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AWARDS

The 2020 Emmy nominations: See all the biggest snubs and surprises

The ceremony will air on Sept. 20.

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By Randee Dawn

Nominations for the 72nd Annual Primetime Emmy Awards were announced Tuesday, and after seeing all the names and shows singled out for special honors this year – well, let's just say it's time to settle in for an extended bumpy ride.

It's a ride that began months ago when most production was shut down across the television industry thanks to COVID-19. Many series shortened their seasons; others created animated final episodes or socially distanced ones, and the pandemic also ended up shifting the awards' schedule: Nominations were originally supposed to have been announced July 14.



— Surprise, surprise, surprise: Larry David (out), Zendaya (in), Reese Witherspoon (out)

Courtesy Everett Collection

Yet you might be surprised to learn that there were *more* Emmy submissions this year, according to prediction site Gold Derby. That meant the TV Academy had to rethink how many slots it would permit for each category, and why some this year have as many as eight entrants, while others have the more traditional four. (best comedy and best drama series categories were pre-locked at eight spaces each.)

In addition, last year's big series winners ("Game of Thrones" for drama, "Fleabag" for comedy) aren't in the running, while series that skipped a year like "The Crown," "Stranger Things" and "Westworld" were back in contention. So in 2020, it's safe to say that almost no one is really an Emmy expert.

Still: Here are a few things that blew us away from some of the main categories announced today.

— "The Mandalorian" (C)Disney+ / Courtesy Everett Collection

Without "Game of Thrones" around, and in an expanded lineup of eight, there was lots of room to include some surprises for best drama series: "Killing Eve" (BBC America) landed a berth alongside "Stranger Things" (Netflix) and a Disney+ channel first: "The Mandalorian." The force is strong with this one. They'll be going up against heavily favored "Succession" (HBO), "The Crown" (Netflix) and "Better Call Saul" (AMC), among others, so competition is fierce.

— "What We Do in the Shadows" (C)FX Networks / Courtesy Everett Collection

The dark vampire comedy "What We Do In the Shadows" (FX) earned the show's first nomination in the best comedy Series category, possibly bolstered by the fact that one of its co-creators is now an Academy Award winner: Taika Waititi ("Jojo Rabbit"). HBO's "Insecure" had been reckoned on to place in the extended lineup and achieved that goal, but both shows are now going up against some heavy hitters like "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel" (Amazon), "The Good Place" (NBC) and "Curb Your Enthusiasm" (HBO).

— Larry David, "Curb Your Enthusiasm" (C)HBO / Courtesy Everett Collection

Speaking of which, while Larry David's "Curb" received a show nomination (its ninth), David himself was left out of the best comedy actor lineup, which includes Ted Danson ("The Good Place"), Michael Douglas ("The Kominsky Method," Netflix) and Don Cheadle ("Black Monday," Showtime). What's up with that?

Best limited series kept things to five total nominees, including the surprise "Unorthodox" (Netflix), about an ultra-religion Jewish woman who leaves her arranged marriage to live overseas; Israeli star Shira Haas received her first nomination for lead actress in a limited series or movie. The show will go up against better-known titles like "Watchmen" (HBO) and "Mrs. America" (FX), but dark horses sometimes have a real fighting chance.

The surprises in this category? No love for Ryan Murphy's "Hollywood" (Netflix) – Murphy is a perennial Emmy favorite – or "I Know This Much Is True" (HBO) though Mark Ruffalo received a limited lead actor nomination.

— Sterling K. Brown, "This Is Us" NBC

It's no surprise that Emmy fave Sterling K. Brown scored two nominations – best drama actor for "This Is Us," and supporting comedy actor for "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel," making him a double threat in two genres, but "Us" ended up snubbed: No other actors from the show were nominated, and the show itself went ignored.

— "The Morning Show" (C)Apple TV / Courtesy Everett Collection

Reese Witherspoon has been a powerhouse behind HBO's "Little Fires Everywhere," but was ignored for her performance in the limited show *and* on Apple TV's "The Morning Show," though her co-star on "Show" Jennifer Aniston picked up her seventh Emmy nomination (she has one win from "Friends" in 2002) and first nod for a dramatic lead actress. But "Little Fires" itself did get nominated in best limited series, so that's something.

Meanwhile, best actress in a movie/limited series turned into one of the most exciting and diverse categories this year, featuring Octavia Spencer ("Self Made," Netflix), Kerry Washington ("Little Fires Everywhere") and Regina King ("Watchmen"), though Cate Blanchett ("Mrs. America," FX) is going to be pretty hard to beat.

