

The Grammys? More like the Scammys!



By Tara Walsh

Horror. That is the feeling that gripped me when I woke up on the morning of February 5th 2024 to discover that Lana Del Rey had not received a single Grammy award in the previous night's ceremony. Despite having been nominated for five different award categories for her latest album '*Did you know that there's a tunnel under ocean boulevard*' released in May 2023, she departed from the Crypto.com arena in Los Angeles that night empty-handed. Similar to all Lana fans across the globe, I was shocked that one of the most influential and successful artists of our time was snubbed by an alleged prestigious music organisation. This shattered my confidence in the integrity of this institution. How can they justify the dismissal of one of the most iconic musical figures of the 21st century?

The exclusion of Lana from the list of Grammy winners might have been comprehensible had the victors of her nominated categories been truly deserving of their wins. However, in most cases this could not be further from the truth. For instance, Lana lost the title for '*Album of the Year*' to '*Voyage*' by ABBA. ABBA's latest album was widely regarded as painfully reminiscent of their past works and lacking emotional value and vocal power. Contrastingly, Lana's release was critically acclaimed for its bold stylistic experimentation, lyrical depth, and evocative vocals.



A similar disparity occurred when Taylor Swift's '*Anti-Hero*' was awarded the Grammy for the '*Best Pop Solo Performance*' prevailing over Lana's '*A&W*'. Once again, Swift's production was simplistic, lacked innovation and contained narrowly personal themes. In contrast, Lana accomplished a cinematic and atmospheric quality while exploring universal themes such as the complexities of

womanhood in her work. The only apparent advantage that these prizewinners have in comparison to Lana is their significantly greater mainstream popularity. Were the Grammy judges influenced by the notable fame of the nominees when making their decision rather than the artistic merit of their work? This tragedy exhibits how the Grammy selection process is in dire need of a reevaluation to prevent further injustices.

Following the outrage of this thievery, an anonymous Grammy judge released a statement expressing their disdain for Lana. They shared with the press that they have “never taken Lana Del Rey seriously as an artist”. This opinion is believed to have originated from the controversy surrounding her 2010 debut album ‘*Lana Del Rey AKA Lizzy Grant*’ released during her transition from her birth name, Elizabeth Woolridge Grant to her stage name, Lana Del Rey. The album tackled themes such as toxic relationships, substance abuse and sexuality. As a result, many excessively conservative music critics immediately disregarded her as an artist. This is an outright injustice to the raw authentic emotion and appealing old Hollywood glamour aesthetic of her debut album.



An additional reason for the judge’s disdain was Lana’s infamous 2012 *Saturday Night Live* performance, which sparked significant public backlash. Critics labeled her vocals as shaky and inconsistent and described her stage presence as awkward. While these critiques are not entirely false, they are heavily exaggerated and lack important context. It’s crucial to remember that this was Lana’s first-ever live national television performance, and as a new artist facing immense pressure, it’s only natural that nerves impacted her execution. Therefore, it is absolutely unjust that the Grammy judge concocted a pessimistic view of Lana so early in her career let alone to carry their premature views with them for such an extended length of time. This further exhibits how the Grammys are an institution riddled with internalised bias and outdated perspectives that strips talented artists of their rightful titles.

By this point, I’ve thoroughly outlined my reaction to the Grammys’ iniquitous shunning of Lana Del Rey so you might be wondering how the lyrical legend herself responded to such an egregious snub. While she did not openly express her disappointment, her fury became evident through her subsequent actions. A few days after the treacherous ceremony, she shared a post on Instagram in which she posed in a white dress holding a gun. This was speculated to exhibit her frustration with the unfortunate outcome of the distorted decisions.





Whereas her Instagram post was merely a subtle hint at her rage, Lana didn't stop there. In April 2024, Lana Del Rey headlined at the illustrious Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in California. Her bitterness towards the Grammys was boldly displayed on her Coachella billboard which read "Has anyone else died for your sins?" with a subtext of 'Lana Del Rey, SNL, Jan 14, 2012'. This alludes to the aforementioned SNL performance which ultimately turned the Grammy

judges against her. Her clever and scathing jab at the Grammys portrays how she understands that the disapproval of her performance eliminated any future Grammy opportunities. Even Lana herself recognises that her talent has been unfairly overlooked by this flawed organisation which highlights the immorality of the judges and their warped impressions.

On May 21st of this year, Lana Del Rey will release her highly anticipated country album '*The Right Person Will Stay*'. Perhaps the Grammys will realise the faults of their ways and finally acknowledge the artist that undeniably reshaped pop culture and music as we know it. Despite having been the recipient of Variety's '*Artist of the Decade*' and Q's '*Song of the Decade*' for her debut single '*Video Games*', having a total of eleven Grammy nominations to her name and having featured on Taylor Swift's Grammy-winning album '*Midnights*' as well as The Weeknd's album '*Starboy*' which earned him a Grammy, Lana still remains unrecognised by the Recording Academy. However, a Grammy award would be incapable of altering the ethereal and exquisite quality of her music and there is no chance that she'd ever consider adapting this style to fit the mold of the judges as aptly expressed in her words "If they love me, they'll love me / Cause' I'm wild, wild at heart".