



Cherokee National Youth Choir Nominated for Native American Music Awards

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The Cherokee Nation, a federally-recognized Native American tribe, issued the following news release:

Celebrating the Cherokee language in song, the Cherokee National Youth Choir has been nominated for two Native American Music Awards (NAMMY). The group is nominated in the "Best Gospel/Inspirational Recording" and "Best Historical Recording" categories, for its latest CD, Precious Memories.

"This has been a busy year for the choir and these NAMMY nominations make us forget all the hard work," said Mary Kay Henderson, Choir Director. "It's very exciting to be nominated by your peers."

According to the organization, the Native American Music Association and Awards have nominated approximately 1,500 artists and honored 300 winners over the past decade. The awards ceremony will take place on Saturday, October 4, at the Seneca Entertainment Center in the Seneca Casino and Hotel in Niagara Falls, New York. This year artists are nominated in 30 different music categories.

"These nominations throughout our 30 music categories reflect a diverse and impressive range of new and established talent from our community," said Ellen Bello, Awards President. "We are looking forward to a spectacular Awards celebration running the full spectrum of today's most popular contemporary and traditional Native American music initiatives."

Fans of the Cherokee National Youth Choir and other Native American musicians can vote online for their favorite artists at www.votenative.com or www.nativeamericanmusicawards.com. Voting will end on Saturday, October 4, the day of the awards ceremony.

The Cherokee National Youth Choir performs traditional Cherokee songs in the Cherokee language. The Cherokee National Youth Choir came into existence from the vision of Principal Chief Chad Smith, who saw it as a way to keep children involved in the Cherokee language and culture. They function as an important symbol to the world, demonstrating that Cherokee language and culture continues to thrive in modern society.

Since being founded in 2000, the group has recorded six CDs, including Voices of the Creator's Children, featuring two-time Grammy® Award winner Rita Coolidge, which garnered two Native American Music Awards (NAMMY) nominations and a win for "Best Gospel Christian Recording" in 2002. In total, the group has received four NAMMYS. Precious Memories, an acapella compilation, was released in 2007.

The Youth Choir acts as ambassadors for the Cherokee Nation, their beautiful voices

showing the strength of the Cherokee Nation and its culture more than 160 years after the Cherokees' forced removal from its eastern homelands. The goal of the choir is to increase awareness of Cherokee culture both within the Cherokee Nation as well as among the dominant culture.

Through the success of the group, interest in the Cherokee language has been rekindled among young people throughout the Cherokee Nation. Several area schools now use the CDs as learning tools, and other schools are interested in developing curriculum to teach Cherokee language and music. Principal Chief Smith and Deputy Principal Chief Joe Grayson, Jr. have pledged to make preserving language and culture a priority at the Cherokee Nation, and the success of the Cherokee National Youth Choir has helped spark a cultural renaissance among the Cherokee people.

For more information about the Cherokee National Youth Choir, contact Mary Kay Henderson at (918) 478-4473 or Kathy Sierra at (918) 453-5638.

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