WOMEN’S MEDIA CENTER:
2019 REVIEW OF GENDER AND NON-ACTING EMMY PRIMETIME NOMINATIONS

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GENDER PARITY STILL ELUSIVE IN NON-ACTING PRIMETIME EMMY NOMINATIONS DESPITE ABUNDANCE OF FEMALE-DRIVEN SHOWS

Despite a year in television that was dominated by female-driven content on screen, gender parity remains elusive for women in non-acting nominations for the 2019 Primetime Emmy Awards, according to the most recent Women’s Media Center analysis.

Men represent 68 percent of all behind-the-scenes nominations in 98 total categories compared to women, who represent only 32 percent, a slight two percentage point increase from last year, the WMC research shows.

There were gains across the board for women in the major writing, producing, editing, and directing categories — 31 percent women and 69 percent men — up five percentage points from last year, yet still 19 percentage points from attaining gender equity. Those improvements are largely attributable to women spearheading their own projects and showing up in multiple writing, producing, editing, and directing categories: Phoebe Waller-Bridge (Fleabag), Ava DuVernay (When They See Us), Amy Sherman-Palladino (The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel), and Beyoncé Knowles-Carter (Homecoming: A Film by Beyoncé). A deeper examination of these four influential sets of categories illustrates the male domination: The number of women directors remains woefully low at 19, or 11 percent, compared to 155 men, or 89 percent. Women received only 27 percent of editing nominations, with 73 percent going to men. Women represent only 28 percent of the nominees for writing, while 72 percent are men. Female producers still account for only 31 percent of nominees, while men dominate with 69 percent.

Women lost ground in the technical categories. Female nominees dipped from 326 (35 percent) last year to 323 (34 percent) this year. There are six categories that are exclusively male: Outstanding Cinematography for Multi-Camera Series, Outstanding Cinematography For A Limited Series Or Movie, Outstanding Lighting Design/Lighting Direction For A Variety Special, Music Composition for a Drama Series, Outstanding Sound Mixing For A Variety Series or Special, and Outstanding Sound Mixing For A Comedy or Drama Series (Half-Hour) and Animation.

“Women are more than half the U.S. population and deserve equal status in Hollywood,” said Julie Burton, president and CEO of the Women’s Media Center. “These
behind-the-scenes roles are powerful positions and critical in shaping the images and representation of women on screen. We must level the playing field for women if the entertainment industry is to be transformed and reflect the diversity and inclusivity of audiences. It’s not only what audiences want, but also what they deserve.”

Shows with the most Primetime Emmy nominations were female-driven: HBO’s Game of Thrones received a total of 32 nominations both in front of and behind the camera, followed by Amazon’s The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel, FX’s Fosse/Verdon, Netflix’s When They See Us, Netflix’s Russian Doll, Showtime’s Escape at Dannemora, Amazon’s Fleabag, Hulu’s The Handmaid’s Tale, BBC’s Killing Eve, HBO’s Veep, HBO’s Sharp Objects, and Netflix’s Homecoming: A Film by Beyoncé.

These buzzworthy shows featured women both in front of and behind the camera. Fleabag was conceived by, written by, and stars Waller-Bridge, who not only has earned multiple nominations in those categories but also is nominated for co-producing Killing Eve. Russian Doll was written by, co-produced by, and stars Natasha Lyonne. Sharp Objects was co-produced by its star, Amy Adams, and its author, Gillian Flynn. Fosse/Verdon was co-produced by its star, Michelle Williams.

In an industry that has long struggled with diversity and inclusion, a few women broke barriers. DuVernay and Knowles-Carter both made history by being the first black women to earn multiple nominations for directing in a single year. DuVernay is nominated for writing, directing, and producing When They See Us for Netflix, which has a total of 16 nominations. Knowles-Carter is nominated for writing, directing, producing, and musical direction for Homecoming: A Film by Beyoncé. Janet Mock and Our Lady became the first openly transgender women nominated, for producing Pose, a drama series about New York’s underground ball culture in the 1980s.

