



41st Annual

STELLAR AWARDS

RULES & REGULATIONS



STELLAR AWARDS 2026

IMPORTANT DATES

ELIGIBILITY PERIOD OF:

MARCH 1, 2025 THROUGH FEBRUARY 28, 2026

March 2, 2026 – March 13, 2026	41st Annual Online Submission Period <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Stellar Awards➤ Gospel Radio Awards➤ Gospel Announcer of the Year
April 27, 2026 – May 11, 2026	First Ballot Voting (SAGMA MEMBERS ONLY) <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Stellar Awards
April 27, 2026 – May 11, 2026	First Ballot Voting (PUBLIC VOTING) <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Rap/Hip Hop Categories
May 18, 2026 – June 1, 2026	Second Ballot Voting (SAGMA MEMBERS ONLY) <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Stellar Awards
May 18, 2026 – June 1, 2026	Second Ballot Voting (PUBLIC VOTING) <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Gospel Radio Awards➤ Rap/Hip Hop Categories➤ HBCU Choir of the Year Category➤ Fan Favorite Categories



PLEASE REVIEW ALL RULES, REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES BEFORE ENTERING AND BE SURE TO REVIEW YOUR ENTRIES BEFORE SUBMITTING.

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❑ **Eligibility Period: MARCH 1, 2025 THROUGH FEBRUARY 28, 2026**

- Recordings must be commercially released, nationally distributed within the United States and available from any date within the eligibility period. *Entries previously released between August 1, 2024 – February 28, 2025 may be eligible for submission now if they did not appear on last year's **2nd ballot** and they meet the eligibility requirements.*

❑ **Submission Period: March 2, 2026 – March 13, 2026**

- Eligible artists must be submitted online by completing the online entry form at www.stellarawards.com. These online entries must contain accurate information in each field.
- Each online entrant **MUST** upload a Dropbox link to the full album or single submitted along with completing the online Entry Form and each artist must be a current SAGMA member (in good standing). You may join SAGMA at the time of submission by completing the online SAGMA form. Upon confirmation of your membership, you must electronically submit a **non-refundable** fee of \$125 for each artist submitted.
- If unable to upload the Dropbox link to your music electronically please email links of the music to info@ccptv.com by March 13, 2026.

❑ **Eligibility Rules and Regulations:**

- Eligible entries **MUST** meet the category specific charting and regulation requirements (see attached).
- Once a product meets these basic category specific requirements, they are reviewed by the Stellar Review Committee, who determines which projects meet all the rules required to be included on the first ballot.

❑ **Stellar Review Committee:**

- The Committee consists of impartial, knowledgeable, industry individuals who objectively look at the eligibility packages and charts. All or a portion of the Committee is changed each year.
- The Stellar Awards Review Committee checks all entries to make sure they meet the specified requirements for inclusion. Charting duration/performance, appropriate category/genre placement and technical quality will be reviewed for inclusion on the ballot. All Stellar Awards Review Committee selections are final.
- The Stellar Awards Review Committee reserves the right to withdraw any category in any one year if there are not sufficient entries in that category. Periodically, an artist is erroneously omitted from a category in which they should be placed. In these circumstances, The Review Committee reserves the right to correct the omission.

❑ **Number of Entries:**

- Please use the highest level of discretion when determining the number of entries to submit. Entries are limited to one (1) genre field (excluding General Field and Craft Categories) – see next page for further description of these fields. More than one recording for the same artist in the same category is **PROHIBITED**.



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☐ General Field Categories:

- The following are classified as general field categories:
 - Artist of the Year
 - Song of the Year
 - Male Artist of the Year
 - Albertina Walker Female Artist of the Year
 - Chorus Group/Duo of the Year
 - New Artist of the Year
 - Album of the Year
 - Choir of the Year
 - Producer of the Year
 - Youth Project of the Year

☐ Genre Fields:

- The following are classified as separate genre fields and projects may only qualify for one genre:
 - Traditional
 - Contemporary
 - Praise and Worship
 - Quartet
 - Rap/Hip Hop

☐ Craft Category:

- Music Video of the Year is a craft category selected by an independent committee outside of the SAGMA membership before placement on the second ballot.
- HBCU Choir of the Year is a craft category evaluated by a professional, independent committee outside of the SAGMA membership before placement on the second ballot.

