

By PATRICK HALL

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The 85th Academy Awards will be held on Sunday, and while I spent quite some time mulling over the most deserving films, I am settling on the fact that "Lincoln" will be the winner in the big categories, despite the fact that I don't see it as the best of the nominees.

Directed by **Steven Spielberg**, and based on a book by **Doris Kearns Goodwin**, "Lincoln" received rave reviews, most notably for the otherworldly performance by

Daniel Day-Lewis

as President Abraham Lincoln.

The film was truly outstanding and a wonderful look into one of our greatest Presidents, as well as the political fight over the death of slavery. It is nominated for a whopping 12 awards: Best Picture, Best Actor, Best Supporting Actor, Best Supporting Actress, Cinematography, Costume Design, Best Directing, Film Editing, Original Score, Production Design, Sound Mixing and Best Adapted Screenplay.

All things considered, I'm guessing "Lincoln" wins four awards, including Best Picture, Best Actor for Day-Lewis and Best Director for Spielberg and Best Supporting Actress for **Sally Field**, as Mary Todd Lincoln.

To me, "Lincoln" was mind-blowingly good upon first seeing it. Day-Lewis's performance as the embattled and depressed, but resolute President was transcendent. With subtly of movements and facial expressions alongside moments of power and charisma, in "Lincoln", Day-Lewis continued to make his case as one of the best actors to ever step in front of a camera.

He has deservedly-so, won previous Best Actor Oscars for his role in 2007's "There Will Be Blood" and 1990's "My Left Foot." He was nominated two other times, in 1994 and 2003, for "In the Name of the Father" and "Gangs of New York." Why he didn't win for those, I still can't fathom.

While Day-Lewis owns the film in front of the camera, the masterful Spielberg directs everything with grace and emotional weight from behind the lens. There may be more artful directors, but few can match Spielberg's eye and ability to not only convey powerful emotions, but entertain while telling a story that should matter to every American.

I'm a huge fan of Spielberg, but I'm giving him this award by default, considering **Kathryn Bigelow** was not nominated for "Zero Dark Thirty."

Therein lies the rub.

In my opinion, "Lincoln" is actually the third-best film of this award season.

Both "Zero Dark Thirty" and "The Master" were superior films, but combined, they didn't receive as many nominations as "Lincoln," with only eight.

The fact that Bigelow was snubbed (along with **Ben Affleck** for "Argo") is laughable. Unfortunately for "The Master", it was a film that will take time to settle, digest and be reviewed countless times at home before more people appreciate it. Even after I walked out of the theater, I had to spend quite some time dwelling on it, and since it isn't out on DVD, I have still yet to decide its true potential.

Jessica Chastain ("Zero Dark Thirty") likely will lose to **Jennifer Lawrence** ("Silver Linings Playbook") for Best Actress.

Phillip Seymour Hoffman should easily take the Best Supporting Actor award for "The Master".

"Les Miserables" will take home all the expected awards that musicals are shoe-horned into receiving: Costume Design, Makeup and Hairstyling, Music Original Song, Production Design and Sound Mixing.

"Life of Pi" should win for Best Adapted Screenplay and Film Editing, while possibly also winning Best Visual Effects. But don't count out "Marvel's The Avengers" in the Special Effects category.

Best Original Screenplay will be a battle between **Quentin Tarantino's** script for "Django Unchained" and **Nick Boal's** script for "Zero Dark Thirty."

Of course, take all of this with a grain of salt.

"Lincoln" could win 12 awards and become the biggest winner ever (previous record is 11 awards by "Titanic" and "Ben-Hur").

"Amour" could become this year's "The Artist" and be a film that 95-percent of us haven't seen but wins everything.

"Argo" could continue to roll and win all seven of its nominations.

One thing is certain: If Day-Lewis doesn't win for Best Actor, I will never watch the Academy Awards again.

Probably.

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