



The Recording Academy: The Grammys 2026

by J Belin

Secretary-General, Old Dominion University Model United Nations Society

Welcome to *The Grammys 2026*

This crisis simulation is one that means so much to me. Music has played such a significant role in my life, and the development that goes into these awards shows fascinates me. It's always exciting to see who gets recognized for their contributions to the industry, and it's equally as frustrating to see your favorites lose an award you feel they deserve.

The passion and excitement behind this all make it that much more exciting. This is the first year that ODUMUNC has done a non-traditional crisis committee of this caliber, and the music industry is such a prevalent part of the lives of the younger generation. With that, I wanted to make some clear reminders about the goal of this committee.

I recognize that there are aspects of the music industry that are controversial and divisive, especially regarding the hip-hop and rap genres. Some music discusses topics that may be perceived as inappropriate and/or violent. Artists have been criticized for the way they discuss women or topics like gangs and drug violence. Artists also commonly discuss things like racism and problematic behaviors within or related to the Black community.

Conversations surrounding misogyny, discrimination, and other controversial topics in the music industry are important, but remember to approach these topics from a lens of diplomacy and civility. The official and artists in this body are character depictions. While many of your actions and portrayals will be fictitious, always be conscious of the real-world implications of your decisions.

ODUMUNC has a zero-tolerance for problematic behavior. These can be sensitive topics with real-world implications. Treat all delegates with respect. Make sure you never cross lines or violate ODUMUNC rules of conduct.

I wish you all the best of luck, and hope you are prepared for this exhilarating committee!

J Belin, Secretary-General
ODUMUNC 48



Table of Contents

Welcome to The Grammys 2026.....	1
Introduction	2
The Recording Academy and Grammys ...	2
Controversies.....	3
Issues	4
Characters	5
Bibliography.....	7

Introduction

The Recording Academy, famously the body in charge of the Grammy Awards, is a collective of artists, songwriters, producers, recording engineers, executives, and other music industry professionals, based in Santa Monica, California. They are also responsible for the Grammy Museum, which works to preserve the history of the academy and music advancement, and MusiCares, a newly-founded charitable organization to improve the health and well-being of the music community through various initiatives.



RECORDING ACADEMY®
**GRAMMY
AWARDS**

The Grammy Awards are a widely televised event that highlights the work of artists and the impacts that they have had on the music industry that previous year. In addition to the Grammy Awards, they also have the Latin Grammy Awards, recognizing professionals in the music industry who the Latin Recording Academy supports.

The Recording Academy and Grammys

In 1957, the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce reached out to record executives to determine a proper way to honor professionals in the music industry since many of them would not be eligible for a Hollywood Bronze Star. Those groups were MGM Records, Capitol Records, Decca Records, RCA Records, and Columbia Records, and this led to the creation of the Grammy Awards in 1959, with simultaneous ceremonies being held in Beverly Hills, California, and New York, New York. The Record of the Year was *Nel Blu Dipinto di Blu (Volare)* by Domenico Modugno. The Album of the Year was *The Music from Peter Gunn* by Henry Mancini.

From 1959 to 1973, the Grammys were held at various venues between Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, New York City, Nashville, and Chicago. In 1971, the ceremony was televised for the first time, and hosted by singer and TV personality, Andy Williams. That year, Simon and Garfunkel dominated the music industry, and Elton John, who was up for New Artist of the Year, lost to The Carpenters.



B.B. King, winner of the 1971 Grammy Award for Best Male R&B Vocal Performance, performing in Hamburg, Germany.

In 1997, there was a major shift in the Recording

Academy. To better support Latin artists, Michael Greene- who was president at the time- established the Latin Recording Academy to expand operations in America and Spain, and create a stronger community to highlight artists whose works have strong Latin influences or are primarily in Spanish and/or Portuguese. Members of the Latin Recording Academy are spread across The Americas and the Iberian Peninsula. Artists who are eligible for awards during the Latin Grammys also have eligibility for awards during the regular Grammys.

Some of the biggest examples are Beyoncé's self-titled album losing to Beck's *Morning Phase* in 2015, or Kendrick Lamar's *Good Kid, M.A.A.D. City* losing to Daft Punk's *Random Access Memories* in 2014. Both of the former albums were considered much more popular but were not received the same by the academy.



