Brits Rule Monte Carlo TV Fest; Double Wins for ‘Victoria,’ ‘Fleabag’ – Variety

By Nick Vivarelli

June 19, 2017

British television dominated the 57th Monte Carlo Television Festival where ITV's glossy period drama “Victoria” won Golden Nymph Awards for both best TV drama and actress, while edgy series “Fleabag,” from the BBC and Amazon, scooped the best comedy prize and the actress nod in that section.

The actress statuettes went to Jenna Coleman, who plays the titular queen in “Victoria,” and to Phoebe Waller-Bridge, the star, creator and writer of “Fleabag.”

Scottish comedian Robbie Coltrane took the prize for best actor in the long fiction section, which comprises TV movies and miniseries, for his performance in Channel 4's four-part “National Treasure.” Coltrane plays a beloved television comedian accused of rape. The show goes out on Hulu in the U.S.

The fiction jury headed by Argentina’s Juan Jose Campanella (“The Secret in Their Eyes”) also awarded the Golden Nymph for best long fiction to French ISIS-themed telepic “Ne m’abandonne pas” (“Don't Abandon Me”), about a Muslim mother in France contending with
a 17-year-old girl determined to join Islamic terrorists in Syria. “Abandon” was made by Scarlett Production for France 2.

U.S. shows swept the audience awards, which crown the most-watched programs in the world. CBS’s “NCIS” won the audience nod for best drama, while “The Big Bang Theory,” from Warner Bros. Television, took the nod for top comedy.

The audience award for best soap went to CBS’ long-running “The Bold and the Beautiful,” which during the fest held a glitzy 30th anniversary party in the garden of the Monte Carlo Bay hotel with cast, including Reign Edwards and Don Diamont, in attendance.

Monte Carlo’s news section jury awarded the top doc prize to “Dugma — The Button” by Norway’s Paul Salahadin Refsdal, which looks at the day to-day-lives of men preparing to become Al Qaeda suicide bombers and is produced by Medieoperatorene. The doc Jury Grand Prize went to ITV’s “Saudi Arabia Uncovered,” produced by Hardcash Productions.

France 2 won in the best TV news item section for a special on the exodus from Mosul during the Iraqi civil war, while Brazil’s Globonews won the live reporting competition for its broadcast of explosive tapped conversations between former Brazilian presidents Dilma Rousseff and Luis Inacio Lula da Silva.

Awards were handed out during a star-studded ceremony attended by Prince Albert II, who presented a lifetime achievement to Helen Mirren.

Faced with a TV fest frenzy in nearby France, Monte Carlo, which is the oldest TV festival in Europe, is managing to retain its prestige thanks in part to its rigorous selection process and high-caliber juries. It has abandoned any designs on becoming a market, focusing instead on premieres, star power, social media, and being an effective launching pad for shows with their European fan base.

A key aspect of Monte Carlo that continues to make it unique among TV events is the side dedicated to news content.

Phil Rees, head of Al Jazeera’s Investigative Unit, who is a member of this year’s news content jury, underlined that news journalism and the whole world of factual television “is not a glamorous industry.”

“It’s really good that this festival, unlike most others, allows those of us in that field to feel a sense of glamour and also recognition,” he said. “It offers a phenomenal boost to the factual industry, especially the documentary industry, because it’s a prize that's highly valued.”

Complete list of winners:

Crystal Nymph, lifetime achievement award: Helen Mirren
Drama television series: “Victoria” (UK)
Actress in a drama television series: Jenna Coleman, “Victoria” (UK)
Actor in a drama television series: Askel Hennie, “Nobel” (Norway)
Comedy television series: “Fleabag” (UK)
Actress in a comedy series: Phoebe Waller-Bridge, “Fleabag” (UK)
Actor in a comedy series: Michel Jonasz, “Lebowitz vs Lebowitz” (France)
Long fiction program: “Ne M’Abandonne Pas” (France)
Actress in a long fiction program: Anna Maria Mühe, “NSU German History X” (Germany)
Actor in a long fiction program: Robbie Coltrane, “National Treasure” (UK)
Documentary: “Dugma — The Button” (Norway)
Jury prize in the documentary category: “Saudi Arabia Uncovered” (UK)
Television news item: “Mosul: Flee At All Costs” (France)
Live breaking news: “Conversations Between President Dilma Rousseff and Lula” (Brazil)
Television audience (most watched program) award for drama: “NCIS” (US)
Television audience (most watched program) award for comedy: “The Big Bang Theory” (US)
Television audience (most watched program) award for soap: “The Bold and the Beautiful” (US)
Prince Rainier III Special Prize: “Midway: A Plastic Island” (US)
Association Mondiale des Amis de L’enfance Prize: “Reel Time: Forgotten Children of the Waves” (Philippines)
International Committee of the Red Cross Prize: “Aquarius, Rescue In Deadly Waters” (France)
SIGNIS (World Catholic Association for Communication) Prize: “Part Of Us” (Germany)
Monaco Red Cross Prize: “Part Of Us” (Germany)
PeaceJam Prize: “Out Of Sight” (Italy)