PRODUCERS +ENGINEERS®

2027 TECHNICAL GRAMMY®

TECHNICAL GRAMMY DESCRIPTION:

The Technical GRAMMY is awarded to those individuals who have dramatically pushed boundaries and made groundbreaking, important, outstanding and influential contributions of technical excellence and innovation to the recording field throughout their lifetime. The Technical GRAMMY will not be awarded to individuals who have been deceased for more than 10 years.

Please ensure that your submission fits these criteria.

On rare occasions, company, organization or institution submissions will also be considered by the Blue Ribbon Technical GRAMMY Review Committee. In these cases, it must be clear that the submission's innovative, groundbreaking technology or contribution originated at the company, organization or institution (i.e. was not licensed or purchased from another entity and then improved upon) and was created by a fairly large group within the entity so it would not be appropriate to award just one or two individuals.

PREVIOUS TECHNICAL GRAMMY RECIPIENTS:

Dr. Thomas G. Stockham, Jr. (1994)
Ray Dolby (1995)
Rupert Neve (1997)
George Massenburg (1998)
Sony/Philips (1998)
Georg Neumann GmbH (1999)
AMS Neve plc (2000)
Bill Putnam (2000)
Digidesign (2001)
Les Paul (2001)
Apple Computer, Inc. (2002)
Dr. Robert Moog (2002)
Geoff Emerick (2003)
Shure Incorporated (2003)
Douglas Sax (2004)
Solid State Logic (2004)
JBL Professional (2005)
Phil Ramone (2005)
Tom Dowd (2006)
Western Electric/Bell Labs (2006)
David M. Smith (2007)
Yamaha Corporation (2007)
Ampex Corporation (2008)
John Eargle (2008)
Leo Fender (2009)
Universal Audio (2009)
AKG Acoustics Gmbh (2010)
Thomas Alva Edison (2010)
Roger Linn (2011)
WAVES Audio Ltd. (2011)
Celemony Software GmbH (2012)
Roger Nichols (2012)
Ikutaro Kakehashi & Dave Smith (2013)
Royer Labs (2013)
Emile Berliner (2014)
Lexicon (2014)
Dr. Raymond Kurzweil (2015)
EMT (2016)
Dr. Harvey Fletcher (2016)
Alan Dower Blumlein (2017)
Tony Agnello & Richard Factor (2018)
Saul Walker (2019)
George Augspurger (2020)
Daniel Weiss (2021)
Dr. Harold (Andy) Hildebrand (2023)
Audio Engineering Society (AES) (2023)
Tom Kobayashi & Tom Scott (2024)
Dr. Leo Beranek (2025)
John Chowning (2026)

THINGS TO CONSIDER PRIOR TO SUBMITTING A TECHNICAL GRAMMY RECOMMENDATION

1. Review the **Technical GRAMMY Description** (on page 1 of this document).

2. Does this individual's contribution to the recording industry **rise to the level** of previous Technical GRAMMY Award recipients? Review the list of past winners here: https://www.grammy.com/awards/technical-awards

3. Is this individual's contribution **technical in nature** and NOT his or her musical "body of work" as a producer or engineer? This Award requires a significant technical contribution to the industry **beyond being a great producer or engineer**.

   For example, Phil Ramone received his Technical GRAMMY for technical innovations such as facilitating the first surround sound optical track in a movie, the first satellite link between a film soundstage and a recording studio, his work with Dolby and the innovative production techniques and early use of EDNet technology on the Frank Sinatra *Duets* project, not for his renowned body of engineering and production work.

   Mastering engineer Doug Sax did not win for his body of work of mastering recordings, but for pioneering modern day direct-to-disc recording and the establishment of a true audiophile signal path in a mastering studio.

4. Have this individual's valuable contributions been **specific to the music recording industry**?

5. Are the individual's technical contributions to the recording industry **truly innovative**? In other words, is the person's work original, or based, in large part, on the work others have done previously? If the work is based on past technology, does this person's new work advance the original technology to a degree that it is truly important and innovative?

