

**NEWS from the LIBRARY OF CONGRESS**

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**Elton John and Bernie Taupin to Receive the Library of Congress**

**Gershwin Prize for Popular Song**

*PBS to Premiere Concert Special Honoring Elton John and Bernie Taupin on April 8*

Elton John and Bernie Taupin, one of the great songwriting duos of all time, will be the 2024 recipients of the Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for Popular Song, Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden announced today. The prize is named for another legendary songwriting team, George and Ira Gershwin, whose papers are held by the Library.

John and Taupin will be honored with a tribute concert in Washington, D.C., that will premiere on PBS stations nationwide on April 8 at 8 p.m. ET (check local listings).

A once-in-a-lifetime meeting between John, a young piano player, and lyricist Taupin together in 1967, they have forged a songwriting partnership that continues after more than 50 years. Their process seems simple: Taupin writes lyrics and sends them to John who goes to work at the piano and creates a song. The results of their enduring partnership have been simply incredible.

“Elton John and Bernie Taupin have written some of the most memorable songs of our lives. Their careers stand out for the quality and broad appeal of their music and their influence on their fellow artists,” Hayden said. “More than 50 years ago, they came from across the pond to win over Americans and audiences worldwide with their beautiful songs and rock anthems. We’re proud to honor Elton and Bernie with the Gershwin Prize for their incredible impact on generations of music lovers.”

“Your Song,” “Tiny Dancer,” “Rocket Man” “Don’t Let the Sun Go Down on Me,” and “Goodbye Yellow Brick Road” are just a few songs they wrote together that became timeless standards. Not to mention the fun they had with “Bennie and The Jets” and “Crocodile Rock,” which became their first No. 1 single in the U.S. in 1973.

"I've been writing songs with Bernie for 56 years, and we never thought that that one day this might be bestowed upon us,” **Elton John** said. “It's an incredible honor for two British guys to be recognized like this. I’m so honored.”

"To be in a house along with the great American songwriters, to even be in the same avenue is humbling, and I am absolutely thrilled to accept," **Bernie Taupin** said.

**Elton John: Six Decades of Music**

Today, John is among the top-selling solo artists of all time with more than 70 Top 40 hits over the course of six decades, including nine No. 1s and 29 Top 10s on the Billboard Hot 100. He has sold more than 300 million records worldwide. John holds the record for the biggest-selling physical single of all time with Taupin’s rewritten lyrics for “Candle in the Wind 1997,” which sold more than 33 million copies. In 2018, he was named the most successful male solo artist in Billboard Hot 100 chart history. In America, John holds the record for the longest span between Billboard Top 40 hits at 50 years.

In 1992, John established the Elton John AIDS Foundation, which continues to be a leader in the global fight against HIV/AIDS. The foundation has raised more than $565 million for HIV/AIDS grants that have funded more than 3,000 projects in over 90 countries to care for patients and provide education for AIDS prevention. His music and charitable service have been honored with a knighthood from Queen Elizabeth II; the Légion d’honneur, France’s highest award; and the National Humanities Medal awarded by President Joe Biden at the White House in 2022.

Since launching his first tour in 1970, John has delivered more than 4,000 performances in more than 80 countries. His work has spanned recording studios, stadiums, stages and screens — always with music that resonates with new generations of audiences. Disney’s “The Lion King,” carried by John’s tunes, continues to be one of Broadway’s longest running shows.

In January, John won an Emmy Award for outstanding variety special for his show “Elton John Live: Farewell from Dodger Stadium,” making him just the 19th performer to achieve rare EGOT status, having also won five Grammys, two Oscars for his work on “The Lion King” and with Taupin on the movie “Rocketman,” and a Tony Award for the score to the Broadway musical “Aida.”

Soon John and Taupin will have a Gershwin Prize to add to the mix for an even more exclusive distinction.

**Bernie Taupin: Artist in Words and Pictures**

While their work has been intertwined for decades as co-writers, Taupin often preferred to stay behind the scenes. In their first two years, Taupin and John mostly wrote for other artists. Their first album, “Empty Sky” in 1969, was followed by “Elton John” in 1970. That second album, including the single “Your Song,” helped define their style for soaring ballads and rock songs. Taupin’s narrative songwriting, influenced by folk music, blues and country, offered the words that helped John’s melodies soar.

In addition to his work with John, Taupin has written hit songs for other artists, including Starship’s “We Built This City” and Heart’s “These Dreams,” as well as songs for Alice Cooper and Brian Wilson. In 2006, he earned a Golden Globe for “A Love That Will Never Grow Old” from the movie “Brokeback Mountain.”

Taupin moved to Southern California, became a U.S. citizen, and developed a love for the American West. He competed in weekend horse shows and hosted a competition for cowboys at his Santa Barbara ranch. All along, he continued writing for John from a distance, and began writing and making music with his Americana band, Farm Dogs. Taupin also turned to another of his passions — painting abstract and contemporary mixed-media — and he considers art his full-time career.

The 1975 album “Captain Fantasticand the Brown Dirt Cowboy” has been called their autobiographical album as alter egos, with the song “We All Fall in Love Sometimes” describing their partnership that has survived as one of the most important relationships of their lives. Taupin and John were inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1992. In 2023, John inducted Taupin into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

**About the Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for Popular Song**

Bestowed in recognition of the legendary songwriting team of George and Ira Gershwin, the Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for Popular Song is the nation’s highest award for influence, impact and achievement in popular music. The honoree is selected by the Librarian of Congress in consultation with a board of scholars, producers, performers, songwriters and music specialists. Previous recipients are Paul Simon, Stevie Wonder, Sir Paul McCartney, songwriting duo Burt Bacharach and the late Hal David, Carole King, Billy Joel, Willie Nelson, Smokey Robinson, Tony Bennett, Emilio and Gloria Estefan, Garth Brooks, Lionel Richie and Joni Mitchell.

Established in 2007, the prize honors living musical artists whose contributions in the field of popular song exemplify the standard of excellence associated with George and Ira Gershwin. Criteria for selection include: artistic merit; influence in promoting music as a vehicle of cultural understanding; impact and achievement in entertaining and informing audiences; and inspiring new generations of musicians.

In making the selection, the Librarian of Congress consulted leading members of the music and entertainment communities, as well as curators from the Library’s Music Division, American Folklife Center and National Audio-Visual Conservation Center.

John and Taupin will receive the Gershwin Prize at an all-star concert in Washington, D.C., on March 20. PBS stations nationwide will premiere the concert — “Elton John and Bernie Taupin: The Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for Popular Song” — at **8 p.m. ET** on **Monday, April 8,** (check local listings), available via broadcast and streaming on PBS.org and the PBS App as part of the co-produced Emmy Award-winning music series. It will also be available to U.S. Department of Defense locations around the world via the American Forces Network.

[Please visit our virtual newsroom](https://newsroom.loc.gov/) for additional materials and media assets related to this announcement.

**“Elton John and Bernie Taupin: The Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for Popular Song”** is a co-production of WETA Washington, D.C.; Ken Ehrlich Productions, Inc.; and the Library of Congress.

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