

Monday, December 12, 2005

## **LA Film Critics Dig Gay Cowboys**

For the first time in God knows when, the credibility-challenged National Board of Review were not first out of the gate with their annual "awards". This year the honor goes to the Los Angeles Film Critics. (Actually, it was the Washington Area Film Critics - but no one was looking in their area.) This year, L.A. went with the gay cowboy epic, Brokeback Mountain, producing good news and bad news if statistics are your bread-and-butter.

**The Good News:** 14 of their last 20 picks for the top prize wound up with an Oscar nomination, including last year's Sideways.

**The Bad:** Only twice have their pick won in that time - and only 5 times since 1979.

Ang Lee's star-crossed romance also picked up a win for Best Director and a runner-up for Heath Ledger as Best Actor. Runner-Ups?

C'mon people - nothing says amateur hour like Runners-up and yet L.A. and other critics groups still continue to do it. There is no runner-up Oscar, Grammy or Emmy. Maybe a tie once-in-a-while, but that's just as gay. Seriously, if I were David Cronenberg, whose A History of Violence was the runner-up for Picture and Director, the term "First Loser" (or maybe even "pitcher") would be flashing like neon across my brain.

Even gayer than Brokeback Mountain?

How about not being able to make up your mind over which film to give an actor an award for? This is a typical staple of both the LA & NY Critics Circles - awarding an actor for a year's body of work as if every film on their resume is worthy of award consideration. This year's recipient - the very worthy Catherine Keener winning not just for Capote, but also for The 40 Year-Old Virgin, The Ballad of Jack and Rose and The Interpreter. What the hell? If they would have gone with Terrence Howard for Hustle & Flow, would they also have included Four Brothers, Get Rich or Die Tryin', Crash and The Salon. Why stop there? Why not the straight-to-video Animal and the TV flicks Lackawanna Blues and Their Eyes Were Watching God. Advice for the undecided - one vote, one film. MAKE UP YOUR GODDAMNED MINDS! YOU ARE GROWN-UPS!

Other big winners were:

**Best Actor:** Phillip Seymour Hoffman - Capote (4 of the last 6 winners were nominated; 1 Oscar-winner)

**Best Actress:** Vera Farmiga - Down to the Bone (The last 6 LA picks were nominated. Too bad no one outside of the coasts and those of us who saw this film at Sundance in 2004 have ever heard of this overrated film and performance.)

**Best Supporting Actor:** William Hurt - A History of Violence (4 of the last 6 winners were nominated; 2 Oscar-winners)

**Best Supporting Actress:** Catherine Keener - Every film she's ever been in. (5 of the last 6 winners were nominated; ZERO Oscar-winners)

**Best Screenplay:** Capote

**Best Cinematography:** Good Night, and Good Luck.

**Best Production Design:** 2046

**Best Music Score:** Howl's Moving Castle

**Best Foreign-Language Film:** Cache

**Best Documentary/Non-Fiction Film:** Grizzly Man (not even making the Academy cut)

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Best Animation: Wallace & Gromit in The Curse of the Were-Rabbit

The Special Citation Award went to LA Times film critic, Kevin Thomas "for his contribution to film culture in Los Angeles". In related news, Hollywood Bitchslap's Criticwatch awarded Thomas with his own award - The Kevin Thomas Sloppy Seconds Award - for the runner-up to the Peter Travers Quote Whore of the Year. The winner of that award doesn't get much gayer

Posted by Erik Childress in Award Season at 22:44