

The Grammy Awards return to Los Angeles in 2019



English singer-songwriter Adele backstage in February at the 59th Grammy Awards at Staples Center in Los Angeles. (Allen J. Schaben / Los Angeles Times)

By **Randy Lewis**

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In the bicoastal competition to host the [Grammy Awards](#), New York City scored a major victory last month with the news that the music industry's biggest event would be held there next year.

But now Los Angeles has come roaring back with the announcement Wednesday that the Grammys will return to downtown's [Staples Center](#) in 2019 and stay there for at least four years.

The Recording Academy, which puts on the Grammys, reached a deal with [AEG](#), the developer and operator of Staples, where the ceremony has been held for 17 of the last 18 years. The Grammys were held in New York in 2003 for its 45th anniversary and will be held there in 2018 for its 60th birthday.

The deal to have the Grammys in L.A. from 2019 to 2022 — and possibly longer — was a shot in the arm for both AEG and the city.

“Typically our agreements are year to year,” AEG President and CEO Dan Beckerman said. “That’s why I think this announcement about a four-year deal is significant. It gives us that certainty, and that’s important. I think it’s a testament to what the Recording Academy really likes about Staples and what they love about the whole L.A. Live campus and everything it offers: the hotels, the convenience of all the restaurants, and that it’s right near the Grammy Museum, which they open up for special events during Grammy week.”

Declaring that “Los Angeles loves the Grammys,” Mayor [Eric Garcetti](#) said in a statement: “The Grammys are always welcome in the creative capital of the world, and we look forward to the show’s return to Los Angeles.

“The awards have had a home here for well over a decade -- a celebration of the artists who transform how we think about music and sound, and an opportunity to honor the behind-the-scenes talent that make production possible. The music industry is integral to L.A.’s economy, and reflects the spirit of the city itself: diverse, imaginative, and always ready to break new ground.”

In fact, according to a 2015 economic impact study by Roy Weinstein and Kristina Stanford of the L.A.-based firm Micronomics, the 2014 Grammy

Awards show and related events generated at least \$82 million — a conservative estimate, the study's authors stated.

“Total benefit to Los Angeles County associated with the Grammy Awards could be close to \$200 million,” the study concluded, when factoring in increased tourism and other non-direct spending prompted by the Grammys.

“These are international events that draw people from around the country and around the world,” Beckerman said Tuesday. “They’re staying here for extended periods of time, staying in hotels, eating in restaurants and with the ancillary events like MusiCares, I’m not the least bit surprised that it has an economic impact of this magnitude.”

One facet of the move to New York next year was an effort to continue mending the relationship between the organization and city officials dating back nearly two decades, when the Recording Academy’s then-President Mike Green was embroiled in a dispute with then-Mayor [Rudy Giuliani](#) over Giuliani’s wish to reveal a list of award nominees sooner than academy officials wanted.

Recording Academy officials described the choice of New York for 2018 as “a move initiated to not only provide a unique celebration for the 60th anniversary, but also serve as a reflection of the organization's national presence, with members across the country.”

“We understand that they have a lot of different needs and different memberships to satisfy,” AEG’s Beckerman said. “We understand their desire, which [academy chief] Neil communicated to me dating back years, when he told me that at some point they would be going back to New York. We understand that and support him 100%.”

One factor in the equation that did not exist when the Grammys last visited New York 15 years ago was direct competition in Los Angeles between AEG and the

Madison Square Garden Co., which established a beachhead in 2014 with its purchase and \$100-million renovation of the Forum in Inglewood.

Neither MSG nor superstar manager Irving Azoff, who helped MSG land the Grammy ceremony for next year, would comment on this story or their future plans.

Asked whether competition with MSG in the Southland added an extra measure of motivation to enter into the four-year contract, Beckerman noted: “We’ve been partners for a long time with the Recording Academy. I think our commitment to the Recording Academy has been demonstrated since they first came here in 1999.”

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, officials at Madison Square Garden and Julie Menin, the recently appointed commissioner of the Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment, faced tremendous logistical and financial obstacles in bringing the ceremony to that city next year. But all indications are that the show will primarily be L.A.-based in the future, even though periodic excursions to other cities and venues may still happen.

“We very much consider Staples Center our home and are grateful for the successful relationship we’ve cultivated throughout the years with AEG and the entire Staples Center team,” Recording Academy President and CEO Neil Portnow said in a statement. “We look forward to continuing this relationship and bringing the Grammys back” to Los Angeles.

When the Grammy Awards began, it was a bicoastal event that recognized the major presence of record industry businesses in New York and Los Angeles. Awards were distributed in both cities for the first three years, then Chicago was included to make it a three-pronged annual ceremony from 1962 to 1964, and the event expanded further to include Nashville for several years in the late ’60s.

Through the 1970s, '80s and '90s it largely shifted between New York and Los Angeles, after another visit to Nashville in 1973. But with the opening of Staples Center in 1999, the Grammys found a home at a venue that was designed to accommodate the ceremony and the accompanying national telecast.

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