



## **RECORDING ACADEMY® ANNOUNCES GLOBAL EXPANSION EFFORTS IN AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST**

### **INITIATIVE BUILDS ON ACADEMY'S RECENT MOVES TO GLOBALIZE ITS MISSION**

**SANTA MONICA, CALIF. (JUNE 11, 2024)** — The Recording Academy®, the organization behind the GRAMMY Awards®, is embarking on a path to extend its efforts to support music creators on a global scale. The Academy has agreements with Ministries of Cultures and key stakeholders across the Middle East and Africa to collaborate on a framework to bolster the Academy's presence and services in these rapidly growing music regions.

"This is exciting because music is one of humanity's greatest natural resources," said Harvey Mason jr., CEO of the Recording Academy. "It is critical that the people who dedicate themselves to creating music have support, resources and opportunities, no matter where they are from."

For the past two years, the Academy's leaders have traveled throughout these regions, participated in listening sessions, received high-level briefings, tours, demonstrations, and obtained insight directly from both the governmental ministries and music creators driving innovation in these markets.

The Academy is working with the Ministries of Culture in Kenya, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and Nigeria, the Department of Culture and Tourism in Abu Dhabi for the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the Rwanda Development Board (RDB), and the Ministry of Sports, Arts and Culture in South Africa. Additionally, MOUs have been signed with Ghana and the Ivory Coast. Through these collaborations, and in alignment with our mission, the Academy looks to explore several key initiatives, including:

- Championing music creators at all levels, providing them with a platform and advocacy.
- Empowering creators through enhanced training. Through its online learning platform, GRAMMY GO™, the Academy will look to provide educational programs and resources specifically tailored to the needs of music creators in these regions.
- Producing original content that celebrates the rich musical heritage and dynamic emerging scenes of Africa and the Middle East.
- Enhancing support for existing members. Cross-cultural learnings will benefit all music creators, and a presence in these rapidly growing music regions would provide numerous benefits to the Recording Academy's current and future members.
- Advocating for strong Intellectual Property (IP) legislation and protections for music creators.



- Fueling the music economy by collaborating with partners to develop and strengthen the creative economy in Africa and the Middle East.
- As a cornerstone of this initiative, the Academy will publish a series of reports, highlighting the Academy's research and insights into these music markets.

"The Recording Academy is dedicated to supporting music creators around the world," said Panos A. Panay, Recording Academy President. "Our expansion efforts into these fast-growing regions reflect our commitment to fostering a truly global music community, where creators at every stage of their careers and from every corner of the world have the resources and support they need to thrive."

This exploration into the Middle East and Africa is only the first phase of plans to support music creators abroad and comes the same year the Academy celebrates the 25th anniversary of the Latin GRAMMY Awards®, and months after Seville hosted the Latin GRAMMY Awards, the first GRAMMY Awards show to be held overseas. Also, last year, the Recording Academy partnered with the U.S. State Department on an initiative to promote peace through music.

#### **Additional quotes for use:**

##### **Kenya:**

Hon. Ababu Namwamba, EGH: "Creative Economy is among the key cogs in the wheel driving the Bottom-up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA) in Kenya. The country has placed a premium on music, film, theatre, content creation, fashion, pageantry, and other creative industries as a pivot for job creation, revenue generation and economic growth for sustainable livelihoods. With a predominantly youthful population that is well educated, innovative and passionate in stretching the frontiers of imagination, Kenya considers the creative sector as a fitting ignition for lighting and unleashing the full potential of this enormous youth bulge. Furthermore, creatives offer a formidable platform for building cultural, social, economic, and political ties across the East African Community, the African Continent and indeed the entire African Diaspora globally. And so, it should be no surprise that Kenya is delighted to be among the four champions of this effort, alongside our sister nations of Rwanda, Nigeria and South Africa. This is a historic opportunity to hoist high and celebrate Africanacity through artistic and cultural expression, while fostering innovation, creativity, fraternity, and solidarity for African peoples in Africa and beyond. Kenya is in KABISA! (absolutely). Welcome to magical Kenya, the land of Hakuna Matata!"

