

ACADEMY OF COUNTRY MUSIC AWARDS VOTING CRITERIA

AWARD SHOW VOTING PROCEDURES (Revised 12/21/08, amended 1/26/09, effective for Awards Show 2009)

The following are the official criteria and voting procedures used by the Academy of Country Music (ACM) to determine its annual award winners. The criteria and voting procedures are set forth by the Board of Directors of the ACM ("the Board") in accordance with the by-laws, and may be amended from time to time as the Board deems appropriate in the best interest of country music. Any disputes shall be resolved by the Chairman of the Board in accordance with Roberts Rules of Order.

VOTING PROCEDURE

The voting procedure shall comply with all legal requirements and any requirements of any network airing the awards show. Disputes as to voting procedure shall be resolved by a majority of the Board. Ballots will be tabulated by an independent accounting firm. Effective for the 2005 show and all future shows, ACM members will vote via the Internet for all award categories.

NOMINATION ROUND:

The membership will submit one nomination in each of the following categories; Entertainer of the Year, Top Male Vocalist, Top Female Vocalist, Top New Male Vocalist, Top New Female Vocalist, Top New Vocal Duo or Group, Top Vocal Group, Top Vocal Duo, Single Record of the Year, Vocal Event of the Year, Album of the Year, Song of the Year and Video of the Year.

The top twenty (20) vote getters will go before a review committee to ensure the entry meets all eligibility criteria (see "criteria" below).

SECOND ROUND:

In the second round, up to two (2) votes must be cast in each category for the category to be counted. The five (5) nominees receiving the most votes in each category will be placed on the third ballot. In the case of a tie, the additional nominees will be included on the third ballot.

FINAL ROUND:

In the final round, only one (1) vote will be cast in each category. The nominee receiving the most votes in each category will be deemed the winner. In the case of a tie, both winners will receive an award.

ADDITIONAL CATEGORIES VOTED ON THE THIRD BALLOT

A Blue Ribbon Committee will submit five (5) nominees to be approved by the Board for the third and final ballot in the following categories; Casino of the Year, Nightclub of the Year, Venue of the Year, Don Romeo Talent Buyer of the Year, Promoter of the Year, based on the criteria for each category (see "criteria" below). The nominee receiving the most votes in each category will be deemed the winner. In the case of a tie, both winners will receive an award.

MBI BALLOT (Musician/ Bandleader/ Instrumentalist)

The MBI ballot is voted on by only those members that are classified in the Artist/Entertainer/Musician/Bandleader/Instrumentalist or Producer/Engineer/Studio Manager categories.

A Blue Ribbon Committee will submit five (5) names to be approved by the Board for the MBI ballot in the following categories; Guitarist, Piano/Keyboards, Bass, Percussionist/Drummer, Steel Guitar, Fiddle, Specialty Instrument(s), Producer and Audio Engineer of the Year. The nominee receiving the most votes in each category will be deemed the winner. In the case of a tie, both winners will receive an award.

ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR

This award is presented to the individual, duo or group who showed the most overall success in the country music industry during the preceding calendar year. The factors to be considered in arriving at this award include, but are not limited to, success at radio, sales of prerecorded music, success of music videos, live concert ticket sales, artistic merit, appearances on television, appearances in films, songwriting, writing and contributions to the country music industry. The nominees shall be determined by a nomination ballot(s) and are subject to the approval of the board. The winner shall be determined by a combination of votes from the membership of the ACM and viewer voting.

TOP MALE VOCALIST

This award is presented to an outstanding individual male vocalist in the country music industry during the preceding calendar year. The factors to be considered in arriving at this award include, but are not limited to, success at radio, sales of prerecorded music, live concert ticket sales and vocal performances. The nominees shall be determined by a nomination ballot(s) and are subject to the approval of the board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the membership of the ACM.

TOP FEMALE VOCALIST

This award is presented to an outstanding individual female vocalist in the country music industry during the preceding calendar year. The factors to be considered in arriving at this award include, but are not limited to, success at radio, sales of prerecorded music, live concert ticket sales and vocal performances. The nominees shall be determined by a nomination ballot(s) and are subject to the approval of the board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the membership of the ACM.

