

Lana Del Rey: A Trailblazer in Music

- Maeve Reilly

Every year, Billboard honors females in the music industry, of varying genres and positions, through the annual Women in Music magazine print and invitation only event. Billboard describes this as their special way of recognizing women who “drive [the] business forward with their vision, dedication, and hard work.” This year the publication will be released in late fall and the ceremony for those being honored will be held on December 11 in New York. Leading up to this anticipated printing, the music charts magazine has been announcing the recipients of certain awards. Demi Lovato will be receiving the Rule Breaker Award, Selena Gomez will be given with the Chart Topper Award, and Lady Gaga will be honored as Woman of the Year. On Friday, Billboard released that this year, the Trailblazer award will be go to Lana Del Rey, an artist who could not possibly be a more deserving recipient.

In the past three years, Lana Del Rey has released three albums and one EP, each of which has a different sound than the last. Del Rey is both prolific and wide ranging in the music she has created. Her first album, *Born to Die*, released in 2012, was heavily rooted in hip hop, techno and dance influence. Since then, Del Rey has fearlessly explored both rock and jazz inspired sounds. However, in every song she releases, she maintains her distinct musical identity. The themes of Del Rey's lyrics, the rich and deep quality of her voice, and the unpredictable melodies she writes combine to create an aura that cannot be replicated.

While Lana Del Rey's sound is one-of-a-kind and all her own, she certainly has served as inspiration for other female musical artists, such as 19 year old New Zealander, Lorde. Most notably, it has been wildly speculated that Taylor Swift drew inspiration from Del Rey's lyrics and music videos in the making of her latest hit song and video off the *1989* album, “Wildest Dreams.” Similarities can be seen between Swift's lyrics, breathy tone, and video aesthetic, and those of Del Rey's earlier work.

Despite Lana Del Rey's obvious talent and versatility, she hasn't yet received the full recognition she deserves. Even though she has a following of diehard fans, she has never reached the same level of widespread popularity as many mainstream female artists, most of whom with much less to offer than Del Rey. Hopefully, with this upcoming award, Lana Del Rey will be one step closer to getting the credit she has rightfully earned. With any luck, readers of the popular magazine will start to see Del Rey for who she is, an incredibly unique artist who has continuously taken risks and "blazed trails" for women in the music industry.