##### **United Arab Emirates:**

H.E. Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, Chairman of the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi: "Abu Dhabi's music scene is soaring, driven by the vibrancy of our youthful population, and strengthened by governmental commitment to infrastructure development, exemplified by existing and upcoming venues across the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. Additionally, investments in educational institutions such as Berklee Abu Dhabi and Bait al Oud Abu Dhabi, underscore our dedication to fostering local talent by providing them with comprehensive music theory education. As we embrace diverse genres emerging from our rich cultural heritage, we see a dynamic wave of creators and talents shaping our musical landscape. Today, we stand



ready to collaborate with the Recording Academy to amplify our artists' voices, celebrate our music, and propel MENA's music industry to new heights.”

#### **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:**

Paul Pacifico, CEO, The Music Commission: "We are excited to become a part of the global GRAMMYs® family, working to unite a growing range of music and talent from around the world as we strive to develop an inclusive and sustainable industry which fosters a rich tapestry of music and talent from diverse corners of the globe. We eagerly anticipate the benefits we know this partnership will bring to our music community in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the opportunities it will deliver for Saudi music to take its place on the global stage and contribute to a more globally representative and vibrant music industry.”

#### **Rwanda:**

Francis Gatare, CEO, Rwanda Development Board: "Rwanda embraces this vision of connecting the continent's creative minds, marking a pivotal moment in our history where our culture and spirit are celebrated and shared with the world. By fostering a unified creative platform, we not only celebrate our creativity but also forge a shared path toward economic and social prosperity. Rwanda is proud to champion this significant milestone. By promoting our diverse talents, we enrich the global creative community and affirm our place as leaders in cultural expression. This initiative underscores Rwanda's dedication to a vibrant and dynamic cultural landscape, positioning us at the heart of Africa's creative renaissance.”

#### **South Africa:**

Tshepo Mahloele, Chairman of Arena Holdings: "It is an exciting era for African and particularly South African music to finally work with the Recording Academy in ways that will provide the opportunity for African music to be recognized and celebrated on the global stage. We are proud to have advanced this exciting partnership.”

#### **Afrexim Bank:**

President Dr. Benedict Okey Oramah, Afrexim Bank: "With Afreximbank's support for Africa's creative industries and endorsement of the Recording Academy's expansion, we recognize the immense potential this sector has to boost GDP and create employment for the youth. We extend our heartfelt congratulations and gratitude to the Academy's founding nations and the leadership of the Recording Academy for this remarkable opportunity to blend 65 years of invaluable experience with our continent's vibrant music and creative ecosystem.”

#### **Recording Academy Members:**

**John Legend:** "I'm excited to see the Recording Academy taking these meaningful steps to globalize our mission and reach. Music knows no borders. It's global and transcends cultural, political and language barriers. I'm so glad that the Recording Academy, the leading organization serving music creators, is evolving to be a more global organization.”



**Angelique Kidjo:** "The Recording Academy is accelerating its efforts to serve music people everywhere, and Africa is ready with open arms. We are a continent of music and young, passionate music makers. I'm proud to see the Academy forming partnerships with Nigeria, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, and no doubt, more to come!"

**Kat Graham:** "As a Goodwill Ambassador for the UN Refugee Agency, I've seen firsthand how interconnected our world is. I applaud the Recording Academy for expanding its activities to Africa and the Middle East, two of the fastest-growing regions. This visionary move will amplify the role music can play as a force for good in the world while showcasing diverse voices and fostering cultural unity on a global scale."

**David:** "As an African musician, I'm excited about the Recording Academy's expansion into Africa and the Middle East. It acknowledges our vibrant talent and the global influence of African music. This initiative offers a platform for creators, elevating our cultural expressions and uniting us through music."

## ABOUT THE RECORDING ACADEMY

The Recording Academy represents the voices of performers, songwriters, producers, engineers, and all music professionals. Dedicated to ensuring the recording arts remain a thriving part of our shared cultural heritage, the Academy honors music's history while investing in its future through the GRAMMY Museum®, advocates on behalf of music creators, supports music people in times of need through MusiCares®, and celebrates artistic excellence through the GRAMMY Awards — music's only peer-recognized accolade and highest achievement. As the world's leading society of music professionals, we work year-round to foster a more inspiring world for creators.

For more information about the GRAMMY Awards and the Recording Academy, please visit [GRAMMY.com](https://www.grammy.com) and [RecordingAcademy.com](https://www.recordingacademy.com). For breaking news and exclusive content, [follow @RecordingAcad on X](#), ["like" Recording Academy on Facebook](#), and join the Recording Academy's social communities on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [TikTok](#), and [LinkedIn](#). For media assets, please visit the [Recording Academy's Press Room](#).

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