
Stars descend on London for Brit Awards

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The multi million-selling trio will each perform, while Sheeran and Smith go head-to-head for the night's biggest prize, album of the year.

They also face off in the best British male, best single and best video categories.

Kanye West will also play, in a last-minute addition to the bill.

The hip-hop artist will play a track from his as-yet-untitled seventh album.

TV duo Ant and Dec take over from James Corden to host the ceremony, returning for their first stint behind the podium since 2001.

Join us on the BBC News website later for live coverage of the build-up, red carpet and awards ceremony.

[See the full list of nominees](#)

After a largely spectacle-free Grammy Awards earlier this month, all eyes will be on the Brits to deliver some eye-popping performances.

The confirmed line-up includes:

Kanye West



Brits organisers promise a "truly epic" performance from West, who last appeared in 2006, accompanied by 77 dancers, all spray-painted gold for a medley of Diamonds from Sierra Leone, Gold Digger and Touch the Sky.

However, his recent TV appearances on the Grammys and Saturday Night Live have been stark and minimalist, with the rapper performing over a sole spotlight, or against a bare backdrop.

But the more important question is whether he'll storm the stage if Beyonce fails to win best international female?

Take That



The newly-truncated pop group mark their sixth Brit Awards performance by playing new single *Let In The Sun*.

Their last appearance [in 2011](#) saw the band (then a five-piece) clash with dancers dressed as riot police, while in 2009 they played [Greatest Day](#) while descending from the ceiling in a neon spaceship.

Madonna



Madonna's matador-themed performance of [Living For Love](#) was one of the few Grammy moments with big production values and a sense of occasion.

Will she repeat the routine in London, or use the opportunity to promote Ghosttown - the second single and standout track from her new album, Rebel Heart?

Sam Smith



Sam Smith already has one Brit under his belt, having won the critics' choice award last year. He'll be hoping to add a few more, so he can balance out the four Grammys he won in LA two weeks ago.

It would be something of a surprise if he didn't perform Stay With Me, which is up for best single, but a medley is never out of the question at the Brits.

Royal Blood



Brighton's Royal Blood are the only rock band confirmed to perform at this year's Brit Awards - and despite the fact there are only two of them, they should bring enough noise to shake the O2 to its foundations.

The band are also up for three prizes, including best British album, after hitting number one with their self-titled debut last year.

Taylor Swift



Country musician turned bubblegum pop star Taylor Swift has confirmed she will play the self-deprecating Blank Space for her star turn.

The song pokes fun at her media image as a man-eater, providing plenty of material for a tongue-in-cheek performance.

Paloma Faith



Paloma Faith was the biggest-selling British female artist last year, meaning she could finally be in with a chance of winning a Brit on her third nomination.

She plays the ceremony as a solo artist for the first time, having previously duetted with Cee-Lo Green on a version of his mega-hit Forget You in 2011.

Ed Sheeran



Ed Sheeran told BBC Radio 1 he would be playing the song Bloodstream from his second album, x - which topped the chart in 12 countries and was Spotify's most-streamed record of 2014.

The song has [recently been reworked](#) by Brit Award-winning dance act Rudimental - raising the interesting and unlikely prospect of an Ed Sheeran rave-up on Wednesday night.

George Ezra



Smoky-voiced George Ezra is likely to be overshadowed by Ed Sheeran and Sam Smith for the night's main awards, but he is guaranteed to deliver a spine-tingling performance, having just wrapped up his first major UK tour with a sold-out date at London's Brixton Academy.

The 21-year-old is up for four awards, including best British Breakthrough, having topped the charts and sold more than 800,000 copies of his debut album, *Wanted on Voyage*.

The Brit Awards used to be synonymous with chaos and unpredictability but have in recent years become more slick and professional.

However, there was some controversy this year when Glastonbury headliners Kasabian were overlooked in the nominations. The band, whose fifth album *48:13* topped the charts last summer, promptly announced they would play the Bafta ceremony instead.

Guitarist and founder Serge Pizzorno said Kasabian were victims of a Brits "conspiracy" against "working class rock 'n' roll bands".

[Noel Gallagher joined in](#), saying the ceremony was "a bit of a carve-up" between the major record labels, and that "independent artists get shafted by people at the Brits".

Dominance of 'white boys'

There was also discussion about the lack of nominees from BAME backgrounds.

Pop group Clean Bandit, whose dance anthem *Rather Be* is up for best single, said the dominance of "white boys" in the main categories was "a bit weird and a problem".

"It's bizarre," Neil Amin-Smith [told Newsbeat](#), suggesting black artists like MNEK, Labrinth and

Kwabs had been overlooked. "I think there is something that needs talking about there."

Brits organisers say their voting procedure is transparent, with "over 1,000 music enthusiasts" choosing the shortlists, including record label employees, music critics, NUS entertainment officers and the artists themselves.

This year's ceremony will be broadcast live in the UK on ITV1 from 20:00 GMT on Wednesday, and around the world on YouTube.
