

'Bob Barker emcees Daytime Emmys in first-ever prime-time slot'

'Twelfth time may be the charm for Susan Lucci'

By AMY SCHMIDT

A couple of firsts marks this year's Daytime Emmy Awards, airing Thursday, June 27, live from New York City: One, the ceremonies will be presented during prime time for the first time in the show's 18-year history; two, "All My Children" star Susan Lucci will compete for an unprecedented 12th time in the Outstanding Lead Actress category.

CBS leads the field with 78 nominations. ABC trails with 37 — less than half. NBC scored 29, PBS 22, Cable 14 and Fox 3.

Not new to the show is this year's repeat-host, Bob Barker ("The Price Is Right"). Barker, a five-time winner, could win his sixth game-show trophy during Thursday's CBS telecast.

What does Barker think of Lucci's chances? "If I were Susan Lucci," says Barker. "I would be sitting around hoping I did not win, because she gets more publicity for not winning the Emmy than the winner gets for winning the Emmy." "Cheers" Ted Danson had been running neck-in-neck with Lucci for winless Emmy nominations until pulling away last season with a victory in prime-time Emmy competition.

Far from bitter about her dubious honor, Lucci has, in fact, capitalized on the scenario. Most recently she appears on a Nutrasweet commercial as a pampered, powder-puffed star who gets everything she wants — "except the Emmy!" she suddenly shouts, throwing an on-set temper tantrum. The creative spot also copped a Clio nomination.

The actress has also introduced a new line of hair-care products known as The Susan Lucci Collection with the help of Rodeo Drive salon owner Fernando Romero.

"If she (Lucci) wins an Emmy," says Barker, looking at the contest

from all angles, "it's going to end her commercial career. Once she's won, well, then she's just another actress with with an Emmy. But as long as she doesn't win, she's an actress with 12 or 13 nominations."

But Barker is upbeat about his own prospects of winning. "I have five trophies. I think a half-dozen would be a nice number, don't you?" he goads in his optimistic "Price-Is-Right" tone of voice.

"Someone asked me, 'Have you ever hosted the Emmy Awards when you were nominated,'" tells Barker. "I have not only hosted when I was nominated, I've hosted the Emmys when I've won, I've hosted the Emmys when I lost, and I've hosted the Emmys when I was disqualified. So I don't think they'll have any surprises for me, but if I have my choice, I'd prefer to do it when I win."

And if Barker's competition, Alex Trebek ("Jeopardy!") should win?

Well, Trebek can just "come on down," says Barker. "I think that if I don't win, and Alex is there, I'm just going to say, 'All right, if you're so good, you just do the rest of the show,'" he chuckles.

The Daytime Emmy Awards honor excellence in network, cable and syndicated programs in diverse areas such as drama series, game/audience participation shows, talk/service shows, children's and animated series and specials.

Besides best drama series and lead actor and actress honors, a plethora of other technical and creative crafts comprise the total number of Emmy Awards — everything from Outstanding Achievement in Lighting Direction to Outstanding Achievement in Hairstyling, and Graphics and Title Design honors. Winners in some of those categories, primarily in the creative arts, were announced Saturday, June 22, in Los Angeles.

SATURDAY



Tom Berenger is a happily married detective assigned to protect a beautiful Manhattan socialite (Mimi Rogers) in *Someone to Watch Over Me*, Saturday on ABC.