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The 2014 Academy Awards Oscars with Adrienne Papp

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By Adrienne Papp

I get invited to a lot of social events as a journalist/publicist, but there is nothing quite like the Oscars. Excitement is in the air, everyone is full of wonder, looking forward to this fairytale-like evening with its never ending magic. The unexpected always happens just to keep things fresh year after year (just like U2 live on stage). The 86th Oscars was really by far one of the best ever produced.

Of course it's Hollywood's biggest night, where the most beautiful and talented people in the movies come out in their finest plumage in a show of glamor and glorious art-like dresses, for a broadcast that is shown to millions around the world. It's a living tapestry of celebrities on display in their most elegant fineries, lavish gowns and jewelry, as they grace the red carpet and are interviewed by every form of international media.

Sunday's show was a unique blend of the traditional, the comedic, some surprises and many inspirational speeches.

This year the Oscar was hosted by Ellen DeGeneres, who set a very casual and warm tone for the event. Later I learned that she memorized every single word, which is why she was moving around so freely and naturally not being glued to the prompter, which is what usually happens. And, of course she is everyone's favorite! I personally adore every one of her shows and appearances.

Ellen has always been very funny, and it's nice to see a woman take charge and lighten up such a huge and serious event as the Oscar.



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After all, not everyone is at ease in the audience. The actors are wondering who will win, everyone is nervous about their acceptance speech just in case they get lucky enough to win, and just by the magnitude of the event is almost intimidating. Over the course of the evening, Ellen changed from matt black tuxedo to white tuxedo to shiny black tuxedo, and, adding a bit of whimsy as part of a tribute to The Wizard of Oz, dressed up in a pink princess costume as Glenda, the Good Witch.



In an exciting musical performance early in the show, Pharrell Williams performed “Happy,” nominated as best song for Despicable Me 2, and got down into the seats section where he managed to get Meryl Streep, Lupita Nyong’o, and Amy Adams to stand up and shimmy with him! That song ignited the show with lively energy and helped set the tone for the rest of the evening.

Once the awards presentation got started, things got more serious. In the Best Supporting Actress category, Lupita Nyong’o’s win was not unexpected. She has been, without question, the darling of this awards season, and the first-time screen actress has had plenty of practice with acceptance speeches for her role in 12 Years a Slave this year. But it was so impressive to see her in this special moment, with so much poise and grace.

Accepting her Best Supporting Actress statuette, she smiled through tears with a moving speech that expressed her deep appreciation for all the people who had helped her achieve so much so early in her career. It was truly inspiring to hear the way she finished the speech: “When I look down at this golden statue, may it remind me and every little child, that no matter where you’re from, your dreams are valid.”

There was also a very heartfelt and moving acceptance speech from Jared Leto, for Best Supporting Actor in Dallas Buyers’ Club. It seems he had learned something from his Golden Globes acceptance speech, and, after a touching dedication to his mother for teaching him and his brother to live their dreams, he paid tribute to the 36 million people who have lost their lives to AIDS, and



finished by saying “anyone who’s ever felt injustice because of who you are and who you love, tonight I stand here with you and for you.” It was a very touching moment. Later on I learned from Matthew McConaughey that the film has been in the “making” for over 10 years and got turned down over some 150 times. Also, their financing fell out just three weeks before shooting was scheduled to start and Matthew had already lost 40 pounds for the role.



As the event progressed, Ellen injected a lot of whimsical humor into the proceedings, including a running joke about selfies, and she finally took the most popular selfie ever retweeted on Twitter (at over 2 million retweets and counting), a shot with a group of A-listers that included Bradley Cooper, Amy Adams, Meryl Streep, Julia Roberts, Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie. That was something completely new and refreshing for the Oscars, and was a great use of live social media, let alone the surprise!

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Almost all of the awards went as expected, with a scattering of technical wins for the eye-popping *Gravity* and the rest of the awards spread out across a broad selection of films. The only upset was in the best animated short category, in which the French-Luxembourgish collaboration *Mr. Hublot* beat Disney's much-favored nostalgia piece called *Get a Horse!*

In other musical performances, Pink proved once again that she is as impressive a singer as we have today, singing "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" during the *Wizard of Oz* 75th anniversary tribute. She looked radiant in a ruby-studded gown, and her voice was absolutely on point. It was one of the high points of the night. We are used to a different kind of performance from her, so this elegant Oscar old charm appearance was truly an eye-opener about her.



Another standout moment was during the award for the Best Documentary Feature winner *20 Feet from Stardom*. The movie is about female backup singers, but former Phil Spector recording artist Darlene Love took center stage at the end of the winners' acceptance speech and let loose with a cappella version of "His Eye Is on the Sparrow" that drew a standing ovation. It was a spectacular vocal performance that should make anyone who heard it go out and see the movie.

