

# Controversy Again Casts Cloud Over Grammy Awards Program

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The 28th Annual Grammy Awards approach with a whiff of controversy over eligibility and bloc voting, and word that the televised show will include a long overdue tribute to jazz.

The National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences will hand out its prizes in 71 categories tonight. The three-hour show will be broadcast on CBS beginning at 8 p.m.

Controversy arose last month when the academy ruled singer Whitney Houston ineligible for the best new artist category because she had previously recorded duets with Jermaine Jackson and Teddy Pendergrass.



Houston

Miss Houston, who won two American Music Awards this year, earned three Grammy nominations: best album for her debut LP, "Whitney Houston"; best pop vocal performance for "Saving All My Love for You"; and best rhythm and blues song for "You Give Good Love."

Clive Davis, president of Arista Records, on which Miss Houston records, said that past recipients of the best new artist award had also made records prior to being

nominated.

Crosby Stills & Nash, who won the award in 1969, had been vocalists and songwriters in the Byrds, Buffalo Springfield and the Hollies, Davis said. Last year's winner, Cyndi Lauper, recorded as lead vocalist with a group called Blue Angel before her "She's So Unusual" LP.

Miss Houston could not be reached for comment. Seymour Flics, co-manager of Tara Productions which handles Miss Houston, said his office agreed with Davis, but would not comment further.

Billboard Magazine has received letters supporting the song stylist.

"One writer noted that Freddie Jackson (nominated this year for best new artist) was part of a group called Mystic Merlin that had an album on Capitol records," said Billboard's Paul Grein.

"I think . . . the academy is going to have to clarify its rules for next year because of this controversy," he said.

In another matter, CBS Records contends that the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, which records on the independent Telarc label, earned 12 classical nominations as a result of bloc voting following a membership drive by academy members in Atlanta.

But such allegations could not be verified, said Michael Greene, president of the academy, because all branches reported membership increases this year

and voting was done in secret.

However, CBS contended that if an unusually large number of Atlanta Symphony members joined the academy, other symphonies around the nation should have been alerted so they could conduct their own membership drives.

Simmering throughout the year was the issue of how jazz is treated on Grammy programs. Though prizes are awarded, jazz is virtually ignored during the proceedings.

Indeed, media attention this year has been focused on the number of nominations for "We Are the World," which received six, and Mark Knopfler, leader of the British group Dire Straits, who received eight.

Coverage of those pop music nominations overshadowed the dozen nominations scooped up by the jazz vocal group Manhattan Transfer and individual artists such as Dizzy Gillespie who appeared on their "Vocalese" LP.

Jazz musician and critic Leonard Feather criticized last year's show for giving jazz a back seat to pop.

"If the media coverage is to be believed," he said in a Los Angeles Times essay, "musicianship is now a secondary factor; the entire Grammy game has become a sociological rather than a musical phenomenon, a celebration of pop and rock in which serious music has no part."

Feather noted that jazz was not represented in any of last year's musical segments, which have in recent seasons leaned more toward rock stars, who in turn attract larger viewer ratings. None of the jazz awards were presented on camera in 1985.

The Grammy show this year will pay attention to jazz in a special segment which Greene said had been in the planning for about two years, as are most sequences on the show that require several major stars to be scheduled.

Feather said only one jazz category award — for best instrumental performance — will be in the televised sequence of the show.

The jazz segment will feature Buddy Rich and Tony Williams on drums; Ron Carter and Stanley Clarke on bass; Herbie Hancock on keyboards; Kenny Burrell, B.B. King and Stanley Jordan on guitar; Dizzy Gillespie and John Vaddis on trumpet; Gerry Mulligan and David Sanborn on saxophone; and Bobby Hutcherson and Gary Burton on vibraphone. Vocalists include Joe Williams, who last year won his first Grammy at age 66, Sarah Vaughan, Bobby McFerrin, Diane Schuur, and Manhattan Transfer.



Knopfler