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**Billboard Announces Finalists For The 2006 Billboard R&B Hip-Hop Awards
--Jamie Foxx, Mary J. Blige, Mariah Carey and Kanye West Lead Finalists in Multiple Categories--**

New York, NY (June 22, 2006) — Billboard, the world's most trusted source of music, video and digital entertainment news, charts, reviews and analysis, announced today the finalists for the 2006 Billboard R&B Hip-Hop Awards. The winners will be revealed at a star-studded awards party, which is being held on September 8th in Atlanta.

Jamie Foxx leads the pack this year as a finalist in eight categories including Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums, Top R&B/Hip-Hop Songs, and Top R&B/Hip-Hop Artists. Mary J. Blige, Mariah Carey and Kanye West follow closely behind as finalists in seven categories, while new rapper Young Jeezy is up for four awards.

"The Billboard R&B Hip-Hop Awards celebrate the hottest genre of music on the charts today," said Gail Mitchell, Billboard's senior R&B/hip-hop editor. "From veteran artists such as Mary J. Blige and Mariah Carey to new artists such as Chris Brown and Keyshia Cole, this year's finalists include some of the best and brightest stars that the music industry has to offer."

Billboard will also honor the top R&B and hip-hop songwriters, producers and record labels during this award show, along with Etta James, who will receive the coveted R&B Founders Award for the incredible impact that she has had on today's R&B music.

The Billboard R&B Hip-Hop Awards honor the genres' most popular albums, songs, artists, and contributors, as determined by the actual sales and radio airplay data that informs Billboard's weekly charts. Finalists and winners reflect performance of recordings on Billboard's R&B Hip-Hop and Rap charts, during the one-year period from the May 28, 2005 issue of Billboard through the May 20, 2006 issue of Billboard. A new artist is considered any artist who has not appeared on a Billboard album chart prior to the March 26, 2005 issue or has not been a new artist finalist in the past.

The following is a list of finalists for the 2006 Billboard R&B Hip-Hop Awards:

TOP R&B/HIP-HOP ALBUMS

The Breakthrough	Mary J. Blige	Matriarch/Geffen/Interscope
The Emancipation of Mimi	Mariah Carey	Island/IDJMG
Unpredictable	Jamie Foxx	J/RMG
Late Registration	Kanye West	Roc-A-Fella/Def Jam/IDJMG

TOP R&B/HIP-HOP SONGS

Be Without You	Mary J. Blige	Geffen/Interscope
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We Belong Together	Mariah Carey	Island/IDJMG
Unpredictable	Jamie Foxx	
	Feat. Ludacris	J/RMG
Gold Digger	Kanye West Feat.	
	Jamie Foxx	Roc-A-Fella/Def Jam/IDJMG

TOP R&B/HIP-HOP ARTISTS

Mary J. Blige	Matriarch/Geffen/Interscope
Mariah Carey	Island/IDJMG
Jamie Foxx	J/RMG
Kanye West	Roc-A-Fella/Def Jam/IDJMG

TOP R&B/HIP-HOP ARTISTS – MALE

Jamie Foxx	J/RMG
T.I.	Grand Hustle/Atlantic/AG
Kanye West	Roc-A-Fella/Def Jam/IDJMG
Young Jeezy	Corporate Thugz/Def Jam/IDJMG

TOP R&B/HIP-HOP ARTISTS – FEMALE

Mary J. Blige	Matriarch/Geffen/Interscope
Mariah Carey	Island/IDJMG
Keyshia Cole	A&M/Interscope
Alicia Keys	J/RMG

TOP R&B/HIP-HOP ARTISTS – DUO OR GROUP

The Black Eyed Peas	A&M/Interscope
Dem Franchize Boyz	So So Def/Virgin
Destiny’s Child	Columbia/Sony Music
Ying Yang Twins	ColliPark/TVT

TOP R&B/HIP-HOP ARTISTS – NEW

Chris Brown	Jive/Zomba
Keyshia Cole	A&M/Interscope
Ne-Yo	Def Jam/IDJMG
Young Jeezy	Corporate Thugz/Def Jam/IDJMG

TOP R&B/HIP-HOP SONGS ARTIST

Mary J. Blige	Matriarch/Geffen/Interscope
Chris Brown	Jive/Zomba
Mariah Carey	Island/IDJMG
Keyshia Cole	A&M/Interscope

TOP R&B/HIP-HOP ALBUMS ARTIST

Mary J. Blige	Matriarch/Geffen/Interscope
Mariah Carey	Island/IDJMG
Jamie Foxx	J/RMG
Kanye West	Roc-A-Fella/Def Jam/IDJMG

TOP RAP ALBUMS

Monkey Business King	The Black Eyed Peas T.I.	A&M/Interscope Grand Hustle/Atlantic/AG
Late Registration Let's Get It: Thug Motivation 101	Kanye West Young Jeezy	Roc-A-Fella/Def Jam/IDJMG Corporate Thugz/Def Jam/IDJMG

TOP R&B/ HIP-HOP SONGS – SALES

Run It!	Chris Brown	Jive/Zomba
In The Kitchen Back Together Again	R. Kelly Meli'sa Morgan & Freddie Jackson	Jive/Zomba LuAnn/Orpheus
Don't Cha	Pussycat Dolls Feat. Busta Rhymes	A&M/Interscope

TOP R&B/ HIP-HOP SONGS – AIRPLAY

Be Without You	Mary J. Blige	Geffen/Interscope
We Belong Together	Mariah Carey	Island/IDJMG
Unpredictable	Jamie Foxx Feat. Ludacris	J/RMG
Must Be Nice	Lyfe Jennings	Columbia/SUM

HOT RAP TRACKS

Like You Grillz	Bow Wow Feat. Ciara Nelly Feat. Paul Wall, Ali & Gipp	Columbia/SUM Derrty/Fo'Reel/Universal Motown
Gold Digger	Kanye West Feat. Jamie Foxx	Roc-A-Fella/Def Jam/IDJMG
Soul Survivor	Young Jeezy Feat. Akon	Corporate Thugz/Def Jam/IDJMG

TOP SONGWRITERS

Johnta Austin
Jermaine Dupri
Robert Kelly
Scott Storch

TOP PRODUCERS

Mr. Collipark
Bryan-Michael Cox
Jermaine Dupri
Scott Storch

TOP MAJOR LABEL

Atlantic Group
Interscope
Island Def Jam Music Group
Sony Music

TOP INDEPENDENT LABEL

Koch
Invisible
Ruthless
TVT

The Billboard R&B Hip-Hop Awards will cap off the 7th annual R&B Hip-Hop Conference, which is taking place from September 6-8 at the Renaissance Waverly Hotel in Atlanta. This 3-day event brings together music professionals that help to create, produce, promote and distribute this exciting genre of music. The conference will be packed with panels keyed to current issues and trends in the R&B/hip-hop industry, workshops, artist showcases, savvy speakers, networking opportunities, and an exclusive Q&A keynote session with a major name in the music business.

For more information on the Billboard R&B Hip-Hop Conference & Awards, visit www.billboardevents.com or contact Michele Jacangelo at 646-654-4660. For information on registration and group discounts, contact Erin Parker at 646-654-4643. For sponsorship information, contact Karl Vontz at 415-738-0745. For hotel information, contact the Renaissance Waverly Hotel at 770.953.4500. For press credentials, please contact Lila Gerson at 212-255-8455.

About Billboard:

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