

Richie dominates awards

BY MICHAEL GILTZ

As a performer, Lionel Richie projects the image of a warm and sincere person. As host of the Twelfth Annual American Music Awards, which were televised last Monday, he was boorish and became a self-parody that exemplifies the music industry at its worst.

Besides three costume changes, which denigrated from ugly to repulsive, Richie decided that the key word for the night was going to be "Outrageous!" In case we doubted him, he proved it by saying "Outrageous!" 10 times.

At one point (actually, at several points), Richie shrilled, "This isn't an awards show. This is one great, big party!" That was easy for him to say because Richie won six awards, double the amount of anyone else.

However, he received four of those awards in the less-distinguished video categories, which highlights an interesting trend: the video award as consolation prize. Richie won trophies for the Best Pop Video and Black Video Singles, but Bruce Springsteen ("Dancing In The Dark") and Prince ("When Doves Cry") triumphed in the general categories.

Other award winners included Kenny Rogers, who scored on Best Country Album with *Eyes That See In The Dark* and on Best Country Single with "Islands In The Stream," his duet with Dolly Parton; Loretta Lynn, who received the Award of Merit; and Tina Turner, who was named the Best Black Female Vocalist of the year.

The live performances that peppered the American Music Awards were generally good. Hall and Oates did respectably with "The Method of Modern Love," a difficult song to perform for it contains many vocal flourishes. Alabama, however, was atrocious. They performed a ballad called "There's No Way," which seemed to drag on interminably. It was a fair song by country standards and fairly boring by any other standards. In contrast, Waylon Jennings epitomized the best of country as he delivered a strong, assured version of "Waltz Me To Heaven Tonight."

Kenny Rogers and Lionel Richie performed

back-to-back, dramatizing how interchangeable their musical styles really are. Nonetheless, the highlights of the evening both involved Prince.

He and the Revolution sang "Purple Rain," eliciting screams from the public in the balcony and bringing the lethargic celebrity audience to life. The standing ovation they received was the most spontaneous and deserved of the evening.

Prince also wrote the song that Cyndi Lauper



Cyndi Lauper received the Best Female Vocalist and Best Video Female Vocalist awards.

sang, "When You Were Mine," which is on her *She's So Unusual* album. Her reading of it was stunning, and Lauper's voice soared high and low, changing emotions from anger to pain to wistfulness at the drop of a hat, she revealed what a major talent she truly is.

It is merely coincidence that the American Music Awards has the same initials as the American Medical Association. Still, the show could use some doctoring. At times, the awards were quite confusing and repetitious. For instance, why make the distinction between Best Vocalist and Best Video Vocalist when the same voice is being heard? ■