

**66th AWARDS - VISUAL EFFECTS NOMINATING COMMITTEE
MAIN MEETING**

Opening Remarks

Good evening! ...and welcome to the nominating meeting for Visual Effects for the 66th Academy Awards. Thank you for being here for this occasion and would the voting members of the nominating committee please be sure that you have your folder with you before you get settled into your seats.

I'm Jonathan Erland, Chairman of the Visual Effects Nominating Committee, and with us also is Pete Clark, Vice Chairman of the Committee - Pete, if you would please rise, sir. We're also honored to have with us this evening the Dean of the Visual Effects community, a former Governor of the Academy, former President of the A.S.C. "Mighty Joe" Dunn, I mean Linwood Dunn! Stand up Lin if you would.

(Applause)

I'd like to especially welcome those present who are guests of committee members. Some of you are Academy members, some not, but all are welcome to observe how we go about this nominating process.

This evening this committee will, as is its custom, discharge a somewhat solemn duty in the service of our Academy. But in doing so we'll also enjoy a smorgasbord of some of the most extraordinary visual artistry conceivable. A years worth of the finest Visual Effects packed into roughly a two and a half hour evening. This is a little bit like a "dessert party" for the eyes and I don't know if there is anything like an ocular bromo seltzer so we'll just have to sleep it off!

We will also learn quite a bit from this evening, I can promise you, regardless of whether you are a seasoned practitioner of this craft, or an interested visitor, we will all learn something here this evening. And this, of course, is also a vital part of the purpose of this Academy.

This event also provides a rare opportunity for the visual effects community to gather, from literally all over the world, to renew and maintain old acquaintanceships. Some of which, I realize, can become quite complicated!

This is also the only opportunity I get, as Chairman, to report to you all on the State of the Visual Effects Craft within the Academy. So before we get down to the main agenda item for the evening, I'd like to review some of the highlights of the year.

As many of you will recall, last year I was able to report that the Board of Governors had undertaken to consider the possibility of Branch status for Visual Effects. At present, as you know, we are classed as Members at Large. As a preliminary step toward that goal we were invited to send a representative to attend Board meetings in a non-voting capacity.

So for the past four such meetings I, as your elected representative, have attended Board meetings. Our specific situation has not, as yet, appeared on the agenda, but the Board has proposed the creation of an ad hoc committee to study Branch questions in general and the President of the Academy, Arthur Hiller, has declared that he will convene such a committee. Naturally, I have asked to serve on this committee and it's within this forum that the rather difficult and complex discussions will occur.

Meanwhile, in addition to an abundance of sterling work, some of which we will be viewing this evening, the visibility of the Visual Effects community was raised during the past year by a variety of events and activities.

We have had an abundance of seminars on our craft at such venues as ShowBis Expo and the SMPTE Conference. We also have a growing number of exhibitions appearing at museums around the world with a new one currently in development at the California Museum of Science and Industry.

But the most outstanding demonstration of the interest and appreciation of our craft was undoubtedly the recent tribute program presented by the Academy and the Academy Foundation, produced by Ellen Harrington.

I hope many of you present here tonight were able to attend that memorable evening last November, for it was truly a tour de force presentation of the art and craft of visual effects spanning more than half a century of our craft.

As Bill Taylor so aptly observed, "Simply to see Peter Ellenshaw and Al Whitlock on the same stage together was worth the price of admission!" Practical effects, matte paintings, stop motion animation, opticals, you name it, were on display in clips ranging from *The Lost World* of 1925 through *Demolition Man* in 1993.

To people the stage with so many of our crafts' luminaries spanning two, or possibly three generations, from Lin Dunn, Ray Harryhausen, Al Whitlock, Peter Ellenshaw and Gene Warren, Senior to the relative youngsters Gene Warren, Jr. Peter Ellenshaw, Mark Stetson and Hoyt Yeatman, was truly an outstanding accomplishment.

One the Visual Effects committee would like to acknowledge with a little tribute of our own to Ms. Harrington who has been kind enough to grace our proceedings with

her presence. I'd like to invite her to come up on the stage and accept a small token of our appreciation.

