



## Mirabal Tops Native American Awards

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ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) -- Robert Mirabal was the big winner at the Native American Music Awards, taking artist of the year, songwriter of the year and record of the year honors for "Music from a Painted Cave."

The fourth annual awards ceremony took place Saturday night at Sandia Casino's new 3,000 seat amphitheater near the Sandia Mountains.

Rodney A. Grant, who co-starred as Wind in His Hair in the 1990 film "Dances with Wolves," was the host. Country music star Crystal Gayle was among the performers and was inducted into the NAMA Hall of Fame.

Other performers included Keith Secola, a crowd favorite with his electric guitar, and 8-year-old flute player Evren Ozan, who later was honored as the "future of Native American music."

Arigon Starr's "Junior Frybread" won the song of the year award. She said the song, based on a popular American Indian food, started out as a joke.

"I am so excited," Starr said after the ceremony. "It's kind of a little anthem."

Olympic gold medalist Billy Mills received the Thorpe Sports Award for his win in the 10,000 meter race at the 1964 games in Tokyo. Other winners included Annie Humphrey as best female artist, Delphine Tsinajinnie as debut artist of the year, Northern Cree for best pow wow recording and Robert Tree Cody as male artist of the year.

Attending the show and seeing her own people recognized for their music was an inspiration for aspiring songwriter and rapper Danielle DeClay.

"The entertainment industry is a good way for Native Americans to gain recognition," said the 18-year-old DeClay, the current Miss Indian Teen World who was a presenter at the show. "I think it's just a matter of time until we start shining through."

Performances were taped and will be featured as part of the pay-per-view music benefit "Concert For America." The goal is to raise \$100 million for victims of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, survivors and recovery efforts.

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On the Net: <http://www.nativeamericanmusic.com>

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