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## Internet growth fuels BFCA

**With Net crits more prevalent, org's influence grows**

By JAIME NETZER

Film criticism, like all other media, is not immune to the effects of the information age. As the media landscape changes, so has the very definition of "broadcast." The Broadcast Film Critics Association, founded in 1995 to be a voice for TV and radio critics, now includes online critics, and as broadcast media continues to dominate consumers' lives, the BFCA will likely only expand in influence and importance.

Tip sheet

What: 16th annual Critics' Choice Movie Awards

When: Tonight

Where: Hollywood Palladium (broadcast on VH1)

"As one of the largest critics groups in the country, the BFCA is as important as they are influential," says Steve Elzer, senior VP of media relations for Sony Pictures Entertainment. "Whether you live in a major market or a smaller city, chances are you are receiving your entertainment information by a BFCA member through their reports on radio, television or online."

Joey Berlin, one of the group's co-founders who has served as president for 13 years, has witnessed the steady decline of print journalism having a reverse effect on his constituency. "It's sad but true, print media is fading in importance," Berlin says. "More and more consumers are getting their information from broadcast media, whether that's TV, radio or the internet."

Many print critics have long looked down their noses at the BFCA, comprised of 250 members in the U.S. and Canada, as overly glib in their pronouncements, with the kind of quick-hit observations that often provide fodder for studios looking for easily digestible, if not excessively superlative quotes to promote their movies in ads.

Berlin, who is exec producer of BFCA's awards show, concedes that consumers are drawn to broadcast criticism because it is simpler and quicker than print reviews. "Everything has gone digital," he says. "It's just so much more easily accessible."

If members of the BFCA provide more widely palatable advice to consumers, their nominations for 2010 don't necessarily reveal a more populist bent than their print peers, or voters within the Hollywood guilds for that matter. "The Social Network," which has topped more domestic critics' lists than any film thus far -- including those of the willfully erudite Los Angeles Film Critics Assn. and the New York Film Critics Circle -- is among the BFCA's five most nominated films, with nine nods, including best picture.

Nor does box office seem to come into play, with specialty releases "The Black Swan" (approaching \$50 million in domestic b.o.) and "The King's Speech" (\$24 million), leading the pack with 12 and 11 nominations, respectively ("True Grit" also touts 11 noms), going head to head with blockbusters like "Inception" (\$292.6; 10 noms) and "Toy Story 3" (\$415; five noms) in the top categories. "Winter's Bone," a micro-budgeted indie that has grossed just more than \$6 million to date, is also in the running for best picture.

(The BFCA's category of "Best Action Movie" might be the most conspicuous indicator of consumerists' tastes.)

If print critics arrive at their assessments using lengthier routes of thought in general, it's more a reflection of consumers' divided attention spans -- accustomed to more bells and whistles and less to concentrated reading -- and not because what they have to say is any less valid.

Kit Yarrow, a clinical psychologist who studies consumer behavior, says the more people consume technology in general, the more they look for visual cues. This, she says, could expand the influence and dominance of broadcast criticism.

"People are increasingly more visual than they are verbal," she says. "Instead of reading a long description of a movie or all of the insights that a newspaper critic might have, while there's still a place for that, more and more consumers are instead going to look for a snapshot."

Yarrow says that snapshot often contains visual and symbolic content over verbal. Berlin agrees that consumers are eager for visual shortcuts.

"Every year the BFCA collectively rates every movie on a 1-100 scale, just like how your papers were graded at school," Berlin says. "Those rankings are available for every movie to provide those simple cues, and we're proud of that."

Yarrow says consumers today need these shortcuts because they are overwhelmed with options. She explains that even if we're not overloaded with information within a given realm, such as entertainment, we still go about processing information as if we are.

"Our brains go for ways to simplify things now because we feel overwhelmed with information," she says. "As a society, we think about things differently. Across the board, we look for shortcuts and fast, easy, symbolic ways of digesting material on everything from cereal to jobs to potential mates."