TOP NEW MALE VOCALIST

This award is presented to an outstanding individual male vocalist in the country music industry who gains either initial fame or significantly greater recognition through his efforts during the preceding calendar year. The artist must have charted a single in the Top 40 on Billboard/Radio & Records (BDS) or Country Aircheck (Mediabase) Country Airplay charts; and/or sold 100,000 album units reflected in SoundScan during the qualifying period. The nominees shall be determined by a nomination ballot(s) and are subject to the approval of the board. The winner shall be determined by votes from the membership of the ACM and/or viewer voting (on-line and text).

Any solo artist, duo or group that has sold 500,000 copies of a previously released album (with general exclusions of specialty albums, such as seasonal or live recordings) according to Nielsen SoundScan, are not eligible for the Top New Male Vocalist category. Additionally, solo artists that previously served (or are currently serving) as lead vocalists for, or otherwise fronted duos or groups that have sold 500,000 copies of previously released albums (according to Nielsen SoundScan) are not eligible for the Top New Male category.

An artist may be a nominee for a period of two consecutive album releases; and/or for two consecutive years. If an artist is a winner in this category his first year on the ballot, he will not be eligible in this category for a second year.

TOP NEW FEMALE VOCALIST

This award is presented to an outstanding individual female vocalist in the country music industry who gains either initial fame or significantly greater recognition through her efforts during the preceding calendar year. The artist must have charted a single in the Top 40 on Billboard/Radio & Records (BDS) or Country Aircheck (Mediabase) Country Airplay charts; and/or sold 100,000 album units reflected in SoundScan during the qualifying period. The nominees shall be determined by a nomination ballot(s) and are subject to the approval of the board. The winner shall be determined by votes from the membership of the ACM and/or viewer voting (on-line and text).

Any solo artist, duo or group that has sold 500,000 copies of a previously released album (with general exclusions of specialty albums, such as seasonal or live recordings) according to Nielsen SoundScan, are not eligible for the Top New Female Vocalist category. Additionally, solo artists that previously served (or are currently serving) as lead vocalists for, or otherwise fronted duos or groups that have sold 500,000 copies of previously released albums (according to Nielsen SoundScan) are not eligible for the Top New Female category.

An artist may be a nominee for a period of two consecutive album releases; and/or for two consecutive years. If an artist is a winner in this category her first year on the ballot, she will not be eligible in this category for a second year.

TOP NEW VOCAL DUO OR GROUP

This award is presented to an outstanding duo featuring a vocalist or group featuring a vocalist (herein called “duo or group”) in the country music industry who gains either initial fame or significantly greater recognition through their efforts during the preceding calendar year. The duo or group must have charted a single in the Top 40 on Billboard/Radio & Records (BDS) or Country Aircheck (Mediabase) Country Airplay charts; and/or sold 100,000 album units reflected in SoundScan during the qualifying period. The nominees shall be determined by a nomination ballot(s) and are subject to the approval of the board. The winner shall be determined by votes from the membership of the ACM and/or viewer voting (on-line and text).

Any solo artist, duo or group that has sold 500,000 copies of a previously released album (with general exclusions of specialty albums, such as seasonal or live recordings) according to Nielsen SoundScan, are not eligible for the Top Vocal Duo or Group category. Additionally, solo artists that previously served (or are currently serving) as lead vocalists for, or otherwise fronted duos or groups that have sold 500,000 copies of previously released albums (according to Nielsen SoundScan) are not eligible for the Top New Vocal Duo or Group category.

An artist may be a nominee for a period of two consecutive album releases; and/or for two consecutive years. If an artist is a winner in this category their first year on the ballot, they will not be eligible in this category for a second year.