☐ Release Date: Street Date/In-Store Date

- Recordings (albums/singles) must be available to the public as stand-alone purchases or streams, audio-only (exceptions: music video) by February 28, 2026. Product must be available for sale on a nationwide basis (general distributions, see below) in the United States. Imports ARE NOT eligible.

☐ General Distribution: Is the broad release of a recording

- Available nationwide via brick and mortar, third party online retailers and/or streaming services. "Streaming services" is defined as paid subscription, full catalogue, on-demand streaming/limited download, nationally recognized services that have existed as such within the United States for at least one full year as of the submission deadline.

☐ Digital Recordings: Downloads/Streams

- A digital album consists of multiple tracks that meet the Music Connect criteria for an album. In order to be eligible for charting, the digital album must be widely available through multiple retail sales outlets or digital services.
- A digital track/single consists of one song purchased individually or as part of a retailer-defined bundle. A digital track may come from an album, a single or a stand-alone recording; copy of label credits (producer, songwriter, etc.) must be included.
- NOT ELIGIBLE: Digital recordings that are considered "advance" sales but are not otherwise available by the eligibility deadline.



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❑ Album Definition:

- An album is defined as having no less than five (5) different tracks and having a total playing time of no less than 15 minutes.
- The same album may be entered in various categories – for example: Album Of The Year and Producer of the Year. NOTE: an album is eligible in only ONE category in the specialized genre field. If an album has been entered in more than ONE category in a specialized genre field (i.e. Contemporary or Traditional), the review committee will place it in the ONE appropriate category.
- Albums entered in categories of a specialized genre field must consist of 51% or more playing time in the specified genre.
- Sampler albums or albums which are a compilation of tracks from other currently released albums are NOT ELIGIBLE.
- Updated, revised or expanded versions of previously submitted albums WILL NOT be eligible
- Albums must contain greater than 75% playing time of newly recorded, previously unreleased recordings (within five years of release date)

❑ Single Definition:

- A single may be a stand-alone song distributed commercially or through streaming services or a track that is part of a full album, which will have the same release date as the album.
- A single may only be entered in the Song of The Year, Male Artist of the Year, Albertina Walker Female Artist of the Year, New Artist of the Year, Chorus Group/Duo of the Year, Choir of the Year, Urban/Inspirational Single/Performance of the Year, Traditional & Contemporary - Male, Female, Chorus Group/Duo or Choir of the Year, Praise and Worship Song of the Year, Rap Hip Hop Song of the Year and/or HBCU Choir of the Year categories.
- Singles from an album released during last year's eligibility period are eligible provided the Single was not entered the previous year and provided the album did not win a Stellar Award.
- Stand-Alone Singles that were on the second ballot last year are NOT ELIGIBLE during the current eligibility period, even if they are included on a newly released full album.

❑ Re-Released – Remastered – Deluxe - Remixed Recordings:

- Recordings that have been re-released, remastered, remixed or classified as deluxe editions must contain greater than 75% playing time of newly recorded (within five years of the release date), previously unreleased material in order to qualify in the current eligibility period.

❑ Entries vs. Nominations: Entries are NOT nominations.

- The online eligibility entry process is not a voting process. Entries are submissions to be considered for placement on the first ballot (or second ballot) by the Stellar Review or Craft Committees.
- Entries are not votes. Only one entry of the same recording in the same category is necessary (More than one entry of the same recording in the same category is considered a duplicate and will be voided.)



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☐ Timelines: Please pay attention to the submission deadlines

- If you have not fully submitted your entries through the Stellar website by the cut-off dates, your entries WILL NOT be processed. If copies of the product are not received by the deadline your entries WILL NOT be finalized. Calls and/or emails to the Central City Productions office requesting extensions WILL NOT be honored.

☐ Product: Due by March 13, 2026

- Please complete the online Eligibility Entry Form and upload a link to the electronic copy of your product and/or email copies of your product. Without this, your entries cannot be screened or verified, which will result in disqualifications. If your product is not received by the deadline requirement, your entries were NOT finalized. (See Submission Period section for email address).

