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Baltimore, 'Homeland' have winning night at 2012 Emmys

Showtime series steals the show with upset in drama, but Baltimore scores too

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The biggest winner Sunday at the 64th Primetime Emmy Awards had to be Showtime's "Homeland," which took the top three drama awards in an upset over such favorites as "Mad Men" and Downton Abbey." But Baltimore-based productions and stars had a very big night, too, during the telecast hosted by Jimmy Kimmel.

For the second year in a row, Baltimore native Julie Bowen won the Emmy as best supporting actress in a comedy for her performance as Claire Dunphy in ABC's "Modern Family." The groundbreaking sitcom also won again as best comedy.

The best actress award in a comedy went to Julia Louis-Dreyfus for her performance as Vice President Selina Meyer in HBO's "VEEP," which is filmed in Baltimore.

And in one the strongest sweeps of the night, "Game Change," another HBO production made in Baltimore, took four major awards in a tough movie and miniseries competition: best movie/miniseries, best actress for Julianne Moore, best writing by Danny Strong and best direction by Jay Roach for the docudrama about the 2008 Republican presidential campaign by John McCain and Sarah Palin.

"Wow, I feel so validated," Moore said in accepting her award, "because Sarah Palin gave me a big thumbs down."

Baltimore's first shout-out came as Bowen made her way to the stage for the third major Emmy handed out.

"Julie Bowen was raised in Baltimore, where her love of acting led to staging plays with her two sisters in her backyard," viewers were told in a voice-over as Bowen approached the microphone.

"This is really an embarrassment of riches," she said in her remarks. "My job really amounts to me falling down and making faces while wearing lipstick and nipple covers. The fact that could be translated at any time into an award or something artful is really a testament to the people that hired me."

Bowen also gave thanks to "the people who edited around me with great regularity and made it look like I have a clue what I'm doing, our writers who write things much better than the nipple covers, the censors at ABC for insisting on nipple covers."

Louis-Dreyfus, who tied Lucille Ball as the most-nominated comedic actress, took home her third Emmy with Sunday's award for her work in the edgy satire about American politics. Her other Emmys were for "Seinfeld" and "New Adventures of Old Christine."

After a bit of shtick involving a faux mixup of speeches with fellow nominee Amy Poehler, Louis-Dreyfus thanked show creator Armando Iannucci and the rest of the producing team on "VEEP."

Her first words to the backstage "thank-you-cam" that was streaming online were: "I'd like to thank our crew in Baltimore; I forgot to thank them."

Louis-Dreyfus has been a big booster of Baltimore since arriving in town last year to film "VEEP." She and the rest of the cast and crew return next month to start work on the second season.

But the biggest story of the night was Showtime winning its first best drama award ever for "Homeland," the story of a Marine sergeant who returns to the U.S. after being held for captive eight years by terrorists in Afghanistan.

Damian Lewis, who plays Sgt. Nick Brody, won as best actor in a dramatic series over such heavily favored performers as Jon Hamm ("Mad Men") and Bryan Cranston ("Breaking Bad").

"I'm one of those pesky Brits," Lewis said in accepting his award. "Apologies. I don't really believe in judging art. But I thought I'd show just in case. I think it worked out."

Claire Danes won as best actress in a drama for her performance as a bipolar CIA operative who suspected that Brody has been turned by his captors.

"Homeland" also won an Emmy for best writing in a drama series, beating out favored entries from "Mad Men" and "Downton Abbey." The writers are Alex Gansa, Howard Gordon and Gideon Raff.

The four awards put Showtime for the first time in a league with HBO, the premium channel that has long overshadowed it. In fact, if not for the victories by the Baltimore-based productions, "Game Change" and "VEEP," HBO would have had a very bad night compared to Showtime.

Best supporting actress in a drama went to Maggie Smith of "Downton Abbey" — an award that everyone expected her to win. But "Downton Abbey," the darling of many prognosticators, did not have a very good night. Neither did "Mad Men," thanks to "Homeland," which has clearly been crowned as TV's new best drama.

The loss in the writing category had to be especially painful for "Mad Men" creator Matthew Weiner. But "Homeland" deserved each and every one of the four top drama awards it won.

A pultiple winner on the comedy front besides "Modern Family" was Louis C.K. who took home

Emmys for writing in a comedy series and writing for a variety special.

"The Daily Show with Jon Stewart" won the Emmy for best variety, music or comedy show.

In terms of the telecast itself, the best thing that can be said about host Jimmy Kimmel is that he didn't try to overdo it in his monologue. It was brief and quickly got viewers to the awards that they had tuned in to see -- and that is pretty much the way the whole show went.

But the taped segments in which he did appear were lame. The opening of him cowering in the women's bathroom, afraid to go on after having botox injections, was silly. And the mock "In Memoriam" to him was just plain dumb.

But silly and just plain dumb are still a lot better than Billy Crystal at the Oscars. And, hey, the telecast did actually end on time. Give the producers and Kimmel some credit for that. In fact, give them lots of credit for that.

Read on for the list of winners:

Drama Series: "Homeland," Showtime.

Actress, Drama Series: Claire Danes, "Homeland," Showtime.

Actor, Drama Series: Damian Lewis, "Homeland," Showtime.

Supporting Actor, Drama Series: Aaron Paul, "Breaking Bad," AMC.

Supporting Actress, Drama Series: Maggie Smith, "Downton Abbey," PBS.

Writing, Drama Series: Alex Gansa, Howard Gordon, Gideon Raff, "Homeland," Showtime.

Directing, Drama Series: Tim Van Patten, "Boardwalk Empire," HBO.

Comedy Series: "Modern Family," ABC.

Actor, Comedy Series: Jon Cryer, "Two and a Half Men," CBS.

Actress, Comedy Series: Julia Louis-Dreyfus, "Veep," HBO.

Supporting Actress, Comedy Series: Julie Bowen, "Modern Family," ABC.

Supporting Actor, Comedy Series: Eric Stonestreet, "Modern Family," ABC.

Writing, Comedy Series: Louis C.K, "Louie," FX Networks.

Directing, Comedy Series: Steven Levitan, "Modern Family," ABC.

Miniseries or Movie: "Game Change," HBO.

Actress, Miniseries or Movie: Julianne Moore, "Game Change," HBO.

Actor, Miniseries or Movie: Kevin Costner, "Hatfields & McCoys," History.

Supporting Actress, Miniseries or Movie: Jessica Lange, "American Horror Story," FX Networks.

Supporting Actor, Miniseries or Movie: Tom Berenger, "Hatfields & McCoys," History.

Directing, Miniseries, Movie or Dramatic Special: Jay Roach, "Game Change," HBO.

Writing, Miniseries, Movie or Dramatic Special: Danny Strong, "Game Change," HBO.

Reality-Competition Program: "The Amazing Race," CBS.

Host, Reality-Competition Program: Tom Bergeron, "Dancing With the Stars," ABC.

Variety, Music or Comedy Series: "The Daily Show With Jon Stewart," Comedy Central.

Writing for a Variety Special: Louis C.K., "Louis C.K. Live at the Beacon Theatre," FX Networks.

Directing, Variety, Music or Comedy Special: Glenn Weiss, 65th Annual Tony Awards, CBS.