



2026 Inductees Announced

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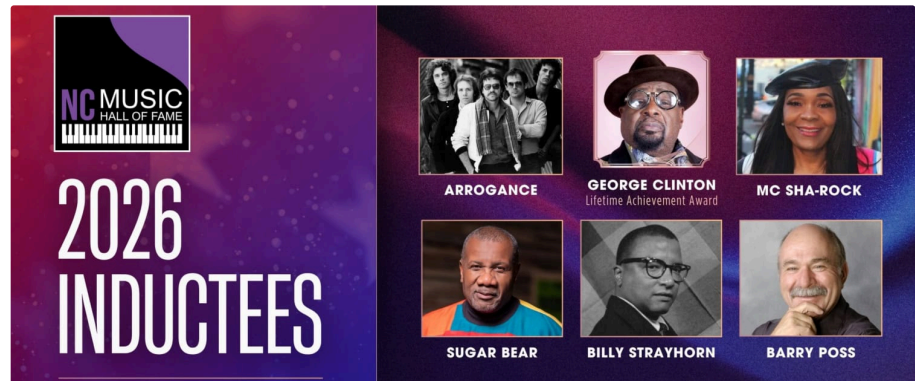
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NORTH CAROLINA MUSIC HALL OF FAME ANNOUNCES 2026 INDUCTEES

Induction Ceremony Tickets Now Available to the Public

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KANNAPOLIS, N.C. (June 18, 2026) – The North Carolina Music Hall of Fame has announced its 2026 class of inductees, honoring six influential artists and groups whose work has helped shape American music across genres.

Presented by Visit Mooresville, the 2026 Induction Ceremony will take place Thursday, Oct. 15, 2026, at the Charles Mack Citizen Center in Mooresville, N.C. The event is open to the public, with tickets available now at NorthCarolinaMusicHallOfFame.org. The 2026 inductees are:

MC SHA-ROCK (Wilmington, N.C.)

MC SHA-ROCK is the first female of Hip Hop culture and a founding member of the pioneering group Funky 4 + 1. Emerging during Hip-Hop's formative years in the late 1970s, she helped establish new standards for microphone technique, lyrical delivery, and live performance. Funky 4 + 1 became the first Hip-Hop group to appear on national television with a performance on Saturday Night Live in 1981, helping introduce Hip-Hop culture to a mainstream audience. MC SHA-ROCK's influence has been recognized by generations of artists and historians, and her contributions are foundational to the global reach of Hip-Hop music and culture.

Sugar Bear (Red Springs, N.C.)

Gregory "Sugar Bear" Elliott is a founding member of Experience Unlimited (E.U.) and a pioneer of Go-Go music. E.U. recorded three Billboard-charting singles and reached No. 1 on the Billboard Black Singles chart with "Da Butt" in 1988. The group received a Grammy nomination for the song, earned a Soul Train Award for Best New Artist, and was ranked No. 61 on VH1's 100 Greatest One Hit Wonders of the 80s. E.U. performed nationally and internationally, contributing to the global recognition of Go-Go music.

Arrogance (Chapel Hill, N.C.)

Arrogance is a Chapel Hill-based rock band that formed at the University of North Carolina, co-founded by Robert Kirkland and acclaimed producer and musician Don Dixon. The group is recognized as an early contributor to the independent music movement. Their self-released debut album Give Us a Break established an early model for DIY recording and distribution and helped define the regional independent rock scene that influenced later national indie acts. They remain widely regarded as North Carolina's original indie rock trailblazers.

Barry Poss (Durham, N.C.)

Barry Poss is the founder of Sugar Hill Records, a label central to the development of modern bluegrass and Americana music. Under his leadership, the label released recordings by Doc Watson, Ricky Skaggs, Alison Krauss, Dolly Parton, Jerry Douglas, Doyle Lawson, Nickel Creek, Sam Bush, and The Osborne Brothers. These releases contributed to multiple Grammy-winning and Grammy-nominated projects and played a significant role in shaping the sound of modern progressive bluegrass, and expanding its national and international reach.

Billy Strayhorn (Hillsborough, N.C.)

Billy Strayhorn was an influential jazz composer and arranger best known for his long-term collaboration with Duke Ellington.



recognized in the Grammy Hall of Fame and by the Library of Congress for its historical and cultural significance. His arrangements were central to the development of the Duke Ellington Orchestra over nearly three decades.

Eddie Ray Lifetime Achievement Award

George Clinton (Kannapolis, N.C.)

George Clinton is the founder of Parliament and Funkadelic and a pioneer of funk music. He was inducted into the North Carolina Music Hall of Fame in 2009 and is being recognized in 2026 with the Eddie Ray Lifetime Achievement Award for his decades of influence on American music.

Over more than five decades, he developed a distinctive musical and visual style that influenced funk, hip-hop, R&B, rock, and pop. His work with Parliament-Funkadelic introduced new approaches to production, performance, and concept-driven albums, establishing him as an iconic figure in modern American music.

The Eddie Ray Lifetime Achievement Award is named for music industry pioneer Eddie Ray (2009 inductee), and honors individuals whose decades-long careers have had a profound and lasting impact on American music.

Event Details

The 2026 Induction Ceremony, presented by Visit Mooresville, will take place Thursday, Oct. 15, 2026, at the Charles Mack Citizen Center in Mooresville, N.C. The event is open to the public and will include appearances and live performances by inductees. The full list of performers will be announced at a later date.

Tickets start at \$80 and are available now at NorthCarolinaMusicHallOfFame.org.

About the North Carolina Music Hall of Fame

The North Carolina Music Hall of Fame is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to recognizing, promoting, and preserving the state's musical heritage. Founded in 1994, the Hall of Fame has inducted 143 individuals representing a wide range of genres, all with strong ties to North Carolina and at least ten years of national prominence.

Located at 600 Dale Earnhardt Blvd. in Kannapolis, N.C., the North Carolina Music Hall of Fame Museum is housed within the Curb Music & Motorsports Museum, which highlights the career and legacy of Mike Curb in both the music and motorsports industries. The North Carolina Music Hall of Fame Museum features more than 65 exhibits showcasing inductee memorabilia, including Charlie Daniels' fiddle, Arthur Smith's banjo, and artifacts from artists such as Jermaine Dupri, Luke Combs, Tori Amos, Roberta Flack, Randy Travis, and The Avett Brothers.

In conjunction with the 2026 induction ceremony, new exhibits featuring memorabilia from the 2026 inductees will open at the museum in October. Admission to the museum and the new inductee exhibit is free. Guided tours are available upon request, and donations are welcomed to support ongoing programming.

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2026 INDUCTION CEREMONY

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