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11th Annual Native American Music Awards nominees announced

By Staff reports

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NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. – Nominations for the 11th Annual Native American Music Awards were recently announced by the Native American Music Association.

The awards will be held Oct. 3 at the Seneca Entertainment Center in the [Seneca Casino & Hotel](#) in Niagara Falls. The awards ceremony will be hosted by Gil Birmingham who has received recent public acclaim for his portrayal as Billy Black in "Twilight." Birmingham's other TV and screen credits include; "Dreamkeeper," "Skins," "Nip/Tuck," "10 Items or Less," "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," and his powerful portrayal of Dogstar in Steven Spielberg's six-part TV miniseries, "Into the West." Birmingham will return as Billy Black in the "Twilight" sequel, "New Moon," scheduled for release in November 2009.

"It is with great pleasure that we announce the inclusion of Gil Birmingham to the Seneca Niagara Casino & Hotel for the 11th Annual Native American Music Awards," said Karen Karsten, executive director of entertainment for Seneca Gaming Corporation. Gil represents the very best of what NAMA stands for – a formal recognition of outstanding contributions in the arts by Native American performers. We couldn't be more honored to have Gil join us in Niagara Falls for this very prestigious occasion."

This year's Hall of Fame induction will be held for the late Ritchie Valens, who is of Yaqui heritage on his mother's side. It has been 50 years since his tragic passing – he was killed on a small private plane that took off from Clear Lake, Iowa bound for Fargo, N.D. that never made its destination. The plane crash also claimed the lives of Buddy Holly, J.P. "Big Bopper" Richardson and the pilot Feb. 3, 1959.

A special Hall of Fame tribute performance will be held in Valens' honor by his brother, Mario Ramirez, and his Backyard Blues Band. Mario's passion for music, and his desire to honor the memory of his brother are the driving force behind his band.

The induction presentation will be made by Tommy Allsup, famed guitarist in Buddy Holly's band who lost the coin toss with Valens to ride on the ill-fated plane. The coin-toss scene was depicted in the film "La Bamba." In a music career spanning more than 60 years, Allsup (an citizen of the Cherokee Nation) has played on hundreds of country chart toppers and worked with artists as diverse as Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys, Buddy Holly, Roy Orbison, Tanya Tucker, Kenny Rogers, Paul McCartney, Charlie Rich and Willie Nelson. Allsup was elected to the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame in 2005 and won a Grammy Award for Best Country Instrumental Performance in 1999.

Special recognition will also be given to guitarist/musician/producer Stevie Salas as this year's Lifetime Achievement Award recipient. Salas is an American born rock guitarist of Apache descent. With humble beginnings, Salas' unique heavy funk/rock guitar styling's quickly helped him make a name for himself in music industry circles in the late 1980s. After 20 years in the business, Salas' talent and swagger have earned him great respect in the music world as a studio and concert musician. He has recorded, toured with, written, produced and directed many record industry greats including; Mick Jagger, Rod Stewart, George Clinton and Justin Timberlake.

As a producer, Salas has worked on many global superstar projects including the 1989 classic "What Up Dog" by Was (Not Was) which Rolling Stone Magazine named one of the top 100 records of the decade. As a film composer he has scored many films and TV shows, but is best known for the guitar score to the cult classic "Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure" where he not only scored, but also appears as the hands of George Carlin in the famed wild guitar solo ending.

Salas also tours the world as a solo artist often playing sold out concerts and festivals in the UK, Europe and Asia and has sold two million solo records around the world. He has won many awards including



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POLL

What do you think of Phil Hogen stepping down as chairman of the National Indian Gaming Commission?

- Long overdue
- Sad to see him go
- Not going to matter
- Don't care

Native American Music Award for Best Rock Recording in 2008. He is the host and executive producer of the one hour live comedy/music TV program "Arbor Live" in Canada and, for the last four years, has worked as the music consultant for 19 Entertainment for American Idol's Chris Daughtry, Jordan Sparks, David Cook, Alison Krauss, Kris Allen and Adam Lambert. Salas has also advised the Smithsonian Institution's [National Museum of the American Indian](#) on contemporary music programming and helped conceptualize the idea for an exhibit on American Indian contributions to the roots and advancement of contemporary music.

A plethora of new up-and-comers were nominated alongside established artists and previous winners throughout a diverse array of 30 music categories spanning all genres. This year's leading nominee is classical guitarist Gabriel Ayala (Yaqui) with five nominations surrounding his three recordings; "Portraits," "Allegro" and "Tango!" Three of those nominations are in the World music category and the other two in Instrumental and Male Artist.

