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Roland Announces the 2026 Lifetime Achievement Award Honoring Prince Paul

Celebrating Artists Who Redefined Music, Innovation, and Sound



Hamamatsu, Japan, January 21, 2026 — (NAMM, Room 202, Level 2) Roland announces the 2026 Lifetime Achievement Award honoring Prince Paul, recognizing a career that has transformed hip-hop production, storytelling, and sonic innovation. The annual Roland Lifetime Achievement Award applauds artists whose creative impact, innovation, and enduring influence have helped shape modern music, often through long-standing relationships with Roland instruments and production tools. Prince Paul will be celebrated during The NAMM Show 2026 on Friday, January 23, at 4:30 p.m., from Roland's booth, Room 202.

Prince Paul is one of the most influential and imaginative figures in hip-hop history, widely credited with helping transform the genre into a fully realized art form. Emerging in the late 1980s as the DJ and primary producer for Stetsasonic, he played a pivotal role in pushing hip-hop beyond early conventions through innovative rhythm programming, musicality, and narrative structure.

He went on to define an era through his groundbreaking work with De La Soul, producing a run of landmark albums that blended humor, experimentation, and emotional depth. Those releases

earned Grammy recognition, widespread critical acclaim, and permanently expanded the creative vocabulary of hip-hop, influencing generations of artists and producers across genres.

Across decades of work, Prince Paul has remained a singular creative force. His career includes being a co-founding member of both pioneering hip hop groups, Gravediggaz, and Handsome Boy Modeling School, as well as releasing influential solo projects, composing for film and television, and collaborating across music, media, and culture. Central to his sound has been an intuitive command of rhythm and production tools, including the iconic Roland TR-808 and TR-909, which helped shape the feel, swing, and sonic identity of his work. Prince Paul's career stands as a blueprint for innovation, longevity, and artistic fearlessness.

This annual milestone celebrates a decade of honoring artists whose creative legacies are deeply intertwined with Roland's history and the evolution of music technology. Since its introduction in 2016, the awards have grown alongside Roland, reflecting both the company's commitment to innovation and its enduring partnership with the global artist community.

"I would have never thought that, as a young teen learning how to program on a piece of Roland gear, that one day I'd make hit music, let alone be recognized by the company that was pivotal in my musical beginnings," added Paul. "I've been making records for over 40 years, and to still be recognized for my musical contributions is very humbling."

"The first drum machine I learned to program beats on was a BOSS DR-55 Dr. Rhythm in the early '80s, continued Paul. "I was so fascinated with this drum machine, but it was complex to program. It took me a few days to really master it. A few years later, my friend introduced me to the Roland 808, which was the complete opposite. The programming was so easy. I learned how to really rock that thing in ten minutes, and the sound was like nothing I'd ever heard at the time. Then came the 909, which was easy for me to program, too. Those kicks and snares were so heavy! I loved that thing. What's next for me now is the new TR -1000. That machine is nuts!"

As a recipient of the Roland Lifetime Achievement Award, Prince Paul joins an esteemed group of prior inductees, including Gary Numan, Jim Keltner, Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis, Thomas Dolby, Jean-Michel Jarre, DJ Pierre, Omar Hakim, and Nick Rhodes, artists whose work has helped shape the sound and direction of modern music.

Learn more about [Prince Paul](#).

[808-envy is real. DJ Prince Paul borrowed one and laid down history-making beats.](#)

Roland's family of brands will also recognize three additional influential artists with awards during NAMM, artists whose innovation and impact have profoundly shaped music and culture. All awards will be presented in Room 202, Level 2, on Friday, January 23, at 4:30 p.m. Additional 2026 honorees include a BOSS Lifetime Achievement Award for Adam Granduciel of *The War on Drugs*, acclaimed for his expressive guitar work and extensive use of BOSS pedals. Drum Workshop (DW) presents its award to Josh Freese, one of rock's most versatile and in-demand drummers, and Latin Percussion (LP) honors Karl Perazzo, the powerhouse Santana percussionist known for his signature rhythm and showmanship.

Explore the history of the [Roland Lifetime Achievement Awards](#).

Additional assets, including hi-res images and media materials, are available in the [press kit](#).

About Roland Corporation

For more than 50 years, Roland's innovative electronic musical instruments and multimedia products have fueled inspiration in artists and creators around the world. Embraced by hobbyists and professionals alike, the company's trendsetting gear spans multiple categories, from pianos, synthesizers, guitar products, drum and percussion products, DJ controllers, audio/video solutions, gaming mixers, livestreaming products, and more. As technology evolves, Roland and its expanding family of brands, including BOSS, V-MODA, Drum Workshop (DW), PDP, Latin Percussion (LP), and Slingerland, continue to lead the way for music makers and creators, providing modern solutions and seamless creative workflows between hardware products, computers, and mobile devices. For more information, visit [Roland.com](https://www.roland.com) or see your local Roland dealer. Follow Roland on [Facebook](#), Twitter ([@RolandGlobal](#)), and Instagram ([@RolandGlobal](#)).

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