



Top: DJ Kiss, Kimberly Guilfoyle (right), Lara Spencer. Bottom: Lynn Shelton, Anderson Cooper, Madonna, Milla Jovovich

## GLAAD TO BE GAY

The GLAAD Media Awards call out the Scouts and highlight trans rights.

High above bustling Times Square, impeccably dressed media elites braved sleet and snow to be present at New York City's **24th Annual GLAAD Media Awards**. The event served as a star-studded call to action as it honored outstanding media portrayals of the LGBT community in 2012.

Kicking off the ceremony, a fired-up GLAAD President, Herndon Graddick, seized the moment to condemn the Boy Scouts of America for its systemic discrimination against LGBT children and their families. Graddick then urged journalists to tell more of the untold stories of the transgender community, calling transgender issues the future of the civil rights battle.

As the awards got underway, co-hosts Sam Champion and Lara Spencer of *Good Morning America* announced winners in each category, including Outstanding Drama Series (*Smash*, NBC) and Outstanding Documentary (*How To Survive a Plague*, *Sundance Selects*).

The main honor of the night was reserved for CNN's sexy silver fox Anderson Cooper, who received the distinguished Vito Russo Award, an honor bestowed upon openly gay media professionals who have made a significant difference in promoting equality for the LGBT community. This was Cooper's first award since publicly coming out of the closet in 2012.

And what's a good celebration without Madonna?

Ever the provocateur, a fashionably late Madonna clad in a

tight Boy Scouts uniform took the stage to introduce Cooper. Denouncing the Boy Scouts ban of LGBT youth, she condemned Russia for imprisoning members of the girl-band Pussy Riot, and called for a social "revolution!" before praising Cooper as a personal inspiration. "I don't know a lot of brave people...and that is the reason I'm here: To give an award to someone I admire. Someone who is brave, someone who has made a difference in the world by promoting equality and giving a voice to the LGBT community. I am here to honor you, Anderson Cooper."

Taking the stage and visibly awe-struck, Cooper couldn't resist giving Madge a big smooch on the lips. He joked that that was the only time he'd kissed a girl, before graciously accepting the honor. "As a gay person, it's important for me to remember that all of us come from a community whose stories have for too long been forgotten or ignored, ridiculed or misrepresented," he told the audience. "A community despite all that has found ways to love and to laugh and to care for one another. I know I'm only able to be on this stage because of generations of gay people who have come before."

Before leaving the stage, an emotional Cooper looked out into the crowd, fixing his eyes on his boyfriend, Benjamin, sitting in the audience below. "I have had so many blessings in my life. And being gay is certainly one of the greatest blessings of all." (glaad.org) —Samantha L. Stewart