



Kelli O'Hara, left, and Louisa Jacobson in HBO's "The Gilded Age."

Alison Cohen Rosa / HBO / TNS

Hall of Fame responds to Dolly Parton

Rock and Roll Hall of Fame says country icon is still on this year's ballot

By Chris Willman
Reuters

LOS ANGELES - After staying quiet in the three days since Dolly Parton's declaration that she'd like to bow out of contention for the hall, the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Foundation has come forth with a statement, in effect indicating that Parton will remain on the ballot.

With voting already well underway, the Foundation's position is that, while her "thoughtful" statement is worth consideration, the Hall of Fame is a big tent that includes far more than core rock acts — and it will be left up to the voters.

"All of us in the music community have seen Dolly Parton's thoughtful note expressing her feeling that she has not earned the right to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame," the statement says. "In addition to her incredible talent as an artist, her humility is another reason Dolly is a beloved icon by millions of fans around the world."

The statement continues, "From its inception, Rock and Roll has had deep roots in Rhythm & Blues and Country music. It is not defined by any one genre, rather a sound that moves youth culture. Dolly Parton's music impacted a generation of young fans and influenced countless artists that followed. Her nomination to be considered for induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame followed the same process as all other artists who have been considered."

The Foundation goes on to reiterate that voting is already in process: "Dolly's recommendation, along with the other 16 nominees for the class of 2022 was sent out earlier this month to our 1,200 general ballot voters, the majority of whom are artists themselves, for consideration for induction at our ceremony."

It concludes, "We are in awe of Dolly's brilliant talent and pioneering spirit and are proud to have nominated her for induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame."

Parton further explained her position in an interview with Fox Thursday morning: "Well, I didn't feel exactly right about that," she said, while being interviewed on the show "Fox & Friends" along with James Patterson, who co-authored her new book "Run, Rose Run." "Because my perception, and I think the perception of most of America — I just feel like that's more for the people in rock music. I've been educated since then, saying that it's more than that, but I still didn't feel right about it. It kind of would be like putting AC/DC in the Country Music Hall of Fame. That just felt a little out of place for me."

Earlier this week, Variety reported that sources close to the Hall's leadership said they were disinclined to do anything that would interrupt or subvert a vote already in progress, and were hopeful that Parton will change her mind if she is voted in, as anecdotal evidence among voters indicates she may well be.

MUSEUM AFTER SHOW

The Frick Pittsburgh offers historical context on HBO's 'The Gilded Age'

By Joshua Axelrod
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Pittsburgh Before "The Unofficial Gilded Age After Show" was a web series available on The Frick Pittsburgh's YouTube channel, it was an idea bouncing around Melanie Groves' head — for almost the last decade.

Groves, The Frick's manager of exhibitions and registrar, is a huge "Downton Abbey" fan and was delighted in 2012 when creator Julian Fellowes announced that his next series would be set in the United States, during the late-19th-century period known as the Gilded Age. Considering her workplace's Gilded-Age bona fides, Groves figured there would be plenty of opportunities for The Frick to capitalize on Fellowes' new endeavor.

That show languished in development hell for years before it eventually jumped from NBC to HBO. Groves kept tabs on it via Google alerts, and she was delighted upon finding out it would finally be premiering in January. "The Unofficial Gilded Age After Show" launched the Friday after the show debuted, and has continued to feature Gilded Age experts providing context on what the show is getting right and wrong about New York City high society during the era.

"We thought, 'We're going to be having these conversations amongst ourselves anyway,'" Groves told the Post-Gazette. "We might as well film it and see what everyone else has to say."

Like "Downton Abbey," "The Gilded Age" focuses on the

fabulously wealthy and their servants. The series kicks off with Marian Brook (Louisa Jacobson) moving from Doylestown to the Big Apple to live with her aunts Agnes (Christine Baranski) and Ada (Cynthia Nixon). She quickly becomes part of the city's social structure, which includes befriending her aunts' new-money neighbors, George (Morgan Spector) and Bertha (Carrie Coon) Russell.

The show has aired eight episodes so far and will be wrapping up its first season on Monday. "The Unofficial Gilded Age After Show" will be putting up at least two more episodes, with the potential for some bonus content in the near future, according to Kelsie Paul, The Frick's manager of interpretation and engagement. All the aftershows will continue to be available via The Frick's YouTube channel.

It quickly became apparent to Paul and Groves that there was an audience for an aftershow like this when their first episode racked up more than 34,000 views. Even more encouraging was when they realized the analytics on that video showed that the folks tuning in weren't just in Pittsburgh.

"We found something that people are responding to, and that they're making a connection to something that is already grabbing attention and interest in popular culture," Groves said. "We're doing the Googling for them, but from an expert's perspective."

She and Paul have both been impressed with how "The Gilded Age" has depicted that particular moment in American

history. Paul said it has "taken some liberties" with the chronology of certain events and the characters' fashion choices, but she understands that just comes with the territory of making a period drama.

Groves appreciates how "The Gilded Age" centers its story mostly on women and prominently features "the stories of the Black elite" through the character of Peggy Scott, who is played by Carnegie Mellon University graduate Denee Benton. "The Gilded Age" has already been renewed for a second season, and Paul said she would like to see more "complexity of lived experiences" being portrayed when it returns.

"The Gilded Age was an extreme time of disparity," Paul said. "We're seeing a lot of the high privilege and wealth on one end, so I'm hoping they fill out the world a little more and show by and large what most Americans were dealing with in the Gilded Age."

Though the show itself has yet to feature the Steel City, the character of George Russell serves as an amalgam of Gilded Age robber barons like Pittsburghers Andrew Carnegie and Henry Clay Frick. Paul said she definitely sees "echoes of Mr. Frick" in Russell, who Fellowes himself said is largely based on railroad tycoon Jay Gould.

"There's absolutely a connection between the heightened version we're seeing on the show and what was going on in Pittsburgh," Paul said. "That's one of the reasons we thought this show would be worth

exploring from our perspective. You can't talk about the Gilded Age without talking about Pittsburgh."

The Frick was prepared to launch something like the aftershow after the COVID-19 pandemic made bolstering its virtual capabilities an immediate priority. Groves posited that "piecing things back together," after exhibitions that had been planned out years in advance fell apart, encouraged the kind of flexibility needed for a project of this magnitude.

Though most of the spaces that The Frick maintains are open to the public already, both Groves and Paul are excited for the historic Clayton mansion to hopefully reopen soon. Groves joked that the Clayton would be the perfect backdrop if Fellowes ever wanted to film an origin story for the Russells.

They both fully plan on continuing with "The Unofficial Gilded Age After Show" when the series comes back for Season 2. Groves hopes "The Gilded Age" has been "tapping into people's interest in the period" enough to entice Pittsburghers to come check out The Frick's vast collection of resources on that subject.

"We hope people will have their interests peaked in the Gilded Age," Paul said. "We find it to be an interesting time, and a Julian Fellowes show has the ability to show people things they didn't know before. We're excited to be part of that conversation, even a little bit."

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