



# Award shows becoming more politicized

## Oscars going to cap off another political awards show season *by Tia Rotolo*

This award season, Hollywood hasn't shied away from being a part of the political conversation as actresses and musicians use both their screen time and speeches to speak out against the current political landscape.

It all started with Meryl Streep's Golden Globes speech on Jan 8. She began by speaking of the great diversity in Hollywood, specifically the variety of where people in the audience came from and who they end up playing.

Continuing, Streep noted the specific time when President Donald Trump mocked a reporter with disabilities. She mentions her struggle to comprehend the event and the fact that it wasn't a movie, but real life.

Shocked by Donald Trump's complete lack of respect and compassion, Streep shared her worries for its influence in the future.

"And this instinct to humiliate, when it's modeled by someone in the public platform, by someone powerful, it filters down into everybody's life, because it kinda gives permission for other people to do the same thing. Disrespect invites disrespect, violence incites violence.

And when the powerful use their position to bully others we all lose," Streep said.

Further, Streep acknowledged the need for the press and the privilege of her position as an actress to speak out against the issues within the United States. It was at this moment, Hollywood took note.

The political-driven speeches didn't stop with Streep, they had only begun.

However, the political nature of Streep's speech wasn't solely met with support. Many criticized her for speaking about politics, believing it wasn't an actress's place to do so.

A week later at the Screen Actors Guild Awards, Kerry Washington quickly refuted this assumption with her acceptance speech: "But the truth is, actors are activists no matter what, because we embody the worth and humanity of all people."

The SAG Awards occurred during Trump's recent immigration ban. Ashton Kutcher spoke specifically of its influence as he opened the show.

After greeting viewers, he also took time to greet those who were currently waiting to be allowed in: "And everyone in airports that belong to my America. You are a part of the fabric of who we are, and we love you, and we welcome you."

While all of these politically-fired, liberal-leaning speeches were received completely in praise and applause, there was one that clearly



Meryl Streep receiving the Cecil B. DeMille award |AP Images

surpassed the rest.

David Harbour, Police Chief Jim Hopper from "Stranger Things," delivered his winning speech after the show won Best Ensemble. Riled up in passion, Harbour spoke of repelling bullies and sheltering freaks and outcasts. He shared his personal feelings of the duties of actors and actresses as they recreate life.

"And through our art to battle against fear, self-centeredness and exclusivity of our predominantly narcissistic culture and through our craft to cultivate a more empathetic and understanding society by revealing intimate truths that serve as a forceful reminder to folks that when they feel broken and afraid and tired they are not alone," Harbour said.

The entire audience stood

up in applause, nodding heads in passion-induced support. The room was on fire, preaching acceptance and justice. The typical speech of thanking producers and directors was dead, in its place was political fervor and resistance.

As the Grammys fast approached, audiences were wondering how musicians would react to the recent election via their music and speeches.

After many performances lacking political substance, Katy Perry sang her new song "Chained to the Rhythm" with Skip Marley. On the shoulder of her all-white suit, "PERSIST." A clear reference to the recent feminist rally phrase coined by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to Sen. Elizabeth Warren

"Nevertheless, she persisted."

While the song itself was intensely political, the background of the stage, after imitating the shattering of the bubble, pieced itself back together with the preamble of the Constitution, specifically "We the People." Perry left the stage with one final remark, hand in hand with Marley, "No hate!" Perry said.

"We The People" became a recurring theme as A Tribe Called Quest performed their recent single off of their politically-charged album.

With Anderson Paak, Consequence and Busta Rhymes in full support, the group began their tribute for Phife Dawg, while simultaneously shutting down Trump's agenda.

Busta Rhymes saluted Trump as "President Agent Orange." At the chorus of the song in which A Tribe Called Quest speaks out against the hate towards minorities, the same minorities that were being sung about, joined A Tribe Called Quest on stage.

The song finished as everyone on stage stood with a black power salute and one last word, "Resist."

The show ended soon after, audiences in awe of the not-subtle political outcries.

With the Oscars this coming Sunday, audiences can only wonder what political messages will be made.

## People of color well-represented in this year's Academy Awards

### After last year's boycott, there is far more diversity in Oscar nominations *by Jesse McCauley*

After a controversial awards show last year, people of color will now have more representation at this year's televised event.

The 2017 Oscars include people of color in every acting category. The nominations include six people of color, which is a new record.

This contrasts the 2016 Oscars, in which not a single person of color received a nomination. Last year in particular, the hashtag #OscarsSoWhite trended widely through social media. Many actors even boycotted the show.

The 2015 "Rocky" sequel, "Creed," featured Michael B. Jordan portraying Apollo Creed's son. Jordan was not nominated for an award, but Sylvester Stallone was nominated for Best Supporting Actor.

The movie was also written and directed by Ryan Coogler, a black man. However, Coogler did not receive recognition either.