☐ Charting Requirements:

- The following charts are reviewed and required in order for a project to be considered for ballot placement by the Review Committee:
 - Billboard
 - Gospel Airplay
 - Top Gospel Albums
 - Hot Gospel Songs
 - Gospel Digital Song Sales
 - Gospel Streaming Songs
 - Music Connect – Current Gospel Album or Gospel Airplay (which includes streaming)
 - Mediabase - Published Gospel Chart
 - Review each individual category description (on the following pages) for exact charting requirements

COMMON REASONS FOR DISQUALIFICATION

- ☐ The same Album/Single was on last year's second ballot.
- ☐ The product is not a new recording.
- ☐ Required commercially released product not received by The Stellar Awards by deadline.
- ☐ Product was released outside of the current eligibility year. *Exception: Entries previously released between August 1, 2024 – February 28, 2025 may be eligible for submission now if they did not appear on last year's **2nd** ballot and they meet the eligibility requirements.*
- ☐ Product was not released in the United States (imports are not eligible).
- ☐ Not selected by Stellar Review Committee based upon Charting duration/performance, appropriate category/genre placement and technical quality.
- ☐ The product (album/single) did not meet the charting requirements.
- ☐ The product has been re-released, remastered, remixed or classified as a deluxe edition and does not contain over 75% playing time of newly recorded material



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☐ The Awards Process:

- The Stellar Awards process includes these four rounds:
 - Submission – artists and record labels submit projects for consideration during the submission period each year
 - Screening – an independent review committee reviews the submissions for proper category placement (i.e. Traditional/Contemporary) on the first ballot
 - First Ballot – Members of SAGMA (in good standing) vote on the first ballot to determine the top entries that will move on to the second and final ballot
 - Second Ballot – Members of SAGMA (in good standing) vote on this ballot to determine the nominees and winners of the annual Stellar Awards

☐ Fan Favorite Categories:

- Public voting will be open during the second ballot period for the fan favorite categories

☐ Voting and Solicitation Guidelines:

- It is our goal to ensure the Stellar Awards process is led in a fair and ethical manner and that voting members make their choices based solely on the artistic and technical merits of the eligible recordings. In an effort to maintain a high degree of integrity and transparency, it is crucial that the following guidelines be understood and followed by all voting members.
- Voting Code of Conduct:
 - Voters shall not allow their choices to be suggested, directed or influenced by anything other than their own analysis of merit, including, but not limited to: friendships, company loyalties, regional preferences, or sales/volume popularity.
 - Voters shall not accept money or anything of value in exchange for votes, access to other members, submission of materials for Stellar Awards consideration, or any other privilege of SAGMA membership.
 - Voters shall not enter into any agreements or understandings on how to vote. This includes without limitation:
 - Voting Blocs or groups of voters who agree to vote together. Such groups may include but are not limited to: voters affiliated with a particular record label or management company, or voters linked through social media.
 - Vote Trading or offering to vote in any manner in exchange for another's vote
 - Social media campaigns where goods or services are offered in exchange for votes



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CATEGORY REQUIREMENTS

CATEGORY #1: ARTIST OF THE YEAR

- Must chart in the Top 50 on at least (3) charts as listed below: At Least (1) of these (2 charts): Billboard's Gospel Airplay or Mediabase Published Panel; At Least (1) of these (2 charts): Billboard's Gospel Album or Music Connect Current Gospel Album; and At least (1) of these (4 charts): Billboard's Hot Gospel Songs, Billboard's Gospel Digital Song Sales, Billboard's Gospel Streaming Songs, Music Connect Gospel Airplay for four (4) weeks (weeks need not be consecutive).
- The project submitted for this category MUST be an Album

CATEGORY #2: SONG OF THE YEAR

- Must chart in the Top 50 on at least (2) charts as listed below: At Least (1) of these (2 charts): Billboard's Gospel Airplay or Mediabase Published Panel; and At least (1) of these (4 charts): Billboard's Hot Gospel Songs, Billboard's Gospel Digital Song Sales, Billboard's Gospel Streaming Songs, Music Connect Gospel Airplay for four (4) weeks (weeks need not be consecutive).
- This Award is presented to the Songwriter(s).

CATEGORY #3: MALE Artist OF THE YEAR

- Must chart in the Top 100 on at least (2) charts as listed below: Billboard's Gospel Airplay, Mediabase Published Panel, Billboard's Gospel Album, Billboard's Hot Gospel Songs, Billboard's Gospel Digital Song Sales, Billboard's Gospel Streaming Songs, Music Connect Gospel Airplay or Music Connect Current Gospel Album for three (3) weeks (weeks need not be consecutive).
- The project submitted for this category can be a Single or Album
- One (1) submission/project per artist
- This artist is a soloist or lead singer of a group, choir or quartet.

