

Billboard Music Awards: Michael Jackson thrills in hologram

By **GERRICK D. KENNEDY**

MAY 19, 2014, 4:00 AM

There's really only one reason to tune in to the Billboard Music Awards: the spectacle.

The annual celebration of radio and sales rainmakers isn't about who will win. It's about what happens onstage, and viewers of the telecast Sunday night from the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas were promised "a once in a lifetime" experience from the late Michael Jackson: a hologram of the King of Pop.

The closely guarded secret had been spoiled days before the ceremony — on Friday a federal judge tossed out a lawsuit from tech companies alleging the hologram would violate their patents — but the performance remained the night's most anticipated moment. And just like Tupac Shakur before him, Jackson was brought to life by the [wonders of technology](#).

Amid a bevy of dancers (both beamed in and in person), Jackson's eerie hologram image sang his tune "Slave to the Rhythm," lifted from his recent posthumous album "Xscape," as audience members wiped tears. The performance divided social media as fan reaction ranged from shock and awe to disappointment.

Jackson's resurrection was the night's most talked-about event, but the award for most viral moment went to Kendall Jenner. The reality TV star fumbled an introduction for Australian pop group 5 Seconds of Summer.

"And now we welcome ... One ..." she said, nearly calling the band One Direction. "Guys, I'm the worst reader."

The flub was more memorable than some of the acts. Taped performances by Miley Cyrus and Katy Perry were little more than filler doubling as tour promotion for the singers, and the promotion didn't stop there.

John Legend's segment was sponsored by Citibank, and the show ceded two slots to peddle tracks from the new World Cup album. Pitbull and Jennifer Lopez opened with the overwrought official anthem.

But this was still an awards show, and trophies were doled out during the three-hour telecast.

Fans already knew Lorde would win new artist, Justin Timberlake would take top album honors and Robin Thicke would win the song prize, considering they've spent the past year keeping their work on the charts.

Imagine Dragons took the night's first honor as their 2012 breakout debut, "Night Visions," was named top rock album. Cyrus won top streaming artist, and Perry was named top female artist. Lopez made Billboard Awards history by being the first female feted with the Icon Award. The night's other big prize, the Milestone Award, a fan-voted honor for musical ingenuity and innovation, went to country superstar Carrie Underwood.

Timberlake was the night's biggest winner, nabbing seven trophies including top artist and top male artist.

"It's not a competition. But if it was, I won," he said in a taped speech.

gerrick.kennedy@latimes.com

Copyright © 2015, Los Angeles Times

FROM AROUND THE WEB

Sponsored Links

A credit card offering 6% cash back?
NextAdvisor

James vs. Curry: Who Is the More Efficient Scorer?
Intel iQ

There's Trouble Brewing for America's Most Hated Companies
The Motley Fool

"New World Dollar" Coming This October?
Stansberry Research

The Skinny on Thin Provisioning
Solar Winds

These Places to Stay Close to Portland Are Always Accommodating
Washington County Visitors Association