TOP NEW ARTIST

The Board of Directors may elect to give out this award from time to time in lieu of or in addition to the Top New Male Artist, Top New Female Artist, and Top New Vocal Duo or Group by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

This award is presented to an outstanding individual male vocalist (herein called artist), female vocalist (herein called artist), duo or group featuring a vocalist (herein called “duo or group”) in the country music industry who gains either initial fame or significantly greater recognition through their efforts during the preceding calendar year. The artist, duo or group must have charted a single in the top 40 on Billboard/Radio & Records (BDS) or Country Aircheck (Mediabase) Country Airplay charts; and/or sold 100,000 album units reflected in SoundScan during the qualifying period. The nominees shall be determined by a nomination ballot(s) and are subject to the approval of the board. The winner shall be determined by votes from the membership of the ACM and/or viewer voting (on-line and text).

Any solo artist, duo or group that has sold 500,000 copies of a previously released album (with general exclusions of specialty albums, such as seasonal or live recordings) according to Nielsen SoundScan, are not eligible for the Top New Artist category. Additionally, solo artists that previously served (or are currently serving) as lead vocalists for, or otherwise fronted duos or groups that have sold 500,000 copies of a previously released album (according to Nielsen SoundScan) are not eligible for the Top New Artist category.

Any otherwise eligible artist, duo or group that has appeared previously on a final ballot in this category is not eligible in subsequent years.

TOP VOCAL GROUP

This award is presented to an outstanding group featuring at least one vocalist in the country music industry during the preceding calendar year. The factors to be considered in arriving at this award include, but are not limited to, success at radio, sales of prerecorded music, live concert ticket sales and vocal performances. The nominees shall be determined by a nomination ballot(s) and are subject to the approval of the board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the membership of the ACM.

TOP VOCAL DUO

This award is presented to an outstanding duo featuring at least one vocalist in the country music industry during the preceding calendar year. The factors to be considered in arriving at this award include, but are not limited to, success at radio, sales of records, live concert ticket sales and vocal performances. The nominees shall be determined by a nomination ballot(s) and are subject to the approval of the board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the membership of the ACM.

In the event that the Board of Directors determines that there are not enough nominees in this category in any particular year, this category may be merged with the Top Vocal Group by the Board, and shall be called the Top Vocal Group or Duo.

SINGLE RECORD OF THE YEAR

This award is presented to the artist, producer and record company of an outstanding country music single record during the preceding calendar year. The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, success at radio, sales of prerecorded music embodying the single, and the impact of the single on consumers and the country music industry. The nominees shall be determined by a nomination ballot(s) and are subject to the approval of the board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the membership of the ACM.

Any single commercially and/or promotionally released prior to the preceding calendar year, but achieving its highest charted position in any accepted country music industry publication chart during the preceding calendar year, is eligible unless it has appeared on a final ACM ballot in this category.

SONG OF THE YEAR

This award is presented to the songwriter(s), publisher(s) and artist(s) performing an outstanding country music song of the preceding calendar year. The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, the success of the song at radio, sales of prerecorded music embodying the song and the impact of the song on consumers and the country music industry. The nominees shall be determined by a nomination ballot(s) and are subject to the approval of the board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the membership of the ACM.

Any song contained on an album commercially released prior to the preceding calendar year, but achieving its highest charted position in any accepted country music industry publication chart during the preceding calendar year, is eligible unless it has appeared on a final ACM ballot in this category.

ALBUM OF THE YEAR

This award is presented to the artist(s), producer(s) and record company of an outstanding country music album during the preceding calendar year. The nominees shall be determined by a nomination ballot(s) and are subject to the approval of the board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the membership of the ACM.

Any album commercially released prior to the preceding calendar year (2007), but achieving its highest charted position in any accepted country music industry publication chart and/or greatest commercial success during the calendar year (2008), and/or must have maintained an average of 20,000 unit sales per week since release as reflected by SoundScan during the preceding calendar year (2007), is eligible unless it has appeared on a final ACM ballot in this category.

Any album, which contains more than three (3) previously released selections including, but not limited to, "best of" or "greatest hits" albums are not eligible.

