Crisis, where U.S. and Canadian Intelligence created a fake film *Argo* to try and rescue six escaped Americans trapped in Tehran.

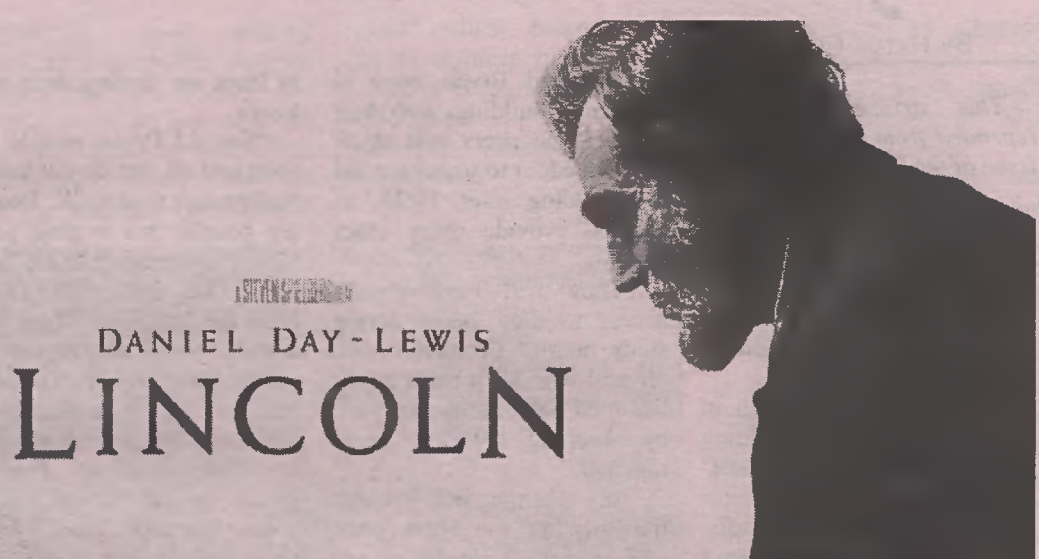
Zero Dark Thirty, which timelines the search for Osama Bin Laden, is another movie with a chance at the award, as its director Kathryn Bigelow won multiple Oscars in her last film *The Hurt Locker*.

Best Director

At the Golden Globes, Ben Affleck won Best Director for his movie *Argo*, but did not receive even a nomination for the Oscar. Former Oscar-winning director Kathryn Bigelow and Quentin Tarantino also didn't receive nominations for their well-acclaimed films *Zero Dark Thirty* and *Django Unchained*, respectively. In the opinions of many, all three directors were snubbed by the often controversial Academy. Out of those who were nominated, it seems that Steven Spielberg is the frontrunner with *Lincoln*, while many see Austrian Michael Haneke as a potential dark horse for the award for his critically acclaimed French language film *Amour*. *Amour* depicts an elderly couple, Georges and Anne, whose love is tested after Anne has a stroke.

Best Actor

After his supposed "retirement" from acting and short stint as a rapper, Joaquin Phoenix returns to the spotlight after being nominated for an outstanding performance as a PTSD-afflicted WWII veteran in *The Master*. However, his chances seem to be slim after he denounced the Academy Awards as "bull...". The



DANIEL DAY-LEWIS LINCOLN

Lincoln, starring Daniel Day Lewis, is the nominee favorite for several Academy

Courtesy of the University of Alabama

consensus favorite for this award again goes to *Lincoln*, as many think Daniel Day-Lewis will go home with the award for his role as Honest Abe. *Lincoln* and its actors have received twelve nominations in all categories this Oscar season.

Best Actress

Within the group of nominees for this award, we see the youngest and oldest ever nominees. The youngest nominee, Quvenzhané Wallis for *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, is only nine, while the oldest nominee, Emmanuelle Riva for *Amour*, is a ripe

eighty-five. It's incredible how well both performed at their ages (Wallis makes me wonder what I'm doing with my life). Jennifer Lawrence is another contender for the award for her performance in the romantic comedy *Silver Linings Playbook*. Jessica Chastain is seen as the slight favorite for the award after starring and shining in *Zero Dark Thirty*.

Best Foreign Film

Not only is *Amour* nominated for Best Foreign Film, it is also a contender for "Best Picture", "Best Director" under Michael Haneke, and "Best Actress" under

Emmanuelle Riva. *Amour* has won over the praise of many critics and is the clear favorite for this Oscar.

Best Original Screenplay

Opinions are divided in this race, as *Amour*, *Zero Dark Thirty*, and *Django Unchained* all have good chances at winning the award. The slight favorite for the award has to be Tarantino's *Django Unchained*, which is his highest rated movie (via IMDb) since his 1994 classic *Pulp Fiction*. *Moonrise Kingdom* and *Flight* were also nominated for the award, and have slim chances of winning the Oscar.

Latin America Fest: El Carnival bolsters cultural pride and awareness

By MIA MADDURI

Latin America Fest: El Carnival, hosted by the Latin America Fest Committee and the NCSSM Hispanic Cultures Club, performed several acts for the school's community on Jan. 12.

The performance, student-organized and produced, both appreciated and celebrated Latin American cultures.

El Carnival is a festive tradition that occurs in countries across the globe as a celebratory finale right before the rigorous observances of Lent. Latin America Fest's theme this year involved a group of friends adventuring in Brazil, learning about the culture, and partaking in the festivities.

The MCs acted out different scenarios, which included a pair of friends aboard the wrong flight, two brothers looking for love, a married couple, and a tourist entangled with a Brazilian.

The show was composed of dance acts such as March of the Flags, Salsa, Mambo and Merengue, Samba, Reggaeton,



Madden Brewster and Corey Su in March of the Flags

Courtesy of Ryan McCord

Traditional Mexican Dance, Tango, and Bachata.

Senior Caila Holley, choreographer of Merengue vs. Mambo and Reggaeton, explained the significance of her song choice. "Reggaeton

originates in Puerto Rico and was originally a degrading type of music, especially to females, until some pioneers cleaned it up and made it less of an underground genre and enabled it to go mainstream.

I also explained the origins of Mambo and how it came from Merengue and how the songs we used came from the Dominican Republic."

Jive Samba, Girl from

Ipanema Cumbia, "Dia de Enero" and "Put your Records On, were the musical acts in addition to a video, Latin American Struggles in America.

Senior Christie Jiang, one of the leaders of Unichords, said, "We always have lots of fun with these cultural fests since we get to explore other languages and musical styles."

Rosemary Munroe, a Spanish instructor at NCSSM, was the sponsor for this Fest, and seniors Anabel Medrano and Phoebe Castelblanco were the two main coordinators.

Medrano said, "I am choreographing Bachata, Salsa, and Traditional Mexican dance. I think the music selection is very authentic this year, as well as being modern and catchy. Traditional Mexican dance is one of my favorites because it has never been performed at LAF, and is an extremely popular dance in Mexico. The song we are performing, called el Jarabe Tapatio, is one of the most recognizable Traditional Mexican songs."