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## BCIMA's Have Got A Way

by Nenari Diamond, Gonzo Contributor



GREG SCZEBEL



As many across the globe know, Bryan Adams has a hit song called "She's Got A Way" and in it he expresses how naked and totally exposed he feels in a relationship with a woman, how she seems to know him so intimately.

Well, the BCIMA'S most certainly provided that and more. From intimate moments such as Friday evening's Songwriter's Workshop in which two-time BCIMA 2011 winner Mike Gouchie was quoted as saying that *"Here we are up here, we are totally naked and exposed up here, very raw"*, to the humbling acceptance speeches from award winners such as this year's **People's Choice** award winner Leah West who was quote in her acceptance speech as saying *"To my wonderful Mark, who has supported me through many many of my ups and downs, thank you and I love you....I don't know what else to say, I am really touched, this is really moving, touching time in my life and one way or another I have been waiting my whole life for this moment, so thank you"*, and **Instrumental Recording Artist of the Year** Chris Madsen who also said in his acceptance speech so vulnerably *"This is a beautiful truth for all of us is that every one of us has a beautiful song within us and it's our life. And in any moment of our life, the moment you say 'I love you' or just express (it) somehow, in that moment, you have created the song, and you get this award"*, the 2011 British Columbia Interior Music Awards, now known as the British Columbia Indie Music Awards, were nothing short of awe inspiring and amazing.

Coming from a background where I have been involved in the music business in some form or another for many years as both a music manager and in other music related elements, I have seen all too often how musicians can let it all go to their head and be very much in ego. I have also seen how the music industry is often all about that same ego and how award shows can be very superficial and all about the glitz and glamour rather than the whole reason we are all there to begin with - the music, which is our heart and soul.



Chris Madsen accepting his award for  
Instrumental Of The Year

I am very honoured to say that the BCIMA's this year were lacking, and I say this in a very sincere and meaningful way. This year's BCIMA's were lacking in ego and pretentious arrogance. We here in the Okanagan really know how to show Canada, and the whole world for that matter, that it really *is* about the music and the heart and soul of the musician, rather than about pomp and circumstance and who is better than another.

It was extremely touching to see this right from the beginning, even before the actual awards themselves began. One could say that the awards really kicked off with the weekend's workshops. Within the Songwriter's Workshop was a panel of musicians from such a wide variety of genres, most of whom rarely knew one another, and yet all of whom came together in a collaborative co-creation that was as if they had all known one another their whole lives and were the best of friends at that. This coupled with this year's BCIMA three-time nominee Jane Eamon, who was originally scheduled to be the 'leader' of this workshop (only finding out a short time before this that she was to be the 'leader'), how she graciously made it a group effort rather than it being all about her as I have seen other workshop presenters do in workshops I have attended over the years, was nothing short of humbling.

The music and the wisdom given in those moments of that workshop from each of the five artists there really touched my heart deeply in many ways and gave credence to what their message and legacy is that is beyond the awards themselves. Twice during the workshop, both Mike Gouchie and Leah West had issues with their guitars/cables and without even a second thought, Jane Eamon and Greg Sczebel helped their fellow musicians by holding their cables during the whole of the song played. There was no sense of 'oh this is beneath me to do this' or any of the cattiness I have seen plague other award shows and workshops. Truly a sense of grace, style, class, and above all true camaraderie and heart-warming love was felt in those moments.

And that sense of kinship was free from stopping there. Even before the show began, the flow of the artists, media, and family/friends in the lobby had all the markings of a real hometown feel intermixed with professionalism and lightheartedness. Then, from our first glimpse of the evening's award show,

when the beautiful native drummers and singers came out in honouring our homelands aboriginal roots and music, which then flowed into a beautiful song performed by this year's **Roots/World Recording Artist of the Year** Adham Shaikh (and featuring Melissa Meretsky from Wassabi Collective) about *'love the water, keep the vibe high'*; a perfect rhythmic vocal expression about the universal truth of conscious creation and co-creation, topped with a most exotic belly dancer, was a sheer delight.

Featuring Astral Radio's Mark Burley as this year's Master of Ceremonies, with a wit and perfectly balanced humorous charm, the award presentations were exquisite. Greg Sczebel kicked off the night with his winning for **Songwriter of the Year** (Greg winning a total of eight smashing coveted awards in the evening, in which a witty Mark Burley, then in veering off of the script as he did in many facetious moments, then made Greg the satiristic pun of the evening which was beloved by all including Greg, who when asked about such, was quoted at the after party as saying to me *'I know, it was really funny and I didn't mind at all actually'*), followed by Wasabi Collective's win for **Urban Dance Recording of the Year**, and then followed by **Concept Collaboration Recording of the Year** going to Jude Davidson.