[Amendment: On January 26, 2009 the Board of Directors voted to suspend the 300,000 unit sales threshold for the 2009 Awards Show only.]

VOCAL EVENT OF THE YEAR

This award is presented to the artist(s), producer(s) and record company of an outstanding country music event single record during the preceding calendar year. The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, success at radio, sales of prerecorded music embodying the single, video exposure and artistic merit of the single. The nominees shall be determined by a nomination ballot(s) and are subject to the approval of the board. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the membership of the ACM.

Any single commercially and/or promotionally released prior to the preceding calendar year, but achieving its highest charted position in any accepted country music industry publication chart during the preceding calendar year, is eligible unless it has appeared on a final ACM ballot in this category.

To be eligible, the single must be collaboration between two or more artists who do not normally perform together and are credited on the track listing.

VIDEO OF THE YEAR

This award is presented to the producer, director and artist performing an outstanding country music video during the preceding calendar year. Emphasis shall be placed on creativity, production, visual appeal and impact on consumers and the country music industry. Other factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, success of any single record for which the video was made at radio, sales of prerecorded music embodying the single record for which the video was made and success on any accepted video chart in the country music industry (sales or performances). The nominees shall be determined by a nomination ballot(s) and are subject to the approval of the board. The winner shall be determined by a combined vote of the professional membership of the ACM.

Any country music video released prior to the preceding calendar year, but which achieves its highest charted position in any accepted country music industry publication chart during the preceding calendar year, is eligible unless it has appeared on a final ACM ballot in this category.

OFF CAMERA AWARDS

RADIO AWARDS

ON-AIR PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR

This award is presented to an outstanding country music "on-air" radio personality of the year, selected by a panel of Blue Ribbon Judges. A demonstration of the Disc Jockey/personality's "on-air" presentation of a maximum length of ten (10) minutes must be uploaded to the ACM voting site along with their daypart's market share/ratings information for the calendar year of the award, the nominee's community service, industry involvement, charitable contributions, etc. All entries become the property of the ACM. A panel of Blue Ribbon Judges, approved by the Board of Directors, shall give consideration to ratings, community service, industry involvement, entertainment and professionalism of the demo tape in determining the top (5) five nominees for the ballot. The winner from the previous year is ineligible to win the award for the current calendar year. The winner will be notified in advance of the Academy of Country Music Awards show so they may make arrangements to be in attendance for the presentation of the award.

Entries will be judged using market size consideration based on Arbitron markets: 1-25 Major, 26-50 Large, 51-100 Medium, and 101+ Small.

NATIONAL ON-AIR PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR

This award is presented to an outstanding country music national "on-air" radio personality of the year, selected by a panel of Blue Ribbon Judges. National on-air personality entrants must provide information showing that they air on a minimum of ten (10) markets with a minimum of thirty-six (36) shows airing in the previous calendar year. A demonstration of the Disc Jockey/personality's "on-air" presentation of a maximum length of ten (10) minutes must be uploaded to the ACM voting site along with a description of any industry involvement. All entries become the property of the ACM. A panel of Blue Ribbon Judges, approved by the Board of Directors, shall give consideration to industry involvement, entertainment and professionalism of the demo tape in determining the top (5) five nominees for the ballot. The winner from the previous year is ineligible to win the award for the current calendar year. The winner will be notified in advance of the Academy of Country Music Awards show so they may make arrangements to be in attendance for the presentation of the award.

RADIO STATION OF THE YEAR

This award is presented to an outstanding radio station, selected by a panel of Blue Ribbon Judges. The radio station will upload a (15) fifteen-minute (maximum length) composite demonstration of the station's on-air presentation to the ACM voting site along with description of the radio station's best attributes including market share/ratings information for the calendar year of the award, community service, industry involvement, charitable contributions, etc. All entries become the property of the ACM. A panel of Blue Ribbon Judges, approved by the Board of Directors, shall give consideration to ratings, community service, industry involvement, entertainment and professionalism of the demo tape in determining the top (5) five nominees for the ballot. The winner from the previous year is ineligible to win the award for the current calendar year. The winner will be notified in advance of the Academy of Country Music Awards show so they may make arrangements to be in attendance for the presentation of the award.

