

STUDENT LIFE

Grammy predictions: Mary J. takes two



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

By Sean Mihlo
student life editor

This year's Grammy Awards, airing Sunday, Feb. 11 at 8 p.m. on CBS, is set to be unlike any other in recent memory. If not for this reason only, the Police, featuring all three original members, Sting, Andy Summers and Stewart Copeland, are set to open the show after a 23-year-long "hiatus." Jennifer Hudson, hot off of numerous major film award wins for her portrayal of lead-singer-gone-back-up "Effie White" in *Dreamgirls*, will perform along with her movie co-stars Beyoncé and Anika Noni Rose. Other performers announced for the show include Justin Timberlake, Smokey Robinson, Shakira (in her first Grammy performance) and Wyclef, the Dixie Chicks, Christina Aguilera, Gnarls Barkley, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Carrie Underwood and Ludacris, all of whom are nominated this year. With so much great music released over the past year, who'll walk away with a statue?

Record of the Year: "Be Without You," Mary J. Blige; "You're Beautiful," James Blunt; "Not Ready to Make Nice," the Dixie Chicks; "Crazy," Gnarls Barkley; "Put Your Records On," Corinne Bailey Rae.

It's weird to see Gnarls Barkley, a.k.a. former Goodie Mob member Cee-Lo Green and DJ Danger Mouse, nominated for a freaking *Grammy*, let alone Record of the Year. But "Crazy" was undoubtedly one of the best singles of the year, no matter how much radio overplayed it. In this category, though, Gnarls seems almost too radical to win. The freakish pop-gospel-psych-folk of "Crazy" can't top Mary J.'s comeback single, "Be Without You." While the Dixie Chicks struck back against critics and former fans with "Not Ready to Make Nice," and newcomer Corinne Bailey Rae is still too under-the-radar and obscure for this recognition, Blige broke records with "The Breakthrough." Released in 2005, it's the biggest first-week debut, with 727,000 copies sold, for a female R&B artist in SoundScan history. She's drama free, and she'll reign over this year's awards.

Album of the Year: *Taking The Long Way*, the Dixie Chicks; *St. Elsewhere*, Gnarls Barkley; *Continuum*, John Mayer; *Stadium Arcadium*, the Red Hot Chili Peppers; *FutureSex/LoveSounds*, Justin Timberlake.

FutureSex/LoveSounds is Timberlake and Timbaland at the top of their game. Earlier last year, music review website Pitchfork Media crowned Timberlake the "new King of Pop," deservedly.

"My Love" was probably last year's best single, with its warm rush of lusty synth-lines and subtle, weepy vocals, showed how much of a minimal pop master Timbaland is. And even though JT should take the crown in this category, Timberlake is too far ahead of Grammy's game. Grammy likes a bold political statement, and the Dixie Chicks delivered exactly that with *Taking the Long Way*. Country radio isn't playing their records? They don't care. People are *still* offended by Maines' Bush-bashing comment? Actually, they still don't care. But Grammy does, and they'll walk away with it.

Song of the Year: "Be Without You," Jhnta Austin, Mary J. Blige, Bryan-Michael Cox and Jason Perry (Mary J. Blige); "Jesus, Take the Wheel," Brett James, Hillary Lindsey and Gordie Sampson (Carrie Underwood); "Not Ready to Make Nice," Martie Maguire, Natalie Maines, Emily Robison and Dan Wilson (the Dixie Chicks); "Put Your Records On," John Beck, Steve Chrisanthou and Corinne Bailey Rae (Corinne Bailey Rae); "You're Beautiful," James Blunt, Amanda Ghost and Sacha Skarbek (James Blunt).

James Blunt: not a chance in hell. "You're Beautiful" was last year's "I'm Too Sexy" – you hear it once, and you never, ever want to hear it again. Corinne Bailey Rae: maybe in a few years. "Put Your Records On" is a sweet little slice of soul, but not enough to win voters over. "Jesus, Take the Wheel" is a well-written song period, and Carrie Underwood established herself as a strong presence in the country and pop community, but Grammy gives extra credit to big comebacks, so Mary J. will nab this one too.