Much of the recent uptick for women has to do with the abundance of opportunities available now with network, cable, and streaming services like Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon. They have widened competition, giving consumers more choices of what to watch and when to watch it. Social media also has put additional pressures on the film and television industry to diversify, widen representation, and hire more women and people of color and, in turn, has carved out a bigger audience for projects that do embody the kind of inclusion and representation broader audiences want.
“This WMC study shows that an abundance of on-camera, female-driven shows did not necessarily translate to more non-acting nominations for women,” Burton said. “Yet, it is clear that the combination of industry-wide activism, more opportunities across multiple platforms, and an audience hungry for more female-driven content has enabled women to become more of a creative force behind the projects that get nominated at the Emmys.”

The 71st Primetime Emmy Awards air September 22 on FOX.

**PRODUCING (21 categories)**

There are a higher percentage of women nominees in the producing category than there are in the 23 writing, directing, and editing categories. But even with the increased numbers — 346 women nominated compared to 626 men and three non-binary people — women still represent only 36 percent of the producing nominees, compared to 64 percent for men. Many of the nominated performers are also named as co-producers, such as Adams on *Sharp Objects*, Williams on *Fosse/Verdon*, and Sandra Oh on *Killing Eve*, or writers and/or directors who are also co-producers, such as Sherman-Palladino for *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, Sarah Silverman for *I Love You, America*, and Amy Sedaris for *At Home with Amy Sedaris*.

There was an increase for women in Outstanding Limited Series, with 18 women nominated (37 percent) compared to 12 last year (25 percent). Men still outnumber women in the category, with 30 nominated producers (63 percent). The number of women nominated for Outstanding Television Movie fell to 11, down from 14 last year. Men received 17 nominations, or 61 percent. Annabel Jones received her third consecutive nomination for Netflix’s *Black Mirror*. A record five female-driven shows were nominated in the Outstanding Comedy Series category: *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, *Fleabag*, *Russian Doll*, *Veep*, and *The Good Place*. There were 23 women nominated out of 60 total nominees (38 percent), compared to 28 women last year (43 percent). Men received 37 (62 percent) of the nominations. All but one of the nominated programs have multiple female nominees for producing.

Women still represent only 40 percent of the nominees in Outstanding Drama Series and men 60 percent, despite an increase in the overall numbers. There was a slight uptick for women nominees in Outstanding Variety Talk Series, from 19 last
year to 22 (34 percent), compared to 42 male nominees (66 percent). *Full Frontal with Samantha Bee* was nominated for the third consecutive year and remains the only late-night comedy talk show hosted by a woman. Bee is also nominated as producer and writer. In Outstanding Variety Sketch Series, *At Home with Amy Sedaris* and Silverman’s *I Love You, America* are nominated for the second consecutive year, earning both stars producing nominations.

Women represented 26 percent of the total and men 74 percent in Outstanding Variety Special (Live), with Sandra Oh, one of the co-hosts of the Golden Globes telecast, nominated as producer. Women are 43 percent of the nominees in Outstanding Variety Special (Pre-Recorded) and men 57 percent. Among the nominees are Hannah Gadsby for *Hannah Gadsby: Nanette* and Wanda Sykes and Page Hurwitz for *Wanda Sykes: Not Normal*.

There were 24 women (24 percent) nominated in Outstanding Animation Program compared to 77 men (76 percent). Women represented half of the nominees in Outstanding Children’s Program, which included Netflix’s *Carmen Sandiego*.

Women dominated in Outstanding Documentary Or Nonfiction Special with 18 nominations, or 60 percent, compared to 12 nominations, or 40 percent, for men. Netflix’s *Jane Fonda in Five Acts* is nominated with all female nominees: Susan Lacy, Jessica Levin, and Emma Piled. Women achieved parity in Outstanding Informational Series Or Special (52 percent) with 15 women nominated compared to 14 men, or 48 percent.

