



**57th GMA Dove Awards  
2025-2026  
Rules & Definitions**

Eligibility Period: May 1, 2025 – April 30, 2026

## **SONG of the YEAR**

### **DIVISION I / Category 1**

**Rules and Definitions:** Candidates for Song of the Year will be determined using data provided by *CCLI*, *BDS*, *Nielsen Music Connect* and *SoundScan* to calculate the most impressions/audience impact across a songwriter's body of work based on sales, airplay and church performance during the eligibility period.

A song is ineligible for Song of the Year if it has previously been a nominee within this category.

This category will not appear on the first ballot. A craft committee will review the final 10 nominees to ensure qualitative (the character of the music) and quantitative (the number of impacting single) credibility of the outcome. Final nominees will be submitted for voting on the final ballot only.

*Dove Awards are presented to the songwriter(s) and publisher(s).*

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## **ARTIST/NON-ARTIST**

### **SONGWRITER of the YEAR**

#### **DIVISION I / Categories 2-3**

**Rules and Definitions:** The Songwriter of the Year categories will be determined using data provided by *CCLI*, *BDS*, *Nielsen Music Connect* and *SoundScan* to calculate the most impressions/audience impact across a songwriter's body of work based on sales, airplay and church performance during the eligibility period.

**Category 2 Songwriter (Artist)** - A songwriter who is actively recording their own material and came to prominence as a performer.

**Category 3 Songwriter (Non-Artist)** - A songwriter who came to prominence as a non-performing songwriter.

This category will not appear on the first ballot. A craft committee will review the final five nominees to ensure qualitative (the character of the music) and quantitative (the number of impacting single) credibility of the outcome. Final nominees will be submitted for voting on the final ballot only.

*Dove Awards are presented to the songwriter.*

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## **ARTIST of the YEAR**

### **DIVISION I / Category 4**

**Rules and Definitions:** An artist is a soloist or group whose preponderance of music performances and recordings are in Christian/Gospel music. The top 20 artists determined by Nielsen Music Connect will appear as eligible entries on the first ballot.

1. The top 20 will be determined as the top selling artists (based on consumption) of up to two albums released within the last three years.
2. At least one single must have been released during the current eligibility period.
3. Prior to the first ballot, a craft committee will review all entries to identify any egregious omissions.

*Dove Awards are presented to the artist and record label.*

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## **NEW ARTIST of the YEAR**

### **DIVISION I / Category 5**

**Rules and Definitions:** A new artist is a soloist or group, to attain breakthrough/ prominence in this configuration, whose first album (minimum of five singles) was released for general distribution within the last two eligibility periods, or 3 singles released for general distribution within the current eligibility period. A Screening Committee will determine when the artist attained prominence by examining consumption, radio and touring.

A preponderance of the artist's music performances and recordings:

1. Must be in Christian/Gospel music.
2. Must be in the configuration (soloist or group) in which the artist is entered in the submission process.

An artist is ineligible for New Artist of the Year if they have previously been a nominee within this category.

*Dove Awards are presented to the artist and record label.*

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## **PRODUCER of the YEAR**

### **DIVISION I / Category 6**

**Rules and Definitions:** In consideration of impact across a producer's body of work, individuals must have produced or co-produced at least six recorded songs on product eligible in the current year's Album of the Year categories. Recorded songs where the entrant is considered the artist do not qualify for this category.

*Dove Awards are presented to the producer or production team.*

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## **RECORDED SONG of the YEAR**

### **DIVISION II / Categories 7-21**

**Rules and Definitions:** This division takes into consideration the performance/production of a recorded song, as well as the writing. Submitted songs must meet the following criteria:

1. Its first week of sales recorded by SoundScan must fall within the eligibility period or,
2. It may be released during the eligibility period as a national promotional release for radio airplay (in which case the release date of the single must be listed).
3. Any previous nominee in any Song of the Year category is ineligible.
4. Entering a song in more than one category in Division II will invalidate that entry in both categories.
5. For recordings with multiple versions (including with featured artists), only one version/mix of the recording qualifies in an eligibility period.
6. A preponderance of the recording must be consistent with the Christian worldview outlined in the Policy and Procedures manual. Lyrics and vocals are required in order to determine Christian worldview.

**Category 10 Inspirational Recorded Song** - A song with a more traditional approach in vocals/arrangement/production and tends to have a horizontal focus toward the listener rather than toward God.

**Categories 14-16 Gospel Recorded Songs** - A song must be marketed as Gospel genre to be eligible.

**Category 17 Spanish Language Recorded Song** – A song must contain at least 51% lyrics in Spanish to be eligible. Translations and artists outside the Spanish Language platform will be eligible.

**Category 18 Spanish Language Worship Recorded Song** – A song with 51% or more lyrics in Spanish that is specifically used to lead others in worship, which invite participation, and tend to have a vertical focus toward God rather than toward the listener.

**Category 19 Worship Recorded Song** - A song specifically used to lead others in worship, which invite participation, and tend to have a vertical focus toward God rather than toward the listener.

**Category 20 Children's Recorded Song** - A song containing music especially produced and totally designed for children's listening or performing.

