



The Recording Academy[®]

3030 Olympic Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90404

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**THE RECORDING ACADEMY[®] TO HONOR
2017 SPECIAL MERIT AWARDS RECIPIENTS WITH
"GRAMMY SALUTE TO MUSIC LEGENDS[®]" TELEVISION SPECIAL
AS PART OF "GREAT PERFORMANCES" SERIES ON PBS**

***Andra Day, Kirk Franklin, Randy Newman, And Dwight Yoakam To Perform At
Annual Awards Ceremony And Tribute Concert; Tickets On Sale
Monday, June 5 At 11:00 A.M. EST***

SANTA MONICA, Calif. (June 2, 2017) — [The Recording Academy](http://www.grammy.com)[®] will honor its **2017 Special Merit Awards** recipients with an awards ceremony and live tribute concert on **Tuesday, July 11, 2017**, at **The Beacon Theatre** in New York City. This year's Lifetime Achievement Award honorees are **Shirley Caesar, Ahmad Jamal, Charley Pride, Jimmie Rodgers, Nina Simone, Sly Stone, and the Velvet Underground**. Led by GRAMMY[®]-winning industry icon **Paul Shaffer** as musical director, the tribute concert will feature rare performances by honorees and never-seen renditions by those they've inspired. Currently scheduled to appear are past GRAMMY[®] nominee **Andra Day**, who will be honoring Simone; 12-time GRAMMY winner **Kirk Franklin**, who will pay tribute to Caesar; six-time GRAMMY winner **Randy Newman**, who will honor Ostin; and two-time GRAMMY winner **Dwight Yoakam**, who will salute Rodgers. Additional performers will be announced shortly. Tickets for the event will be on sale via Ticketmaster beginning **Monday, June 5, 2017 at 11:00 a.m. EST**.

Additional Special Merit Awards honorees to be celebrated include **Thom Bell, Mo Ostin, and Ralph Peer**, who are this year's **Trustees Award** honorees, and **Alan Dower Blumlein**, who is the **Technical GRAMMY[®] Award** recipient. Also being honored is **Keith Hancock**, this year's recipient of the **Music Educator Award[™]**.

"We are thrilled to once again partner with THIRTEEN Productions and PBS to bring our 'GRAMMY Salute To Music Legends' event to life in an extraordinary fashion," said Neil Portnow, President/CEO of the Recording Academy. "We look forward to celebrating the exceptional contributions and accomplishments of our honorees at New York City's famed Beacon Theatre, and the event serves as the perfect kickoff to the exciting lead up to the 60th Annual GRAMMY Awards[®], which will also take place in The Big Apple for the first time in 15 years."

Now in its second year, the "**GRAMMY Salute to Music Legends[™]**" event will be produced in partnership with **THIRTEEN** as part of the "**Great Performances**" series on **PBS**, set to air later this year. Previously held during GRAMMY Week, this is the second year the Recording Academy has celebrated the Special Merit Awards with a stand-alone event and musical tribute. In addition to the tribute concert, special celebrity guests will present recipients their award statues and guests will enjoy never-before-seen video packages celebrating each of the honorees' contributions to the music industry and our cultural heritage.

(more)

A production of THIRTEEN Productions LLC for WNET, "GRAMMY Salute to Music Legends" will be written by David Wild and directed for television by David Horn, with Mitch Ovwang as producer, and David Horn and Neil Portnow as executive producers.

The Lifetime Achievement Award honors performers who have made contributions of outstanding artistic significance to the field of recording, while the Trustees Award recognizes such contributions in areas other than performance. Both awards are determined by a vote of the Recording Academy's National Board of Trustees. Technical GRAMMY Award recipients are determined by vote of the Academy's Producers & Engineers Wing[®] Advisory Council and Chapter Committees. The award is presented to individuals and companies who have made contributions of outstanding technical significance to the recording field.

About the Lifetime Achievement Award Honorees:

A deeply spiritual and affecting gospel singer, **Shirley Caesar's** emotive vocal talents were discovered in a church choir when she was 10 years old. She is arguably best known for her eight-year tenure with the Chicago-based gospel group the Caravans, whom she joined after appealing to Albertina Walker to sing a solo with the group. Electing to pursue a solo career in 1966 alongside her own choir, the Caesar Singers, she subsequently carved out a profile that earned her the title of First Lady of Gospel Music. Caesar's roll call of achievements includes 11 GRAMMY Awards, 14 Stellar awards, 15 Dove awards, a NAACP Image Award, a Soul Train Music Award, and two recent 59th GRAMMY nominations.

A prodigy who began playing piano at age 3, **Ahmad Jamal** started performing professionally at 14 and was signed to Okeh Records by age 21. Trained in both traditional jazz and European classical piano styles, Jamal has been labeled as a jazz innovator who helped pioneer "cool jazz," which had a significant influence on Miles Davis, among others. With a catalogue spanning seven decades, he is known for wonderful renditions of pieces such as "Poinciana" and "Dolphin Dance," original compositions such as "Ahmad's Blues," the fantastic compilation *Complete Live At The Spotlight Club 1958*, and his most well-known album, 1958's *At The Pershing: But Not For Me*.

Three-time GRAMMY winner **Charley Pride** taught himself to play guitar in his early teens, but he dreamed of becoming a professional baseball player. After playing in the Negro American League, he was signed by RCA Victor and in 1967 he became the first black singer to perform at the Grand Ole Opry. "Just Between You And Me" launched Pride to stardom, earning him his first GRAMMY nomination for 1966. In 1969 Pride scored his first No. 1 country hit with "All I Have To Offer You (Is Me)." The recognition led to a long and auspicious career for Pride, who is considered the first African-American superstar in country music.

