

LATIN AMERICAN Herald Tribune

Spanish Filmmaker David Trueba's Oscar Race Begins

LOS ANGELES – The movie "Vivir es fácil con los ojos cerrados" (Living is Easy with Eyes Closed, 2013) opened the 20th edition of the Recent Spanish Cinema festival in Los Angeles, a showcase of Spanish film and which marked the start of the Oscar race for the film by director David Trueba.



It is among the 83 contenders for Best Foreign Language Film at the 87th Academy Awards contest which officially kicked off Monday with winners announced on February 22 next year.

"It is always a mess. It's better to be inside than outside, it's like the World Cup final, it's better to play it than watch it on TV," Trueba told Efe on Thursday on the red carpet outside Hollywood's iconic Egyptian Theater just 500 meters (500 yards) from the Dolby theater where the golden statuettes are presented every year.

Trueba is familiar with this process, having witnessed it with his nomination for "Soldados de Salamina" (The Soldiers of Salamis, 2003) and during his brother Fernando's nominations for "Chico and Rita" (2010) and "Belle Epoque" (The Beautiful Era, 1992), for which the elder sibling won the Oscar.

Only four Spanish films have won in the foreign film category: "Mar Adentro" (The Sea Inside, 2004), "Todo Sobre Mi Madre" (All about my Mother, 1999), "Belle Epoque" (1992) and "Volver a Empezar" (1982).

"I am quite a sensible person and pretty cold-blooded, and I know the difficulties and how complicated it is for a small country like ours to make it to the select group of the five (nominated) movies. One always has to be sensible and respectful," the filmmaker commented.

"Living is Easy with Eyes Closed" is a "road movie" based on real events about a Spanish professor of English in dictator Francisco Franco's time who drives to southern Spain to meet John Lennon, who is shooting a movie there.

Trueba doesn't hide the fact that his movie is up against stronger contenders than the last time he was nominated.

"It is placed among the 15 (favorites)," Trueba said of the movie which, unlike "The Soldiers of Salamis," was released in the United States, a factor which often plays an important part in securing the nomination.

Starting this week and until Dec. 15, the competing filmmakers will try to get close to the 200 members of the Hollywood Foreign Language Film Award Committee to watch their films and score them positively in order to make it to the list of nine finalists which will be announced on Dec. 20.