Entries will be judged using market size consideration based on Arbitron markets: 1-25 Major, 26-50 Large, 51-100 Medium, and 101+ Small.

INDUSTRY AWARDS

CASINO OF THE YEAR

This award is presented to an outstanding casino, selected by a panel of Blue Ribbon Judges. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. The venue must have bought or promoted at least fifteen (15) country concerts/dates during the calendar year of the award, be in good standing with all agents and help promote country ticket sales. The winner from the previous year is ineligible to win the award for the current calendar year. The winner will be notified two weeks in advance of the Academy of Country Music Awards show so they may make arrangements to be in attendance for the presentation of the award.

NIGHTCLUB OF THE YEAR

This award is presented to an outstanding country music nightclub, selected by a panel of Blue Ribbon Judges. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. The nightclub must have bought or promoted at least fifteen (15) country concerts/dates during the calendar year of the award, be in good standing with all agents and help promote country ticket sales. The winner from the previous year is ineligible to win the award for the current calendar year. The winner will be notified two weeks in advance of the Academy of Country Music Awards show so they may make arrangements to be in attendance for the presentation of the award.

VENUE OF THE YEAR

This award is presented to an outstanding venue, selected by a panel of Blue Ribbon Judges. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. The venue must have bought or promoted at least six (6) country concerts/dates during the calendar year of the award, be in good standing with all agents and help promote country ticket sales. The winner from the previous year is ineligible to win the award for the current calendar year. The winner will be notified two weeks in advance of the Academy of Country Music Awards show so they may make arrangements to be in attendance for the presentation of the award.

DON ROMEO TALENT BUYER OF THE YEAR

This award is presented to an outstanding talent buyer, selected by a panel of Blue Ribbon Judges. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. The buyer must have bought at least twenty (20) country concerts/dates during the calendar year of the award, be in good standing with all agents and help promote country ticket sales. The winner from the previous year is ineligible to win the award for the current calendar year. The winner will be notified two weeks in advance of the Academy of Country Music Awards show so they may make arrangements to be in attendance for the presentation of the award.

PROMOTER OF THE YEAR

This award is presented to an outstanding promoter, selected by a panel of Blue Ribbon Judges. The panel will submit five (5) nominees, which will be placed on the ballot once approved by the Board. The promoter must have promoted at least twenty (20) country concerts/dates during the calendar year of the award, be in good standing with all agents and help promote country ticket sales. The winner from the previous year is ineligible to win the award for the current calendar year. The winner will be notified two weeks in advance of the Academy of Country Music Awards show so they may make arrangements to be in attendance for the presentation of the award.

MBI BALLOT

VOTED BY ONLY THOSE MEMBERS IN THE ARTIST/ENTERTAINER/MUSICIAN/BANDLEADER/INSTRUMENTALIST AND PRODUCER/ENGINEER/STUDIO MANAGER CATEGORIES.

TOP GUITARIST OF THE YEAR

This award is presented to an outstanding session guitar player for the preceding calendar year. The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, success at radio (i.e. player's performance is embodied on a single which achieves "Top 20" or better as set forth in the relevant Billboard or R&R charts) and/or sales of pre-recorded music embodying the performance of player (i.e. "Top 20" or better as set forth in the Billboard "Top Country Albums" chart). Any single or album embodying the player's performance, and commercially released prior to the preceding calendar year, but achieving its highest charted position in any accepted country music industry publication or chart during the preceding calendar year is eligible unless it has appeared on a

previously published ACM ballot in this category. Five (5) nominees shall be selected by the Selections Committee via the MBI as set forth herein and shall be subject to the approval of the ACM Board. Any individual that won this category for the previous year is not eligible to be nominated for the subsequent year only - no consecutive winners. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the Artist/Entertainer/Musician/Bandleader/Instrumentalist and Producer/Engineer/Studio Manager categories of the ACM.

