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The class of 2003: A wave of fresh SOCAN member talent at Grammy Awards

by Jim Kelly, for [www.socan.ca](http://www.socan.ca)



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Quadruple Grammy nominee Remy Shand

The 45<sup>th</sup> annual Grammy Awards ceremony has come and gone, and the bleary Monday morning after left most Canadian boosters rubbing their eyes — and not just from staying up late to watch the entire broadcast. Although there were a whopping 22 nominations given to Canadian artists in 2003 (up from 15 last year), only Burnaby, B.C.'s jazz siren Diana Krall and film composer Howard Shore walked away with the coveted golden gramophones (Krall for jazz vocal album, Shore for score or soundtrack album).

But win or lose, this year's contingent of Canadian SOCAN member nominees was notable for being spearheaded by a wave of fresh young talent.

Napanee, Ont.'s 18-year-old pop-punk princess Avril Lavigne led the pack with five nominations on the strength of her debut album *Let Go*, while Winnipeg's 24-year-old R&B/soul sensation Remy Shand received four for his rookie CD, *The Way I Feel*, and Alberta hard-rockers Nickelback had their hit "How You Remind Me" nominated for Record Of The Year. The band's lead singer Chad Kroeger received three further nominations for his song "Hero" from the movie *Spider-Man*.

All three SOCAN members were ecstatic to receive news of

the Grammy nods.

“I would have freaked out if I just had one,” an excited Lavigne said at a media conference when the nominations were announced in New York. “Now that I have five — I’m just trying to pinch myself.”



Five-time nominee Avril Lavigne: “I’m just trying to pinch myself.”

Shand and Kroeger needed to be pinched too, as both had been sleeping when their respective mothers called with the news of their nominations.

“I finally dragged myself out of bed and it’s turning into a bit of a whirlwind,” Kroeger told The Canadian Press just after the nominations were announced. “It’s fun that we got nominated. We’re now going to get to go down to New York and enjoy the festivities.”

Shand’s mom similarly roused her lethargic pop-star son.

“Wow, I wasn’t expecting it. It was a good wake-up call,” says Shand, laughing. “It was kind of a freak thing. My mom was just checking out the Grammy web site, and she called me up and said ‘you’re up for one of these things.’ And as the day went on she found out that I was up for four.”

Unfortunately for Shand, an ear infection kept him from making the trip to New York for the ceremonies. But speaking to [www.socan.ca](http://www.socan.ca) the week before the awards, he showed that the affliction wasn’t dimming his spirits. Winnipeg’s number one blue-eyed Soul brother is one happy man.

Shand — who wrote, recorded and produced his debut album essentially by himself, in his bedroom at his parents’ apartment in Winnipeg — was nominated for Best R&B Album, Best R&B Song and Best Male R&B Vocal Performance for his song “Take A Message,” and Best

Traditional R&B Vocal Performance for the hit “Rock Steady.”

The newcomer faced some pretty stiff competition, eventually losing out to India.Arie, Chaka Khan & The Funk Brothers, Usher and Erykah Badu, respectively. Still, not a bad showing for a rookie kid from the Great White North.

But being part of a new wave of younger artists, and especially being something of a novelty as an R&B/Soul artist from Canada, is something Shand is enjoying immensely.

“It’s great. It just feels stronger than ever — the whole feeling from Canada, and who we are and what we stand for,” he says. “It’s interesting because R&B is not the usual thing in Canada,” he adds with a laugh. “It’s great to be somewhat of an ambassador, to go to the States and basically explain that not everyone in Canada is, y’know, into Perry Coma (sic) or something.”

Shand had hoped to attend the ceremonies with his wife, and said he’d planned to wear the suit he “inherited” from his first video shoot. But he’ll get some use out of the cool threads yet, since he’s also been nominated for four Juno Awards, to be handed out April 6. He received nods for Artist Of The Year, Producer Of The Year, R&B Recording and Songwriter Of The Year.

Despite the whirlwind of nominations and accolades, Shand is still able to put things in perspective. When asked if he were to win an armful of trophies, that it could possibly be too much, too soon, he doesn’t hesitate in his response.

“Nah. No way man!” he says, laughing again. “It was a lot of work, and getting awards is great. If they come, they come. If not, I’m gonna be here making music anyway, regardless.”

No doubt we’ll be hearing more from Shand, and the Grammy-nominated SOCAN class of 2003, in the years to come.

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