Women also dominated Exceptional Merit in Documentary Filmmaking, with 13 women (72 percent) nominated compared to five men (28 percent). All four of the nominees for the Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg documentary, CNN’s *RBG* are women: Julie Cohen, Betsy West, Amy Entelis, and Courtney Sexton.

In the Outstanding Reality Competition Program category, 31 of the nominees (36 percent) were women compared to 54 men (64 percent). In Outstanding Unstructured Reality Program, 16 women, or 26 percent, were nominated, compared to 45 men, or 74 percent. The number jumped for women in the Outstanding Structured Reality Program category, with 23, or 47 percent of the nominees, including Marie Kondo, who is one of the nominated producers for Netflix’s *Tidying Up with Marie Kondo*, along with Gail Berman and Bianca Barnes-Williams. Men received 23 nominations, or 53 percent.

**DIRECTING (Nine categories)**

There haven’t been significant gains in nominations for women in directing categories, even with so many women spearheading their own projects. Women remain at a disappointing 11 percent compared to men, who are 89 percent of nominees. Just 19 women were nominated in all of the directing categories compared to 155 men. That’s up very slightly from last year’s 13 women (6 percent) compared to 188 men (94 percent).
While the Outstanding Comedy Series category featured a record-breaking number of female-driven programs, there is still only one woman nominated in Outstanding Directing For A Comedy Series, Sherman-Palladino for *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*. All of the rest of the nominees in the category are men. The same was true last year, with just one woman and six men nominated. *Fleabag, Russian Doll, The Good Place, The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel,* and *Veep* are all nominated for Outstanding Comedy Series, yet only one of these five nominated shows has a corresponding best director nominee who is a woman.

There are just two women nominated in the Outstanding Directing For A Drama Series category: Daina Reid for *The Handmaid’s Tale* and Lisa Brühlmann for *Killing Eve*. Though up by one from last year, they represent just 25 percent of the total nominations for women compared to 75 percent for men. Eight episodes of *Pose*, nominated for Outstanding Drama Series, were directed by women, yet none were nominated. Women directed five episodes of *This Is Us*, yet no women were nominated.

After last year, when not a single woman was nominated in the category of Outstanding Directing For A Limited Series, this year two women are nominated (33 percent), including DuVernay for *When They See Us* and Jessica Yu for *Fosse/Verdon*. Yu is one of two women who directed episodes of *Fosse/Verdon*. DuVernay is the only female nominee in the category who was in charge of directing an entire series.

Knowles-Carter, nominated across the board for her film *Homecoming: A Film by Beyoncé*, is the only female nominated in Outstanding Directing For A Variety Special.

Three women were nominated in the Outstanding Direction For A Documentary/Nonfiction Program category. All were also Oscar nominated: Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi, who won for *Free Solo* (along with Jimmy Chin), and Betsy West and Julie Cohen for *RBG*. That brought the total to 43 percent female nominees, compared to 57 percent male nominees. By contrast, there was just one woman in the category last year.

**WRITING (Six categories)**

Although the total number of nominations for female writers rose from 34 last year (23 percent) to 46 this year (28 percent), the number of nominations for women writ-
ers remains low considering how many women are now writing their own material, and even producing it.

The abundance of female-driven shows can be seen in Outstanding Writing For A Comedy Series. All four writers of Russian Doll were nominated: Leslye Headland, Natasha Lyonne, Amy Poehler, and Allison Silverman. Fleabag star Waller-Bridge wrote the entire series and is the show’s sole writing nominee. Pen15’s stars — Maya Erskine, Anna Konkle, and Stacy Osei-Kuffour — are all first-time nominees for writing. In total, eight, or 62 percent, of the nominees are women, compared to five men (38 percent).

