

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

Rapper First to Win Pulitzer Kendrick Lamar makes history with latest work

(AP) - Kendrick Lamar has won the Pulitzer Prize for music, making history as the first non-classical or jazz artist to win the prestigious prize.

The 30-year-old won the prize for "DAMN," his raw and powerful Grammy-winning album. The Pulitzer board said Monday the album is a "virtuosic song collection" and said it captures "the modern African American life."

Lamar has been lauded for his deep lyrical content, politically charged live performances, and his profound mix of hip-hop, spoken word, jazz, soul, funk, poetry and African sounds. Since emerging on the music scene with the 2011 album "Section.80," he has achieved the perfect mix of commercial appeal and critical respect.

The Pulitzer board has awarded special honors to Bob Dylan, Duke Ellington, George Gershwin, Thelonious Monk, John Coltrane and Hank Williams, but a popular figure like Lamar has never won the prize for music. In 1997, Wynton Marsalis became the first jazz act to win the Pulitzer Prize for music.

That makes Lamar's win that much more important: His platinum-selling major-label albums - "good kid, m.A.A.d city," "To Pimp a Butterfly" and "DAMN." - became works of art, with Lamar



Kendrick Lamar has won the Pulitzer Prize for music for his album "DAMN." which also won the Grammy for Best Rap Album this year.

writing songs about blackness, street life, police brutality, perseverance, survival and self-worth.

His piercing and sharp raps helped him become the voice of the generation, and easily ascend as the leader in hip-hop and cross over to audiences outside of rap, from rock to pop to jazz. He's also been a dominator on the charts, having achieved two dozen Top 40 hits, including a No. 1 success with "Humble," and he has even collaborated with the likes of U2, Taylor Swift, Imagine Dragons, Rihanna and Beyonce.

His music, with songs like "Alright" and "The Blacker the Berry," have become anthems in the wake of high-profile police shoot-

ings of minorities as the conversation about race relations dominates news headlines. He brought a dose of seriousness to the 2015 BET Awards, rapping on top of a police car with a large American flag waving behind him. At the 2016 Grammys, during his visual-stunning, show-stopping performance, he appeared beaten, in handcuffs, with chains around his hands and bruises on his eyes as he delivered powerful lyrics to the audience.

The rapper, born in Compton, Calif., was hand-picked by "Black Panther" director Ryan Coogler to curate an album to accompany the ubiquitously successful film, giving Lamar yet again another No. 1 effort and highly praised project.



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