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In Selected Areas

NIAGARA'S TOP MUSICAL TALENT HONOURED AT MUSIC AWARDSBY STEVE HENSCHEL
STAFF

The Niagara music industry recognized the best of its own Wednesday night at the third annual Niagara Music Awards (NMAs).

Musicians, family, friends, fans and industry professionals gathered at the Niagara Regional Exhibition in Welland for a show recognizing the best in music from Niagara and showcasing a variety of local talent.

Ariana Gillis took home top awards for Female Vocalist of the Year and Album of the Year for her debut CD *To Make It Make Sense*.

"I'm honoured ... it's close to home," she said of her recognition at the local awards ceremony. The 19-year-old Vineland native was awarded Songwriter of the Year at the 2009 NMAs and performed at this year's ceremony.

"(I plan to) just keep playing my music, seeing where it takes me."

Songwriter of the Year and Male

Vocalist of the Year both went to Niagara Falls singer and guitarist John Boyd.

Welland-based band Street Pharmacy was awarded the Niagara Music Awards Group of the Year after taking the Entertainer and Music Video of the Year awards last year. The group also performed at the show on Wednesday.

Ryan Guay, singer for the band, said he was proud to be recognized locally two years running.

"I'm happy to be an active part of the award ceremony in our home town, I love Welland," he said.

The Rising Star Award was given to Briar Gillis, while Jazz Group of the Year went to Greg Holmes.

The Punk Rock Group of the Year award went to last year's recipient of the award: The Lucky Ones.

Wretched Pain was named Heavy Metal Group of the Year and Daniel X received the Recording Engineer of the Year award for his efforts in recording Wretched Pain's and his

own albums.

Beth Moore received the Adult Contemporary of the Year award, while Eagles tribute band New Kid in Town was recognized as Tribute Artist of the Year. Original Song of the Year was awarded to Jacelyn Holmes for her song "Growin' Up" and Steve Burnside was named Blues Group of the Year.

Marty Allen said he was honoured to even be nominated after being given the award for Country Group of the Year. Nathaniel Goold, of Folk Group of the Year, The Black Flies, said while it was nice to win "we're (The Black Flies) all about the fun of things." As last year's Group of the Year, The Black Flies also performed at the ceremony.

St. Catharines rapper Femapco took home the award for Hip Hop Group of the Year for the second year in a row and performed at this year's show.

He said he doesn't spend as much time on his music as many of the



Ariana Gillis was named Female Vocalist of the Year at Wednesday's NMAs. As last year's Songwriter of the Year, she performed her original brand of soft rock at the ceremony.

STEVE HENSCHEL/STAFF PHOTO

other artists due to career restraints, but his recent awards may lead him to place more concentration on his music career.

The Niagara Rhythm Section, last year's Blues Group of the Year, performed at the show and took home the award for Entertainer of the Year. The KAC Himself was awarded Music Video of the Year for his video "Rock Paper Life." Theatrical Performance of the Year was awarded to the Rocky Horror Show Live at Port Mansion.

This year's People's Choice award

went to Ryan Swayze.

Andrew Timperio was awarded Promoter of the Year and Mancini Music received the Instrumentalist of the Year award. The Best Bar Band of the Year award went to 351 Cleveland, while the Celtic group McPherson's Rant was named World Group of the Year.

Winners of last year's Album and Original Group of the Year awards, The Waxbills performed at Wednesday's show where The Roxwells were named Rock Group and Original Group of the Year.