However, there is a stark contrast in Outstanding Writing For A Drama Series, with just two women nominated compared to seven men. That’s an increase of just one from last year. The two women are in female-driven shows: Killing Eve’s Emerald Fennell and The Handmaid’s Tale’s Kira Snyder.

In Outstanding Writing For A Limited Series, Movie Or Special, there is just one female nominee: DuVernay, who is also nominated for producing and directing When They See Us. Last year there were no female writers nominated in the category. While this is an improvement, DuVernay’s sole nomination means that just 11 percent of nominees for writing in this category are women. All of the other nominees in the category, or 89 percent, are men.

Women are 28 of the nominees (28 percent) in Outstanding Writing For A Variety Series compared to 71 men (72 percent). Five women (24 percent) received nominations in Outstanding Writing For A Variety Special compared to 16 men (76 percent). In Outstanding Writing For A Nonfiction Program, just two women were nominated: Amy J. Berg for The Case Against Adnan Syed and Julie Willoughby Nason for Fyre Fraud.

**EDITING (Eight categories)**

Men dominated in the editing categories, with a total of 80 male nominees, or 73 percent. Nominations for women in the editing categories rose slightly from 20 percent, or 23 women, last year to 27 percent, or 29 women, this year.

One woman was nominated in the category of Outstanding Picture Editing For Variety Programming, Vera Drew for Who Is America? and Outstanding Picture Editing for a Nonfiction Program, Carla Gutierrez for RBG. In Outstanding Editing Structured Or Reality Competition Program, 27 men were nominated (79 percent) com-
pared to seven women (21 percent). In Outstanding Picture Editing Unstructured or Reality Competition Program, there were 10 women, or 33 percent, compared to 20 men, or 67 percent.

Women outnumbered men in Outstanding Single-Camera Picture Editing For A Drama Series, with four women, or 57 percent: Ozark’s Cindy Mollo and Heather Goodwin Floyd, Wendy Hallam Martin for The Handmaid’s Tale, and Katie Weiland for Game of Thrones. Three men were nominated (42 percent). But women represented just 33 percent compared to 67 percent for male nominees in Outstanding Single-Camera Picture Editing For A Comedy Series, with two women and four men nominated. Laura Weinberg was nominated for Russian Doll, and Kate Sanford was nominated for The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel. In Outstanding Single-Camera Picture Editing For A Limited Series or Movie, just three women, or 25 percent, were nominated compared to nine men, or 75 percent.

OTHER CATEGORIES (54 categories)

The overall number of female nominees declined this year in production design, casting, choreography, cinematography, costume, hairstyling, interactive program, lighting design/direction, makeup, music, sound, special effects, and stunt coordination categories. Last year, 326 women were nominated (35 percent), compared to 323 this year (34 percent). Men were 639 (66 percent).

In Outstanding Production Design For A Narrative Contemporary Program (One Hour Or More), there were six women nominated (40 percent); men were 60 percent of nominees. In Outstanding Production Design For A Narrative Period or Fantasy Program (One Hour Or More), seven (37 percent) of the nominees were women, while 12 (63 percent) were men. Of nominees for Outstanding Production Design For A Narrative Program (Half-Hour), five (38 percent) were women versus eight (62 percent) men. For Outstanding Production Design For A Variety, Reality Or Competition Series, six were women (40 percent) compared to 9 men (60 percent). And for Outstanding Production Design For A Variety Special, four (29 percent) were women; 10 (71 percent) were men.

Women continued to dominate in the casting categories, with all seven nominations in Outstanding Casting For A Series. Women were 64 percent and men 36 percent in Outstanding Casting For A Drama Series. Women were 56 percent and men 44 percent of the nominations for Outstanding Casting for Limited Series, Movie Or
Women doubled their numbers from last year in the cinematography categories, with a total of six women nominated. The jump is primarily due to three women nominated in Outstanding Cinematography For A Reality Program, compared to none last year. That still only brought the percentage up to 5 percent, with 95 percent of the nominations, or 61, going to men. The cinematography categories continue to largely shut out women: Only one woman (17 percent) was nominated for Outstanding Cinematography For A Single-Camera Series (Half-Hour) compared to five men (83 percent), and one woman (17 percent) was nominated for Outstanding Cinematography For A Single-Camera Series (One Hour). No women at all were nominated for Outstanding Cinematography For A Limited Series or for Outstanding Cinematography For A Multi-Camera Series; all nominees were men.