New Artist: James Blunt; Chris Brown; Imogen Heap; Corinne Bailey Rae; Carrie Underwood.

Please, James Blunt, can you go away? Please! Newcomer Chris Brown re-energized the pop-R&B scene last year with "Run It," one of the many hits from his 2005 debut. But at 17 years old, it might be too early on in his career to run away with the trophy. It's nice to see Imogen Heap, the former Frou Frou front woman whose song "Hide and Seek" was popularized on the TV show "The O.C.," nominated, but will anyone know who she is if she wins? Exactly. 2006 was the year of the Idol: Carrie Underwood. She won the People's Choice Award for "Favorite Female Singer," the Billboard Music Award for "Female Country Artist of the Year" and "Country New Artist of the Year" and the Academy of Country Music Awards for "Top New Female Vocalist of the Year." No surprises here – Carrie will take the cake.

College legends and myths unmasked

By Patrick Webster
managing editor

College is a place of open and free communication, which leads to a sharing of ideas and knowledge. For the most part, this serves to speed the educational process by making it easier for everyone to learn. However, such open communication also has the drawback of allowing unverified and untrue information to spread even more rapidly than the real story. As a result, college campuses are often a hot spot for the spreading of myths and rumors, such as the ones below:

The roommate's suicide

One common myth among many college students is that the death of a roommate or similarly close friend or relative will result in the instantaneous award of a 4.0 or other high grade for the semester to the emotionally devastated student. While many educational institutions have policies in effect that will provide special consideration for a student in such a situation, such as extra time to complete work or waiving certain attendance requirements, no school, including Penn State, will award grades without the completion of the necessary coursework.

This myth is so prevalent that at least two feature films, "Dead Man on Campus" and "Dead Man's Curve," have plots that are generally based on the same premise. It has also found its way into numerous television shows, including "The Simpsons" and "Law and Order."

The backwards PIN

Another myth that has been floating around since at least 1998 is that entering your PIN (Personal Identification Number) backwards into an ATM or similar banking machine will alert the police and your bank that you are doing so under duress.

This tale likely has its roots in a patent issued to Chicago entrepreneur Joseph Zinger, who in 1994 came up with the idea for a system installed in bank teller machines that would alert authorities when the PIN was entered backwards. This system has never been implemented by any bank, though a few states have either passed or considered legislation that would allow banks to do so. The most famous incident related to this myth was the carjacking and murder of Kimberly Boyd, who was forced at gunpoint to withdraw all her money for the carjacker before being murdered. Her husband Michael immediately lobbied the Georgia State Legislature to enact a law that would require banks to institute such a system. A bill was introduced in December of 2005, but has never been voted or acted upon.

Favorite Chinese dish: cat

College students are always on the lookout for one thing: cheap, good food. As a result, Chinese restaurants are often popular choices on college towns for their offerings of large quanti-

ties of food for a reasonable price. Naturally, cultural xenophobia quickly supplies a reason why the price is so reasonable.

There is rarely a college student that has not heard a joke or tale about a favorite Chinese restaurant that actually serves cat meat in its dishes instead of chicken. This myth is in fact very old, with British newspapers printed as early as the 1850s alluding to cat being on the menu in new Asian eating establishments. As exemplified by the longevity of this myth, it is very ingrained into popular culture. In 1995, this rumor spread like wildfire in the city of Chicago after a popular Chinese restaurant closed, even after weeks of advertisement that the whole national franchise was closing for business reasons. The United States Department of Health reports that no restaurant, Chinese or otherwise, has ever been closed for keeping cat meat in its freezer.

While it is true that dog is consumed in very few parts of Asia that have poverty-level economies and in times of famine, the use of what are considered pet animals in the western hemisphere as food is rare even in China and Korea.