TOP PIANO/KEYBOARDS PLAYER OF THE YEAR

This award is presented to an outstanding session piano/keyboard player for the preceding calendar year. The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, success at radio (i.e. player's performance is embodied on a single which achieves "Top 20" or better as set forth in the relevant Billboard or R&R charts) and/or sales of pre-recorded music embodying the performance of player (i.e. "Top 20" or better as set forth in the Billboard "Top Country Albums" chart). Any single or album embodying the player's performance, and commercially released prior to the preceding calendar year, but achieving its highest charted position in any accepted country music industry publication or chart during the preceding calendar year is eligible unless it has appeared on a previously published ACM ballot in this category. Five (5) nominees shall be selected by the Selections Committee via the MBI as set forth herein and shall be subject to the approval of the ACM Board. Any individual that won this category for the previous year is not eligible to be nominated for the subsequent year only - no consecutive winners. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the Artist/Entertainer/Musician/Bandleader/Instrumentalist and Producer/Engineer/Studio Manager categories of the ACM.

TOP BASS PLAYER OF THE YEAR

This award is presented to an outstanding session bass player for the preceding calendar year. The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, success at radio (i.e. player's performance is embodied on a single which achieves "Top 20" or better as set forth in the relevant Billboard or R&R charts) and/or sales of pre-recorded music embodying the performance of player (i.e. "Top 20" or better as set forth in the Billboard "Top Country Albums" chart). Any single or album embodying the player's performance, and commercially released prior to the preceding calendar year, but achieving its highest charted position in any accepted country music industry publication or chart during the preceding calendar year is eligible unless it has appeared on a previously published ACM ballot in this category. Five (5) nominees shall be selected by the Selections Committee via the MBI as set forth herein and shall be subject to the approval of the ACM Board. Any individual that won this category for the previous year is not eligible to be nominated for the subsequent year only - no consecutive winners. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the Artist/Entertainer/Musician/Bandleader/Instrumentalist and Producer/Engineer/Studio Manager categories of the ACM.

TOP PERCUSSIONIST/DRUMMER OF THE YEAR

This award is presented to an outstanding session drummer for the preceding calendar year. The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, success at radio (i.e. player's performance is embodied on a single which achieves "Top 20" or better as set forth in the relevant Billboard or R&R charts) and/or sales of pre-recorded music embodying the performance of player (i.e. "Top 20" or better as set forth in the Billboard "Top Country Albums" chart). Any single or album embodying the player's performance, and commercially released prior to the preceding calendar year, but achieving its highest charted position in any accepted country music industry publication or chart during the preceding calendar year is eligible unless it has appeared on a previously published ACM ballot in this category. Five (5) nominees shall be selected by the Selections Committee via the MBI as set forth herein and shall be subject to the approval of the ACM Board. Any individual that won this category for the previous year is not eligible to be nominated for the subsequent year only - no consecutive winners. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the Artist/Entertainer/Musician/Bandleader/Instrumentalist and Producer/Engineer/Studio Manager categories of the ACM.

TOP STEEL GUITAR PLAYER OF THE YEAR

This award is presented to an outstanding session steel player for the preceding calendar year. The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, success at radio (i.e. player's performance is embodied on a single which achieves "Top 20" or better as set forth in the relevant Billboard or R&R charts) and/or sales of pre-recorded music embodying the performance of player (i.e. "Top 20" or better as set forth in the Billboard "Top Country Albums" chart). Any single or album embodying the player's performance, and commercially released prior to the preceding calendar year, but achieving its highest charted position in any accepted country music industry publication or chart during the preceding calendar year is eligible unless it has appeared on a previously published ACM ballot in this category. Five (5) nominees shall be selected by the Selections Committee via the MBI as set forth herein and shall be subject to the approval of the ACM Board. Any individual that won this category for the previous year is not eligible to be nominated for the subsequent year only - no consecutive winners. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the Artist/Entertainer/Musician/Bandleader/Instrumentalist and Producer/Engineer/Studio Manager categories of the ACM.

