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O Brotherly Love

Gillian Welch helped make a movie soundtrack the surprise winner of the 44th Grammys.

By Rob Hochschild
Berklee.edu Editor
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Gillian Welch '92 helped produce the Album of the Year, "O Brother, Where Art Thou?"

reading at the time they called me to participate on the record. But that was two-and-a-half years ago. We were doing all this music before they shot a single scene."

Welch also performed the Grammy-nominated *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* song "Didn't Leave Nobody But the Baby," during the telecast with Emmylou Harris and Allison Krauss. The album, a collection of bluegrass, country, and traditional American music that was produced by T-Bone Burnett, landed five Grammy Awards. And among those receiving Grammys for their work contributing to *O Brother's* Album of the Year win were mastering engineer and alumnus Gavin Lurssen '91.

Two other Berklee alumni won awards during the night: Alan Silvestri '70, for Best Instrumental Composition, "Cast Away (End Credits)" and Quincy Jones '51, for Best Spoken Word Album, *Q: The Autobiography of Quincy Jones*.

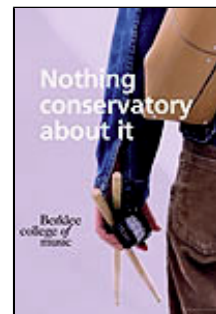
Among the scores of performers during the Grammy telecast was guitarist Steve Vai '79, who accompanied vocalist Nelly Furtado on her song, "I'm Like a Bird." Vai's "Whispering a Prayer" had been nominated for Best Rock Instrumental.

Berklee alumni played a role on two other Grammy-Award-nominated recordings. The Best Engineered Album, Non-Classical, went to *The Look of Love*, the latest release by Diana Krall '83. The Best Latin Jazz Album Grammy was awarded to Charlie Haden's *Nocturne*, featuring saxophonist Joe Lovano '72.

At the 44th Grammy Awards last Wednesday, on a stage where industry-standard glitz typically rules, **Gillian Welch '92** and her ***O Brother, Where Art Thou?*** collaborators proved that there's hope for the musical underdogs of the world. Welch, who performs on and was Associate Music Producer of the soundtrack disc, was among two dozen musicians and producers who crowded around the Staples Center podium after *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* won the Album of the Year award.

"When we started working on this record, it was just music for a Coen Brothers' movie," Welch said after the awards ceremony, according to a press release on the **Grammy Awards web site**.

"The movie is a loose retelling of [Homer's] *The Odyssey*, and it just so happened that was the book I was



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On a night when the music industry celebrated itself with a hearty parade of new and legendary stars, the most serious moment came when Recording Academy President/CEO Michael Greene blasted the practice of Internet music piracy. He said that the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) reports that 3.6 billion songs are illegally downloaded every month.

"This illegal file sharing and ripping of music files is pervasive, out of control, and oh so criminal," Greene said during his speech. "Many of the nominees here tonight, especially the new, less-established artists, are in immediate danger of being marginalized out of our business...ripping is stealing their livelihood one digital file at a time, leaving their musical dreams haplessly snared."

Greene's comments were greeted with a mixture of applause and jeers, testament to the troublesome dynamic between artists, listeners, and major labels these days. Earlier in the evening, during an award presentation, former Eagles leader Don Henley made reference to his campaign for better treatment of artists by record companies. Henley, Courtney Love, and other artists have taken their case before courts and congressmen.

Despite those controversies and a sagging year for record sales, the Grammy Awards telecast demonstrated that the industry hasn't forgotten how to throw a party. And regardless of what Greene says, the *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* upset shows that some musical dreams still come true.



Quincy Jones's audio biography earned the producer his 27th Grammy Award.

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