CATEGORY #4: ALBERTINA WALKER FEMALE Artist OF THE YEAR

- Must chart in the Top 100 on at least (2) charts as listed below: Billboard's Gospel Airplay, Mediabase Published Panel, Billboard's Gospel Album, Billboard's Hot Gospel Songs, Billboard's Gospel Digital Song Sales, Billboard's Gospel Streaming Songs, Music Connect Gospel Airplay or Music Connect Current Gospel Album for three (3) weeks (weeks need not be consecutive).
- The project submitted for this category can be a Single or Album
- One (1) submission/project per artist
- This Artist is a soloist or lead singer of a group, choir or quartet.

CATEGORY #5: CHORUS GROUP/DUO OF THE YEAR

- Must chart in the Top 100 on at least (2) charts as listed below: Billboard's Gospel Airplay, Mediabase Published Panel, Billboard's Gospel Album, Billboard's Hot Gospel Songs, Billboard's Gospel Digital Song Sales, Billboard's Gospel Streaming Songs, Music Connect Gospel Airplay or Music Connect Current Gospel Album for two (2) weeks (weeks need not be consecutive).
- The project submitted for this category can be a Single or Album
- The group or duo can consist of only two (2) to ten (10) individuals.
- This Award is presented to the Group/Duo (as a whole).

CATEGORY #6:

NEW ARTIST OF THE YEAR

- Must chart in the Top 200 on at least 1 of the charts listed below: Billboard's Gospel Airplay, Mediabase Published Panel, Billboard's Gospel Album, Billboard's Hot Gospel Songs, Billboard's Gospel Digital Song Sales, Billboard's Gospel Streaming Songs, Music Connect Gospel Airplay or Music Connect Current Gospel Album for two (2) weeks (weeks need not be consecutive).
- The project submitted for this category can be a Single or Album
- Never won a Stellar Award as a soloist or as part of a duo/group, quartet or choir of which they were a featured performer.
- Never been nominated for a Stellar Award prior to the current eligibility year.
- Previous commercially released projects by the artist must have been distributed within 2 years of the current eligibility period without breaking through the industry through chart placement, radio airplay or major distribution.

CATEGORY #7:

ALBUM OF THE YEAR

- Must chart in the Top 50 on at least 1 of the charts listed below: Billboard's Gospel Album or Music Connect Current Gospel Album for four (4) weeks (weeks need not be consecutive).
- This Award is presented to the Artist.

CATEGORY #8:

CHOIR OF THE YEAR

- Must chart in the Top 100 on at least 1 chart of the charts listed below: Billboard's Gospel Airplay, Mediabase Published Panel, Billboard's Gospel Album, Billboard's Hot Gospel Songs, Billboard's Gospel Digital Song Sales, Billboard's Gospel Streaming Songs, Music Connect Gospel Airplay or Music Connect Current Gospel Album for two (2) weeks (weeks need not be consecutive).
- The project submitted for this category can be a Single or Album
- A choir must consist of 11 or more individuals.
- This award is given to the choir (as a whole).

CATEGORY #9:

PRODUCER OF THE YEAR

- Must chart in the Top 50 on at least 2 of the charts listed below: Billboard's Gospel Airplay, Mediabase Published Panel, Billboard's Gospel Album, Billboard's Hot Gospel Songs, Billboard's Gospel Digital Song Sales, Billboard's Gospel Streaming Songs, Music Connect Gospel Airplay or Music Connect Current Gospel Album for four (4) weeks (weeks need not be consecutive).
- The project submitted for this category MUST be an Album
- This award is given to the Album Producer(s) (as a whole).

CATEGORY #10:

CONTEMPORARY CHORUS GROUP/DUO OF THE YEAR

- Must chart in the Top 200 on any 1 of the charts listed below: Billboard's Gospel Airplay, Mediabase Published Panel, Billboard's Gospel Album, Billboard's Hot Gospel Songs, Billboard's Gospel Digital Song Sales, Billboard's Gospel Streaming Songs, Music Connect Gospel Airplay or Music Connect Current Gospel Album for one (1) week.
- The project submitted for this category can be a Single or Album
- The group or duo can consist of only two (2) to ten (10) individuals.
- 51% of the tracks on the submitted project must fall within the Contemporary specialized genre.
- This Award is presented to the Group/Duo (as a whole).

