



## Los Angeles Times | Entertainment

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# Mirabal Tops Native American Music Awards

October 23, 2001 *in print edition F-5*

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.

Eight-year-old flute player Evren Ozan was honored at the awards ceremony as the "future of Native American music."

Arigon Starr's "Junior Frybread" won the song of the year award. Starr said the song, which is based on a popular food made by American Indians, started out as a joke.

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 powwow 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."

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