There has been a history of performers, albums, and songs that are widely popular across various streaming charts. Industry-wide reviews were designated as "hip-hop/rap" or "R&B" only, even if those same standards weren't held to other albums in different genres. This stems back to the larger issue of perceptions and connotations surrounding hip-hop/rap and R&B music.

The Recording Academy cut the number of categories from 109 to 78. The most notable changes were removing the distinction between male and female artists and between collaborations and duos/groups. However, by 2023, there had been even more changes and restructurings, bringing the total number of categories to 94, the most since the 2012 cuts.

There were also some notable changes made to the

names of categories, especially R&B, rap, and hip-hop categories amid the 2020 protests. Previously, many hip-hop, R&B, and rap-based categories were tagged as "urban" which was deemed inappropriate and an offensive descriptor that was too generalizing and demeaning of the work that these artists produced.

The awards show has historically had four awards that fall in the "General Field" meaning winners are not restricted to a certain genre. Until 2024, those categories were "Record of the Year", "Album of the Year", "Song of the Year", and "Best New Artist". In 2024, "Producer of the Year, Non-Classical" and "Songwriter of the Year, Non-Classical" were added to the "General Field Awards. There are more genre-specific awards, but those categories had a major restructuring in 2012.



Tyler The Creator, accepting the 2020 Grammy for *Igor*, which won Best Rap Album.

Controversies

Since its inception, the Grammy Awards has been the subject of multiple controversies. Many artists, producers, and even fans have addressed the underlying racism within the awards process.

Some artists have even pulled out of submitting any of their works until the Recording Academy shows more equity within the awards process, one of these being pop sensation The Weeknd.

It has been noted that artists of color are disproportionately recognized in a variety of categories. Only 11 Black artists have won Album of the Year, and before Jon Batiste won in 2022, the most recent win from an artist of color in that category was Herbie Hancock in 2008 with *River: The Joni Letters*. Many wins in the past 20 years have been questioned as albums that were more critically acclaimed, better charting, or more successful were losing, with many of these losing albums being from these genres can cover topics that may be overly explicit or unappealing to people, especially those that have a more “violent” nature.



Daft Punk after winning Album of the Year for *Random Access Memories* in 2014

This also comes into play when comparing the recognition of artists at genre-specific award shows compared to multi-genre award shows (the Country Music Awards vs the Academy Music Awards). Some shows are more tailored to country, hip-hop, R&B, and jazz, but not genre-specific shows for pop. Artists, producers, and fans across genres have stated that shows seem to be more biased towards pop works for big-ticket awards, rather than works that can win in their album-specific shows.

Many also have questions about the legitimacy and fairness of some awards, which was sparked by Taylor Swift’s re-recordings of many of her works, dubbed “Taylor’s Version”. While not eligible for new songwriting awards, those works are still

eligible for performance categories, which has caused questions of if other artists are potentially losing nomination spots to songs that have been previously awarded and/or recognized.

Overall, there seems to be some consensus that the current model for the awards ceremony is dated, and until something changes, we could slowly see it fade out of relevance



Issues

The awards ceremony needs a revitalization. There have been a multitude of positional restructurings, team reorganizations, and overall mass change that has shaken up the executive side of the Grammys. Professionals and fans alike are looking to find a way to bring back the excitement of awards season, and Recording Academy executives want to bring the viewership numbers back up while also ensuring the ceremony is equitable and representative of the people.

Existing nomination and voting processes may fall short of the intended outcome, failing to take into account the broad variety of ingenuity that defines modern music as genres increasingly meld together and independent performers become more well-known.

A history of inadequate representation of

marginalized communities and females underscores the pressing necessity for more comprehensive strategies. Artists, producers, and Recording Academy Executives will need to work together to come up with an innovative and creative plan to ensure that the 2026 Grammy Awards is one that people will talk about for years to come.

None of this will come easily. Executives want to make sure they can keep their positions and are appealing the Board of Trustees. Artists and producers may be working to advance their own careers, even if that comes at the expense of someone else's.

Characters

Jack Anontoff: one of the most prominent producers in the pop music industry. Producing for Taylor Swift, Sabrina Carpenter, Lana Del Ray, Lorde, and more, he has achieved numerous accolades, including 11 Grammys. He is also the frontman for alternative rock band Bleachers.