CATEGORY #11:

TRADITIONAL CHORUS GROUP/DUO OF THE YEAR

- Must chart in the Top 200 on any 1 of the charts listed below: Billboard's Gospel Airplay, Mediabase Published Panel, Billboard's Gospel Album, Billboard's Hot Gospel Songs, Billboard's Gospel Digital Song Sales, Billboard's Gospel Streaming Songs, Music Connect Gospel Airplay or Music Connect Current Gospel Album for one (1) week.
- The project submitted for this category can be a Single or Album
- The group or duo can consist of only two (2) to ten (10) individuals.
- 51% of the tracks on the submitted project must fall within the Traditional specialized genre
- This Award is presented to the Group/Duo (as a whole).

CATEGORY #12:

CONTEMPORARY MALE Artist OF THE YEAR

- Must chart in the Top 200 on any 1 of the charts listed below: Billboard's Gospel Airplay, Mediabase Published Panel, Billboard's Gospel Album, Billboard's Hot Gospel Songs, Billboard's Gospel Digital Song Sales, Billboard's Gospel Streaming Songs, Music Connect Gospel Airplay or Music Connect Current Gospel Album for two (2) weeks (weeks need not be consecutive).
- The project submitted for this category can be a Single or Album
- One (1) submission/project per artist
- This artist is a soloist or lead singer of a group, choir or quartet.
- 51% of the tracks sung on the submitted project must fall within the Contemporary specialized genre.

CATEGORY #13:

TRADITIONAL MALE Artist OF THE YEAR

- Must chart in the Top 200 on any 1 of the charts listed below: Billboard's Gospel Airplay, Mediabase Published Panel, Billboard's Gospel Album, Billboard's Hot Gospel Songs, Billboard's Gospel Digital Song Sales, Billboard's Gospel Streaming Songs, Music Connect Gospel Airplay or Music Connect Current Gospel Album for two (2) weeks (weeks need not be consecutive).
- The project submitted for this category can be a Single or Album
- One (1) submission/project per artist
- This artist is a soloist or lead singer of a group, choir or quartet.
- 51% of the tracks sung on the submitted project must fall within the Traditional specialized genre.

CATEGORY #14:

CONTEMPORARY FEMALE Artist OF THE YEAR

- Must chart in the Top 200 on any 1 of the charts listed below: Billboard's Gospel Airplay, Mediabase Published Panel, Billboard's Gospel Album, Billboard's Hot Gospel Songs, Billboard's Gospel Digital Song Sales, Billboard's Gospel Streaming Songs, Music Connect Gospel Airplay or Music Connect Current Gospel Album for two (2) weeks (weeks need not be consecutive).
- The project submitted for this category can be a Single or Album
- One (1) submission/project per artist
- This Artist is a soloist or lead singer of a group, choir or quartet.
- 51% of the tracks sung on the submitted project must fall within the Contemporary specialized genre.



Category rules are subject to change without notice

CATEGORY #15:

TRADITIONAL FEMALE Artist OF THE YEAR

- Must chart in the Top 200 on any 1 of the charts listed below: Billboard's Gospel Airplay, Mediabase Published Panel, Billboard's Gospel Album, Billboard's Hot Gospel Songs, Billboard's Gospel Digital Song Sales, Billboard's Gospel Streaming Songs, Music Connect Gospel Airplay or Music Connect Current Gospel Album for two (2) weeks (weeks need not be consecutive).
- The project submitted for this category can be a Single or Album
- One (1) submission/project per artist
- This Artist is a soloist or lead singer of a group, choir or quartet.
- 51% of the tracks sung on the submitted project must fall within the Traditional specialized genre.

CATEGORY #16:

CONTEMPORARY ALBUM OF THE YEAR

- Must chart in the Top 200 on either of the charts listed below: Billboard's Gospel Album or Music Connect Current Gospel Album for one (1) week.
- This Award is presented to the Artist.
- 51% of the tracks on the submitted project must fall within the Contemporary specialized genre.

CATEGORY #17:

TRADITIONAL ALBUM OF THE YEAR

- Must chart in the Top 200 on either of the charts listed below: Billboard's Gospel Album or Music Connect Current Gospel Album for one (1) week.
- This Award is presented to the Artist.
- 51% of the tracks on the submitted project must fall within the Traditional specialized genre.

