# The Oscars: Romance 2008

February 23, 2009 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

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The 81st Academy Awards were presented last night. It was a great show--a welcome surprise in and of itself. What impressed me the most, however, was a smaller moment during the montage “Romance 2008” highlighting the best on-screen romances of the year. LGBT relationships weren’t forgotten.

I was watching with my boyfriend and we saw memorable romantic scenes from a cross-section of films from 2008, such as “Slumdog Millionaire” (won Best Picture), “The Reader” (won Best Actress for Kate Winslet) and even “Sex and the City” (didn’t win any awards, but Sarah Jessica Parker did co-present the artsy awards with Daniel Craig).

We quickly noticed, however, that there was no LGBT romance. With “Milk” in the running for Best Picture and other awards (won Best Original Screenplay and Best Actor for Sean Penn), I started to get a bit upset. Then, a flash of Sean Penn. I was pleased, but not yet satisfied. Then, a flash of Sean Penn kissing co-star James Franco. I was satisfied.

To have omitted the gay Sean Penn/James Franco kiss from all that kissing by straight characters would have been a mistake--and I’m thrilled the Oscars understood.

I couldn’t find a photo of the Penn/Franco kiss. Not sure what it means, but it makes my anti-homophobia/anti-stigma Spidy senses tingle. Well, you can imagine the kiss that also somehow is missing from the end of this publicity clip:

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