

Focus

Hip Hop Dominates Grammy Competition

Beyonce, Jay Z, OutKast, each collect six nominations

(AP) — Beyonce, Jay-Z, OutKast and Pharrell Williams have each collected a leading six Grammy nominations.

Missy Elliott, Eminem, Evanescence, 50 Cent, Chad Hugo, Ricky Skaggs, Justin Timberlake, Luther Vandross and the late Warren Zevon had five nominations each.

Nominations for the 46th annual Grammy Awards were announced at a Beverly Hilton press conference Thursday.

Pop stars Moby, Sarah McLachlan and Dido were among a group of musicians who announced bids, which will be awarded in 105 categories on Feb. 8 at the Staples Center arena in downtown Los Angeles.

Beyonce and her beau, rapper Jay-Z, were among contenders for record of the year for "Crazy in Love," along with the Blackeyed Peas' and Justin Timberlake's "Where is the Love?" Other nominees were Coldplay's "Clocks," Eminem's "Lose Yourself" and OutKast's "Hey Ya."

Album of the year contenders were Elliott's "Under Construction," "Fallen" by Evanescence, "Speakerboxxx/The Love Below" by OutKast, "Justified" by Timberlake and "Elephant" by The White Stripes.

The song of the year nominations, which go to songwriters, went to Linda Perry for Christina Aguilera's "Beautiful," Richard Marx and Vandross for "Dance With My Father" and Avril Lavigne and the songwriting group The Matrix for "I'm With You."

Williams received two nominations in the category for best rap/sung collaboration: He performed with Snoop Dogg and Uncle Charlie Wilson



Beyonce Knowles and rapper Jay-Z, performing at the BET awards last summer, earned a leading six Grammy nominations last week. (AP photo)

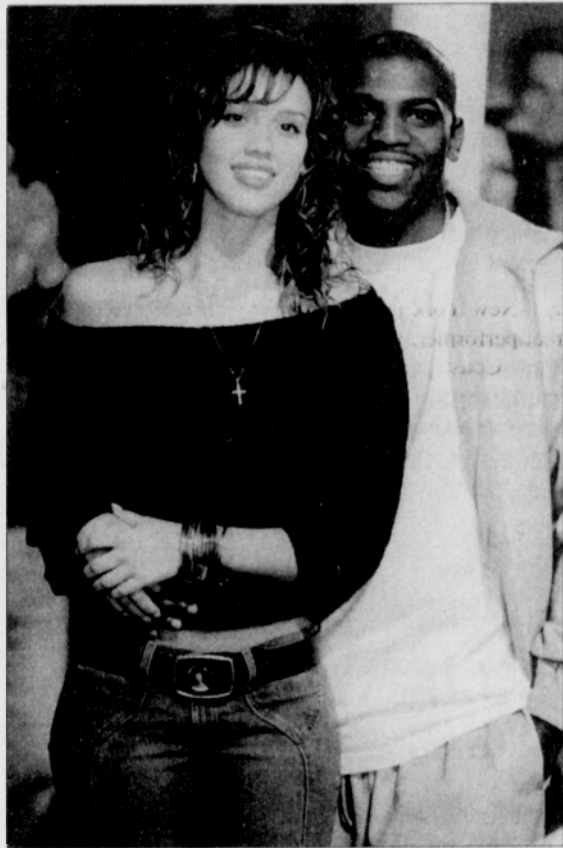
on "Beautiful," from Snoop Dogg's album "Paid Tha Cost to be Da Bo\$\$," and is also featured with Jay-Z on The Neptunes' single "Frontin'."

Williams is also competing against himself for best rap song for his songwriting collaboration on "Beautiful" and the Jay-Z song "Excuse Me Miss."

Best rap album contenders are Elliott's "Under Construction," 50 Cent's "Get Rich or Die Tryin'," Jay-Z's "The Black Album - The Gift & The Curse," OutKast's "Speakerboxxx/The Love Below" and "Phrenology" by the Roots.

Jessica Alba Stars in 'Honey'

Jessica Alba and Mekhi Phifer star in "Honey," the story about a sexy, tough music video choreographer who shakes up her life after her mentor gives her an ultimatum: sleep with him or be blacklisted within their industry. Also stars Joy Bryant, Lil' Romeo and cameos by Missy Elliot and Ginuwine. The United Pictures release opened Friday in local theaters. Rated PG-13.



'Jazz Masters' Roster Grows

Names Added to 'Jazz Masters' Roster

(AP) — Count Basie, Miles Davis, Ella Fitzgerald, Dizzy Gillespie, Sarah Vaughan. These are some of the names that have been previously honored as America's "Jazz Masters" by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Now add to the list jazz advocate and music critic Nat Hentoff, guitarist Jim Hall, rhythm instrumentalist Chico Hamilton, pianist Herbie Hancock, arranger-composer Luther Henderson and vocalist Nancy Wilson.

The winners will be honored at a ceremony and concert to be held in New York on Jan. 23 and televised nationally.

In addition, the arts group is working with the Verve Music Group on a commemorative double CD set of recordings by 28 "Jazz Masters."

To date, 73 jazz artists have been named "Jazz Masters."

Tenor Works to Reduce Global Tensions

(AP) — Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli is visiting China in a call for more cultural exchanges as a way of boosting understanding among people.

Events such as his Shanghai visit are "good for music, good for culture and good for people," said Bocelli, on the eve of his performance at Shanghai's landmark Grand Theater.

"Especially at this time, when the world is so tense and things are

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— Andrea Bocelli

so unstable, increasing these sorts of exchanges has special significance for better mutual understanding among people," Bocelli said at a news conference.

Bocelli, blinded by illness at age 12, donned a black silk Chinese tunic for the news conference.

The 45-year-old singer will perform five concerts in China, accompanied by the renowned Shanghai Symphony Orchestra and Chinese soprano Huang Ying.



Andrea Bocelli

Ray Charles Recovers From Surgery

Hip replacement is temporary setback

(AP) — Ray Charles is recovering in his Beverly Hills home after undergoing a hip replacement.

"I feel terrific and am so thankful to the good Lord that all is going well for me," Charles said in a statement last week. "I can't wait to get back on the road, which is my second home."

Acute discomfort in his left hip forced the 73-year-old singer in August to cancel his remaining 2003 tour dates. It was the first time Charles had canceled a tour in 53 years.



Ray Charles

Charles is undergoing physical therapy and expects to start a national tour again in March, spokesman Jerry Digney said. While hospitalized in Novem-

ber, Charles donated \$1 million to Dillard University in New Orleans for the creation of a program about black culture. He's also been working on a duets album at his private studio, Digney said.

Charles, who was 7 years old when he lost his eyesight, has won 13 Grammy Awards, including a lifetime achievement award. He also was one of the original inductees to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1986.

He's recorded classic songs such as "I Got a Woman," "What'd I Say" and "Georgia on My Mind."

A movie based on his life story, "Unchain My Heart: The Ray Charles Story," starring Jamie Foxx, recently finished filming.

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