CATEGORY #18: URBAN

SINGLE/PERFORMANCE OF THE YEAR (Must be *INSPIRATIONAL*)

- Must chart in the Top 100 on at least (2) charts as listed below: At Least (1) of these (2 charts): Billboard's Gospel Airplay or Mediabase Published Panel; and At least (1) of these charts: Billboard's Hot Gospel Songs, Billboard's Gospel Digital Song Sales, Billboard's Gospel Streaming Songs, or Music Connect Gospel Airplay for four (4) weeks (weeks need not be consecutive).
- This Single/Performance may be performed by a Gospel Artist or a Secular Artist, which promotes "Gospel Music."
- This Award is presented to the Artist.

CATEGORY #19:

MUSIC VIDEO OF THE YEAR

- Entrants will be decided by a professional, independent, creative community committee before being placed on the second ballot for voting
- This Award is presented to the Video Director(s).

CATEGORY #20:

TRADITIONAL CHOIR OF THE YEAR

- Must chart in the Top 200 on any (1) of the charts as listed below: Billboard's Gospel Airplay, Mediabase Published Panel, Billboard's Gospel Album, Billboard's Hot Gospel Songs, Billboard's Gospel Digital Song Sales, Billboard's Gospel Streaming Songs, Music Connect Gospel Airplay or Music Connect Current Gospel Album for one (1) week.
- The project submitted for this category can be a Single or Album
- A choir must consist of 11 or more individuals.
- 51% of the tracks on the submitted project must fall within the Traditional specialized genre.
- This Award is presented to the Choir (as a whole).

CATEGORY #21:

CONTEMPORARY CHOIR OF THE YEAR

- Must chart in the Top 200 on any (1) of the charts as listed below: Billboard's Gospel Airplay, Mediabase Published Panel, Billboard's Gospel Album, Billboard's Hot Gospel Songs, Billboard's Gospel Digital Song Sales, Billboard's Gospel Streaming Songs, Music Connect Gospel Airplay or Music Connect Current Gospel Album for one (1) week.
- The project submitted for this category can be a Single or Album
- A choir must consist of 11 or more individuals.
- 51% of the tracks on the submitted project must fall within the Contemporary specialized genre.
- This Award is presented to the Choir (as a whole).

CATEGORY #22:

TRADITIONAL ARTIST OF THE YEAR

- Must chart in the Top 200 on any 1 of the charts listed below: Billboard's Gospel Airplay, Mediabase Published Panel, Billboard's Gospel Album, Billboard's Hot Gospel Songs, Billboard's Gospel Digital Song Sales, Billboard's Gospel Streaming Songs, Music Connect Gospel Airplay or Music Connect Current Gospel Album for three (3) weeks (weeks need not be consecutive).
- The project submitted for this category **MUST** be an Album
- One (1) submission/project per artist
- This Artist is a soloist or lead singer of a group, choir or quartet.
- 51% of the tracks sung on the submitted project must fall within the Traditional specialized genre.

CATEGORY #23:

SPECIAL EVENT ALBUM OF THE YEAR

- This category awards an artist(s) who has collaborated with another artist(s), has recorded a special tribute to a gospel artist(s) or has commemorated a special event or Gospel tradition.
- 75% of the tracks on the submitted project must consist of newly recorded music by the entrant.
- Greatest Hits Albums are NOT eligible.
- This award is presented to the Artist except in cases where a "Various Artists" project wins, then it is presented to the record label (as a whole).

CATEGORY #24:

RAP/HIP HOP GOSPEL ALBUM OF THE YEAR

- 75% of the tracks on the submitted project must consist of Rap or Hip Hop music.
- This Album must be performed by a Gospel Artist.
- No Album with profanity or suggestive lyrics will be eligible.
- This Award is presented to the Artist.

CATEGORY #25:

YOUTH PROJECT OF THE YEAR

- This project must be a complete Album and not a single or performance on another artist's project.
- Performers on the project must be 18 years or younger for the project to qualify in this category.
- This Award is presented to the Artist.

**CATEGORY #26:
QUARTET OF THE YEAR**

- 75% of the tracks on the submitted project must consist of Quartet specialized genre.
- This Award is presented to the Quartet (as a whole).

