

# T-Pain, Weezy, Obama rule roost at BET Awards

LOS ANGELES (AP) — T-Pain and Lil Wayne have owned the music scene over the past year: It seems as if T-Pain's voice has accented half the hits on urban radio, while Lil Wayne, another ubiquitous collaborator, has appeared on the rest.

In addition, Lil Wayne just this month scored the year's best-selling album sales debut with 1 million copies sold of his new CD, "Tha Carter III."

So it was appropriate that both artists dominated Tuesday's BET Awards with not only their energetic performances but their presence, despite winning just one trophy each.

"We're blessed to be in this man's presence," Kanye West, one of music's biggest self-promoters, said of T-



T-Pain performs at the annual BET Awards on Tuesday in Los Angeles.

Pain when the pair accepted their award for best collaboration for "The Good Life," going on to call T-Pain a "ge-

nius." "I'll let y'all know because I'm one of the kings of this game. My opinion counts." West also paid homage to Lil Wayne, calling him "my fiercest competition."

"You scared me man," West said, bringing Lil Wayne onstage when West won the trophy for best hip-hop male. "Congratulations on selling over a million records. And they say hip-hop is dead."

Other highlights from the three-hour ceremony included a girl group reunion; a stirring tribute to Rev. (and soul legend) Al Green; and topless performance by ripped rapper Nelly.

T-Pain, who led the nominees with five nods for his many collaborations — not his own hits — performed twice during the three-hour ceremony. He transformed the Shrine Auditorium into a circus with a multi-artist medley that showed his wide-ranging influence during his first appearance.

Wearing a spangled top hat, the rapper-singer shared the stage with fellow nominees Flo Rida, Rick Ross, Ludacris and Big Boi, along with a bevy of big-top freaks, including fire eaters and acrobats.

"This industry is my circus," said T-Pain. "Ride with

the ringleader."

Then T-Pain gave a sample of his musical assists over the past year. Double nominee Flo Rida performed his hit with T-Pain, "Low"; a bare-chested Ross flaunted his gut while singing his song with T-Pain, "Boss"; and all joined in on the collaborative "I'm So Hood."

He also joined Lil Wayne for the evening's final and much anticipated performance — a show-closing medley of Lil Wayne's hits including "A Milli" and his No. 1 smash "Lollipop." Lil Wayne showed off his vocal dexterity as he feverishly rapped and sang; though censors muted some of his curses, it let his sexually explicit "Lollipop" fly virtually untouched.

Another name heard frequently throughout the night was that of Barack Obama. Diddy, Alicia Keys and other nominees used their time onstage to urge viewers to vote, and clearly showed their support for the Democratic presumptive presidential nominee, who could become the nation's first Black president.

The night's most memorable moments came in performance form. Keys, who was named best female R&B artist, invited SWV, En Vogue and TLC to join her onstage for a medley of their

biggest hits. By the time they closed with TLC's "Waterfalls," the crowd was on its feet. Even West was singing along.

After tributes by John Legend, Jill Scott and Maxwell, Lifetime Achievement Award winner Al Green delivered a smash performance of his own, hitting all the high notes on his hits "Let's Stay Together" and "Love and Happiness," as Diddy, Ludacris and the rest of the awards-show audience sang along. "I'm sorry I didn't sing as well as I could. I got scared," a modest Green, 62, confessed backstage.

Queen Latifah introduced Humanitarian Award recipient Quincy Jones, calling him "an international artist" and "a leader."

"He showed us Black entertainment is more than just a hustle," she said. "It's more than just selling albums. It's about inspiration."

The night's most somber moment came when UGK was named best group. Bun B honored his fallen bandmate, Pimp C, who died in December at age 33 from complications of sleep apnea.

"It's hard to do this with my brother not being here," Bun B said, while joined onstage with Pimp C's wife. "We want to thank y'all for supporting UGK all these (See BET Awards, Page 11)

## Boule

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merchandise, to mingle and meet industry leaders in the fields of publishing, finance, health and entertainment.

Zeta Phi Beta Sorority was founded on January 16, 1920, in Washington, D.C., on the belief that the social nature of sorority life should not overshadow the real mission of progressive organizations—to address societal mores, ills, prejudices, poverty, and health concerns of the day. This organization has more 100,000 members who give millions of voluntary hours to educate the public, provide scholarships, support organized charities and promote legislation for social and civic change. Zeta Phi Beta has more than 700 chapters in the United States, Germany, Japan, Korea, Africa and the Caribbean.

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