



Analysis of The New York Times' Top 30 Songwriters List

Description

A recent list by *The New York Times* has sparked debate among music fans. It highlights the "30 Greatest Living American Songwriters" and aims to celebrate influential composers in the industry. However, many people have reacted with cynicism, focusing on omissions and inclusions rather than appreciating the list's potential for discussion.

The list was created by a panel of six journalists, who reportedly consulted around 250 experts in music. While it includes prominent country songwriters like Dolly Parton and Willie Nelson, critics note that none of the main contributors to the list come from the country music scene. Other notable mentions include Lucinda Williams, who represents a more Americana style of songwriting.

However, not all entries have received praise. The inclusion of three songwriters, Josh Osborne, Brandy Clark, and Shane McAnally, in a single slot has drawn criticism. Although all are accomplished, critics argue that each deserves individual recognition. Furthermore, some believe the list could have benefited from including additional country songwriters, such as Alan Jackson or James McMurtry, who are influential figures in the genre.

Despite mixed reactions, the list serves a purpose. It can generate conversations about songwriting and highlight the essential roles songwriters play in the music industry. The broader implications of this list reflect ongoing discussions about representation and the criteria used to define greatness in songwriting.

Vocabulary List:

1. **debate** //dɪ'beɪt// (noun): a talk where people disagree about something
2. **cynicism** //ˈsɪnɪ,sɪzəm// (noun): belief that people are selfish or insincere
3. **omissions** //ə'mɪʃənz// (noun): things left out or not included
4. **panel** //ˈpænəl// (noun): a small group of people who judge
5. **prominent** //ˈprɒmɪnənt// (adjective): important and easily noticed or known
6. **criteria** //kraɪ'tɪrɪə// (noun): rules or standards used to judge something

Comprehension Questions



Multiple Choice

1. Who created the list of the '30 Greatest Living American Songwriters'?
 - Option: A panel of six journalists
 - Option: A group of music fans
 - Option: A single music expert
 - Option: A music industry executive
2. Which notable country songwriters are included in the list?
 - Option: Dolly Parton and Willie Nelson
 - Option: Garth Brooks and Tim McGraw
 - Option: Kacey Musgraves and Miranda Lambert
 - Option: Alan Jackson and James McMurtry
3. How many experts in music were consulted for the list?
 - Option: 100
 - Option: 150
 - Option: 250
 - Option: 300
4. Which songwriters were criticized for being grouped together in a single slot?
 - Option: Josh Osborne, Brandy Clark, and Shane McAnally
 - Option: Dolly Parton and Willie Nelson
 - Option: Lucinda Williams and Sheryl Crow
 - Option: Alan Jackson and James McMurtry
5. What genre does Lucinda Williams represent?
 - Option: Jazz
 - Option: Americana
 - Option: Rock
 - Option: Pop
6. What has sparked debate among music fans regarding the list?
 - Option: The design of the list
 - Option: Omissions and inclusions
 - Option: The method of creation
 - Option: The writers' backgrounds



True-False

7. The list includes only country songwriters.
8. Critics have generally praised all entries on the list.
9. The list can generate conversations about songwriting.
10. None of the contributors to the list have ties to country music.
11. The list aims to suppress discussion among fans.
12. The broader implications of the list reflect ongoing discussions about representation.

Gap-Fill

13. The list highlights the '30 Greatest Living American Songwriters' and aims to celebrate influential _____.
14. Critics note that the main contributors to the list come from outside the _____ music scene.
15. The inclusion of three songwriters in a single slot has drawn _____.
16. Some believe the list could have benefited from including additional country songwriters, such as Alan Jackson or _____.
17. The list serves a purpose by generating conversations about songwriting and highlighting the essential roles _____ play in the music industry.
18. The discussions about the list reflect the criteria used to define _____ in songwriting.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. A panel of six journalists 2. Dolly Parton and Willie Nelson 3. 250 4. Josh Osborne, Brandy Clark, and Shane McAnally



5. Americana 6. Omissions and inclusions

True-False: 7. False 8. False 9. True 10. True 11. False 12. True

Gap-Fill: 13. composers 14. country 15. criticism 16. James McMurtry 17. songwriters 18. greatness

CATEGORY

1. Entertainment - LEVEL4

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