Of particular jocosity was when award winner Mike Gouchie was announced as the **Aboriginal Recording Artist of the Year** and Mr. Gouchie was nowhere to be found! It seems (and was revealed in his heartfelt and yet lighthearted speech) that he was backstage rehearsing for his then later captivating performance of the title track of his album "Shattered Glass", and no one had informed him that his category was even being announced let alone that he has won such an honour! Brad Krauza, presenter of this award from Gonzo Online, took it all in stride and was very professional in his composure and the whole thing really had us all quite amused.

Intermixed with the remaining twenty-one awards to be given in the evening (including **Engineer of the Year** to Jim LeGuilloux, **New Artist of the Year** and **Blues Recording of the Year** to Thomas Kjørven, **Folk Traditional Recording of the Year** to Miss Quincy, **Metal Recording of the Year** to Zen Rising, and **Single of the Year** and **2011 Special Achievement Award** to Andrew Allen), were stunning and dazzling performances by the likes of Aidan Mayes and Ari Neufield performing their beautiful song "Strawberries and Roses", breathtaking performance in giving their all were Kira Gosselin and the Heart to Heart Choir, Darby Mills' electrifying performance featuring both the YounGuns and our talented young artists from Wentworth Music School and dancers from the Canadian School of Ballet, energetic offerings by Virgin Radio's "Best of BC's" artist Kate Morgan, and Leah West's captivating performance of her song "Orange Bliss". Announcements of the who's who that have been asked to perform at our summer's upcoming festivals, such as, Rarearth Music Festival who will be featuring Greg Sczebel, Funtastic who will be featuring **Rock Recording Artist of the Year** Trinity's Tattoo, and Merritt Mountain Fest who will be featuring both **Country/Bluegrass Recording of the Year** nominee Cynthia Leigh-Ann and winner Mike Gouchie (in this same category) in their festivals this year were also part of the celebration during the evening.

To further show that our artists here in the Okanagan are egoless, all rallied in support of our **eight-time** winner of the evening Greg Sczebel, whose riveting performance had us all dancing and clapping in our seats (and some of us standing and dancing too!) to cap off the evening's event.

While no one doubts that Mark Greenhalgh and Shelly Vida put on a phenomenal show this year for our BCIMA's, and no one would shirk them their due for the astronomical amount of hours put into this, I would be amiss if I were to be free from giving homage to the someone else's. There are many here to give acknowledgment to, way too many to list in this article indeed. However, I will say, to all of you, the men and women of the crew and all who made this amazing evening possible in every way and you

know who you all are, yes you, those whose names we may never know, thank you. Without you, there is no way that any of us could have been there or do what we do, give what we give.

There is yet another group that I desire to acknowledge as well...two actually. One is all the nominees. All too often the ones who are nominated such as the James Avery's or the Jodi Pederson's or the John Lee Sander's of the world get glossed over in the lime light of those who have won. To all those who are nominees, I would like to offer this to you - that to me, you are all winners, you are all stars, award or no award. Because you understand that it's not just about the awards. Yes it is wonderful to win, no doubt. And all the same, to be nominated is a great honour in and of itself and it is really about the heart and the soul of it all which is the music and the message that you give. As Leah West so eloquently stated to Jodi Pederson on her Facebook wall the day after the awards, *"Yes, keep shining Jodi! I was up for 3 awards in 2009...Won nothing. I was up for 4 awards in 2011 and came home with 1. We keep at it because we love it and it's in our blood and we encourage our friends to do the same."* So I thank you all for continuing to shine your light, for it is you that make music beautiful.

And lastly, to all the unsung heroes, as I began this piece with here with Leah West's beautiful acknowledgement to her husband Mark, there are so many of us, myself included, who are the woman/man behind the musician, or the volunteer, or the stage crew, or the camera man; the family and friends, significant others and music managers and all of you who so often go unnoticed. Who give their all within holding the family together, providing the inspiration (or the swift kick in the butt when needed), or the late nights and ups and downs as Leah said, to have our musicians and award presenters and Master's of Ceremonies and such shine. All of you in articles go unnoticed all too often. So here is a thank you to you, for all you do and all you give to help our musicians and all shine.

This is my inaugural article for Gonzo Online I am happy to say. And just like the BCIMA's certainly had a way this year of touching the heart and soul, the spirit and love, of the music and the musicians themselves, I too hope to bring such to you in future pieces. I will be writing from the heart, giving in-depth interviews of our musicians here in BC. Touching, moving, and inspiring you to see the real, raw, vulnerable, and from the heartedness of the musician behind the music; being totally naked and exposed, revealing all and holding back none, and their legacy that they desire to leave for us all. BCIMA's, kudos to you, you really do GOT A WAY!

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**More on the BCIMA's** - [www.bcima.org](http://www.bcima.org)