

## Fox Valley a real presence at WAMIs

By **GEMMA TARLACH**  
Journal Sentinel pop music critic

*Posted: April 26, 2005*

The Grammys could learn a thing or two from the WAMIs.

The Wisconsin Area Music Industry celebrated its 25th-annual awards show at the Potawatomi Bingo Casino's Northern Lights Theater Monday night with a party that celebrated the diversity - and the promising future - of the state's many music scenes.

With no one artist dominating, rising stars in hip-hop, country and rock took home awards and put on performances often worthy of a national stage.

Milwaukee-based Cincere won song of the year for the poignant "Daddy," an anthem that takes aim at the epidemic of absentee fathers. The singer, who also won for R&B artist of the year, wowed the crowd with the winning song as part of a medley that had him serenading members of the near-capacity crowd.

Although it went home empty-handed, Black Elephant presented a different side of the thriving urban scene with a dynamic set that proved the Milwaukee trio of rappers is ready for the national spotlight - and demonstrated the superiority of hip-hop that features live instruments and substantive topics.

Oshkosh band Boxkar, which took home the new group of the year award and already has performed nationally, electrified the crowd with a three-song set early in the evening. Given the group's up-tempo mainstream rock, reminiscent at times of matchbox twenty's punchier fare, and the stage presence of gifted front man Chris Szebeni, expect an easy transition for Boxkar to bigger things.

Boxkar's win was one of several awards that will be heading home to the Fox Valley, arguably the most dominant region of the state during the evening, with a third of the nominations and wins in a number of categories, including folk/acoustic artist, venue, and industry Web site.

Here's a (partial) list of Monday night WAMI award winners:

**Contemporary jazz artist:** Daryl Stuermer

**Blues artist:** Reverend Raven and the Chain Smokin' Altar Boys

**Guitarist:** Greg Koch

**Producer:** Gary Tanin

### WAMI Awards