This year also features several other classical instrumental recordings including; Dawn Avery's "Tulpe" (Mohawk Haudenosaunee) who was nominated for Debut Artist, "Molly & The Mohawks" by composer Augusta Cecconi-Bates for Best Historical Recording, and "Works By Jerod Impichchaachaaha Tate" by composer Jerod Tate & The San Francisco Symphony & Chorus (Chickasaw) for Best Instrumental Recording.

Following up with four nominations each are: Apryl Allen (Comanche) with "Na Unu Nahai" (Shape Shifter) for Debut Artist, Pop, Record of the Year and Song/Single of the Year; Bryan Akipa (Dakota Sioux) with "Songs From The Black Hills" for Flutist, Male, New Age and Record of the Year; Jana Mashonee (Lumbee) with her recording "A Change Is Gonna Come" for Pop, Best Video and Song/Single as well as for her release, "New Moon Born" which earned her Artist of the Year; and Joanne Shenandoah (Oneida) and Michael Bucher (Cherokee) for their recording "Bitter Tears Sacred Ground." Together they share nods for Record of the Year and Best Compilation. Shenandoah earned Best Female and Song/Single for the track, "Riding Free." Bucher earned Best Video for his single, "Don't Forget About Me," and Best Male.

Garnering three nominations each are debut artists Jace Martin (Mohawk) with his eponymously titled release and Samantha Crain (Choctaw) for "The Confiscation: A Musical Novella." Jan Michael Looking Wolf (Kalapuya – Grand Ronde Tribes), with "The Looking Wolf Project," Joy Harjo with "Winding Through The Milky Way" (Muskogee) and Kevin Locke (Lakota/Hunkpapa Sioux and Anishinaabe) with "Earth Gift" also earned three nods each.

Tied with two nominations each are Broken Walls, Annie Humphrey, Arvel Bird, Black Lodge, Brule', Cherokee National Youth Choir, Darryl Tonemah, Desert West, Douglas Blue Feather, Eagle & Hawk, Gary Small, Golana, JJ Kent, James Peshlaka, Jim Boyd, Jimmy Shendo & Moeity, Lenape Spirits, Lietsoiitah Ye'ii Bi Cheii Singers, Mary Youngblood, Michael Searching Bear, Out of the Blue, Primeaux & Mike, R. Carlos Nakai, Rain Song, Red Hawk, Rezhogs, Skylar Wolf, Stevie Salas and Tony Redhouse.

This year's Rap Hip Hop Recording category was besieged by entries marking a new high for submissions in that category. Finalists include "All Day All Night" by the Rezhogs (Yakama), "The Backside" by Chase Manhattan (Muscogee Creek, Ojibwe), "Native Anthem (Yall Aint Know)" by Sandy & Chris Hunt, "Kash Kow," by Lou Nice, Chief, Stoney Creek, Charly Lowry, and Aaron Locklear, "Bluelight" by Quese Iimc (Pawnee/Seminole), "The World & Everything In It" by Team Rezofficial (Cree) and "Talisman Wasted Talent" by N8 (Yakama).

"These nominations throughout all 30 music categories reflect an astounding and diverse range of both new and established talent from our community," said Awards President Ellen Bello. We are extremely honored to be able to pay tribute to a music great like the late Ritchie Valens and give special recognition to international artist Stevie Salas. We are also honored to have the participation and support of Gil Birmingham as our host and music veteran Tommy Allsup as a special guest presenter. We look forward to a spectacular awards celebration running the full musical gamut of popular and traditional initiatives."

Tickets for the 11th Annual Native American Music Awards are on sale now through all ticketmaster outlets. Public voting to determine the winner of each category has now commenced and is open to the general public. Anyone interested in voting can visit the awards Web site www.nativeamericanmusicawards.com. Music from all nominees is currently featured on the site.

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12:39 PM Spider Woman wrote ...

It would be very nice to have NAMA air on TV for all native people to watch in the near future. Is that coming in the near future or something?

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Thursday, Sep 24 at 12:14 PM Phoenix Navajo wrote ...

Native American music has come a long way. I want to send my

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Wednesday, Sep 23 at 10:59 PM wilma fyllesvold wrote ...

I am suprised that Ulali has never been mentioned in the NAMA organization. I wonder why?
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