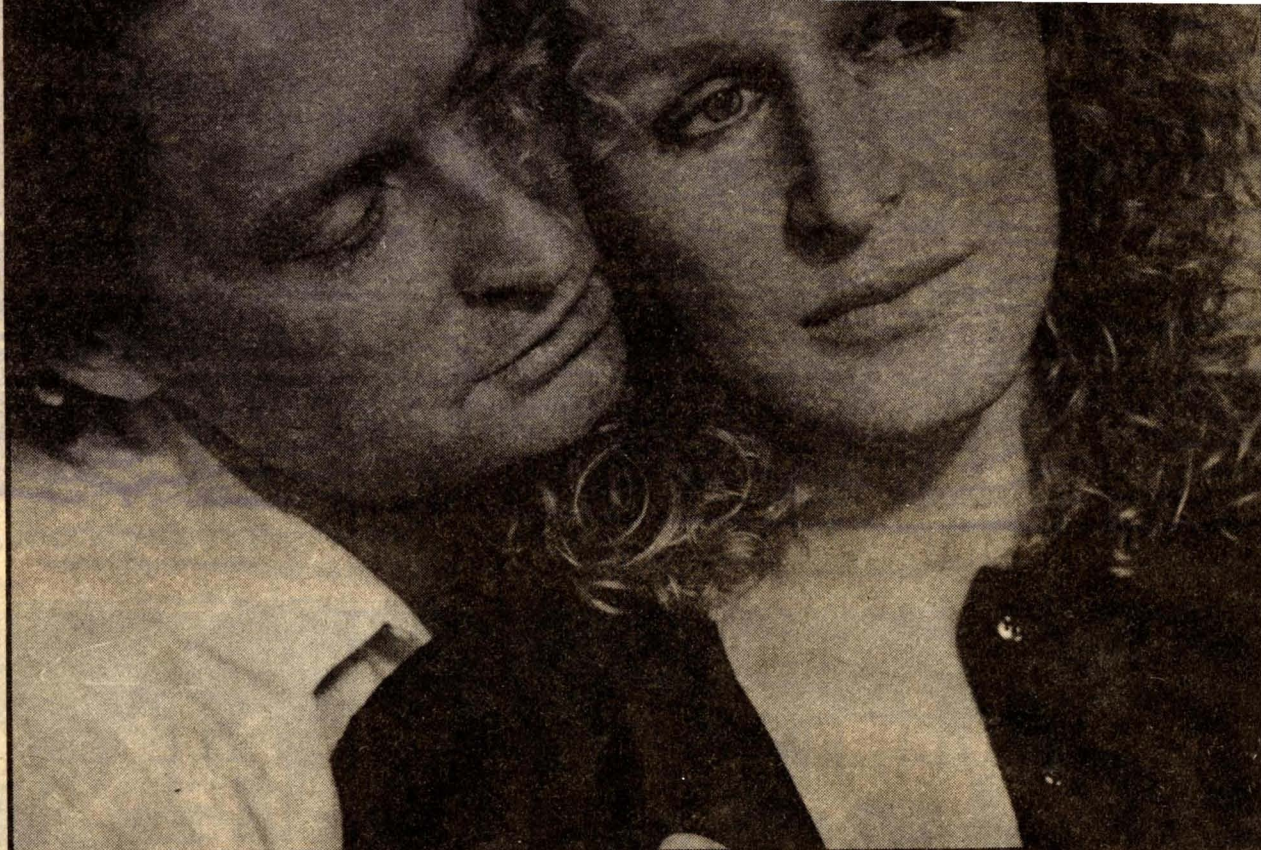*Michael Douglas and Glenn Close are just crazy about the upcoming Oscar awards.*

# Oscar predictions and Academy predilections

BY MICHAEL GILTZ

Do you remember what film won the Best Picture Oscar last year?

Do you care? Well, maybe not (It was *Platoon*). But everyone in Hollywood does. This Monday night they'll all be gathered together for the Academy Awards, and even the people who aren't nominated probably secretly hope their names will be called to receive that golden statuette.

An Oscar means prestige. An Oscar means recognition from your peers. An Oscar means you go to the head of the line for good projects. But most of all, an Oscar means money.

How much? Well, it depends on the films nominated and how successful they've already been, but a good rule of thumb is that an Oscar for Best Picture can mean an extra $20 million at the box office. Of course, if you're lucky enough to grab a handful of major awards — an event that happens less and less as the Academy has grown fond of spreading the joy — you can expect even more.

As you might expect, when there's money to be had, there's money to be spent. Studios spend millions of dollars promoting their best contenders to the small pool of Academy voters, hoping to sway them with swanky promotions or even just remind the absentminded members of the films that opened up 10 or 12 months before the voting occurs.

Furthermore, actors and directors with enough power insert clauses into their contracts obliging the studios to spend a certain amount of money to promote their latest flicks. This results in the amusing sight of advertisements pushing Sylvester Stallone for Best Actor consideration for his fine work in *Over The Top*.

