

'Breakin' Free' named Best Record of the Year

Reibach continues string of prestigious awards at 12th annual NAMMY ceremony

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

Tribal member Jan Michael Looking Wolf Reibach continued his string of major wins at the Native American Music Awards.

In 2008, he was honored as Flutist of the Year.

In 2009, he was named Artist of the Year.

This year, he and his eponymous band, which includes Tribal member Kenny Lewis on lead guitar,



Photo by Kimberlie Acosta/NAMA

Tribal member Kenny Lewis plays with fellow Tribal member Jan Michael Looking Wolf Reibach and the Jan Michael Looking Wolf Band at the 12th annual Native American Music Awards held at the Seneca Niagara Hotel & Casino in Niagara Falls, N.Y., on Friday, Nov. 12.

won Record of the Year for "Breakin' Free." The award, received Nov. 12 at the Seneca Niagara Hotel & Casino in Niagara Falls, N.Y., marks Reibach's third win out of 16 NAMMY nominations and Lewis' first win at the NAMMYs.

"Breakin' Free" was recorded in the wake of last year's Artist of the Year Award and was Reibach's effort to do something positive with the most prestigious of Native American musical honors.

Reibach and his band recorded the hard-edged rock compact disc and filmed music videos in Salem that starred Lewis as a young Native guitarist who resists street come-ons to take drugs and drink alcohol. The compact disc and videos were subsequently distributed to Native American reservations nationwide in an attempt to combat teen drug and alcohol abuse.

"This record was part of an effort to promote drug and alcohol prevention for Native youth across the country," Reibach said upon returning from the awards ceremony. "My band members, who include Kenny Lewis, are recipients as well."

Another highlight of the trip for Reibach was having his song "Live As One" receive the "We Are the World" treatment. Seasoned Native American guitarist Ed Koban (Mohawk) wrote an arrangement for the song and 25 Native American artists gathered to record it. The video of the performance was released Nov. 26 to commemorate National Native American Heritage Day and will be used by the NAMMYs to combat Native teen suicide. The video can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=d2UpToByjfw.

Reibach said "Breakin' Free" represents the finale of his rock band



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal member Jan Michael Looking Wolf Reibach won Record of the Year for "Breakin' Free" at the 12th annual Native American Music Awards held at the Seneca Niagara Hotel & Casino in Niagara Falls, N.Y., on Friday, Nov. 12. This is Reibach's third NAMMY win over the last three years.

efforts, which included 2008's "The Looking Wolf Project," as well as the conclusion of the anti-drug and alcohol project. His next musical adventures include a traditional Native American flute recording ("A Message From the Sun") for an Arizona-based label and the start of Light Wing, a small acoustic group with drummer Nathan Myers.

Light Wing will open for Kenny Lewis' reggae-roots quartet Sol Seed at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 4, at the Grand Theatre, 191 High St. N.E., Salem.

"This honor also belongs to the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde," Reibach said. "Without the Tribe, my life would be empty. The experience of being part of it continues to be an inspiration in my life, music and heart."

Reibach works for the Tribe as the Lands Department manager and Kenny Lewis is the son of Tribal member Ann Lewis, the Tribe's Realty Specialist.

Reibach and/or his band also were nominated in four other categories at the 12th annual NAMMYs, including nods for best producer, best rock recording, song of the year and best compilation recording. During the ceremony, the band performed



Photo by Kimberlie Acosta/NAMA

Tribal member Jan Michael Looking Wolf Reibach performs with the Jan Michael Looking Wolf Band at the 12th annual Native American Music Awards held at the Seneca Niagara Hotel & Casino in Niagara Falls, N.Y., on Friday, Nov. 12.

"You're Not Alone" with Reibach playing his double flute with flames painted on it.

"The NAMMYs were a great experience for everybody," Reibach said. "Kenny and his band got to play at the VIP party and I got to hang out with Wes Studi ("Avatar," "Heat" and "Last of the Mohicans"). They also advertised our Tribe during the ceremony and on the Web site."

"I owe a tremendous amount of gratitude to Jan Michael Looking Wolf for the experience and opportunity that he has given me and my band," Kenny Lewis said. "In addition, I will always be thankful for my Tribe for everything that they do. I know I have been truly blessed." ■

Lane CC to open longhouse

Lane Community College, 4000 E. 30th Ave., Eugene, will hold a grand opening ceremony for its new Native American longhouse on Friday, Dec. 3. An open house will run from 10 to 11 a.m. with the grand opening program running from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Lane Community College President Mary Spilde will speak, as well as Tribal representatives from Oregon.

The longhouse is designed to be the home for Native American students and a place for all students to gather, celebrate and learn.

The Lane Board of Education committed to the longhouse project 15 years ago. The 6,200-square-foot building is on the west side of the main campus and is aligned in the cardinal directions.

"Despite college budget challenges, the board committed seed funding and now the dream has reached fruition," wrote Tony McCown, Lane Board of Education chairman, on the college's Web site.

The construction blends traditional and contemporary methods and uses natural materials, including cedar logs and plants. The east and west entries lead to a circular Hall of Honor commemorating the Tribes of Oregon.

Outside, carved cedar totems embrace a storytelling circle and the landscaping features plants used by local indigenous peoples.

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde contributed funds to the project, as well as Tribal member and Site Protection Specialist Don Day's labor.

"He worked continuously on the plankhouse there for the past eight months," said Tribal member and Cultural Resources Department Manager David Lewis. "He is preparing the cedar plank walls for the honor room."

On Saturday, Dec. 4, a powwow will be held. Grand entries will occur at noon and 7 p.m. with dinner served between 5 and 7 p.m.

For more information, call Lane Community College at 541-463-3000. ■

Chinuk wawa classes offered

The Tribal Cultural Education Department is offering adult Chinuk wawa language classes from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Monday and Wednesday in Room 207 of the Tribal Education Building.

Language classes can be taken for college credit or just for fun.

For more information, contact Kathy Cole at 503-879-2249 or 503-437-4599. ■

GED Classes

Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:30 – 4 p.m.

Contact Joanne Carr at 503-879-2282

or joanne.carr@grandronde.org ■