Beyoncé: The most Grammy-winning individual of all time, Beyoncé has been an icon in the music industry for over three decades. She was a member of the girl group *Destiny's Child*, and then started her solo career in 2003. Since then she has collaborated with many other artists, including her husband Jay-Z under the group *The Carters*. Most recently, she has been in the production of a trilogy album collection as well as going on the Renaissance World Tour.

Metro Boomin: Hip-hop and trap's most acclaimed producer, Metro Boomin is one of the silent voices of modern day music. Known for his dark production style, he has worked with many well known artists, including Gunna, The Weeknd, Future, Travis Scott, and Migos. He has also worked in the film world, producing the soundtrack for *Spiderman: Across the Spider-Verse*.

Bad Bunny: One of the first non-English artists to generate the most Spotify streams in a year, Bad Bunny is an extremely successful Latin hip-hop and pop artist. He has received 3 Grammys and 11

Latin American Grammys. Outside of his music career, he had a brief stint as a professional wrestler, winning the 24/7 Championship in 2022.

Miley Cyrus: the original "Disney Child Star", began her rise to fame acting on *Hannah Montana*. While taking a more minor role in acting, Miley Cyrus moved to a more musical direction, continuing the family trend from father Billy Ray Cyrus, brother Trace Cyrus, and sister Noah Cyrus. Most recently, Cyrus won 2 Grammys in 2024, including Record of the Year.

Drake: a prominent name in hip-hop and pop, whose original claim to fame was acting on *Degrassi*. He frequently works with many other big-name artists, including Future, Lil Wayne, and Nicki Minaj. According to RIAA, he is one of the highest-selling artists in the United States, and he has been awarded 5 Grammys, including Best Rap Album. Most recently, he has been in the news for his rap beef with artist Kendrick Lamar.

Todd Dupler, Recording Academy Chief Advocacy & Public Policy Officer: Dupler's role focuses on championing creators' rights and elevating important policy issues that stand to affect the music community, and his extensive work experience on Capitol Hill helps his policy development within the Recording Academy and its regional chapters.

Billie Eilish: cemented in the music industry with her critically acclaimed pop/alt-pop works. She has won 11 Grammys, and won the "Big Four" -Best New Artist, Record of the Year, Song of the Year, and Album of the Year- all in 2020. She is one of the youngest artists to win such accolades, including Album of the Year at only 18.

Quincy Jones: One of only 15 to receive a Grammy Legend Award, Quincy Jones is a musical icon. With a career spanning over 70 years, Jones has worked with a variety of award winning artists. His areas of prominent influence are jazz and R&B. He is highly decorated, with 28 Grammys, an Emmy award, a Tony award, and 7 Academy Award nominations.

Kendrick Lamar: labeled as one of the most influential hip-hop artists of the generation and one



The Recording Academy: Grammys



of the greatest rappers of all time. Born in Compton, California, Lamar used his experiences growing up to build his artistry and is known for his profound, meaningful, poetic raps. He has received 17 Grammy awards, and in 2015 was nominated for 11 awards in one night, the most by any hip-hop artist. Most recently, Kendrick Lamar has been in the spotlight for his rap beef with artist Drake, and has been announced as the halftime headliner of Super Bowl LIX.

Ruby Marchand, Recording Academy Chief Awards & Industry Officer: Overseeing both Awards and Membership & Industry Relations, Marchand works with the Genre Managers on the awards time to maintain the integrity of the awards while also working on innovation and creative advancement within the Recording Academy.

Harvey Mason Jr., Recording Academy Chief Executive Officer (CEO): The first Black CEO in the Academy's history, Mason was Interim President/CEO of the Recording Academy in 202, while also serving as Chair of the Board of Trustees. In his current role, he works with the Grammy Awards, MusiCares, the Latin Recording Academy, and the Latin Grammy Cultural Foundation.

Panos A. Panay, Recording Academy President: named co-president in 2021, Panay took charge once Butterfield stepped down. He has worked on a variety of initiatives to contribute to the growth of the Recording Academy at a global scale. Panay has been in the industry since the early 2000s, and his extensive skill set proves to be very useful to the Grammys team.

Dolly Parton: one of the most iconic names in country music, has been active in music and entertainment since 1955. Her contributions as such a big-name artist have paved the way for other female country artists, even expanding to genres beyond. She has won 11 Grammy Awards, adding to her 190 total professional awards.