— "Euphoria" (C)HBO / Courtesy Everett Collection

"Unorthodox's" Haas wasn't the only new (or newish) name to light up the nominations: Zendaya received her first Emmy nomination for "Euphoria" (HBO), pitting her against lead actress nominees like Oscar winner Olivia Colman ("The Crown") and Laura Linney ("Ozark," Netflix) – but not Viola Davis, who went ignored for her final season of "How to Get Away With Murder"

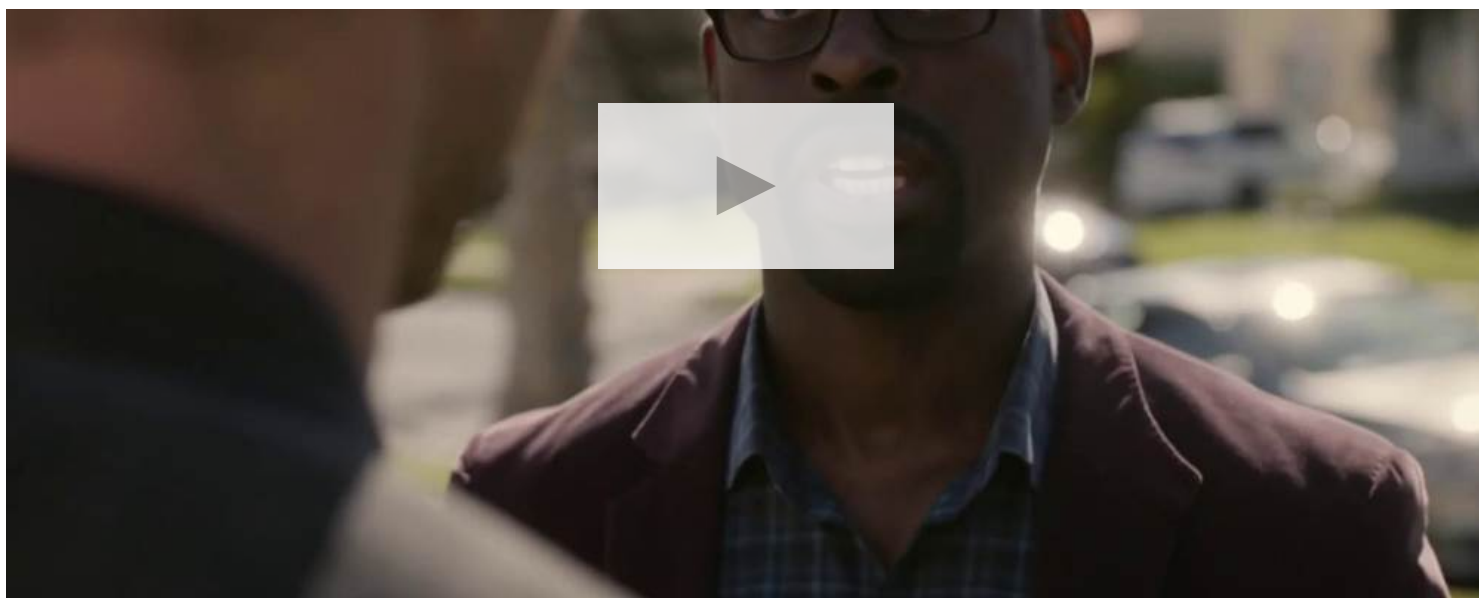
(ABC). Meanwhile, newcomers Paul Mescal ("Normal People," Hulu) and Jeremy Pope ("Hollywood") came from behind to earn their first Emmy nominations.

— Jimmy Kimmel and Seth Meyers. ABC/ NBC

And we'd be remiss not to offer our condolences to "Late Night with Seth Meyers," which failed to earn a nomination for best variety talk series, despite being one of the funniest regular late-night shows out there. Meanwhile, "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" – not expected to receive a nomination this year – landed a spot in the final five; Emmy Awards host Kimmel might be able to present himself with the trophy if all goes well!

Of course, this barely scratches the surface of all the interesting twists and turns of the Emmy nomination process. Be sure to tune in Sept. 20 to ABC to catch all the glitz of what's planned to be a virtual award show. We'll be tuning in!

Sterling K. Brown talks about next season of 'This Is Us'





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