Oscar Week: HollywoodChicago.com Predictions for 2019 Academy Awards

Submitted by **PatrickMcD** [1] on February 23, 2019 - 4:22pm

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CHICAGO – Time to fill out the Oscar prediction ballots! The 91st Academy Awards are on Sunday, February 24th, 2019, and HC film critics Patrick McDonald, Michael "Spike" Walters and Jon Lennon Espino are ready to add their prognosticating powers to eight major categories, plus three wild cards. Let the predicting begin.

Eight films of 2018 – "Black Panther," "BlacKkKlansman," "Bohemian Rhapsody," "The Favourite," "Green Book," "Roma," "A Star Is Born" and "Vice" – will vie for the Best Picture Award. The HC team together will opine on BEST Picture, Actor & Actress, Supporting Actor & Actress, Director, Original & Adapted Screenplay. As in previous years, the predictions are broken down into thoughts on who WILL WIN, SHOULD WIN and SHOULD HAVE BEEN NOMINATED (for one last gasp of WTF?). Separately, Patrick, Spike and Jon will comment on a WILD CARD guess for three other categories, and the latest odds on the rest of the field will be highlighted to fill out your ballot for Oscar Night. Have a great Oscar weekend…

PREDICTOR GUIDE: Patrick McDonald = (PM), Spike Walters = (SW) and Jon Espino = (JE)

BEST PICTURE
NOMINEES: "Black Panther" … "BlacKkKlansman" … "Bohemian Rhapsody" … "The Favourite" … "Green Book' … "Roma" … "A Star Is Born" … "Vice"

Will Win: "Black Panther" (PM), "Roma" (JE), "Green Book" (SW)

Should Win: "Roma" (PM, JE), "Black Panther" (SW)

Should Have Been Nominated: "Ballad of Buster Scruggs" (PM), "Can You Ever Forgive Me?" (JE), "First Man" (SW)

An Evocative Image of Togetherness in 'Roma'
Photo credit: Netflix

Holy sh*t! We all have a different take!

PM: There was a lot of politicking, other awards shows and trends being bantered about, but I think this is the year that The Academy will come together on a significant popular and cultural phenomenon, "Black Panther." Yes, "Roma" is a bit more worthy (and I talk about that in the Foreign Language Film category below) but it is "Black Panther" that was the most talked about, most seen and had the most impact of all the nominees. I would have no problem if "Roma" wins, but "BP" as the BP would be more reflective of 2018 in cinema and social history … so I go there. Wakanda forever!

JE: Never has the Best Picture category been such a mixed bag of truly great films and complete trash. "Bohemian Rhapsody" and "Green Book" shouldn't even be among the list for obvious inaccuracies and overall offensiveness to the very real people they were supposed to be about. The biopic that actually did do justice to the person was "Can You Ever Forgive Me?" and it was criminally overlooked. The real even fight in this category is between "Roma" and "The Favourite", with "Roma" likely winning, but only marginally.

SW: In this wild Oscar year, anything can happen, but amidst all that uncertainty I think enough voters are going to choose the safe crowd-pleaser "Green Book," which harks back to the past. It's also a little out of step with the times, in a year where "Black Panther" is a massive undertaking that managed to be better than just a Marvel movie. Undeniably. it was "First Man" that provided me with the most visceral experience at the movies by getting into the the nitty-gritty weeds of space flight by taking a profoundly personal angle to the space race.

BEST ACTOR
NOMINEES: Christian Bale, "Vice" … Bradley Cooper, "A Star Is Born" … Willem Dafoe, "At Eternity's Gate" … Rami Malek, "Bohemian Rhapsody" … Viggo Mortensen, "Green Book"

Will Win: Rami Malek (SW, PM, JE)

Should Win: Malek (PM), Christian Bale (SW), Willem Dafoe (JE)

Should Have Been Nominated: Ryan Gosling "First Man" (SW), Zain Al Rafeea "Capernaum" (PM), John David Washington, "BlacKkKlansman." (JE)

Rami Malek is Freddie Mercury in 'Bohemian Rhapsody'
Photo credit: 20th Century Fox

It's an "Easy Come … Little High" moment for the Great Rami…

SW: Rami Malek is likely to walk away with this award based on the popularity of "Bohemian Rhapsody." But his performance, like the movie, has been more of a love-it-or-hate-it kind of proposition. Put me in the latter camp, with the awkwardness of his fake teeth pushing the dynamic frontman into caricature. Christian Bale truly disappeared inside the visage of Vice President Dick Cheney, perfectly recreating the man's every mannerism. And "First Man" Ryan Gosling managed to command the screen while letting the emotions bubble up inside, and eschewing the big scenery chewing that gets the attention.

