

# Lincoln silver lining playbook the master

Business



As the calendar reaches the end of February, excitement is practically palpable. The lines outside the movie theater reach to the end of the parking lot.

Popcorn constantly needs to be replenished. Celebrity magazines stop printing insignificant gossip. Japan is overwhelmed with the mass production of tiny statues. Average people sit around judging the outfits of millionaires. A 'select theaters,' low budget movie can beat out that Steven Spielberg multimillion dollar production, giving people hope that skill can succeed over wealth. So roll out that overpriced red carpet because it's Oscar Season everybody.

So who will take home the 'Best Picture' award and be featured among eighty-four other classics? Dozens of magazines, websites, and blogs are completely dedicated to evaluating the winner. Most sources agree to determine a winner based on a production succeeding in the three main aspects of film: Screenplay, Cinematography and Performance. Based on the 2012 season, three films stood out as major contenders for the main prize as they met all the criteria mentioned above: Spielberg's Lincoln, a historical drama portraying the former president's final months in power, Anderson's The Master, a psychological drama depicting an emotional veteran who becomes tantalized by a cult and O. Russell's Silver Lining Playbook, a romantic black comedy centered around the stigmas of mental illness. Although all these films thrive in the major facets of film, some triumph in different categories over others.

By looking closely into each category and assessing their successes, an eventual winner is determined. A plot, if enticing, practically gravitates audience members from their homes to a middle row center seat. Therefore, a screenplay is the leading force behind a film, the ultimate string that holds the picture together. In the script for Lincoln, Lincoln and his wife express themselves through iconic and moving dialogue, fitting to their characters and time period. Lincoln's thoughts and actions portray him as the straightforward valiant man he really was (at least according to history textbooks).

However, numerous audience members have complained of the seemingly never ending speeches and the overly political nature of the dialogue. Although that is expected due to the context, the excessive amount of unnecessary talking could put anyone who isn't a history buff to sleep. In *The Master*, a story is told of a drifter who becomes involved in a cult called 'The Cause.' A major selling point of this film is that it was based on Scientology, a religion that has been mocked maleficently by the media, mostly due to Tom Cruise's fascination with it. Many aspects of the character's rituals do reflect practices of the religion's famous brainwashing tactics.

Yet, the story is put together somewhat haphazardly causing the audience to often have difficulty adjusting to a change of scene. One has to wonder if the dialogue is brilliant because of the screenplay, or the renowned actors delivering the lines. *Silver Lining Playbook* arrives as an obvious winner in this category. Its smart and quirky plot allows an audience member to easily be manipulated into roaring with laughter one moment and tearing up at the next. There is a very thin line between the comedy, romance and drama of <https://assignbuster.com/lincolnsilver-lining-playbook-the-master/>

this film. The three blend together beautifully to create a brand new genre, the perfect size for any customer.

The characters are relatable and loveable and most of all have depth to them, just as this first perceived comedy does. A major piece of film, cinematography, is an artist's journey into a visual atmosphere where an entire mood can be portrayed with the addition of a simple light blue color gel. Lincoln found its stride by using deep black colors, emphasizing Lincoln's icy relationship with his wife, a dramatic winter approaching, and the freezing, murky age of war. The camera angles serve as a visual foundation, not only supporting the film but also adding visual beauty, in which Spielberg does brilliantly. Lincoln's iconic face is not even featured fully until after the first ten minutes of the film, creating an enigmatic mood. Another significant shot features Lincoln's silhouette slowly disappearing into the light, metaphorically indicating his majestic persona and foreshadowing his eventual descent, approaching in his death.

Malaware, the cinematographer of *The Master*, chose to take a risk and shoot the film using a 65mm lens (most films are shot in 25mm or 30mm). By using this higher frame rate per second, the audience's eyes can process the images not only quicker but clearer. It also pays homage to films of the past, as this effect creates a classic feel of a better time. This particular story takes place at the end of World War II which makes technique pretty ironic as it does not depict a happier time at all. When Freddy (the drifter) is under the influence of the cult, the images often appear woozy, emphasizing his unsteady state of mind when under their control.

Many scenes begin in medias res, consistently throwing the viewer off balance and indirectly forcing them to play a part in this cult's unstructured world. Lastly, Silver Lining Playbook featured nervous cinematography, well fitting to its extremely tense subject matter. The shots are quick and short which moves the story along very nicely and also adds to the rapidity of the humor. During the climax of the movie, the overall dark lighting, with strategic bright lights on the two dancers, effectively speeds down the comedic pace into a slower more quixotic mood. Although all are possible contenders, the winner in this category is Lincoln, due to its incredible use of lighting to reflect the mood in conjunction with its metaphorical framing.

It effectively creates not only a journey for the eyes, but one for the mind. The final category, performance, is often a difficult one to determine. In three films, such as these, with multi-million dollar budgets, the best of the best actors can be hired. Daniel Day-Lewis plays an extraordinary Lincoln, who while preparing for the role, never broke character. In fact he had all his cast, crew, and family address him as ' Mr. President' even off screen.

He plays Lincoln with the standard high pitched vocal affectations, and showed him as a real complex man, and not just a saint-like figurehead. Due to his method acting and extreme transformation, Lewis is a major competitor for taking home the gold for Best Actor. In The Master, Phillip Seymour Hoffman gives an extremely chilling performance as ' The Cause's' leader and ultimately, the titular master. Yet Joaquin Phoenix is the standout, as the disturbed Freddy, complete with mental breakdowns and hallucinations. He convincingly depicts a man who was so traumatized and

broken that he could easily be taken advantage of. They work together beautifully, like two unlikely pieces of a puzzle that fit perfectly together.

Another example of ideal foils is represented in Jennifer Lawrence and Bradley Cooper. Lawrence, in *Silver Lining Playbook*, convincingly plays a manic woman who recently lost her husband. Cooper delivers a powerful performance as a man just released from a mental institution. His pain is palpable and in the true spirit of black comedy acting, the audience wonders why they are laughing at such a serious subject. De Niro also gives a poignant performance as Cooper's father, struggling to understand their relationship and attempting to solve his problems by inflicting a sport-infused lifestyle upon him. With all such commanding performances, determining a winner is a difficult task for anybody.

Sometimes acting plays into the Best Picture award based on a singular performance carrying the production, or sometimes based overall strong ensemble piece. So how is a best picture film determined? Where is the line drawn? Although one might be expecting this paper to determine a winner, they would be sadly mistaken. The Oscars should not be undermined; they are an astonishing and upright event. The votes are taken by the best in the business, obviously an honorable indication of a film's success. Yet there is no scientific formula; all the awards are given based on the opinion of a select elite few. Some believe cinematography is a success when it visually reflects the mood, but others believe it is just important for the framing to be clear.

Debating over the winners can be amusing and enjoyable for those interested but perhaps the award itself is put on too high of a pedestal. Although it is a good indication of a great film, one should trust their own opinions and determine their own best picture winner. And that is the reason for film and the ultimate beauty of it. It is completely up to interpretation.