The famous iPhone Group shot was just another surprise this year at the Oscars. There were plenty of other interesting, and sometimes odd moments. Ellen decided at one point that it would be a good idea to order pizza for some members of the audience and a little later a delivery boy showed up with some large pizzas, which Ellen distributed to people in the front rows, including Brad Pitt, Jennifer Lawrence and Meryl Streep.

The famous iPhone Group shot was just another surprise this year at the Oscars.



Some people said the gag went on for a little too long, but it was interesting to see mega stars reaching for and eating pizza, and everyone rooting for pregnant Kerry Washington to eat a slice. Like the selfie gag, it was a spontaneous opportunity to take advantage of the fact that a lot of very famous people have all been collected in one place, so what better time to have an impromptu pizza party? And, what better time to let the world know that even celebrities eat pizza!



Ellen also spotted Bradley Cooper, who had lost out in the Best Supporting Actor category, and told him, "I am going to give you some scratcher lottery tickets." There was no word on whether he had any winning numbers.

Other interesting moments included a deserved standing ovation for the appearance of Sidney Poitier on the 50th anniversary of his own historic Oscar win, and Kim Novak's stunning appearance, since she is well out of the spotlight these days after having once been one of the most striking actresses in Hollywood, most famously for *Alfred*

Hitchcock's *Vertigo*. And, despite some differences they may have had professionally, Bill Murray paid a spontaneous and touching tribute to the late Harold Ramis, who was responsible for the success of *Animal House*, *Caddyshack* and *Ghostbusters*, among other films.

Finally we came to the evening's biggest awards. Cate Blanchett gave a stirring speech in accepting her Oscar for Best Actress in *Blue Jasmine*, pointing out that, as a female-led movie, it's considered by some in the industry to be niche. "Audiences want to see them, and in fact, they earn money," she said. "The world is round, people!" Maybe Hollywood will finally get around to recognizing how women can open and carry movies to substantial box office success.



Matthew McConaughey delivered a lengthy and inspiring speech while accepting the Best Actor statuette. He paid tribute to God and his late father (who evidently loved "gumbo, lemon meringue, Miller Lite, and dancin' in his underwear"), his wife and children ("you are the four people in my life that I want to make the most proud of me"), and the hero he chases, the man he aspires to be 10 years from now. It was a heartfelt speech, with some of McConaughey's down home humor and humility. "To any of us, whatever those

Best director winner Alfonso Cuarón, the first Latin American to win the Oscar for Best Director, was a popular winner for his film *Gravity*, and created a moment of humor when he thanked the "wise guys at Warner Bros.," before correcting himself to say the "wise men."

And finally we got to the award for Best Picture. In one of this year's most competitive fields, the Academy vote for Best Picture ultimately honored human drama over craft by naming *12 Years a Slave* the night's biggest winner over the outer space thriller *Gravity*. It was a popular choice, correctly giving weight to the subject of slavery in an adaptation of the 1853 memoir of the same name by Solomon Northup. John Ridley won for Best Adapted Screenplay for his work on the film, and, in one of the most fun moments of the night, director Steve McQueen hopped around the stage right after his very emotional remarks in accepting his statuette. McQueen has been dignified and reserved throughout this awards season, so it was fun to see him finally jump with joy.



And, let's not leave out the ever so popular lavish Oscar Gift Lounges. This year there were many amazing gifts pampering the stars. One interesting and innovative product was an Alkaline Water machine (AlkaViva Athena and AlkaViva Ultra Delphi) that is taking over water delivery and plastic waste. Some stars used the Infrared Jade Sauna just to shed a few pounds a few weeks before the event. These products are so popular and fast selling that they were featured in the prestigious Beverly Hills Times Magazine.

And when this most memorable and glamorous event came to an end, everyone was off to those famous parties – the Vanity Fair party, Elton John’s bash (raising tens of millions of dollars for charity,) the Governors Ball – as the stars partied into the night, the winners celebrating with their friends and families, and the losers thinking about what might have been and looking forward to their next project.

About the Author of This Article: Dame Adrienne Papp is a recognized journalist, economist and feature writer who has written for many publications including Savoir, Beverly Hills 90210, Malibu Beach, Santa Monica Sun, The Beverly Hills Times, Brentwood News, Bel-Air View, Celebrity Society, Celeb Staff, It Magazine, Chic Today, LA2DAY, West Side Today among many others. She is the President and CEO of Los Angeles/New York-based publicity company, Atlantic Publicity and publishing house, Atlantic Publisher. Adrienne writes about world trends, Quantum Physics, entertainment and interviews celebrities, world leaders, inventors, philanthropists and entrepreneurs. She also owns Atlantic United Films that produces and finances true stories made for theatrical release or the silver screen. Spotlight News Magazine is owned by Atlantic United, Inc. Dame Adrienne Papp is a member of the International Press Academy.

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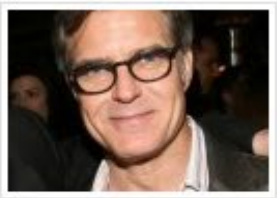
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