**Category 21 Christmas Recorded Song** - A song specifically used during the Christmas season with a focus on sacred rather than secular.

*Dove Awards are presented to the artist, featured artist(s) and songwriter(s).*

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## **ALBUM of the YEAR**

### **DIVISION III / Categories 22-32**

**Rules and Definitions:** An album is defined as a collection of five or more songs in any recorded form other than video. Submitted albums must meet the following criteria:

1. Its first week of sales recorded by SoundScan must fall within the eligibility period.
2. A preponderance of the tracks on the album must fit in the musical style of the category entered.
3. Must have a minimum of five previously unreleased recorded performances.
4. Entering an album in more than one category in Division III will invalidate the entry in both divisions.
5. A preponderance of the tracks on the album must be consistent with the Christian worldview outlined in the Policy and Procedures manual. Lyrics and vocals are required in order to determine Christian worldview.

**Categories 27-29 Gospel Albums** - An album must be marketed as Gospel genre to be eligible.

**Category 30 Spanish Language Album** – An album must contain at least 51% tracks in Spanish to be eligible. Translations and artists outside the Spanish Language platform will be eligible.

**Category 31 Worship Album** - An album in which the majority of the tracks are specifically used to lead others in worship, which invite participation, and tend to have a vertical focus toward God rather than toward the listener.

**Category 32 Christmas/Special Event Album** - Special Event Albums are all albums on which no single artist or group are featured on more than 50% of the recorded performances. A Christmas Album is defined as an album with a preponderance of the recorded material related to Christmas.

*Dove Awards are presented to the artist (if prominent on the album) and producer(s).*

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## **MUSICAL/ CHORAL COLLECTION of the YEAR**

### **DIVISION IV / Category 33**

**Rules and Definitions:** This category takes into consideration works used in the church for music based performances by members and/ or choir. Musicals are works with a conceptual theme and intended for performance in its entirety. Choral Collections are music arranged for choir in multiple parts and do not contain a storyline.

Submitted musicals and collections do not have to be tracked by SoundScan, but are required to have an accompanying published booklet.

*Dove Awards are presented to the creator(s), arranger(s), and orchestrator(s).*

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## **RECORDED MUSIC PACKAGING of the YEAR**

### **DIVISION IV / Category 34**



**Rules and Definitions:** Recorded Music Packaging recognizes package design, photography and/or graphic art for both physical and digital-only releases of albums approved in the Division 3 categories.

This category will not appear on the first ballot. Final nominees will be determined by a craft committee and will be submitted for voting on the final ballot only.

*Dove Awards are presented to the art director(s), graphic artist(s), illustrator(s), and photographer(s).*

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## **SHORT FORM/LONG FORM**

### **MUSIC VIDEO of the YEAR**

### **DIVISION IV / Categories 35-37**

**Rules and Definitions:** The video categories recognize the artistic and technical presentation of song(s) in combination with video; i.e. camera technique, set design, lighting, and editing. Significant changes in either music or video constitute a new music video. A preponderance of the song(s) or medley used in video must be consistent with the worldview outlined in the Policy and Procedures manual. Lyrics and vocals are required in order to determine Christian worldview.

**Category 35 Short Form Music Video (Concept)** - A video designed to present a single complete song or medley in narrative or story form. This video has a clear beginning, middle and end which can be portrayed in a variety of ways; i.e. animation, docu-style, abstract or combination of these styles and techniques. Lyric videos are ineligible.

**Category 36 Short Form Music Video (Performance)** - A video designed to present the artist performing a single complete song or medley. The video has no storyline and the artist is performing to the camera directly or indirectly, either by one shot/scene, or various shots/ scenes. For videos submitted as part of a music film in the long form category, only one song of the film qualifies in an eligibility period. Lyric videos are ineligible.

**Category 37 Long Form Music Video** - A film designed to present more than one complete song or medley. Video samplers, films with a preponderance of non-music content (interviews), and videos in which more than half of the content qualified in a previous eligibility period are ineligible.

Video categories will not appear on the first ballot. Final nominees will be determined by a craft committee and will be submitted for voting on the final ballot only.

*Dove Awards are presented to the artist, featured artist(s), director(s), and producer(s).*

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**FEATURE FILM/ TELEVISION SERIES of the YEAR**  
**DIVISION IV / Categories 38-39**



**Rules and Definitions:** Feature Film/ Television Series must have been released on a broadcast network, cable system, streaming service, or at least 100 theater screens during the eligibility period and be consistent with the worldview outlined in the Policy and Procedures manual.

**Category 38 Feature Film** - The motion picture must be a feature length narrative film or documentary with a runtime of at least 88 minutes.

**Category 39 Television Series** - The television series must consist of at least six episodes, at least 51% of episodes released during eligibility period, with a total season runtime of at least 132 minutes.

Ineligible for Films/ Television Series are: released only as EST (electronic sell-through); preaching or teaching videos; videos approved in the long form category; videos in which more than half of the content was eligible in any previous eligibility period.

*Dove Awards are presented to the director(s) and producer(s).*

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