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Tinseltown Primps For Oscar Night

Written for the web by Jason Kobely, Internet News Producer



Not too long ago, the Oscars was an evening of backslapping and merrymaking within the narrow confines of Hollywood but this year, it will like a United Nations

exercise in diversity.

The 79th annual Academy Awards Sunday night will feature their most ethnically varied lineup ever.

Competing for best picture is Mexican director Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu's "Babel," a sweeping ensemble drama.

The film's cast ranges from A-listers such as Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett to comparative unknowns. Adriana Barraza from Mexico and Rinko Kikuchi from Japan both earned supporting-actress nominations for the film.

Of the 20 acting nominees, five are black, two are Hispanic and one is Asian, while only two Americans, Clint Eastwood and Martin Scorsese, were among the five best-director contenders.

Along with "Babel," the contenders for Best Picture include Scorsese's crime drama "The Departed," Eastwood's World War II epic "Letters From Iwo Jima," Britain's "The Queen" and the family comedy "Little Miss Sunshine."

Meanwhile, though not even a year old, Suri Cruise made her first Academy Awards appearance Saturday.

The 10-month-old daughter of Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes joined her famous father on the Kodak Theatre stage during Oscar rehearsals.

A casually clad Cruise introduced his daughter to an audience of stand-ins and show workers, as if one of the world's best-known babies needed an introduction.

Cruise was among the galaxy of stars who came to practice for the big show. Leonardo DiCaprio wore jeans and a backward ballcap and so did Jerry Seinfeld.

Ten-time nominee Clint Eastwood got big applause when he surveyed the crowd of show workers and said, "All my sons and daughters are here."

Former vice president Al Gore got to meet Oscar-winning actress Reese Witherspoon and Nicole Kidman and husband Keith Urban were holding hands in a hallway, moments after the actress bumped into James Bond actor Daniel Craig.

The 79th Annual Academy Awards coverage begins on News10 at 4:30 p.m. with film critic David Sheehan's "Academy Awards Movie Magic." The "Road to the Oscars 2007" pre-show starts at 5 p.m., followed by the awards telecast at 5:30.

You can also watch press interviews with the winners backstage live here on news10.net, starting around 5:30 p.m.

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