



2008 Billboard Latin Music Awards

No sad songs here for the Billboard Latin Music Awards: They may lack the prestigious aura of the Latin Grammys, and they may not enjoy the blockbuster ratings of Univisión's Premio Lo Nuestro awards show. But the Billboard awards en español have an unusual level of clout and respectability within the industry.

And that's something up-and-coming singer-songwriter Kany García, with four nominations, is well aware of. García will be attending the show for the first time Thursday, when it airs live on Telemundo from the Hard Rock Live in Hollywood.

"The Billboard Latin Music Awards definitely represents a lot of things for me," says the 26-year-old artist by phone from her native Puerto Rico. "They reaffirm all the work that has been done. People's support on radio and the level of sales confirm that *Cualquier Día* [her 2007 Sony BMG debut album] was worth all the effort.

"This has been a super surprise, because I was just planning on going to the show to support the other artists. I did not expect a nomination, and surely not four!"

Seen in 24 countries by an estimated audience of 110 million people, the Billboard Latin Music Awards differs from other ceremonies in that the winners are not chosen via popular vote, nor are they selected by the members of an academy.

Instead, they reflect the best-selling albums and songs by artists who dominated radio within a specific time frame. (This year's awards will cover the period from Feb. 10, 2007, to Feb. 2, 2008). The statistics are determined by Nielsen SoundScan and Nielsen Broadcast Data, and provided to the music industry's bible, *Billboard*.

"They have all the validity because the nominees are based on the *Billboard* charts, which are 100 percent authentic," says Miami-based music publicist Angela Rodríguez, who is promoting the 2008 *Billboard* Latin Music Conference. (The awards show is the crown jewel of the industry gathering, which began Sunday at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino.) The awards "reflect what the artists are selling and how popular they are on radio."

Incorporating new talents, such as García, into the telecast is something that Tony Mojena, the show's executive producer since it began airing 10 years ago, deems vital to keeping it relevant.

"Young artists like Kany García or [Mexican trio] Camila have just one album but, if we go to the charts and measure what is happening, we see that they are having an enormous impact," says Mojena. "And by mixing up these new singers with others who are already established" — major stars scheduled to participate include Enrique Iglesias, Chayanne and Juanes — "we give the people something new and different all the time."



ON TV

Program: 2008 Billboard Latin Music Awards

Airs: 8 p.m. Thursday on WSCV-Ch. 51, with arrivals coverage at 7 p.m.

Online: For more information, visit yahotelemundo.com/premiosbillboard