Mystery shopping

Money is always on the mind of a modern college student. As a result, an offer that would be readily dismissed by someone who is financially secure has a way of worming itself into the mind of someone always looking for a few extra bucks. A currently popular fraud is that of "mystery shopping," or being paid to go shopping and writing reports about certain places of business.

While there are a few legitimate mystery shopping jobs offered by stores themselves, the vast majority seek to separate gullible young adults from their money quickly. In short, the Federal Trade Commission advises that any mystery shopping offer that includes the use of the prospective shopper's own money is almost certainly a fraud. This includes fees for "handling" or "training" that one must undertake before being given assignments, and programs that promise to reimburse the shopper after certain items are purchased. An offshoot of these practices is called "reshipping," in which a victim is instructed to purchase and reship items from online auction services such as eBay and Amazon, in return for promised compensation.

The good and bad offers can be difficult to differentiate; oftentimes they both advertise in the same media, including newspapers, radio, and the internet. An easy way to tell if the job is on the up and up is to look at who is offering it: if Sears is looking for mystery shoppers to test its customer service, it's probably real. If, instead, some third party is offering you the opportunity and insists on certain fees or is not up front with information, it probably isn't.

Special thanks to Barbra Mikkelson at the Urban Legends Reference Pages and The Federal Trade Commission.

Wear a Yorkie on your feet, pay the price

By Deadra Walker
contributing writer

Surprise, surprise—the arctic tundra that we have all come to know as Behrend in the winter is upon us, and although the beast took its sweet time arriving this year, it arrived -- with a vengeance. That means time to break out the sweaters Grandma gave you for Christmas, the tube socks and the boots. However, contrary to what you may have believed, there is a way to keep warm and look physically pleasing. One has to keep a few things in mind when getting dressed in the mornings.

First, young women please scroll back through last year's "Beacon and find the rant regarding winter boots. While I will openly admit that I wear insulated boots over a couple of pairs of socks, my boots do not closely resemble my family's Yorkshire Terrier. If your boot looks like you should strap a leash on it and take it for a stroll with a pooper scooper, that's not aesthetically pleasing. Leave your pets at home ladies and not on your feet.

The same is the case with hats. While at Sheetz last week, I stood in line behind a young gentleman with what looked to be an oversized rodent on his head, and while I was only in line behind him for a few

moments, they were the longest in my life. I spent them not worrying if I had enough money in my back pocket to pay for my sandwich, but praying that said rodent was not staring me down, waiting to attack. If you give your hat sporadic rabies shots, you'd better leave that at home.

In addition, please look outside when preparing to leave your respective residence for the day. There is still a good foot of snow outside, and even if it decides to melt in the upcoming days due to the double-digit temperatures we have returned to, it will be back. With that in mind, flip flops, a mini-skirt and knitted leg warmers are probably not a smart choice. Those leg warmers probably won't be of much use to you if your legs fall off on account of the frostbite or some other lose of limbs. In response to the flip flops, I guess you simply do not appreciate your toes. Pants and closed-toed shoes are your friends. This is not Laguna Beach, California people. Say it with me—Erie, Pennsylvania.

The fact of the matter is that we, for whatever reason, have chosen to live in an area that spends a good chunk of the year blanketed in freezing fluffy snow. Be wise and stay warm.

Billboard Hot 100 for Feb. 17, 2007



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

1. Beyoncé / "Irreplaceable"
2. Nelly Furtado / "Say It Right"
3. Fall Out Boy / "This Ain't A Scene, It's An Arms Race"
4. Daughtry / "It's Not Over"
5. Gwen Stefani ft. Akon / "Sweet Escape"
6. Ludacris ft. Mary J. Blige / "Runaway Love"
7. Akon ft. Snoop Dogg / "I Wanna Love You"
8. Jim Jones / "We Fly High"
9. Lloyd ft. Lil' Wayne / "You"
10. Unk / "Walk It Out"

*Courtesy of Billboard.com

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