



# Show Me The Nominations



AARON STECKELBERG/DN

## Independent films earn Oscar nods; Madonna snubbed

BY LYNN ELBER  
Associated Press

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP) — The sweeping war-time epic "The English Patient" earned 12 Academy Award nominations Tuesday as Oscar voters recognized independent films but snubbed a particular material girl.

Madonna failed to receive a best actress bid for her starring role as Argentina's controversial first lady in the musical "Evita." The film based on the stage play also failed to earn a best picture nomination.

Independent films, led by "The English Patient," triumphed over major studio releases. Four of the five best picture slots and other top nominations were claimed by independent films.

TriStar's "Jerry Maguire," which earned \$121 million, was the only picture in the best picture category from a major studio. Other contenders were "Fargo," "Secrets & Lies" and "Shine."

"Fargo" and "Shine" had seven nominations apiece, while "Jerry Maguire" and "Secrets & Lies" each got five.

Best actor nominees were Ralph Fiennes for "The English Patient," Tom Cruise for "Jerry Maguire," Woody Harrelson for "The People vs. Larry Flynt," Geoffrey Rush for "Shine" and Billy Bob Thornton for "Sling Blade."

Thornton's performance as a retarded man with a violent past was a breakthrough for the relatively obscure actor, who also received a screenplay nomination as the writer of "Sling Blade." He also directed the film. He was a regular on the CBS situation comedy "Hearts Afire."

Top actress contenders were Kristin Scott Thomas for "The English Patient," Brenda Blethyn for "Secrets & Lies," Diane Keaton for "Marvin's Room," Frances McDormand for "Fargo" and Emily Watson for "Breaking the Waves."

"The whole family is tickled pink. Although maybe next year they can move the nominations announcement time to a more reasonable hour," said McDormand, referring to the pre-dawn ceremony at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences headquarters in Beverly Hills.

"To be mentioned in same breath as those other people is quite overwhelming," Blethyn said. "All of the nominees of course would love to win, but truthfully, it really is an honor to be up there as a nominee." Favored but missing from the actress nominees was Debbie Reynolds for "Mother."

Oscar night is March 24. Billy Crystal will emcee the awards.

"Sling Blade," with only \$488,508 in earnings after nearly 11 weeks in release, was the most dramatic example of how a small film, despite its quality, can have limited box office potential.

"Hamlet," with four nominations, has earned \$2.1 million; "Secrets & Lies," \$7.5 million; "Shine," \$16 million; and "Fargo," \$22.1 million. "The English Patient," has earned \$42 million.

The controversial film "The People vs. Larry Flynt," about the life of the Hustler sex magazine publisher, didn't receive a best picture nomination, but director Milos Forman was nominated along with its star, Woody Harrelson. Also forgotten by the academy was Courtney Love, the rock singer and sometime actress who played Flynt's outrageous wife. Forman competes with Anthony Minghella for "The English Patient," Joel Coen for "Fargo," Mike Leigh for "Secrets & Lies" and Scott Hicks for "Shine."

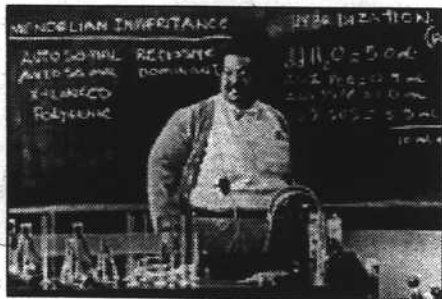
"We're just reeling around in disbelief," said Hicks, whose movie tells how Australian pianist David Helfgott overcame the childhood torment he suffered from his overbearing father.

Supporting actor contenders were Cuba Gooding Jr. for "Jerry Maguire," William H. Macy for "Fargo," Armin Mueller-Stahl for "Shine," Edward Norton for "Primal Fear" and James Woods for "Ghosts of Mississippi."

Gooding's nomination was anticipated. His performance as football player Rod Tidwell, with his exuberant cry "Show me the money!" to the sports agent played by Cruise, was a movie highlight.



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**SEVERAL POTENTIAL NOMINEES, including Madonna, saw their Oscar hopes dashed for this year after Tuesday morning's nomination announcements. Other Academy Award hopefuls who got the snub were (from top to bottom) Courtney Love, who played Larry Flynt's drug-addicted wife Althea in "The People vs. Larry Flynt," and Eddie Murphy, who was practically a one-man cast (he played seven different roles) in "The Nutty Professor."**



**THOSE WHO RECEIVED NOMINATIONS for Academy Awards this year included Tom Cruise, who will get another shot at the best actor trophy for the title role in "Jerry Maguire." Other nominees (from top to bottom) were Woody Harrelson (for best actor), who played embattled porn publisher Larry Flynt in "The People vs. Larry Flynt," and Cuba Gooding Jr. (best supporting actor), who played the outspoken football star Rod Tidwell in "Jerry Maguire."**

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