Similarly, "Straight Outta Compton" featured many young black actors, including Jason Mitchell and Corey Hawkins. The film was written by F. Gary Gary, also black. However, the only nominations for this movie went to the two Caucasian screenplay writers.

In that year, winners included Leonardo DiCaprio for his role in "The Revenant," Brie Larson for her role in "Room," and Alicia Vikander for her role in "The Danish Girl."

Not to discredit these impressive achievements, but many were still unnerved by the complete absence of minority representation across the board. Jada Pickett Smith, an acclaimed actress, tweeted, "At the Oscars people of color are always welcomed to give out awards and even entertain, but we are rarely recognized for our artistic accomplishments. Should people of color refrain from participating all together?"

Ironically, that year's award show was hosted by Chris Rock, a well known comedian and actor.

In his opening, he joked, "I'm here at the Academy Awards, otherwise known as the White People's Choice Awards. You realize if they nominated hosts, I wouldn't even get this job. So y'all would be watching Neil Patrick Harris right now."

Most of his opening speech encompassed this theme. Despite his undeniable humor, it still contained an underlying message that only scratched the surface of the problem. Maybe in a room full of actors, comedy was the way to expose the issue.

Whether it was Pinkett, Rock, or any other celebrity who vocalized the issue, the message hit home. Now, in 2017, more diversity has been brought to the award show.

Denzel Washington was nominated for his role in "Fences," which is also up for Best Picture. With this nomination, Washington is now the most nominated black actor. His co-star, Viola Davis, was nominated for Best Supporting Actress.

"Hidden Figures," another movie up for best picture, stars Octavia Spencer. Spencer portrays a black woman who worked her way up in NASA in the era of John Glenn.

A movie about contemporary African American life, "Moonlight," received lots of attention, as it is competing for Best Picture as well.

The writer, Barry Jenkins, is the first black screenwriter to have his movie recognized in the Best Picture category. Actress Naomie Harris and actor Mahershala Ali were also honored for their work in the movie.

Ruth Negga will be competing for her work in "Loving," a movie about an interracial couple who faced controversy in 1950s Virginia.

Another minority actor, Dev Patel, was nominated for his role in "Lion." The nominations did not stop with the actors and actresses. Along with Jenkins, many writers and producers received nominations. Kimberly Steward was nominated for producing "Manchester by the Sea," August Wilson was nominated for his contribution in "Fences," and Tarell Alvin McCraney, who collaborated with Jenkins in "Moonlight," was nominated too.

On the documentary front, Ava DuVernay, Raoul Peck, Ezra Edelman, and Roger Ross Williams were all nominated for their respective documentaries. The list goes on. The nominations are overwhelming compared to the past two years.

Now that the diversity is in place, hopefully the award show can carry out its main function: to appreciate the artistic work that the movie industry produces each year. The Oscars is set to air on Feb. 26 with Jimmy Kimmel as host.

## Students remain unaware of all but "La La Land"

### New musical is all that is catching students eyes *by Amelia Lytle*

The Oscars feature the best movies of the year, yet many New Trier students are in the dark about the nominations.

La La Land, the film nominated for 14 Academy Awards, was the only film nominated for best picture that students interviewed had seen.

Although the film tied in nominations with classics like "Titanic" and "All About Eve," it lacked attraction with students.

Junior Hannah Roth was one of the two students interviewed who had seen it and said, "I saw La La Land, but it didn't live up to the hype, I really didn't like it."

Senior Ben Matejka chose not to see the award winning film based on the previews. "La La Land looked horrible. I hate musicals."

Most students who had not seen the movie remained interested regardless of their peers negative reviews.

"La La Land looks amazing, I still really want to see it. It's also won so many awards this season which makes me think it must be good," Senior Camille Graham said.

Graham shared that the appealing advertisements, songs, and A-list actors captured her interest in the film.

Graham was not alone in being interested in the film. Critics like Business Insider, IndieWire, and Empire Online all predict La La Land to take home the Best Picture Award on Feb 26.

Aside from this movie,

students lacked knowledge, or even recognition of the other films. Most said they had not heard of half the list nominated for best picture, and most had not seen any advertisements for them.

Senior Lucy Ellis said, "I couldn't tell you about most of them, because there weren't enough ads. In past years I've heard a lot more about the big films, but the only one I knew about this time was La La Land."

Sophomore Christian Maravilla said he didn't watch any of the films because they didn't seem interesting this year, compared to years past.

Matejka and Roth also agreed they had seen more films in past years, due to increased advertisement.



This, along with a lack of interest and a lack of time seem to be the driving forces why Trevians were so in the dark about the nominated Oscar films.

Seniors Tay Munson and Lucy Ellis both shared that they didn't have time to watch the movies. The students were too busy with school work, extracurriculars, and family obligations.

Although New Trier students lacked knowledge on the nominated films, the Oscars remains the most viewed night in Hollywood as well as the provider of the most coveted Hollywood awards.