

OSCAR PREDICTIONS

OOH, "LA LA"!

By STEVE WARREN

ON THE SURFACE, THIS YEAR'S Academy Awards are the easiest to predict, perhaps ever. But don't bet the house. *La La Land* was the right movie at the right time. With all the stress and consternation from last year's election people we're looking for an old-fashioned musical to cheer them up. While most of the studios were releasing typical "award bait" that's totally depressing.

So if you bet that *La La Land* will win in every category it's nominated in, you'll be right more often than not. But be careful how the bet is worded. It has two nominees in the Best Song category so all 14 of its nominations can't result in a win. (A tie for Best Song? Get serious!) That means that after tying *Titanic* and *All About Eve* for the most nominations, *La La Land* can't win more than 13, one more than it needs to beat the record of 11 held by *Ben-Hur* (not the dreadful 2016 version), *Titanic* and *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*.

With the Academy often sharing the wealth between the Best Picture and Best Director awards (last year, *Spotlight* and *The Revenant*, e.g.), could *La La Land* lose one of them to its closest competitors this award season, *Moonlight* or *Manchester by the Sea*? In any case, the losing director has a shot at a Best Screenplay award, Barry Jenkins (*Moonlight*) for Adapted, Damien Chazelle (*La La Land*) and Kenneth Lonergan (*Manchester*) for Original.

Three of the four acting categories appeared to be locks, with only Best Actress somewhat up in the air. Best Actor became less certain last week after the Screen Actors Guild honored Denzel Washington and actress Constance Wu blasted frontrunner Casey Affleck over sexual harassment accusations from 2010. (He was never charged, let alone convicted.) This will probably cost Wu more votes in TV awards than it does Affleck at the Oscars, but politics are on everyone's mind this year.

BEST PICTURE:
La La Land

It's only two years since *Birdman* scored the double play, and we're going out on a limb to predict it again:

BEST DIRECTOR:
Damien Chazelle, *La La Land*

BEST ACTOR:
Casey Affleck, *Manchester by the Sea*

BEST ACTRESS:
Emma Stone, *La La Land*

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR:
Mahershala Ali, *Moonlight*

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS:
Viola Davis, *Fences*

With three of the five documentary nominees dealing with race in America, thus splitting the vote, and refugees being front page news, I'll pick the latter issue to prevail:

BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE:
Fire at Sea

Moana could take some Disney votes away from

Zootopia, letting *Kubo* and the *Two Strings* score an upset; but I'll go with the one that's won the bulk of the early awards:

BEST ANIMATED FEATURE:
Zootopia

I've been disappointed with three of the four foreign language nominees I've seen, but this is about my prediction, not my choice. Iran may be too controversial this year, even though their entry isn't political, so I'll go with Germany:

BEST FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILM:
Toni Erdmann

BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY:
Linus Sandgren, *La La Land*

The writing awards are often consolation prizes to Best Picture also-rans. Original Screenplay is an easy call but Adapted has at least three strong contenders:

BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY:
Manchester by the Sea

BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY:
Moonlight

BEST FILM EDITING:
La La Land

Two songs will split the *La La Land* vote (and besides, composer Justin Hurwitz will win for his score), leaving the field open to this year's *King of All Media*, Lin-Manuel Miranda:

BEST ORIGINAL SONG:
"How Far I'll Go," *Moana*

BEST ORIGINAL SCORE:
Justin Hurwitz, *La La Land*

BEST PRODUCTION DESIGN:
Hail, Caesar!

BEST COSTUME DESIGN:
Florence Foster Jenkins

BEST MAKEUP AND HAIRSTYLING:
Suicide Squad

BEST SOUND EDITING:
Arrival

BEST SOUND MIXING:
La La Land

BEST VISUAL EFFECTS:
The Jungle Book

I didn't get to see the short film nominees until after deadline, but with some research here are my wild guesses.

BEST DOCUMENTARY SHORT SUBJECT:
4.1 Miles

BEST ANIMATED SHORT FILM:
Piper

BEST LIVE ACTION SHORT FILM:
Sing

Hmmm, that's only seven for *La La Land*. Hardly a sweep but not too shabby.



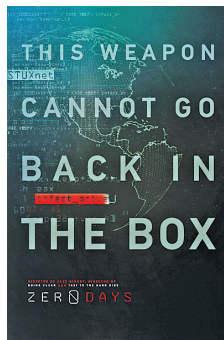
NEW RELEASES

THE LATEST DVD, BLU RAY & VOD RELEASES

By John Moore

ZERO DAYS (Magnolia Home Entertainment)

Remember when we thought the Russians hacking our elections was the worst that could happen? In this riveting documentary, Director Alex Gibney looks into the world of government-sponsored cyberwarfare, focusing on an (alleged) partnership between the U.S. and Israel to disrupt Iran's nuclear program. The film, told through interviews, some frustratingly vague for obvious reasons, focuses on the Stuxnet worm that was successful in temporarily shutting down parts of Iran's program and highlights the problems with cyberwarfare once the bug gets away from its creators. Gibney does a great job in taking a complex issue and making it play out like a Jason Bourne plot.



SAD VACATION: THE LAST DAYS OF SID AND NANCY (MVD Visual)

The death of Nancy Spungen, the punk rock hanger on that few seemed to enjoy being around, has been a point of debate in Sex Pistols lore for decades. She was either killed by her boyfriend Sid Vicious, the Pistols' bassist, during a drug binge or she was murdered by someone else. The latest doc about the duo,

Sad Vacation, does little to solve the debate, rather it muddies the theories up with more questions. Was it the hotel bellboy that Sid had a confrontation with earlier in the day? Was it a drug dealer, pissed that the duo owed him money? Or was it the official verdict from the cops, that a drugged-out Sid stabbed her (most likely). Director Danny Garcia interviewed many who knew the pair, like Sylvain Sylvain from the New York Dolls, Bob Gruen from the Heartbreakers and Howie Pyro from D Generation, but the viewer is left with even more questions at the end making for a pretty unsatisfying experience.

THE IT CROWD: THE INTERNET IS COMING (MPI)

Man, the British really know how to pull together a sitcom. Great characters, deadpan reactions and end it before the story gets old. *The IT Crowd*, about two socially awkward computer nerds paired with a tech-averse boss that work in the basement of a big corporation, ran from 2006 – 2008, ending on a high note. In this one-off 50-minute special, which originally aired in the UK in 2013, Jen and Roy are turned into local pariahs after each is caught on camera accidentally spilling coffee on a homeless woman (Jen) and seemingly berating a little person. Misunderstandings and awkwardness have always been the hallmark of the series and this special doesn't disappoint, serving as a reminder that the *IT Crowd* was still wildly funny when it went off the air, unlike many of comedies in the U.S. which wear out their welcome years before they're cancelled.



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