

# A music revolution at the Grammys

by Tricia Romano

Led Zeppelin doesn't have one. The Grateful Dead don't have one either. The Doors weren't even nominated, ditto for Janis Joplin.

What exactly are these legendary bands lacking? A Grammy.

The Grammy, which is supposedly the highest honor a musician can receive in the business, has never been awarded to arguably some of the most influential and inspiring artists of modern pop and rock 'n roll.

So why is it then that the Grammys are held in such high esteem? Over the last 35 years since the ceremonies started, the Grammys have recognized some of the most famous and influential bands of the rock era.

Or have they? The Beatles, one of the most dominating of the original rock legends, won only three Grammys. Elvis Presley, the King of Rock 'n Roll, took home three awards for his lifetime of achievement. Here's the kicker: they were only for religious recordings. Sure Frank Sinatra, has walked with eight little Grammaphones, and Michael Jackson has a closet full of Grammys (12), but do the Grammys recognize the significance of an artist or do they merely signify the popularity of one?

The evidence seems to be pointing in the latter direction. Zoo Representative Leah Horowitz conceded the Grammys are indeed based on sales.

"I think they (the record industry) will go with what was more successful commercially," said Horowitz. "They look at what sold, and they vote for that artist."

Local promoter Susan Hahn of Full Moon Productions agreed, "I think that its' finally become mainstream, with the numbers in the Arbitron, you just can't ignore it. It seems to me that every year they are (the nominees) the biggest album sellers. I would like to think that it's because their (the bands) talent is being recognized."

In this years' Billboard Music Awards, which nominate and honor the biggest-selling artists in categories similar to the Grammys, there were several parallel nominees in each respective category.

The Billboard's best-selling recordings of the year nominees, Billy Ray Cyrus and Eric Clapton, also put an appearance in the Grammys' Record of the Year category. In the Billboard Best-Selling Recording by a New Artist category, three out of the five artists are also nominated for the New Artist category in the Grammys. It is uncanny that these best-selling artists also happen to be nominated for

the Grammy. Just because an artist sells in massive numbers, does not mean they have a good record; it only represents how popular they are. Does anyone remember Vanilla Ice?

But what is really strange about this year's Grammys are the nominations of bands that even the average music listener has probably not heard of. These are bands whose records sold mediocre, but are well-known in the underground scene. The agro-industrial music of Helmet, Ministry, and Nine Inch Nails has leaked into the Metal category. This is a far cry from the considerable traditional nominees of the past such as Motley Crue and Metallica.

Even more mainstream alternative acts are nominated. While it is no surprise that Nirvana, Pearl Jam and the Red Hot Chili Peppers were noticed, considering their records all went platinum, acts like Soundgarden and Alice In Chains did not have the same hype or publicity. It could be that someone let the little suit and ties in on a few secrets. It's even a fathomable possibility that the Grammys are beginning to catch up to what the rest of the music enthusiasts already knew: That the world does not revolve around Quincy Jones, who incidentally received 29 Grammys.

If a nominated alternative act beats the legendary Clapton in a category, what will be the effect? Might they be elevated to a status where they will appear untouchable? For Nirvana, the reluctant rock stars, who pout whenever they appear in a commercial magazine, Grammy acceptance might alienate them from true underground status. Hardcore scene supporters may aban-

don the now commercial, sell-out bands.

Or, a Grammy could bring a new found, and much-deserved respect to the bands that really are creating fresh sounds, pushing music in new and uncharted territory.

Proof of that came at last night Grammys with Nine Inch Nails and Red Hot Chili Peppers nabbing awards.

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