PM: Rami Malek's performance is the most incendiary of the five, whilst Christian Bale is the most technically intuitive, but it is Rami's fire that deserves the gold. No offense Bradley Cooper (or take offense, I care not), but you don't belong anywhere near this category for the character decision to imitate Sam Elliott. And if anyone wants to see a true "best actor,", check out Zain Al Raffeea's astounding motor-mouthed portrayal of a lost boy in Lebanon for "Capernaum" (nominated for Best Foreign Language Film).

JE: I struggled the most with this category, because most of the films the actors performed in were so uninspired … Cooper in particular playing a role that is essentially is a trope at this point. Christian Bale did his method actor thing, my predicted winner Rami Malek portrayed a legendary musician in a less than stellar examination of his life, and Viggo Mortensen essentially just played an insatiable, insensitive blob. The only worthy one in this category is Willem Dafoe, and if he gets it, it would be more of a career award than an award for that specific film. This category is in dire need of some diversity, and nominating John David Washington for "BlacKkKlansman" would have helped it monumentally.

BEST ACTRESS

NOMINEES: Yalitza Aparicio, "Roma" … Glenn Close, "The Wife" … Lady Gaga, "A Star Is Born" … Olivia Colman, "The Favourite" … Melissa McCarthy, "Can You Ever Forgive Me?"

Will Win: Glenn Close (JE, SW, PM)

Should Win: Close (SW, PM), Yalitza Aparicio (JE)

Should Have Been Nominated: Toni Collette, "Hereditary" (JE, PM)

Glenn Close Contemplates Her Fate as 'The Wife'
Photo credit: Sony Pictures Classics

Put a lock on this one, as the boyz are one voice once again…

JE: There are so many great choices in this category, but the one that stands out the most is first time actress Yalitza Aparicio, who delivers a performance that few seasoned actors could. I wouldn't be upset if McCarthy or Colman took it home, but most likely Glenn Close will win for the same reason Willem Dafoe might … it would be a career award. The Academy sweetheart who is just lucky to be nominated is Lady Gaga, who seems to have taken Toni Collette's spot for her magnificent performance in "Hereditary".

SW: Simply put, Glenn Close has the performance and the personal storyline to walk away with the Oscar.

PM: This buzz is that perhaps Close and Gaga will tie, but the demographics of The Academy and the Awards season so far will assure the Glenn Close win (after a historic seven nominations, the most of any living actor). I loved Yalitza Aparico in "Roma," it was an organic performance, and I thought Gaga was the only reason to see "A Star is Born." Toni Collette was criminally overlooked for "Hereditary," a film that I think Academy voters erroneously thought was "only" a horror film.

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR
NOMINEES: Mahershala Ali, "Green Book" … Adam Driver, "BlackKKlansman" … Sam Elliott, "A Star Is Born" … Richard E. Grant, "Can You Ever Forgive Me" … Sam Rockwell, "Vice"

Will Win: Mahershala Ali (PM, JE, SW)

Should Win: Ali (PM, SW), Richard E. Grant (JE)

Should Have Been Nominated: Michael Jordan, "Black Panther" (PM, JE)

Viggo Mortensen and Mahershala Ali in 'Green Book'
Photo credit: Universal Pictures

Ali! Ali! Ali!…

PM: Despite the problems with point of view in "Green Book," I still believe Mahershala Ali should take home his second Oscar as the dignified piano man Don Shirley. Richard E. Grant is getting some love in the run-up, so you never know. On the snub side, I'm a huge fan of Michael B. Jordan's performance in "Black Panther," putting the soul of the African American experience in the context of a conflicted character.

JE: For some reason, the award season voters are enamored with problematic films like "Green Book" and "Bohemian Rhapsody." That is undoubtedly why Mahershala Ali will win for a role that he may probably wish he hadn't taken. Hell, I would be fine if he stayed nominated but for anything else but "Green Book," like perhaps "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-verse." Better yet, how about it goes to the superior biopic performance of Richard E. Grant in "Can You Ever Forgive Me?" One nomination that is obviously missing from this category is Michael B. Jordan, for his complex role in "Black Panther."