**CATEGORY #27:
RECORDED MUSIC PACKAGING OF THE YEAR**

- Entrants will be decided by a professional, independent, creative community committee before being placed on the second ballot for voting (which will include the project image, album name and record label).
- This Award is presented to the Graphic Artist, Illustrator, Art Director, or Photographer of the product packaging.

**CATEGORY #28:
PRAISE AND WORSHIP ALBUM OF
THE YEAR**

- Must chart in the Top 100 on 1 of the charts listed below: Billboard's Gospel Album or Music Connect Current Gospel Album for two (2) weeks (weeks need not be consecutive).
- 75% of the tracks on the submitted project must consist of Praise and Worship songs.
- This Award is presented to the Artist.

**CATEGORY #29:
PRAISE AND WORSHIP SONG OF THE
YEAR**

- Must chart in the Top 100 on at least 1 of the charts listed below: Billboard's Gospel Airplay, Mediabase Published Panel, Billboard's Hot Gospel Songs, Billboard's Gospel Digital Song Sales, Billboard's Gospel Streaming Songs, or Music Connect Gospel Airplay for four (4) weeks (weeks need not be consecutive).
- This Award is presented to the Artist(s).

**CATEGORY #30:
RAP/HIP HOP SONG OF THE YEAR**

- The track must consist of Rap or Hip/Hop specialized genre.
- This track must be performed by a Gospel Artist.
- No track with profanity or suggestive lyrics will be eligible.
- This Award is presented to the Artist(s).

----NEW CATEGORY ALERT---

**CATEGORY #31:
HBCU CHOIR OF THE YEAR**

- One recorded choir performance of a Gospel Music song (all genres)
- Entrants will be decided by a professional, independent, creative community committee before being placed on the second ballot for voting
- This Award is presented to the Choir Music Director(s).
- See **CATEGORY ADDENDUM** for additional qualifications

Category rules are subject to change without notice

THE REVIEW COMMITTEE RESERVES THE RIGHT TO WITHDRAW ANY CATEGORY IN ANY ONE YEAR IF THERE ARE NOT SUFFICIENT ENTRIES IN THAT CATEGORY. PERIODICALLY, AN ARTIST IS ERRONEOUSLY OMITTED FROM A CATEGORY IN WHICH THEY SHOULD BE PLACED. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE REVIEW COMMITTEE RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CORRECT THE OMISSION.



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CATEGORY ADDENDUM



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☐ New Category Announcement – HBCU CHOIR OF THE YEAR

- The HBCU Choir of the Year category recognizes outstanding artistic excellence, leadership, and impact in gospel music by choirs/choral ensembles that represent accredited Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the United States.
- The award honors the ensemble that, within the eligibility period, demonstrates exemplary vocal artistry, musicianship, technique, ensemble cohesion, direction, and presentation in a publicly available performance.

☐ Eligibility Period: March 1, 2025 – February 28, 2026

- The ensemble must be an active gospel music choir during the eligibility period
- The choir must have performed and uploaded that performance to a publicly accessible website, YouTube, or social media platform during the eligibility period.
- The performance link must remain active and unchanged through the conclusion of judging and voting.

☐ Number of Entries

- Each eligible choir may submit one (1) performance link.

☐ Submission Period: March 2, 2026 – March 13, 2026

- All entries must be received via the online entry form at www.stellarawards.com by 11:59 p.m. on March 13, 2026
- Each music director must be a current SAGMA member (in good standing). You may join SAGMA at the time of submission by completing the online SAGMA form at www.stellarawards.com and electronically submitting a non-refundable fee of \$125 for membership.

☐ Required Materials

- Official online entry form completed in full and public performance link (URL) to the eligible performance.
- Confirmation that the entrant possesses all necessary rights and permissions for the performance, likenesses, arrangements, and recordings submitted.

☐ Technical Recommendations

- Video resolution of 720p or higher with clear, intelligible audio.
- The performance duration should be between 3 and 12 minutes.

☐ Selection and Voting

- Eligible entries will be evaluated by a professional, independent committee drawn from the creative community, inclusive of gospel artists, music educators, producers, and industry professionals.
- Based on committee scoring and deliberation, qualified entrants will be advanced as entries to the official Stellar Awards Second Ballot for voting.
- The nominees and winner of HBCU Choir of the Year will be determined by the results of the Second Ballot.
- The HBCU Choir of the Year award will be presented to the choir's Music Director, who accepts on behalf of the ensemble and the HBCU.