

Remy Ma Beats Nicki Minaj at BET Awards; '90s R&B Shines

New Edition receives lifetime achievement award and a lengthy tribute; Beyonce wins five awards

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Remy Ma has ended rival Nicki Minaj's seven-year winning streak at the 2017 BET Awards, a show highlighted by '90s R&B and groups popular in that decade, as well as five wins for Beyonce.

Ma, who was released from prison in 2014, won best female hip hop artist Sunday in Los Angeles, an award Minaj has won since 2010. Ma last won the prize in 2005, and was sentenced to prison three years later after she shot a former friend after accusing her of theft.

"I wanna thank God first and foremost," said Ma, who named two correctional facilities in her speech and thanked her mentor Fat Joe and husband-rapper Papoose. "You can make mistakes and come back."

In March, Ma released the hostile diss track "Shether," which earned praised from critics and rap fans. Minaj never officially responded to the song.

At the live show at the Microsoft Theater, '90s R&B favorites New Edition and Xscape were the most welcomed performers of the night.

New Edition, whose three-part biopic was a white-hot ratings success for BET earlier this year, earned the lifetime achievement award and received a lengthy tribute. It started with the child actors from

the movie singing "Candy Girl," later followed by the older actors for some of the band's hits apart from the group, including Bell Biv DeVoe's "Poison" and Ralph Tresvant's "Sensitivity."

The real group then hit to stage to sing "Can You Stand the Rain" and "Mr. Telephone Man." The actors later joined New Edition for "If It Isn't Love."

Girl group Xscape, set to launch a new reality show on Bravo, reunited at the BET Awards and sang the popular hits "Just Kickin' It," "Understanding" and "Who Can I Run To?" The crowd was in awe, singing along and filming the performance

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with their phones.

Bruno Mars, whose new album was heavily inspired by '90s R&B, also shined Sunday. He and Beyonce tied for video of the year — the top prize but not televised — with their hits "24K Magic" and "Sorry." Mars also won best male R&B/pop artist and kicked off the show with a fun and funky performance of the song, "Perm."

"To the fans, you know I love you. My first BET Award," he screamed.

Kendrick Lamar surprised the audience when he performed with Future and won best male hip hop artist. He

gave a shout-out to fellow nominee Chance the Rapper, who earned the humanitarian award at the age of 24. Chance also won best new artist and best collaboration.

In a taped message, Michelle Obama honored Chance, who has raised \$2 million dollars for Chicago public schools. The former First Lady said she and Barack Obama knew Chance "since he was a baby rapper."

"Chance is showing our young people that they matter," she said. "Because of you, countless young people will grow up believing in themselves."

Beyonce, who reportedly had her twins earli-

er this month though she hasn't commented on the topic, was the top nominee with seven. When it was announced that she won the viewer's choice award, Chloe x Halle — the young duo signed to Beyonce — recited a speech given to them from the pop star. Queen Bey was the big winner with five, also taking home album of the year for "Lemonade," best female R&B/pop artist and video director of the year for "Sorry."

Solange, Beyonce's younger sister, also had



Kandi Burruss, from left, Tamika Scott, Tameka Cottle, and LaTocha Scott of Xscape perform at the BET Awards at the Microsoft Theater on Sunday, June 25, 2017, in Los Angeles.

a big night: She won the Centric award and called Sunday "the best birthday ever" (she turned 31 on Saturday).

"My arm pits are sweating so much right now," said Solange, who thanked BET for showing her "queens" like Aaliyah, Missy Elliott, Erykah Badu and others during her teenage years.

Solange held a moment of silence later on, and the show also honored some of the minorities who died at the hands of police officers, including Trayvon Martin, Philando Castile, Eric Garner and others.

Other winners included gospel rapper Lecrae and Migos, who took home best group. The hip-hop trio also

won over the audience with its performances of the hits "Bad and Boujee," "T-Shirt" and "Congratulations," with Post Malone. Chance the Rapper, and his mom, danced during the long set; as did Queen Latifah, Cardi B., "Stranger Things" actor Caleb McLaughlin and "black-ish" actress Yara Shahidi, who won the YoungStars award.

Though most of the performances were upbeat, others charmed with slower songs: Tamar Braxton and Maxwell gave vocally impressive performances, and Mary J. Blige sang songs from "Strength of a Woman," her recent album that includes emotional tunes about her divorce.

"Mary J. got that break up body. Whoa,"

screamed Jamie Foxx, who presented an award after Blige's performance.

Leslie Jones of "Saturday Night Live" hosted the four-hour show. El DeBarge and Kamasi Washington performed "Careless Whisper" in honor of George Michael, who died last year on Christmas Day, while Janelle Monae collaborator Roman GianArthur excitedly sang "Johnny B. Goode" in tribute to Chuck Berry, who died in March.

New York rapper Prodigy, who died last week, was remembered in words by his Mobb Deep partner Havoc and Lil Kim, who appeared on the remix of the memorable Mobb Deep hit, "Quiet Storm."

Movies cont'd from pg 6



'Mali Blues'

Pop Aye (Unrated) Unlikely buddies drama, set in Thailand, about a jaded, big city architect (Thaneth Warakulnukroh) who embarks on a cross-country trek with his long-lost pet elephant (Bong) back to the farm where they were raised. Cast includes Penpak Sirikul, Narong Pongpab and Chaiwat Khumdee. (In Thai with subtitles)

The Reagan Show (Unrated) Political expose'

revealing President Ronald Reagan as just a made-for-TV leader of the Free World.

The Skyjacker's Tale (Unrated) Justice delayed documentary about FBI Most Wanted List fugitive Ishmael Muslim Ali, who hijacked a plane to Cuba in 1984 after being convicted of masterminding a massacre of 8 at a Rockefeller country club in the Virgin Islands.



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