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Lionel Richie Named 2016 MusiCares Person of the Year

By [Lars Brandle](#) | August 18, 2015 10:00 AM EDT



Lionel Richie is to be honored as the 2016 MusiCares Person of the Year.

The legendary singer and songwriter will be feted at the 26th annual MusiCares benefit gala, which will be held Feb. 13, 2016 in L.A., just two nights before the Grammy Awards.

Performers confirmed for the special evening include Pharrell Williams, Lady Antebellum and Luke Bryan and others will be announced in due course, organizers said today. Rickey Minor, music director for "American Idol" and a two-time music director for the Grammys, will be the night's musical director.

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Richie will be bestowed the prestigious award in recognition of his "significant creative accomplishments" and for his career-spanning charitable work. The Commodores founding member has been a tireless supporter of various causes, from AIDS awareness to human rights and famine, poverty, human trafficking and women's issues. He's also a longtime contributor to the United Negro College Fund.

Of course, it's the hits that Richie is best remembered for. And there have been many. Richie has enjoyed more than 100 million career album sales and four Grammys, and he has penned an impressive collection of classics from earlier Commodores tracks "Three Times A Lady," "Still" and "Easy" to the '80s standards "All Night Long (All Night)," "Penny Lover," "Stuck On You," and

"Hello." Richie was named a Legend of Live at the 2014 Billboard Touring Awards, Billboard's highest accolade in the touring space.

"I'm really very proud of this," said Richie in a statement. "As far as I'm concerned, this is the highest honor in our music business because it means you have a career. You've survived the journey, if you will. The people who have been there defy categories. When you say Barbra Streisand, Bob Dylan and Paul McCartney -- are you kidding me? When I got in this business I wanted to be like them. When you get recognition like this, it's everything. It really is the top of the mountain when it comes down to what your industry gives as recognition for great work, and the opportunity to help raise funds to sustain MusiCares' critical safety net of programs for members of the music community is momentous to me."

Lionel Richie: The Billboard Shoot

Neil Portnow, president/CEO of the MusiCares Foundation and The Recording Academy, comments:

"Each year our MusiCares Person of the Year tribute honors an extraordinary artist and humanitarian who lends their considerable time and talents to raising the funds necessary to continue to meet the ever-increasing need for our programs and services. And it is truly a privilege to be paying tribute to Lionel, whose musical gifts and philanthropy have touched millions of people around the world."

Adds Bill Silva, chair of the MusiCares foundation board: "Lionel's artistry is a genuine blend of emotional connection and poignant lyricism, and we look forward to a truly magical evening that will highlight his astonishing and inspiring body of work."

The benefit gala dinner and concert raises money for MusiCares, which provides financial and medical help to musicians in need.

For more information, visit www.musicares.org