Olivia Rodrigo: a child actor turned pop sensation. She originally gained stardom on the Disney Channel show *Bizaardvark*, and then again for the lead role in *High School Musical: The Musical: The Series*, both very music-based roles.

She released her first album “Sour” in 2021, and “Guts” in 2023, the former helping her secure the Grammy for Best New Artist, as well as two other awards.

Chantel Sausedo, Recording Academy VP of Artist Relations: Sausedo works to manage and develop relationships with artists and key members of their teams. She serves as the key representative to speak on behalf of the organization and ensures talent activities are advancing the Academy's mission. She has helped bring a diverse string of artists, such as Olivia Rodrigo, Cynthia Eviro, Måneskin, and more.

Laura Segura- MusiCares Executive Director: Segura serves as the organization's spokesperson and senior representative, guiding MusiCares' efforts and increasing awareness of the foundation's role in serving the music community's needs. Her position works with multiple industry sectors, from artists relations to government and policy advancement to ensure the success of the MusiCares foundation.

Chris Stapleton: A big name in the country music industry for almost two decades, Stapleton is one of the most Grammy-awarded country artists, with 10 wins under his belt. He has been a member of two bluegrass country bands, and frequently collaborates with his now-wife Morgane Stapleton, a country singer-songwriter.

Taylor Swift: 52-time Grammy nominee and 14-time winner, Taylor Swift is a dominant force in the music industry. Swift has been in the music industry since 2003, and continues to top the charts. In the mid-2010s, she made a major career shift and moved more toward pop, leaving her country style behind. She's recently been in the spotlight for her re-recordings of her works, labeled as “Taylor's Versions”, as well as the worldwide Eras Tour.

SZA: A prominent female artist of the current era, is the first female artist to sign with Top Dawg Entertainment, the same label that Kendrick Lamar is affiliated with. She has won 4 Grammy awards and has collaborated with a variety of artists across genres, including Isaiah Rashad, Maroon 5, and Phoebe Bridgers.



The Recording Academy: Grammys



The Weeknd: Abel Tesfaye, better known as The Weeknd, is one of a number of artists who is boycotting the Grammys. He has won 4 awards, as well as a Latin Grammy Award, but feels that the Recording Academy discriminates against Black artists and works that fall under the realm of hip-hop, and stated he will not be submitting any further works until he sees a change.

Pharrell Williams: One of the most influential producers of the 21st century, Pharrell Williams

has been an inspiration to the music world for many. From movie soundtracks to music festivals, he has contributed in many ways.

Wayne Zahner, Recording Academy Chief Financial Officer (CFO): oversees all financial, accounting, legal, insurance, trademark, copyright, and facilities-related affairs of the Recording Academy, NARAS Properties, Inc., and the Grammy Museum. He has been with the Recording Academy since 2001 and has served as the CFO since 2004

Bibliography

Chen, Joyce. 2021. "We Should Say Goodbye to the Grammys." Harvard Political Review.

<https://harvardpolitics.com/say-goodbye-Grammys/>

Grein, Paul. 2021. "Will Taylor Swift's Re-Recordings of Her Old Albums Be Eligible for Grammys?"

Billboard. <https://www.billboard.com/music/awards/taylor-swift-fearless-re-recording-Grammys-eligible-9525130/>

Haile, Nardos. 2023. "The Grammys ended in controversy, again. Here's what to know." AP News.

<https://apnews.com/article/grammys-2023-harry-styles-album-of-the-year-harry-beyonce-68bfa38b02e797e3300b7c32f00d8b2c>

Merrilees, Thomas. 2023. "The black box is broken: the modern critique of the Grammys." KSPC 88.7FM.

<https://kspc.org/the-black-box-is-broken-the-modern-critique-of-the-Grammys/>

Schmidt, Addison. 2024. "The Grammy's: a history of scandal and a future of uncertainty." Boston Political Review.

<https://www.bostonpoliticalreview.org/post/the-Grammy-s-a-history-of-scandal-and-a-future-of-uncertainty>

Thompson, Eliza. 2024. "Artists Who've Called Out the Grammys Over the Years." Us Weekly.

<https://www.usmagazine.com/entertainment/pictures/artists-who've-called-out-the-Grammys-over-the-years/>

Wikipedia, n.d. "66th Annual Grammy Awards." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammy_Awards

Wikipedia, n.d. "The Recording Academy." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Recording_Academy