# BRITISH INVASION:
## All about the BRITs



LOGO BY ESHITHA RAO, CONTRIBUTING ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

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A new year brings new beginnings, fortunes and opportunities. It also brings forth awards season — when people's hard work creating a body of art is culminated in stuffy three-hour awards ceremonies, filled to the brim with musical performances, red carpet interviews and comedy bits. This even includes presenting some of the awards that they were supposed to give out.

Since the Grammys held their ceremony last Sunday, Feb. 1, I thought it would be nice to talk about its British counterpart, the BRITs. Welcome to the BRITs edition of British Invasion, the column that dives into British music history.

The BRITs are the premier music awards show in the U.K. much like the Grammys. The ceremony is run by the British Phonographic Industry (BPI) and held their first awards in 1977. Beginning in 1982, they started holding the awards ceremony annually and in 1985 it became televised. The ceremony is less known for the awards and more for notable moments by its guests, especially during the 1990s, which cemented the ceremony's reputation for being "shambolic, unpredictable and, at times, anarchic," according to the Irish Independent.

One unique quirk of the BRITs is its trophies. Since 2011, the winner's statuette has been redesigned by various British architects and designers, including Vivienne Westwood, Damien Hirst and Anish Kapoor.

The first ceremony was held in 1977, then called the British Record Britannia Centenary Awards. 11 million people tuned in to watch both the centenary celebration of Thomas Edison inventing sound recordings and the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, as they gave out trophies to those who shaped British music culture in the past 25 years. This explains why the Beatles won Best British Group and Album for "Sgt. Pepper Lonely Hearts Club Band," even though the band broke up in 1970 and the album was released in 1967.

From 1985 to 1989, the ceremony was broadcast live to the public. That is, until a disastrous 1989 ceremony, where presenters Mick Fleetwood and Sam Fox missed cues, announced incorrect winners and Michael Jackson's pre-recorded acceptance speech was completely forgotten about, prompted the BPI to record future events and broadcast them for the following night. A good call given some of the stuff that happened in future ceremonies.

In the 1992 ceremony, electronic band The KLF opened the show alongside grindcore metal band Extreme Noise Terror. Both groups delivered a chaotic performance, which ended with The KLF's Bill Drummond firing blanks from a vintage machine gun into the audience. The event signaled their exit from the music industry, as they concluded the performance with "Ladies and gentlemen, The KLF have now left the music business."

In 1998, Danbert Nobacon of Chumbawamba dumped a bucket of ice water over Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott. Not because Prescott was partaking in the ice bucket challenge, but more as an act of protest from Chumbawamba against the Labour Party government of the time.