There's also the question of how much a reviewer's personality comes into play. "In broadcast criticism, the reviewer themselves becomes a symbol. They have a sort of celebrity status, and they're giving an endorsement, which we also see more and more of in marketing today," Yarrow says.

Those personalities, at least for some critics, are more easily expressed in a broadcast medium, and, for some, more easily expressed online.

Victoria Alexandar, a BFCA member who writes for [Films In Review](#), worked in print for years, but says she aims to be provocative and controversial in her reviews, and that she is more able to do so online.

"My reviews are more centered on my emotional response, because that's what film is," Alexandar says. "How does it affect you emotionally? I couldn't do that in a newspaper. The internet allows you a fuller expression."

Berlin says the BFCA membership landscape has shifted alongside the digital landscape.

"We found that initially we had only a handful of internet members, but now fully 20% of our membership are people who are exclusively online critics," Berlin says. He adds that even those members who mainly work in TV or radio will usually post their reviews online too.

Berlin says it's been a challenge for the BFCA to determine how to assess which online critics qualify as broadcast. He says a large audience is still key to membership.

"It can't be open to just anyone who puts their opinions on Blogspot," Berlin says. "It's an art."

Berlin says the nature of media like TV, radio, and the internet dictate that the central message of broadcast criticism be more mainstream. But he doesn't believe print criticism is inherently more worthwhile or even necessarily more sophisticated.

"Every medium has its range," Berlin says. "There are certainly fan boy websites, but there are also film commentary-type websites, just as there's the New York Times and there's People magazine. That's what's great about our culture; you find the person who speaks to you and then check in with them."

### **And the nominees are:**

#### **PICTURE**

"127 Hours"  
"Black Swan"  
"The Fighter"  
"Inception"  
"The King's Speech"  
"The Social Network"  
"The Town"  
"Toy Story 3"  
"True Grit"  
"Winter's Bone"

#### **ACTOR**

Jeff Bridges – "True Grit"  
Robert Duvall – "Get Low"  
Jesse Eisenberg – "The Social Network"

Colin Firth – "The King's Speech"  
James Franco – "127 Hours"  
Ryan Gosling – "Blue Valentine"

**ACTRESS**

Annette Bening – "The Kids Are All Right"  
Nicole Kidman – "Rabbit Hole"  
Jennifer Lawrence – "Winter's Bone"  
Natalie Portman – "Black Swan"  
Noomi Rapace – "The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo"  
Michelle Williams – "Blue Valentine"

**SUPPORTING ACTOR**

Christian Bale – "The Fighter"  
Andrew Garfield – "The Social Network"  
Jeremy Renner – "The Town"  
Sam Rockwell – "Conviction"  
Mark Ruffalo – "The Kids Are All Right"  
Geoffrey Rush – "The King's Speech"

**SUPPORTING ACTRESS**

Amy Adams – "The Fighter"  
Helena Bonham Carter – "The King's Speech"  
Mila Kunis – "Black Swan"  
Melissa Leo – "The Fighter"  
Hailee Steinfeld – "True Grit"  
Jacki Weaver – "Animal Kingdom"

**YOUNG ACTOR/ACTRESS**

Elle Fanning – "Somewhere"  
Jennifer Lawrence – "Winter's Bone"  
Chloe Grace Moretz – "Let Me In"  
Chloe Grace Moretz – "Kick-Ass"  
Kodi Smit-McPhee – "Let Me In"  
Hailee Steinfeld – "True Grit"

**ACTING ENSEMBLE**

"The Fighter"  
"The Kids Are All Right"  
"The King's Speech"  
"The Social Network"  
"The Town"

**DIRECTOR**

Darren Aronofsky – "Black Swan"  
Danny Boyle – "127 Hours"  
Joel Coen & Ethan Coen – "True Grit"  
David Fincher – "The Social Network"  
Tom Hooper – "The King's Speech"  
Christopher Nolan – "Inception"

**ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY**

"Another Year" – Mike Leigh

"Black Swan" – Mark Heyman, Andres Heinz, John McLaughlin

"The Fighter" – Scott Silver, Paul Tamasy, Eric Johnson (Story by Keith Dorrington, Paul Tamasy, Eric Johnson)

"Inception" – Christopher Nolan

"The Kids Are All Right" – Lisa Cholodenko, Stuart Blumberg

"The King's Speech" – David Seidler

**ADAPTED SCREENPLAY**

"127 Hours" – Simon Beaufoy, Danny Boyle

"The Social Network" – Aaron Sorkin

"The Town" – Peter Craig, Ben Affleck, Aaron Stockard

"Toy Story 3" – Michael Arndt (Story by John Lasseter, Andrew Stanton, Lee Unkrich)

"True Grit" – Joel Coen, Ethan Coen

"Winter's Bone" – Debra Granik, Anne Rosellini

**CINEMATOGRAPHY**

"127 Hours" – Anthony Dod Mantle, Enrique Chediak

"Black Swan" – Matthew Libatique

"Inception" – Wally Pfister

"The King's Speech" – Danny Cohen

"True Grit" – Roger Deakins

**ART DIRECTION**

"Alice in Wonderland" – Robert Stromberg, Karen O'Hara

"Black Swan" – Therese DePrez, Tora Peterson

"Inception" – Guy Hendrix Dyas, Larry Dias, Doug Mowat

"The King's Speech" – Eve Stewart, Judy Farr

"True Grit" – Jess Gonchor, Nancy Haigh

**EDITING**

"127 Hours" – Jon Harris

"Black Swan" – Andrew Weisblum

"Inception" – Lee Smith

"The Social Network" – Angus Wall, Kirk Baxter

**COSTUME DESIGN**

"Alice in Wonderland" – Colleen Atwood

"Black Swan" – Amy Westcott, Kate Mulleavy, Laura Mulleavy

"The King's Speech" – Jenny Beavan

"True Grit" – Mary Zophres

**MAKEUP**

"Alice in Wonderland"

"Black Swan"

"Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1"

"True Grit"

**VISUAL EFFECTS**

"Alice in Wonderland"  
"Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1"  
"Inception"  
"Tron: Legacy"

**SOUND**

"127 Hours"  
"Black Swan"  
"Inception"  
"The Social Network"  
"Toy Story 3"

**ANIMATED FEATURE**

"Despicable Me"  
"How to Train Your Dragon"  
"The Illusionist"  
"Tangled"  
"Toy Story 3"

**ACTION MOVIE**

"Inception"  
"Kick-Ass"  
"Red"  
"The Town"  
"Unstoppable"

**COMEDY**

"Cyrus"  
"Date Night"  
"Easy A"  
"Get Him to the Greek"  
"I Love You Phillip Morris"  
"The Other Guys"

**MADE FOR TELEVISION MOVIE**

"The Pacific"  
"Temple Grandin"  
"You Don't Know Jack"

**FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILM**

"Biutiful"  
"I Am Love"  
"The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo"

**DOCUMENTARY FEATURE**

"Exit Through the Gift Shop"  
"Inside Job"  
"Restrepo"  
"Joan Rivers: A Piece of Work"  
"The Tillman Story"

"Waiting for Superman"

### SONG

"I See the Light" – performed by Mandy Moore, Zachary Levi/written by Alan Menken, Glenn Slater – "Tangled"

"If I Rise" – performed by Dido, A.R. Rahman/music by A.R. Rahman/lyrics by Dido Armstrong, Rollo Armstrong – "127 Hours"

"Shine" – performed and written by John Legend – "Waiting for Superman"

"We Belong Together" – performed and written by Randy Newman – "Toy Story 3"

"You Haven't Seen the Last of Me Yet" – performed by Cher/written by Diane Warren – "Burlesque"

### SCORE

"Black Swan" – Clint Mansell

"Inception" – Hans Zimmer

"The King's Speech" – Alexandre Desplat

"The Social Network" – Trent Reznor, Atticus Ross

"True Grit" – Carter Burwell

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