SW: While there's some talk that Richard E. Grant or Sam Elliott could pull an upset here, but this category's award has always been Mahershala Ali's to lose. Even those who think that "Green Book" has been unfairly lauded this awards season have singled out his performance for praise.

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS
NOMINEES: Amy Adams, "Vice" … Marina de Tavira, "Roma" … Regina King, "If Beale Street Could Talk" … Emma Stone, "The Favourite" … Rachel Weisz, "The Favourite"

Will Win: Amy Adams (SW), Regina King (PM, JE)

Should Win: King (JE), Marina de Tavira (PM), Rachel Weisz (SW)

Should Have Been Nominated: Milly Shapiro "Hereditary" (PM), Awkwafina/Michelle Yeoh "Crazy Rich Asians" (JE)

Regina King in "If Beale Street Could Talk'
Photo credit: Annapurna Pictures

Spike goes rogue in a category of worthy candidates…

SW: This is the most wide open race at the Oscars this year, but I think that Amy Adams is going to be an Oscar bridesmaid no more. It's more of a career award, than for this particular performance. However, if we're going by sheer entertainment, Rachel Weisz's scheming courtier should win hands down.

PM: I'm not as big a fan of Regina King's performance in "Beale Street" as the awards season has indicated, but I think she has the momentum to take it home on Oscar night. I liked Marina de Tavira's understated-but-conflicted mother in "Roma" much better, but I also think Milly Shapiro's creepy daughter performance in "Hereditary" outdoes them all. I think the timing of the film's release was problematic (Spring) for attention towards the film, which I think might be the longest-lasting classic from 2018.

JE: Every nominee in this category, with the exception of Amy Adams, deserves to be in it… there's isn't a loser in most of the bunch. Regina King is the standout of course, who will and should win this award. Two actresses who should have been nominated are luckily in the same film, but have completely juxtaposed roles – Michelle Yeoh and Awkwafina in "Crazy Rich Asians." This film didn't get nearly enough love so a nomination for either of these fabulous actresses would have gone a long way.

BEST DIRECTOR
NOMINEES: Spike Lee, "BlacKkKlansman" … Pawel Pawlikowski, "Cold War" … Yorgos Lanthimos, "The Favourite" … Alfonso Cuarón, "Roma" … Adam McKay, "Vice"

Will Win: Alfonso Cuarón (JE, SW, PM)

Should Win: Cuarón (PM, JE), Spike Lee (SW)

Should Have Been Nominated: Bo Burnham "Eighth Grade" (JE), Bradley Cooper "A Star is Born" (SW), Ryan Coogler "Black Panther" (PM)

Director Alfonso Cuarón On Set for 'Roma'
Photo credit: Netflix

Another clean sweep…

JE: "The Favourite" and "Roma" both hold special places in my heart, both for completely different reasons. One found its way in through my funny bone, while the latter got in the heart's core with good, old fashioned emotional depth. Cuarón of "Roma" is the clear favorite, and I really wouldn't have it any other way. One egregiously overlooked film, that used both humor and emotional to touch my heart, was Bo Burnham's "Eighth Grade," which deserves much more attention than it received.

SW: Alfonso Cuarón is rightfully considered a visionary filmmaker (and I predict his win), but I tend to find that when he goes small on a grand scale – the way he does with "Roma" – it leaves the viewer a little out in the cold … he's an easier director to admire than love. Spike Lee is a major force in filmmaking who bounced back in a big way with an actually great story this time, that doubled as a potent social message about the day. And for a first timer, Bradley Cooper showed that he's picked up more than a few things from working with great directors. He shows a lot of promise and should have been recognized as such.

PM: Alfonso dug deep into his soul and history, rendered it to film, and placed it right into my consciousness. "Roma" was my favorite film of the year, and the scope of that achievement is apparent in every frame. It would be a crime for this award to go to anyone else. Ryan Coogler, in my estimation, is the most exciting new voice in cinema, able to go from independent ("Fruitvale Station") to iconic revival ("Creed") to epic superhero-ism ("Black Panther"). No one before him has achieved that path, and I predict no one will do it again… it was another crime not to include him.

BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY
NOMINEES: "First Reformed" … "Green Book" … "Roma" … "The Favourite" … "Vice"

Will Win: "Roma" (PM), "The Favourite" (JE), "Green Book" (SW)

Should Win: "First Reformed" (PM), "The Favourite" (JE, SW)

Should Have Been Nominated: Nadine Labaki, Jihad Hojeily and Michelle Keserwany "Capernaum" (PM), Bo Burnham "Eighth Grade" (JE)

Olivia Coleman in 'The Favourite'
Photo credit: 20th Century Fox

Another split in a not-easy-to-call category this year…

PM: Tough, tough, tough. While I love "First Reformed" for its complexities and thought process, I just didn't think it followed through to the end. The rest I feel are incomplete, or in the case of "The Favourite" a bit mean spirited. That leaves my fave "Roma," although it's more "written" as a whole universe rather than being dialogue driven (which is always a consideration in original works). Yeesh. "Capernaum" is so original, it should have just been sent an Oscar.

JE: I will stand up for "The Favourite" and "Roma" every single time, but in this particular category, the wit and humor tips the scale to favor "The Favourite." I'm glad to see "First Reformed" get some love as much as I hate the fact that "Green Book" is even nominated. The only thing that would make me happier would be if Bo Burnham were also in this category for his great work on "Eighth Grade".

BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY
NOMINEES: "The Ballad of Buster Scruggs" … "BlacKkKlansman" … "Can You Ever Forgive Me?" … "If Beale Street Could Talk" … "A Star Is Born"

Will Win: "BlackKkKlansman" (JE, SW), "If Beale Street Could Talk" (PM)

Should Win: "Can You Ever Forgive Me?" (JE, SW), "The Ballad of Buster Scruggs" (PM)

Should Have Been Nominated: "Black Panther" (JE), "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse" (PM)

John David Washington and Laura Harrier of 'BlacKkKlansman'
Photo credit: Focus Features

The Über-Critic is rogue-ing, as opposed to vogue-ing…

JE: Two of the year's best biopics are the only real competition in this category, not the dead horse that continues to be beaten with "A Star is Born." If anything, "A Star is Born" should have been replaced by "Black Panther," which was much more original in more than just the writing. The real battle is between "BlacKkKlansman" and "Can You Ever Forgive Me?"… I would be happy if either won, but personally I'm secretly rooting for "CYEFM?"

PM: Politically, I'm projecting that "Beale Street" (and Barry Jenkins) has the legs in this category, but I'm a fan of "Ballad" as it really adapts some weird stuff. The rest of them, again, incomplete. The animated "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse" should have gotten some nomination love for taking a character and concept (ugh, superhero film) and giving it a completely original spin.

WILD CARD

We took assignments on some other individual categories, just to comment upon some favorite gems buried in the mass of Oscar beyond the above-the-line interest.

BEST ANIMATED FEATURE (Spike Walters)
NOMINEES: "Incredibles 2" … "Isle of Dogs" … "Mirai" … "Ralph Breaks the Internet" … "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse"

Will Win: "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse"
Should Win: "Isle of Dogs"
Should Have Been Nominated: "Early Man"

'Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse'
Photo credit: Sony Pictures Releasing

"Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse" has the momentum and will likely pull off a rare non-Walt Disney Studios win in this animated category. I know it's a hope against hope, but I found Wes Anderson's stop motion Isle of Dogs to be more of a pure visual delight. And poor "Early Man" … this caveman clay-mation soccer comedy came out too early to get much attention, but was really quietly sweet. (SW)

BEST ORIGINAL SONG (Jon Lennon Espino)
NOMINEES: "All The Stars" - "Black Panther" … "I'll Fight" - "RBG" …. "Shallow" - "A Star Is Born" … "The Place Where Lost Things Go" - "Mary Poppins Returns" … "When A Cowboy Trades His Spurs For Wings" - "The Ballad of Buster Scruggs"

Will Win: "Shallow" - "A Star Is Born"
Should Win: "All The Stars" - "Black Panther"
Should Have Been Nominated: "Ashes" – "Deadpool 2"

Bradley Cooper and Lady Gaga in 'A Star is Born'
Photo credit: Warner Bros.