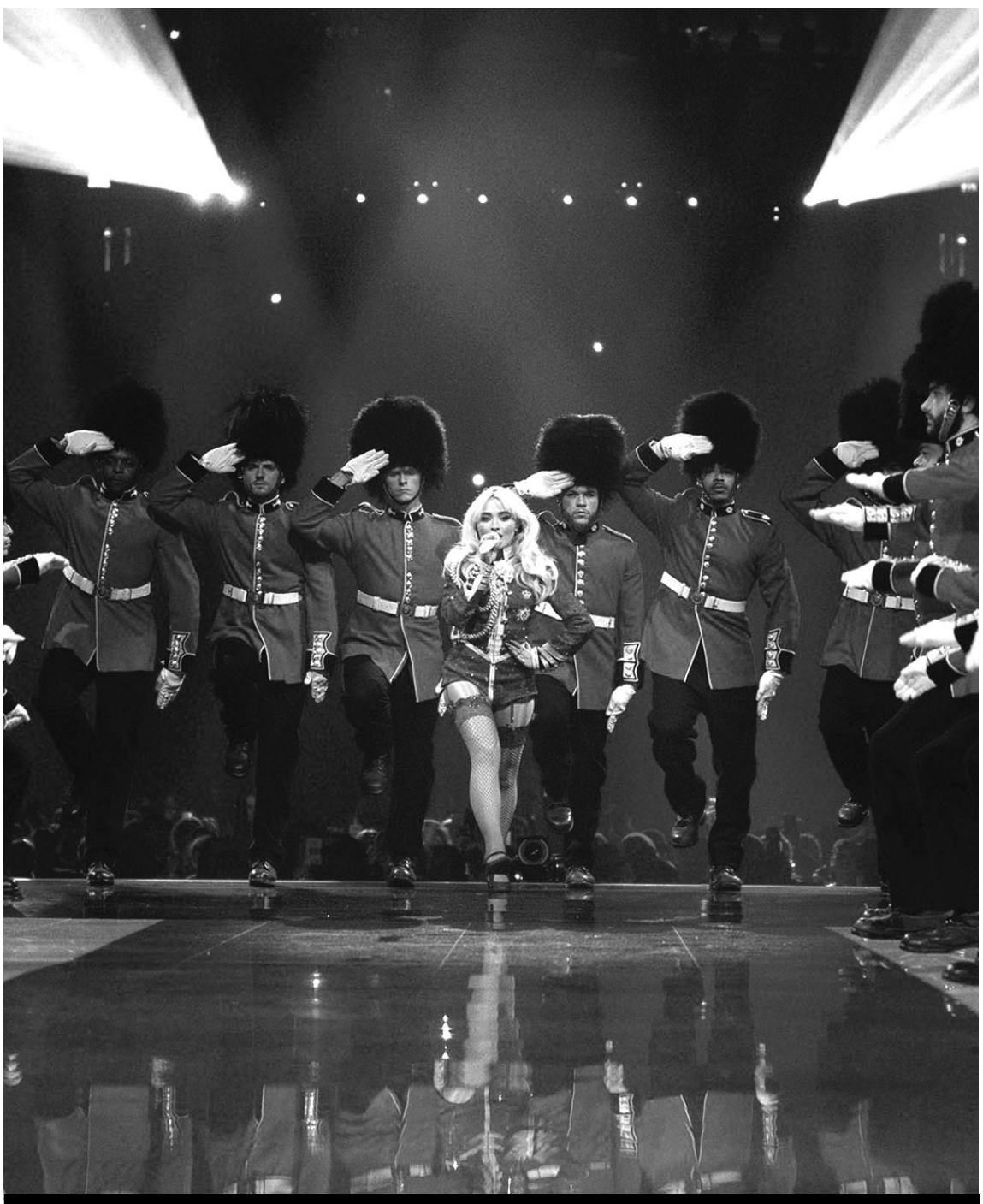
Even after the program returned to a live broadcast after 2006, it still had moments like Adele brandishing a middle finger towards the crowd after her acceptance speech was cut off 30 seconds in, even though she was accepting the show's most coveted prize, British Album of the Year.

The BRITs award several dozen categories per year, albeit not on the same scale as the Grammys, who gave out 96 trophies in 2026. It's a condensed list of awards mainly focused on celebrating British artists. Awards include the "Big Four" you'll find in the Grammys, and the genre awards are slim pickings, only awarding the best genre act. There are also awards for international artists outside of the U.K. for best artist, group and song.

Across 45 ceremonies, Robbie Williams holds the record for most BRITs awards, with 13 as a solo artist and five as a member of Take That. Adele is the most awarded female act with 12 statuettes to her name. Coldplay hold the distinction for the most awarded British group with nine BRITs. U2 and Prince hold the mantle for most wins by an international act, with seven apiece.

The 2026 ceremony will be held on Feb. 28, hosted by comedian Jack Whitehall. Olivia Dean and Lola Young, both newly awarded Grammy-winning artists, lead the nominations with five apiece. Other nominees of note are Jim Legxacy for both Best R&B and Hip-Hop act, Cynthia Ervio and Ariana Grande's duet "Defying Gravity" for Song of the Year and PinkPantheress for Best Dance Act.

The BRITs may not be the biggest, most prestigious or flamboyant music awards show, but it has carved out its own unique niche amongst heavy hitters and has struck a chord with the British public, seen in the millions of people who still tune in. That's all I've got for this week, so come back in two weeks' time to see what else I'll talk about to close out this frigid February!



**Sabrina Carpenter's performance at the 2025 BRIT Awards. This year's ceremony will be held on Feb. 28.**

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