But in the end, it comes down to the voters, and no one can predict what they'll do from year to year. Inevitably, there are surprises and that is what makes Oscar so exciting. Katharine Hepburn spurns the event but has received more Best Actress Oscars than anyone else, while Steven Spielberg — who would probably do back flips if it would help his chances — can't even get nominated.

This year is no exception. Who hasn't been nominated is invariably as interesting as who was, and Monday night is certain to prove as provocative (not to mention overlong and boring) as ever.

If there is any discernable trend, it is that the Academy has grown less wary of box office success, going so far as to give multiple nominations to the runaway smash, *Fatal Attraction*. The following are predictions of who will win in the major categories, as well as who deserves to win. If they all prove correct, I'll be even more surprised than if they don't.

## BEST PICTURE

The voters are notorious Anglophiles -- as recent winners *Gandhi* and *Chariots of Fire* will happily attest to — but the stately, intelligent epic *The Last Emperor* will edge out *Hope and Glory* for the top award. *Moonstruck* is a dark horse possibility, but its achievements are too minor. *Broadcast News* failed to get a Best Director nomination, greatly dimming its prospects, since the Best Picture and Best Director awards go hand in hand. *Fatal Attraction* made too much money.

Who deserves to win? (In all cases, I limit myself to the nominations.) Well, *The Last Emperor*, an impressive, stirring piece of work from Bernardo Bertolucci. It is in the grand tradition of Hollywood and wonderfully effective to boot. The Academy's failure to nominate the sensational leads — John Lone and Joan Chen — surely ranks as the biggest gaffe of the

year. But *Hope and Glory* or *Broadcast News* would be noble choices as well.

## BEST ACTOR

Michael Douglas will win with his flashy role in *Wall Street* for a number of reasons. First and foremost, he is very much a member of the Hollywood community with impressive producing credentials (*One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* and *The China Syndrome*), as well as the family tradition (Dad Kirk) to draw upon. Plus, his solid work in *Fatal Attraction* is still very much in their minds. This is his year, what with box office success and his emergence as a serious actor, and they'll love topping it off with an Oscar.

His stiffest competition is from Jack Nicholson, but *Ironweed* was too downbeat for them to pay much attention, beloved as Jack may be. William Hurt is also a comer, but he's been nominated a lot and won for *Kiss Of The Spider Woman* in 1985. Marcello Mastroianni and Robin Williams are just happy to be nominated.

Who should win? Well, Nicholson was excellent, but the performance I enjoyed the most was Hurt's in *Broadcast News*. He'd seem to have fallen into a rut playing earnest young intellectuals, but here he accomplished something I never expected: Hurt played a believable dummy. To me, this one role has shown that he is in it for the long haul.

## BEST ACTRESS

Next to the Best Picture category, this is the toughest call of all. Meryl Streep is adored by the Academy and gave a remarkable performance in *Ironweed*, but it was downbeat and they want to give her name a rest for a few years. Glenn Close is also a strong contender and her all-out, over-the-top performance as an erotic psychotic is the kind they love to reward.

But the winner will be Holly Hunter. *Broadcast News* was a critically acclaimed film from the much-admired James L. Brooks and this is their one chance to recognize it. Besides, her performance was terrific. Cher's nomination was a sign of respect — she'll win next time. Kirkland has already received her gift from the Academy and won't be expecting anything more.

## BEST DIRECTOR

Throughout the long history of the awards, only a handful of times have the Best Picture and Best Director awards gone separate ways. So, if *The Last Emperor* wins as I expect, Bertolucci will cop this one. If *Hope and Glory* wins, Boorman will too. But they're so close in the running — with *Moonstruck* breathing down their necks — that this very well might be a year in which the awards are split.

Adrian Lyne's nomination for

*John Lone and Joan Chen were overlooked by the Academy.*

category where everyone deserves to win.

## BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS

This is the most off-beat category, with a lot of interesting faces. Ann Sothern for what amounts to a walk-on in *The Whales of August*? Norma Aleandro for the little-seen *Gaby — A True Story*? The Academy always tries to have a little fun and this category shows it. Their most worthy instance of plucking a performance from obscurity was Anne Ramsey's hilarious role in *Throw Momma From The Train*, an otherwise wretched little film.

But the winner will be Olympia Dukakis for her wonderful job in *Moonstruck* as an Italian mother. She's been around for years, and, besides, her relative's high profile on the campaign trail has kept her name uppermost in their minds. Not that it matters to the Academy, but she also happens to be the most deserving.

## BEST FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILM

In a year fraught with uncertainty where no film has come to dominate the proceedings, this category is the clearest of all. Apparently, *My Life As A Dog* was being pushed for Best Picture consideration, thus splitting its votes between these two categories and failing to get nominated in either.

That leaves the field wide open for *Au Revoir Les Enfants* (*Goodbye Children*), the more deserving of the two. Based on the experiences of director Louis Malle in occupied France during World War II, it is a beautifully realized, perfect film.

Yet to arrive in Gainesville, *Au Revoir Les Enfants* is a remarkable achievement. It will be cherished and remembered by movie lovers long after most of the other actors and movies nominated have become mere footnotes. And that is the greatest award of all.