TOP FIDDLE PLAYER OF THE YEAR

This award is presented to an outstanding session fiddle player for the preceding calendar year. The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, success at radio (i.e. player's performance is embodied on a single which achieves "Top 20" or better as set forth in the relevant Billboard or R&R charts) and/or sales of pre-recorded music embodying the performance of player (i.e. "Top 20" or better as set forth in the Billboard "Top Country Albums" chart). Any single or album embodying the player's performance, and commercially released prior to the preceding calendar year, but achieving its highest charted position in any accepted country music industry publication or chart during the preceding calendar year is eligible unless it has appeared on a previously published ACM ballot in this category. Five (5) nominees shall be selected by the Selections Committee via the MBI as set forth herein and shall be subject to the approval of the ACM Board. Any individual that won this category for the previous year is not eligible to be nominated for the subsequent year only - no consecutive winners. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the Artist/Entertainer/Musician/Bandleader/Instrumentalist and Producer/Engineer/Studio Manager categories of the ACM.

TOP SPECIALTY INSTRUMENT(S) PLAYER OF THE YEAR

This award is presented to an outstanding session specialty instrument(s) player for the preceding calendar year. The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, success at radio (i.e. player's performance is embodied on a single which achieves "Top 20" or better as set forth in the relevant Billboard or R&R charts) and/or sales of pre-recorded music embodying the performance of player (i.e. "Top 20" or better as set forth in the Billboard "Top Country Albums" chart). Any single or album embodying the player's performance, and commercially released prior to the preceding calendar year, but achieving its highest charted position in any accepted country music industry publication or chart during the preceding calendar year is eligible unless it has appeared on a previously published ACM ballot in this category. Five (5) nominees shall be selected by the Selections Committee via the MBI as set forth herein and shall be subject to the approval of the ACM Board. Any individual that won this category for the previous year is not eligible to be nominated for the subsequent year only - no consecutive winners. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the Artist/Entertainer/Musician/Bandleader/Instrumentalist and Producer/Engineer/Studio Manager categories of the ACM.

AUDIO ENGINEER OF THE YEAR

This award is presented to an outstanding audio engineer for the preceding calendar year. The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to; success at radio (i.e. engineered a single which achieves "Top 20" or better as set forth in the relevant Billboard or R&R charts) and/or sales of pre-recorded music (i.e. "Top 20" or better as set forth in the Billboard "Top Country Albums" chart). Any single or album crediting "engineer" for engineering same and commercially released prior to the preceding calendar year but achieving its highest charted position in any accepted country music industry publication or chart during the preceding calendar year is eligible unless it has appeared on a previously published ACM ballot in this category. Five (5) nominees shall be selected by the Selections Committee via the MBI as set forth herein and shall be subject to the approval of the ACM Board. Any individual that won this category for the previous year is not eligible to be nominated for the subsequent year only - no consecutive winners. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the Artist/Entertainer/Musician/Bandleader/Instrumentalist and Producer/Engineer/Studio Manager categories of the ACM.

PRODUCER OF THE YEAR OF THE YEAR

This award is presented to an outstanding producer for the preceding calendar year. The factors to be considered include, but are not limited to, success at radio (i.e. produced a single which achieves "Top 20" or better as set forth in the relevant Billboard or R&R charts) and/or sales of pre-recorded music embodying the performance of player (i.e. "Top 20" or better as set forth in the Billboard "Top Country Albums" chart). Any single or album which credits "producer" for producing same and commercially released prior to the preceding calendar year but achieving its highest charted position in any accepted country music industry publication or chart during the preceding calendar year is eligible unless it has appeared on a previously published ACM ballot in this category. Five (5) nominees shall be selected by the Selections Committee via the MBI as set forth herein and shall be subject to the approval of the ACM Board. Any individual that won this category for the previous year is not eligible to be nominated for the subsequent year only - no consecutive winners. The winner shall be determined by a vote of the Artist/Entertainer/Musician/Bandleader/Instrumentalist and Producer/Engineer/Studio Manager categories of the ACM.