Ideally, Technical GRAMMY bios should answer these questions for the reader in the recommendation.

We call it a bio, but don't feel pressured to dedicate the space to telling an individual's life story. (And please avoid submitting a Wikipedia entry or promotional marketing copy.)

Instead, focus on telling the story of the individual's technical contributions and the impact of those contributions to the recording industry.

TECHNICAL GRAMMY SAMPLE BIO

We are pleased to present the bio of the 2026 Technical GRAMMY recipient, John Chowning, as an example of an impactful submission:

JOHN CHOWNING

The cascading intro to Toto's "Africa"; the angular hook in Prince's "When Doves Cry;" the bouncy marimba motif in a-ha's "Take On Me"—these iconic, instantly recognizable sounds were created with the Yamaha GS1 and DX7 synthesizers, utilizing technology pioneered and developed by John Chowning. A visionary composer, computer engineer, and technological innovator, Chowning discovered the frequency modulation (FM) synthesis algorithm, which uses one sound wave to shape another, creating complex tones. His groundbreaking research unlocked a vast new vocabulary for synthesized music.

Chowning studied composition in Paris with Nadia Boulanger and, in 1966, received a doctorate in composition from Stanford University. At Stanford's Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, he helped establish one of the first computer music programs in the world. His early research focused on spatial audio perception: "I was searching for sounds that had some internal dynamism," Chowning once explained, "because for localization one has to have sounds that are dynamic in order to perceive their distance. The direct signal and the reverberant signal have to have some phase differences in order for us to perceive that there are in fact two different signals. Vibrato is one of the ways that one can do that."

This exploration of localization ultimately led to a discovery that transformed synthesized music: the FM synthesis algorithm. For the first time, composers and engineers could dynamically control timbre with remarkable computational efficiency. Combined with envelope filters, FM synthesis could convincingly mimic real instruments—or invent sounds no one had ever heard before. In 1973, Stanford licensed the FM synthesis patent to Yamaha, who released the massively popular Yamaha DX7, which became one of the most popular and influential synthesizers in history, defining the very sound of popular music in the 1980s and beyond. Its unmistakable sound became a staple of chart-topping hits by artists such as Whitney Houston, Herbie Hancock, Depeche Mode, Phil Collins, and Brian Eno, who famously said, "I use the DX7 because I understand it… I have a relationship with it."

Chowning co-founded Stanford's Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics (CCRMA), which remains a globally influential institution at the intersection of music, engineering, and computer science. CCRMA research fueled advances in spatialization, digital signal processing, and virtual acoustics—research that continues to shape how we create, capture, and experience music today. Chowning's own early experiments in surround sound simulation, including 360-degree motion using four speakers as early as 1972, presaged today's immersive audio technologies.

Chowning was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1988 and has received several honorary doctorates in recognition of his singular contributions to music and technology. Now 90, he is Professor Emeritus at Stanford and remains an active contributor to and mentor in the field of synthesized music. His legacy—equal parts scientific brilliance and artistic imagination—redefined the very fabric of recorded sound. His achievements are transformative, enduring, and fully deserving of the Technical GRAMMY Award.

For more on John Chowning at CCRMA. (492 words)

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TECHNICAL GRAMMY® 2027 RECOMMENDATION FORM

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Name of Individual: _____

Contact Information for Individual
Please do your best to include the direct contact information for the individual you are submitting for consideration.

Address: _____

_____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Return this form (last page only) along with a one-page bio, not to exceed 500 words, via email to candice.yang@recordingacademy.com by FRIDAY, MAY 22, 2026.

The bio must outline specific contributions, major developments or techniques, and what impact this individual (or company) has had on the recording industry (i.e. it should demonstrate how the individual [or company] meets the criteria set forth in the Technical GRAMMY description above). Please include any available citations or footnotes, which will not be considered part of the 500-word limit.

Contact Information for Submitter

Name: _____ Date: _____

Chapter: _____

Submitting as a member of:

☐ Producers & Engineers Wing Advisory Council ☐ Producers & Engineers Wing Chapter Committee

☐ Recording Academy Chapter Board