This category is usually reserved for those songs that get stuck in your head long after the film is over. In some cases, they are songs that are so catchy that they go beyond the film and become songs you listen to on a regular basis. This is where "Shallow" and "All the Stars" truly stand above the rest, with "All the Stars" (which should win) beating out the more superficial "Shallow" (which will win). The other choices are so weak that I can't even remember the tune, let alone a single lyric from them. One nominee I would have loved to see – mainly to have her perform it at the Oscars – is Celine Dion's answer to a Bond-style song, "Ashes", from "Deadpool 2."(JE)

BEST FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILM (Patrick McDonald)
NOMINEES: "Capernaum" … "Cold War" … "Never Look Away" … "Roma" … "Shoplifters"

Will Win: "Roma"
Should Win: "Roma"

Yalitza Aparico in 'Roma'
Photo credit: Netflix

I only pick this "most strongest" category to analyze because each and every film is worthy, with "Roma" standing taller only by a sum of a few degrees. "Capernaum," my second favorite film of the year, is a must see. "Never Look Away" is a must see, especially for fine artists channelling painting as a medium, or interested parties (the rest of us). "Cold War" and "Shoplifters," are only lesser because their subject matter was so emotionally harsh to me, but both has something to say. "Roma" wins this one hands down, which allows The Academy to honor "Black Panther" as Best Picture (I think, but again, no problem with "Roma" doing the Best-Best clean sweep). ONE MORE NOTE … crossing fingers and toes and whatever else I can cross for "MINDING THE GAP," the Chicago-produced documentary directed by Bing Liu. Bring it home. (PM)

<u>**ODDS FOR THE REST**</u>

To complete the rest of the categories, here are the latest odds for each.

BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY
Roma 1/20
Cold War 9/1
A Star Is Born 12/1
The Favourite 16/1
Never Look Away 40/1

BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE
Free Solo 5/8
RBG 6/5
Minding the Gap 12/1
Hale County This Morning, This Evening 33/1
Of Fathers and Sons 40/1

BEST LIVE ACTION SHORT

Marguerite 17/5
Skin 39/10
Fauve 4/1
Detainment 4/1
Mother 9/2

BEST ANIMATED SHORT
Bao 16/5
Weekends 4/1
One Small Step 9/2
Animal Behaviour 9/2
Late Afternoon 9/2

BEST DOCUMENTARY SHORT
Period. End of Sentence. 17/5
Black Sheep 19/5
End Game 4/1
A Night at the Garden 9/2
Lifeboat 9/2

BEST ORIGINAL SCORE
If Beale Street Could Talk 1/2
Black Panther 3/1
Mary Poppins Returns 5/1
BlacKkKlansman 10/1
Isle of Dogs 25/1

BEST FILM EDITING
Vice 1/1
The Favourite 2/1
Bohemian Rhapsody 13/4
BlacKkKlansman 9/1
Green Book 25/1

BEST VISUAL EFFECTS
Avengers: Infinity War 1/6
First Man 7/2
Ready Player One 10/1
Christopher Robin 33/1
Solo: A Star Wars Story 50/1

BEST COSTUME DESIGN
The Favourite 4/15
Black Panther 9/5
Mary Poppins Returns 22/1
Mary Queen of Scots 25/1
The Ballad of Buster Scruggs 25/1

BEST PRODUCTION DESIGN
The Favourite 2/5
Black Panther 2/1
Roma 9/1
Mary Poppins Returns 20/1
First Man 25/1

BEST MAKE-UP AND HAIR STYLING
Vice 6/5
Mary Queen of Scotts 49/20
Border 29/10

BEST SOUND EDITING
First Man 4/7
A Quiet Place 5/2
Bohemian Rhapsody 3/1
Black Panther 16/1
Roma 40/1

BEST SOUND MIXING
Bohemian Rhapsody 7/2
A Star is Born 19/5
First Man 4/1
Black Panther 9/2

Roma 9/2

For the TOP TEN films of 2018 by Patrick McDonald of HollywoodChicago.com, click here. *[22]*

To access the reviews and articles of Patrick McDonald, click here. *[19] For Jon Lennon Espino,* click here. *[23] For Spike Walters,* click here. *[21]*

The 91st Academy Awards will take place on February 24th, 2019, at Hollywood's Dolby Theater, and will be broadcast on ABC-TV beginning at 7pm ET/6pm CT. Thanks always to Jimmy Shapiro for the odds determined from click here *[24], except for the Best Live Action, Documentary and Animated Shorts, plus Best Make-Up and Hair Styling, Best Sound Mixing from* click here *[25]. Please, no wagering.*

[26]

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