This is a sketch for a matte painting from "Tremors" by Sid Dutton of Illusion Arts, accompanied by stills representing the scene before and after compositing.

(Applause)

The event was ably hosted by Don Shay who I'm sure you all know is the Founder and Editor of Cinefex magazine. And if Don would join us here on the stage, we'd like to present him with a small token of our appreciation.

This is a bust of Batman from Boss Films sculpted by Lane Liska.

(Applause)

Now, moving to our Main Agenda Item, which is to provide to the full voting Academy Membership the recommendations of this, the Nominating Committee for the Visual Effects Award. For new members, and guests, I'm going to describe what this process is all about.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, was formed in 1927 with the express purpose of encouraging the pursuit of excellence in these arts.

To achieve this goal the Academy elected to recognize excellence by creating Awards of such prestige that professionals in our art would lie awake at night dreaming of how they might win one of these.....

(produce Oscar)

.....So well did they succeed that it's probably fair to say that only the Nobel Prizes take precedence in the minds of most people on this planet.

A rigorous peer review process was set up to ensure that only the most meritorious work was rewarded. The Awards process supersedes financial compensation as the ultimate arbiter of the value of our efforts to our industry and society, and presents both to our profession and to the world, the embodiment of the highest ideals to which we all, as individual artists, may aspire.

Our Awards, in and of themselves, cannot bestow honor or glory; they can only recognize and reflect the honor and glory personified by the recipient. It follows then that the gleam of an Oscar is a direct reflection of the brilliance of the talent on whom it is bestowed.

To ensure the integrity of the Awards, membership in the Academy, which is by invitation, is restricted to those who have achieved a level of distinction sufficient to satisfy their peers.

O.K. So, to recap the nomination process so far:

Early in January the Visual Effects Steering Committee met to review all feature film product deemed to be eligible for the 66th. Awards year. A number of some two hundred and forty-seven films.

This committee sought to identify all productions that contained visual effects to a significant degree, finding fifteen films worthy of consideration. From that group the committee selected the seven productions containing work of sufficient merit to appear on your list this evening.

The Producers of these seven films were then contacted and asked to provide written descriptions of the visual effects work, a film excerpt from composite release print, as well as the names of the four primary individuals involved with and responsible for these visual effects.

Additionally, in order that we might gain more insight into the merit of the work presented, the Producers are invited to provide qualified representatives to attend this meeting so that we can all ask questions.

Everyone present, committee members and guests alike, are encouraged to join in during the questions. In the course of the year I hear a great deal of comment along the lines of, "Why did so-and-so do this that way?" Well, this is your opportunity to find out! Here they are! Load for bear and fire away!

We have a group of extraordinarily gifted craftsmen here tonight and this is a rare occasion for all of us and I'd like, on behalf of the Committee, to express my appreciation for their efforts in making themselves available.

Obviously, an immense amount of work goes into making all of these preparations, and I'd like to thank awards administrator, Rich Miller, ably assisted by the indomitable Claudia Barrett, along with Michelle Reggin and the rest of the Academy staff, for their performance of the Herculean task that goes on quietly and relentlessly throughout the process, leading up to tonight's meeting.

(Applause)

O.K. Now, a word about our balloting procedure. The object of this ballot is to select the three productions we believe worthy to be forwarded to the General Membership,

which, of course, includes us. So we here this evening will have a second opportunity, this time with our peers and fellow members, to vote for the Visual Award Oscar itself.

To achieve this, however, we must be careful to accord a high score to each production we deem worthy of such nomination. It is neither necessary, nor desirable, to try to determine the Award itself at this meeting, though on occasion that has happened. But in the event that we do not qualify three nominees for this award we will deprive our colleagues and fellow members of the privilege of voting in this category. On those occasions when only one film is scored sufficient to qualify for nomination the issue is referred to the Board of Governors. In such a case they may elect to make a special achievement award, but if that occurs the process bypasses the Academy general membership and thus deprives them of a vote.

