



David Bowie's son, Duncan Jones collects the award for British album of the year on behalf of his late father for 'Blackstar' during the BRIT Awards 2017 ceremony and live show in London. — AP/AFP photos



Members of the group Little Mix from left, Jesy Nelson, Leigh-Ann Pinnock, Perry Edwards and Jade Thirwall pose for photographers upon arrival at the Brit Awards 2017.

David Bowie honors, George Michael tribute top Brit Awards

The Brit Awards recognized big international stars including Drake and Beyonce and a cross-section of home-grown talent Wednesday - but the ceremony was overshadowed by the much-missed David Bowie and George Michael. Bowie, who died in January 2016 at age 69, was crowned British male artist of the year and won British album of the year for "Blackstar," released days before his death. Bowie's son, filmmaker Duncan Jones, accepted the best album award on behalf of his father, who he said had "always been there supporting people who think they're a little bit weird or a little bit strange, a little bit different." "This award is for all the kooks, and all the people who make the kooks," Jones said. "Kooks" is the song Bowie wrote for his son when he was born.

As well as rewarding Bowie, the show paid tribute to one of the music industry's many losses of 2016 - George Michael, who died on Christmas Day aged 53. His Wham! bandmate Andrew Ridgeley said that with Michael's death, "a supernova in a firmament of shining stars has been extinguished." Coldplay singer Chris Martin performed a moving rendition of Michael's "A Different Corner" - dueting with a recording of Michael himself and backed by a group of violins.

International stars

The flashy show at London's O2 Arena opened with girl group Little Mix giving a thunderous performance of "Shout Out to My Ex," backed by a troupe of silver-painted dancers. The song went on to be named British single of the year. There were also performances by Bruno Mars, The 1975, Coldplay, Ed Sheeran, Robbie Williams and grime musician Skepta on a night where Britain's music industry celebrated UK talent and a smattering of international stars. Soulful chanteuse Emeli Sande was named female British artist of the year, while Manchester indie pop group The 1975 won the trophy for best British band.

Singer Matt Healy noted that the band, whose album "I Like It When You Sleep, for You Are So Beautiful Yet So Unaware of It" has been a hit on both sides of the Atlantic, had had the same lineup since the members were 13. Injecting a light note of politics into a show that's often slick and uncontroversial, Healy told entertainers with a platform not to heed advice to "stay in your lane when it comes to social issues." He said that "if you have a platform, don't do that. Please don't do that." Few of the winners and performers took up the invitation. The closest thing to edgi-

ness at the show was provided by a pinstripe-clad Katy Perry.

She performed "Chained to the Rhythm" - with its references to zombified people "living in a bubble" - accompanied by Skip Marley and a pair of giant skeletons dressed as US President Donald Trump and British Prime Minister Theresa May. The international awards went to global stars - none of whom came to accept them. Drake was named international male solo artist, while Beyonce took the international female prize. A Tribe Called Quest took the trophy for international group.



Members of the group Little Mix from left, Perry Edwards, Jesy Nelson, Jade Thirwall and Leigh-Ann Pinnock accept the award for Best British Single on stage.



Singer Emeli Sande performs on stage.