Women continue to dominate the costume categories, earning 60 nominations, or 86 percent of the 70 total nominations in all of the costume categories. In Outstanding Period Costume, there were 18 women nominated (86 percent), compared to three men (14 percent), up from last year’s 13 women and five men nominated. In Outstanding Sci-Fi/Fantasy Costume, women comprised 100 percent of the 17 nominations, also up from last year’s 16 out of 17 nominations. In the Outstanding Contemporary Costume category, women received 13 nominations (87 percent) compared to two for men (13 percent). *Grace and Frankie* earned an Emmy nomination in the category with all female nominees.

Men led in the interactive categories with 40 nominations, or 80 percent, compared to 10 women nominated, or 20 percent. That’s down significantly since last year, when women achieved parity with 16 women and 16 men nominated in all of the interactive categories. In the two lighting design/direction categories, just one woman (three percent) was nominated compared to 37 men (97 percent) — the same percentage as last year.
The music categories continue to be dominated by men. Outstanding Music Supervision, which had five women nominated last year, has just three women this year (43 percent) out of a total of seven nominations; men had 57 percent of nominations. *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*’s Sherman-Palladino was nominated for the second year in a row (she won last year). Just one woman was nominated in the music composition categories: none for Outstanding Music Composition For A Series (Original Dramatic Score), one for Outstanding Music Composition For A Limited Series, Movie or Special (Original Dramatic Score), and two for Outstanding Music Composition For A Documentary Series or Special (Original Dramatic Score). Just one woman is nominated along with seven men for Outstanding Original Main Title Theme Music (14 percent), and one woman is nominated for Outstanding Music Direction — Knowles-Carter for *Homecoming: A Film by Beyoncé*. There are six women and 11 men nominated in Outstanding Original Music and Lyrics (35 percent).

In the sound categories, the numbers for women nominees lag far behind the number for men: 34 out of 230 total nominees are women (14 percent), up from last year’s total of 31 female nominees. Most of the female nominees, 31 out of the 34, are from sound editing, while three of the nominees are from sound mixing. Neither Outstanding Sound Mixing For A Limited Series or Movie nor Outstanding Sound Mixing For A Variety Series Or Special has any female nominees; all of the 43 nominees in those categories are male.

**Conclusion**

There were gains across the board for women in the major writing, producing, editing and directing categories for the 2019 non-acting Primetime Emmy nominations due in large part to women spearheading their own productions. Women are creating their own opportunities in an industry that historically has excluded them.

Yet, women’s representation in the behind-the-scenes nominations is far from equal. Even an explosion of television offerings on cable, network, and streaming platforms yielded only small, incremental progress. The need for change starts at the top. Inclusion and representation require intentional expansion of the talent pool in front of and behind the camera.

The Television Academy's voting body is “comprised of 23,000 members that are divided up into 30 peer groups, and in each of those groups’ members vote on the nominees and winners,” according to the Academy.
THE Emmy analysis was drawn using information from Emmys.com. An individual was counted only once per category even if they were nominated multiple times in the same year for the same award.

The Primetime Emmy Awards do not include a producing category. The WMC report includes 21 categories in which producers are nominated.

Founded in 2005 by Jane Fonda, Robin Morgan, and Gloria Steinem, the Women’s Media Center is an inclusive and feminist organization that works to ensure women’s realities are covered and women’s voices are heard. We do this by researching and monitoring media; creating and modeling original online, print, and podcast content; training women and girls to be effective in media; and promoting women experts in all fields.