Last year this committee did an exceptional job in this nominating procedure and we anticipate that the extraordinary productions we have before us tonight will yield similar results. Just be sure to give high marks for merit, and we'll be certain to deliver three Award worthy nominees to the full Academy Membership.

All right, without further ado, let us get on to the screenings. As is customary, the order in which the reels will be screened was determined by lot. The excerpts will be introduced by a spokesman for the production and following each reel, we will all have our opportunity to ask questions. Microphones are provided and I urge you to use them so that everyone can benefit from the discussion.

THE REELS

The first reel will be "**Cliffhanger**," from Tristar productions, Alan Marshall and Renny Harlin, Producers. Alan Marshall will present the reel.

(reel)

Joining Alan will be Niel Krepela, John Richardson, John Bruno and Pamela Easley to discuss their work.

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We'll now move on to "**Adams Family Values**," a Paramount Production, Scott Rudin, Producer. Alan Munro will introduce this entry.

(reel)

O.K. now we have an opportunity to ask questions about this work. Joining Alan Munro, Pete Kuran, Bill Taylor and Ken Pepiot.

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And now we'll see the reel from "**Jurassic Park**," a Universal production, Kathleen Kennedy and Gerald R. Molen, producers, and Gerald Molen will introduce this reel.

(reel)

For "Jurassic Park", Gerald Molen will be joined by Dennis Muren, Stan Winston, Phil Tippett and Michael Lantieri .

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The next reel will be "**Alive**," from Buena Vista productions, Bruce Cohen, Producer, and he will introduce this entry.

(reel)

To answer questions about the work on "Alive," Bruce will be joined by, Scott Farrar, William George, and Dave Heron.

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Next we'll see an excerpt from "**Super Mario Brothers**," another production from, Buena Vista productions. Jake Ebert and Roland Joffe, producers. Chris Woods will introduce the reel.

(reel)

Taking questions on the work in "Super Mario Brothers," will be Christopher Woods and Peter Webb.

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The sixth reel is "**The Nightmare Before Christmas**," yet another Buena Vista production. With Tim Burton and Denise DiNovi, Producers. The reel will be introduced by Pete Kozaschik.

(reel)

Joining Pete to answer questions about the work on "**The Nightmare Before Christmas**" will be Ariel Shaw.

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And the seventh, and last reel this evening is, "**Hocus Pocus**," from, you guessed it, Buena Vista production, with David Kirschner and Steven Haft, Producers. Peter Montgomery will introduce this work.

(reel)

O.K. Now Peter Montgomery and Bert Terreri will take questions on Hocus Pocus.

PRE-VOTE COMMENTS

O.K. Now turning to your ballot, which is the Green sheet in your package, you will see that you have the option of scoring each of these productions on a scale of six to ten. Note that you **could** vote as much as a ten for all seven productions.

Only those productions, to a maximum of three, **averaging 8** or better, will advance to the full voting Academy body as our nominations. After what we've seen this evening I'm sure you will agree that, at the very least, we have three worthy candidates.

We are retaining the practice we initiated a couple of years ago and have only one nominating ballot. So we won't have a tally of this ballot tonight. We'll all discover the results together when the nominations are announced here on Wednesday, February 9th. (at 5:30 A.M., at which time you will all naturally be here of course!).

As a consequence, after turning in your nominating ballot you are free to depart, with our grateful thanks for your participation and your patience! We look forward to seeing you again next year! Goodnight!

QUESTIONS

Cliffhanger

Why was the Sarah fall shot bluescreen instead of greenscreen, given that she had a purple costume?

Adams Family Values

Elaborate a little on this quote from your written presentation,:

"Our experience has shown that while a computer can give the ability to visualize instantly, very often changes are made after preview screenings which make opticals more cost effective."

In the roller skating sequence there was a shot that was achieved by a hybrid process using both digital and optical compositing, can you elaborate on the rationale for that?

Jurassic Park

Alive

With the existing history of shooting shiny models for bluescreen why do you say it can't be done? Reflections are possible in bluescreen as well as revers bluescreen. Read the ASC manual on bluescreen.

Super Mario Brothers

The Nightmare Before Christmas