

Hell unleashed: 'Gladiator' nabs 12 nominations

■ The foreign martial arts film 'Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon' scored 10 nominations, while Steven Soderbergh won two nods for best director.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. — "Gladiator," Hollywood's high-tech return to the glories of Rome, led Academy Awards contenders Tuesday with 12 nominations, including best picture, actor and director.

"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," the Mandarin-language martial arts epic, was close behind with 10 nominations, including best picture and best director. The other best-picture nominees were the French romance "Chocolat," the legal drama "Erin Brockovich" and the gritty drug-war saga "Traffic."

Steven Soderbergh had two directing nominations, for "Erin Brockovich" and "Traffic," the first time that has happened since 1938, when director Michael Curtiz was nominated for "Angels With Dirty Faces" and "Four Daughters." (Curtiz lost to Frank Capra, who directed "You Can't Take It With You.")

The other director nominees were Stephen Daldry for "Billy Elliot," Ang Lee for "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" and Ridley Scott for "Gladiator."

After directing several English-language movies, Lee said he was delighted to see Western audiences embrace "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon."

"This was supposed to be my homecoming project," said the Taiwanese-born Lee. "I'm really taking to heart how this film is performing in America."

"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" is only the third film to earn both best-picture and for-

eign-language film nominations. The others were "Life Is Beautiful" in 1998 and "Z" in 1969. Last weekend, "Crouching Tiger" hit \$60 million and passed "Life Is Beautiful" as the domestic box-office champ among foreign-language films.

Besides best picture, "Gladiator," the first Roman spectacle since the genre fell out of favor in the 1960s, grabbed nominations for actor Russell Crowe and supporting actor Joaquin Phoenix. Hans Zimmer's score was nominated, and the computer wizardry Scott's crew used to recreate ancient Rome was named for visual effects.

Along with Crowe, the actor nominees were Javier Bardem for "Before Night Falls," a film biography of Cuban writer Reinaldo Arenas; Tom Hanks as a man, stranded on an island in "Cast Away"; Ed Harris for "Pollock," a film biography of abstract painter Jackson Pollock; and Geoffrey



Russell Crowe picked up one of 12 Academy Award nominations for "Gladiator," a best actor nod, Tuesday morning in Beverly Hills.

Rush as the asylum-bound Marquis de Sade in "Quills."

Hanks has won two Oscars, and Rush has one.

Best actress nominees were

Joan Allen as a vice-presidential nominee in "The Contender,"

Juliette Binoche as an itinerant chocolatier in "Chocolat," Ellen

Burstyn as a diet-pill addict in

"Requiem for a Dream," Laura Linney as a sister coping with her prodigal brother in "You Can Count On Me" and Julia Roberts as a tart-tongued legal aide in "Erin Brockovich."

Binoche and Burstyn are past Oscar winners.

"A year ago, if someone told me I'd be getting this, I wouldn't believe it," said Linney, a first-time nominee. "This is a huge, huge thing for me. I just feel so damn good."

Snubbed for a best-actress nomination was Icelandic pop singer Bjork, who made her film debut in the dark musical "Dancer in the Dark."

Bjork did score a nomination for best song, "I've Seen It All," which she cowrote.

The best song category was heavy on big names, including Bob Dylan for "Things Have

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heart music

By Sean McCarthy

to create a romantic atmosphere or a not-so-subtle hint of wanting to re-create scenes from "9 1/2 Weeks," "Basic Instinct" and "American Beauty" in the appropriate area of your choice.

Though not a lock-down, definitive list, the 10 CDs listed below make a good starter set to get just about anyone in the mood for love. Some are strictly romantic while others are much more suggestive. And no list of the most romantic CDs can be complete without a list of some of the most bitter and jaded CDs you can listen to after a breakup or during a healthy dose of self-pity and angst.

10 Great Romantic/Make Out CDs

1. Marvin Gaye, "Let's Get It On" Released in 1973, Gaye's masterpiece remains a timeless staple in soul and R&B. With "Let's Get It On" in your collection, you don't have to worry ever again about the right mood music.

2. Isaac Hayes, "Hot Buttered Soul" Long before he was singing about his chocolate salty balls on "South Park," Isaac Hayes was creating some of the funkiest, smoothest music in rock and R&B. Though "Hot Buttered Soul" only contains four songs, there is enough emotion and mastery in those songs to fill a double-album. If played continuously, expect your stereo speakers to ooze honey.

3. Afghan Whigs, "1965" The last full-length album released from these Cincinnati rockers is a superb blend of soulful crooning and guitar squalls. Greg Dulli's voice can be both menacing and heartfelt at the same time. "Gentleman" still stands as their finest moment, but "1965" is an excellent testament to one of the most underrated bands of the 1990s.

4. Tom Jones, "The Best of Tom Jones" It's Tom Jones! What more can be said? This collection, released in 1998, is a great introduction to one of the coolest, slickest cats on the planet. It's not unusual to be swooned by this definitive collection.

5. D'Angelo, "Voodoo" This may be the make out CD of the moment, but D'Angelo's neo-Curtis Mayfield, bubbling cauldron of soul, funk and R&B puts him on track for legend status. Light some candles, burn some incense and let "Voodoo" work its magic.

6. Patti Smith, "Gone Again" The punk priestess makes a comeback album dealing with loss and death. An album revolving around the loss of a husband, a brother and a best friend may not be the best friction-inducing material out there, but Smith eloquently details how loss and mourning are interwoven with love and romance.

