Culture

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Nominees have been announced for the 68th Annual Grammy Awards, and Black Catholics are once again well represented among the music artists.

The nominees were announced by the Recording Academy on Nov. 7 in a ceremony led by a number of star recording artists, including former Album of the Year winner Jon Batiste.

The New Orleans-rooted, Catholic-raised multi-instrumentalist, composer, and singer is nominated again this year in three categories, including Best Americana Album for his new release "Big Money." Two songs from the LP are also up for awards, including the title track for Best American Roots Song and "Lonely Avenue" for Best American Roots Performance.

Broadway and film star Cynthia Erivo will also be returning to music's biggest night, as the English Catholic singer is nominated for Best Pop Duo/Group Performance with her duet "Defying Gravity" alongside Ariana Grande, from part one of the movie adaptation of the musical "Wicked." Erivo is also nominated for Best Arrangement, Instrumental or A Cappella with her song "Be Okay" from her solo studio album released earlier this year.

Another Catholic-raised Black Brit, FKA Twigs, is up for Best Dance/Electronic Album with "Eusexua," which drew rave reviews upon its release in January.



Angélique Kidjo performs at the Royal Festival Hall London 2022. She is nominated for a Grammy in Best Global Music Performance with her song "Jerusalema." (Wikimedia Commons/CC BY-SA 4.0/Anasuyas)

Another New Orleans mainstay is on the board in Ledisi, whose song "Love You Too" is nominated for Best Traditional R&B Performance, a category she won in 2021. Branford Marsalis, another Catholic-raised Crescent City native, is nominated with his "Belonging" LP for Best Jazz Instrumental Album — which he won in 2001.

Louisiana is also seen more broadly in this year's nominations, though clustered — as is often the case — in the Regional Roots Music Album category. That includes a compilation album, "A Tribute to the King of Zydeco," which pays tribute to the late Clifton Chenier, a one-time Grammy winner and lifelong Black Catholic.

Dee Dee Bridgewater, who was raised in the faith in Memphis, Tennessee, is nominated for Best Jazz Vocal Album, a category she won in 2011.

Modern New York hip-hop trailblazer Cardi B is one of several Afro-Latinx Catholic artists nominated this year, with her song "Outside" nominated for Best Rap Performance, while Rauw Alejandro is up for Best Latin Pop Album with his 2024 release, "Cosa Nuestra."

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Outside the strictly music-based categories, Black Catholic Georgia native Omari Hardwick — best known for his acting — is nominated for Best Spoken Word Poetry Album for the second year in a row, this time for the duet effort "Pages" with R&B singer Anthony Hamilton.

Beninese-French singer Angélique Kidjo, whose spiritually tinged works are informed by her Catholic upbringing, is also nominated for the second year running in the same category, with her song "Jerusalema" up for Best Global Music Performance.

This year's Grammys nominees were selected during first-round ballots last month, and voting members of the Recording Academy will decide the winners in November. The Grammys telecast will take place Sunday, Feb. 1, at Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles and will air live on CBS and Paramount+.

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