



RECORDING ACADEMY® RENAMES BEST SONG FOR SOCIAL CHANGE AWARD IN HONOR OF LATE SINGER, ACTOR AND ACTIVIST, HARRY BELAFONTE

SUBMISSIONS FOR THE NEWLY NAMED HARRY BELAFONTE BEST SONG FOR SOCIAL CHANGE AWARD NOW OPEN THROUGH AUG. 30

SANTA MONICA, CALIF. (JULY 17, 2024) — The Recording Academy's [Best Song For Social Change](#) Special Merit Award has been renamed the Harry Belafonte Best Song For Social Change Award in honor of the late entertainment industry icon who was a powerful voice for social justice throughout his illustrious career. [Originally established in 2022](#), the award will continue to honor songwriters of message-driven music that speaks to the social issues of our time and has demonstrated and inspired positive global impact.

"The greatness of Harry Belafonte's artistic legacy is matched by his profound impact of furthering social justice for all," said [Harvey Mason Jr.](#), CEO of the Recording Academy. "We are honored to recognize his lasting influence with the Harry Belafonte Best Song for Social Change Award and to continue celebrating works that have inspired global communities towards social impact."

"The Belafonte estate is deeply honored and thrilled that the Recording Academy's Best Song For Social Change Award will now be named the Harry Belafonte Best Song For Social Change Award," said Adrienne, Shari, Gina and Pamela Belafonte. "This recognition not only celebrates Harry Belafonte's enduring legacy in music and activism, but also inspires future generations to continue using their voices and art for justice and positive change."

From his debut in the 1950s until his passing in 2023, Belafonte's artistic career progressed in parallel with his work as a trailblazing activist. An important friend of [Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.](#) and advisor, organizer and funder of the Civil Rights Movement, Belafonte helped to organize the 1961 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom and contributed to the 1961 Freedom Rides and the Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964. Belafonte was outspoken throughout his career about American political elections, performing at [President John F. Kennedy's](#) inaugural ball and later being named by Kennedy as a cultural advisor to the Peace Corps. Creating the gold record standard in the industry, Belafonte's 1956 RCA album *CALYPSO* made him the first artist in history to sell over one million LPs. An advocate for global humanitarian causes including the Anti-Apartheid Movement and USA for Africa, Belafonte, in 1985, was the key organizer for the [benefit single "We Are The World"](#) to raise money for famine relief in Africa, which won four GRAMMY Awards® and is one of the best-selling physical singles of all time. Belafonte became a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador in 1987 and traveled internationally to raise awareness for the needs of children across sub-Saharan Africa. A two-time GRAMMY® winner and 11-time career nominee, Belafonte received the Recording Academy's [Lifetime Achievement Award](#) in 2000, and three of his recordings are in the [GRAMMY Hall of Fame®](#).

Formerly a Special Merit Award, the Harry Belafonte Best Song For Social Change Award will now be categorized as a CEO's Merit Award, with the finalists and the recipients selected annually by a Committee composed of a community of peers dedicated to artistic expression, the craft of songwriting, and the power of songs to effect social change.



The submission period for the current cycle of the Harry Belafonte Best Song For Social Change Award is July 17 – Aug. 30, 2024. For guidelines and to make a submission, visit [here](#).

For more information about the award, including past recipients, visit [here](#).

ABOUT THE RECORDING ACADEMY

The Recording Academy represents the voices of performers, songwriters, producers, engineers, and all music professionals. Dedicated to ensuring the recording arts remain a thriving part of our shared cultural heritage, the Academy honors music's history while investing in its future through the [GRAMMY Museum®](#), [advocates on behalf of music creators](#), supports music people in times of need through [MusiCares®](#), and celebrates artistic excellence through the [GRAMMY Awards](#) — music's only peer-recognized accolade and highest achievement. As the world's leading society of music professionals, we work year-round to foster a more inspiring world for creators.

For more information about the GRAMMY Awards and the Recording Academy, please visit [GRAMMY.com](#) and [RecordingAcademy.com](#). For breaking news and exclusive content, follow @RecordingAcad on [X \(Twitter\)](#), "like" Recording Academy on [Facebook](#), and join the Recording Academy's social communities on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [TikTok](#), and [LinkedIn](#). For media assets, please visit the [Recording Academy Press Room](#).

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