

# Dance music finally steps into Grammy gaze



**MOVING IN:** DJ David Guetta will be among the dance music artists spotlighted at the Grammy Awards for the first time tonight.

PIYA SINHA-ROY

Dance music finally steps out of its niche and joins the Grammy party tonight, crowning its journey from the underground rave scene to the mainstream music industry.

Just as hip hop was finally embraced by Grammy organisers in 1989, electronica comes of age this year with a DJ nominated for best new artist for the first time, and the first dance music tribute to be broadcast on the music industry's biggest night.

"It's exploding in the country now, if you look at the festivals where dance music is prevalent, if you look at the DJs in this community. So we thought, it's time, and it's never been done on television," Neil Portnow, president of the Recording Academy said.

Skrillex, 24, a dubstep-electronica DJ, has five Grammy nominations including one for best new artist — the first time

a DJ has been nominated in the category. He competes alongside rappers Nicki Minaj and J Cole, country performers the Band Perry and indie rock band Bon Iver.

Tonight's awards ceremony in Los Angeles also features DJs David Guetta and Deadmau5 joined by rockers Foo Fighters and rappers Chris Brown and Lil Wayne in a special dance and electronica performance.

"I think it's nice that the Grammys have made an effort to include dance this year," Grammy-winning music producer and DJ Mark Ronson said.

"You can't really ignore that the charts are dominated by Calvin Harris and Guetta and kids want to go out and see Deadmau5 like it's a rock show," said Ronson, who is featured with Skrillex and others in the upcoming documentary film *Re:Generation*, about the cutting edge genre.

Electronica music emerged from clubs,

raves and festivals that focus on house music, while dubstep came from the underground grime and drum and bass scene in south London, England.

Its popularity grew through collaborations with indie rock, synth-pop and electronica groups. But the transition from underground to mainstream came when artists such as pop star Lady Gaga, rapper Pitbull and hip hop group Black

Eyed Peas, made dance and electronica a key element of songs such as Gaga's chart-topper *Just Dance* and the Peas' track *Boom Boom Pow*.

"We were inspired by electro and dance music, and that's why we took the turn that we took," said Black Eyed Peas rapper Taboo. He noted that the band brought in Frenchman Guetta to work on their 2009 hit *I Got A Feelin'*.

"It introduced the Black Eyed Peas to a whole different genre of music, which was taking dance or electro-style music

and making it mainstream," Taboo said.

Just as members of the Recording

Academy, which gives out the Grammys, did with rap music, they have taken time in embracing dance at the annual awards show, which is seen by millions on television.

The academy gave rap its own Grammy Award category in 1989, despite hip hop culture emerging in the late 1970s and fairly quickly moving into the mainstream music scene.

"Dance music and electronica comes from such a niche culture. But 30 years ago, hip hop was niche and now it's basically the sound of pop music," said Ronson.

The dance music act getting the biggest attention ahead of tonight's awards is LA native Skrillex, whose Grammy nominations include two for his album *Scary Monsters and Nice Sprites*.

"Skrillex is a real prolific artist and not just a DJ. He's definitely creating some interesting music. There's always one artist who opens the floodgates for others to follow, and we've seen it with Skrillex and Deadmau5," said David Waxman, senior vice-president of record label Ultra Music.

The best dance recording category at the Grammys is a tight race between

electro-house DJ Deadmau5, Duck Sauce, chart-topping DJs Guetta and Avicii, Swedish electro-pop singer Robyn, Skrillex and electro-house group Swedish House Mafia.

"It's really reflective of what kids and the public are listening to. There may be people voting who aren't aware of what's happening underground, but it is definitely reflective of the best dance crossover happening out there," said Waxman. REUTERS

---

The 2012 Grammy Awards will be shown on E! (D53) from 6am tomorrow morning.