Jimmie Rodgers* is widely regarded as the Father of Country Music. In 1961 he became one of the first three people inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame. In 1970 he was a part of the inaugural class of songwriters voted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame. In 1986, the first year of Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductions, he was inducted under the early influencers category. Rodgers has three recordings in the GRAMMY Hall Of Fame[®] — "Blue Yodel (T For Texas)" and "In The Jailhouse Now" (both from 1928) and "Blue Yodel #9 (Standing On The Corner)" (1930).

Dr. **Nina Simone***, known as the High Priestess of Soul, was a child prodigy whose dreams of becoming a classical musician were deferred by the color of her skin. Her fearlessness and deep commitment to the civil rights movement gave birth to such classics as "Mississippi Goddam," "Four Women," and "To Be Young, Gifted, And Black." Her approach to music was so versatile she labeled her style black classical. From R&B and rock to jazz, gospel, blues, folk, and Broadway, Simone brought her unique style to each genre. Her interpretations of "Feeling Good" and "Sinnerman" are classics that fans around the world still

enjoy. Her version of "I Loves You, Porgy," which became a Top 20 single in 1959, was inducted into the GRAMMY Hall Of Fame in 2000.

Sylvester "**Sly Stone**" Stewart is an iconic American musician, songwriter and producer most famous for his role as frontman of Sly & The Family Stone. Classic hits penned by Stone, including "Thank You (Falettinme Be Mice Elf Agin)," "Everyday People," "Dance To The Music," and "There's A Riot Going On," played a critical role in the development of soul, funk, rock, and psychedelia in the 1960s and 1970s. Sly & The Family Stone were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1993. The group has four recordings in the GRAMMY Hall Of Fame.

Despite a relatively brief lifespan and limited commercial success, the **Velvet Underground** are now recognized as one of the most influential rock bands of all time. Comprising **Lou Reed***, **John Cale**, **Sterling Morrison***, and **Maureen "Moe" Tucker**, the band was, perhaps, ahead of their time, both visually and sonically. Often dubbed the quintessential proto-punk band, they have been continually cited as the benchmark for countless modern-rock movements over the past 50 years. The Velvet Underground's seminal 1967 debut album, *The Velvet Underground & Nico*, was inducted into the GRAMMY Hall Of Fame in 2008.

About The Trustees Award Honorees:

Producer/arranger/songwriter **Thom Bell** was one of the cornerstones of the Philadelphia Soul legacy. He was a prime architect in the development of a '70s soul sound that moved beyond the grit of Southern soul and the effervescence of Motown by building complex and sophisticated arrangements around smooth strings, elegant horns and a driving rhythm that anticipated the rise of disco. With the Delfonics, the Stylistics, the Spinners and others, Bell established his trademark sound with sweet strings and muted brass led by the French horn. Hits such as "I'll Be Around" and "Betcha By Golly, Wow" cemented his stature as one of the all-time great songwriter/producers, and his partnership with Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff helped create the quintessential sound of Philadelphia.

Mo Ostin is one of the greatest record executives in music history. While he started out at Verve, it was helming Frank Sinatra's Reprise Records where Ostin came into his own. With Reprise Records and ultimately Warner Bros., Ostin discovered and worked with the seminal artists of the generation, such as Eric Clapton, Paul Simon, Prince, and Neil Young, while also developing a staff that was legendary in their own right. With an artist-friendly disposition, Ostin led with the idea that great art made great business — most of the bands signed under his watch made both critically acclaimed and profitable records. Ostin was honored with The Recording Academy's President's Merit Award at the 2006 GRAMMY Salute To Industry Icons®.

Ralph S. Peer* was a successful recording executive, archetypal A&R man and music publisher whose career spanned from 1919 to 1960. Through his work as a music executive, he continually broadened the palate of genres that music makers and audiences embraced. He was the executive producer of the Mamie Smith's "Crazy Blues," the first blues record that sparked the genre, James P. Johnson's "Carolina Shout," considered by historians to be among the first jazz piano solo recordings, and Fiddlin' John Carson's "The Little Old Log Cabin In The Lane," the first country record released. He was the producer of the 1927 Bristol Sessions, considered the "Big Bang" of country music, where he discovered Jimmie Rodgers and the original Carter family. He broadened his focus by publishing Latin music in the U.S. and around the globe. Fifty-nine recordings produced or published by Ralph S. Peer have been inducted into the GRAMMY Hall Of Fame.

About The Technical GRAMMY Award Recipient:

Alan Dower Blumlein* received 128 patents on his way to becoming one of the most significant audio inventors of his time. His most noteworthy patent was for the stereo in 1931, a development that was spurred by a visit to the cinema and being frustrated that the sound from a single speaker didn't match with the actors and action on screen. He also invented the Blumlein Pair microphones, a stereo disc-cutting head and a shuffling circuit, among other audio inventions.

***Denotes posthumous award**

The Recording Academy represents the voices of performers, songwriters, producers, engineers, and all music professionals. Dedicated to ensuring the recording arts remain a thriving part of our shared cultural heritage, The Academy honors music's history while investing in its future through the GRAMMY Museum[®], advocates on behalf of music creators, supports music people in times of need through MusiCares[®], and celebrates artistic excellence through the GRAMMY Awards — music's only peer-recognized accolade and highest achievement. As the world's leading society of music professionals, we work year-round to foster a more inspiring world for creators.

For more information about The Academy, please visit www.grammy.com. For breaking news and exclusive content, follow @RecordingAcad on Twitter, “like” Recording Academy on Facebook and join The Recording Academy's social communities on Instagram, Tumblr, and YouTube.

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