7. Moby, "Play" (V2 Records) Fusing almost every popular form of music genre onto one CD, Moby's majestic album is a great blend of dance-floor catharsis and delicate intimacy. Though the CD is great for getting anyone in the mood, you may have to do some explaining when songs like "Why Does My Heart Feel So Bad" and "Natural Blues" come on.

8. Mazzy Star, "So Tonight That I Might See" Hope Sandoval's ghostly, hazy voice can give you the chills and warm you up simultaneously. If all you want to do is veg out with your loved one, this is the CD to do it. The pacing of the album makes bands like the Cowboy Junkies and Portishead seem lively by comparison.

9. Morphine, "Yes" A band that has no guitar, a 2-slide string bass guitar, a baritone sax and drums is already going to sound recognizable. But lustful burners like "Honey White" and "Super Sex" put "Yes" on another level in terms of standing out. Mark Sandman's deep, husky delivery remains one of the most missed voices in rock today (the singer died of a heart attack in 1999).

10. Massive Attack, "Mezzanine" These trip-hop pioneers fused elements of hard rock and space club beats to make another essential album in their collection. A perfect make-out album for your favorite goth boy or girl.

Candles? Check. Flowers? Check. Dinner arrangements and a collection of sonnets by Shakespeare? Done and done. Candles, flowers, a home cooked meal, all of these are relatively easy elements to take care of on Valentine's Day. ■ Music plays a trickier role in the success or failure of a good Valentine's Day for your significant other. The choices are abundant but the motives are limited: either the music is played

Sick of paying a 400 percent markup for flowers and candy? Survived a recent break-up? Fed up with the dating scene in general? You can be happy and single, but on Valentine's Day, nothing can be more satisfying than spinning one of these benchmarks of bitterness.

10 Great Bitter CDs for this overpriced, over-hyped holiday

1. Joy Division, "Closer" Lead singer Ian Curtis relied on eternal suffering and loss for inspiration for most of Joy Division's groundbreaking material. "Closer" will haunt you like few albums can.

2. John Lee Hooker, "Complete 50s Chess Recording" When it comes to misery, bands like Papa Roach and Korn have nothing on most any blues musician. John Lee Hooker make a simple statement like, "Heyah man, leave my wife alone," into a brutal ultimatum. Music doesn't come much bluer than this.

3. Tori Amos, "Boys For Pele" Amos had the budget to make an epic double-album on scale with "The Wall" and she used every bit of the 70-minutes-plus CD to explore and exorcise her demons. Even if you can't decipher the meaning of some of her songs, her anger throughout the album is unmistakable.

4. Fleetwood Mac, "Rumours" Bring the pain. While most people have the luxury of being able to be physically distant from their ex, the members of Fleetwood Mac had to be locked in a studio room with each other for months as their relationships were crumbling. "Go Your Own Way" and "Gold Dust Woman" remain some of the most stinging kiss-off songs in classic rock.

5. Fiona Apple, "When The Pawn ..." With lyrics like "Hunger hurts but starving works when it costs too much to love" in the more upbeat songs on the album, "When The Pawn..." establishes Fiona Apple as a reigning queen of bitterness. The title of the album is the longest title in contemporary pop music. It could have been whittled down to two words, "love sucks."

6. Eminem, "The Marshall Mathers LP" Remember when you were served with your first restraining order? Remember using your photos of your ex for dart practice? Hopefully not, but Eminem sure feels your pain. Love hurts, but if you take this album literally, please, get some Phish CDs and haul your ass off to counseling services pronto.

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Hotels don't come cheap for Valentine lovers looking for inexpensive deals

BY BILLY SMUCK

Got a valentine as well as roommates, yet you want to be alone to celebrate the holiday with some privacy, at a local hotel perhaps that is offering reduced rates for Valentine's Day?

If so, you're better off locking your doors, putting in the earplugs, breaking out the champagne and pretending that you're in a hotel-bedroom-suite because hotels haven't reduced prices by much, if at all.

Hotels are expensive and students are poor, but it is Valentine's Day, and for those who are truly committed to taking a so-called one-night hotel rendezvous,

then some of the promotions may actually be enticing enough to consider.

Of three hotels close to campus that were asked, Embassy Suites and The Cornhusker did reduce rates. However, the third hotel, Holiday Inn, offers a standard rate that is lower than either of the two.

Embassy Suites, 1040 P St., reduced prices from \$119 to \$104, which is "based upon availability," said Revenue Manager Dawn Wren.

Embassy Suites is the closest to campus, and most students are probably familiar with the outside of it. However, Wren said any students thinking of staying were welcome to check out the showrooms.

The Cornhusker, 333 S. 13th St., is offering a \$115 special featuring a picnic theme basket including a bottle of wine, cheese, breads and fruits.

This price, which is down from the normal \$160 rate, is the only significant reduction of the three hotels, yet it is the most expensive even with the discount.

The Holiday Inn, 141 N. Ninth St., is not promoting any Valentine's Day specials, but its normal rate is \$99.

They do offer a Holiday Inn Worldwide promotion that allow couples to get one night free when they purchase a night's stay. A coupon is required and can be

found in newspapers, magazines or their Web site, holiday-inn.com, said Front Desk Manager Melinda Maendele.

Of course these three aren't the only game in town as far as hotels are concerned, but they are nearby and probably more familiar to students.

Realistically, students aren't financially set in their ways so they can afford the luxury of going to a hotel, in which case a motel may be a more feasible alternative.

Best Western, 5200 O St., is offering their normal

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Delan Lonowski, Shawn Ballarin and Jerry Morgan/DN