

Manitoba singer/actress wins big at aboriginal music awards

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Andrea Menard of Flin Flon, Man., was a multiple winner Friday at the eighth annual Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards.

Menard garnered best folk album and album of the year for *Simple Steps* as well as best song single, *100 Years*.

Menard was one of the hosts of the gala. She is also an actress and playwright, having starred in *Moccasin Flats* and the one-woman stage play *The Velvet Devil*.

Other big winners included Toronto-based Tamara Podemski, who took home trophies for best female artist and best songwriter, while Edmonton's Jared Sowan won best male artist and best blues album, *Eclectically Yours*.

Menard and Podemski, as well as Susan Aglukark and Donna Kay with Little Island Cree, each held four nominations going into the awards show.

The awards, handed out in Toronto on Friday night, are part of the three-day Canadian Aboriginal Festival that includes powwows and an arts and crafts fair.

Other winners included:

- Best group — Eagle and Hawk.
- Best country album — Mike Gouchie, *Bad Boys & Angels*.
- Best hand drum album — Northern Cree & Friends, *Slide & Sway*.
- Best fiddle album — Cliff Maytwayashing, *Skiffle Fiddle*.
- Best rock album — Highway 373, *No Limits*.
- Best rap or hip-hop Album — REDDNATION, *Now or Never*.
- Best powwow album, traditional — Red Bull, *Enter The Circle*.
- Best powwow album, contemporary — Northern Cree, *Nikamo-Sing!*
- Best female traditional — M'Girl, *Fusion of Two Worlds*.
- Best music video — Susan Aglukark, *I Will Return*.

Each category of the awards was judged by a panel of five to seven individuals from across Canada who are active members of the professional Canadian music industry. Each panel also has aboriginal members.



Andrea Menard talks to the crowd after winning the award for album of the year during the Canadian Aboriginal Music Awards on Friday in Toronto. (Nathan Denette/Canadian Press)