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Hoku Zuttermeister, recipient of six awards including entertainer of the year, performed with his group during last night's awards ceremony.

Zuttermeister shines bright

The year's best in music is recognized by the 31st Annual Na Hoku Hanohano Awards

STORY SUMMARY »

For Hoku Zuttermeister, the first time was the charm.

The singer's debut album, "Aina Kupuna," took six Na Hoku Hanohano Awards last night, making him the night's big winner. Awards in more than 20 categories were handed out at the Hawaii Convention Center.

Other notable winners: Maunaulua made it three-for-three when the group's latest album, "Ho'okanaka," won group of the year honors. The trio's previous albums also were Hoku winners. And Napua Greig was named top female vocalist for "Pihana."

FULL STORY »

By **John Berger**
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You get only one chance to make a first impression, and Hoku Zuttermeister discovered last night that he'd aced the challenge when his debut album, "Aina Kupuna," came out a six-time winner in the 31st Annual Na Hoku Hanohano Awards.



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Group of the year Maunaulua, from left, Bruce Spencer, Bobby Moderow and Kahi Kaonohi, enjoyed the pre-event festivities.

Zuttermeister collected awards for entertainer of the year, top male vocalist, most promising artist and Hawaiian album at the Hawaii Academy of Recording Arts' ceremony at the Hawaii Convention Center. He also won the adjudicated Hawaiian-language performance category. The fifth award went to Robert Cazimero for writing the album's liner notes.



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Participants in the Na Hoku Hanohano Awards, from left, Jon DeMello, Leah Bernstein and Wayne Panoke enjoyed the cocktail reception before yesterday's ceremony at the Hawaii Convention Center.

"It's been a long time since we've won one of these," said Cazimero. "Thank you, Hoku, for so many reasons. If you are anything, you are a star."



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Jimmy Borges and his wife, Vicki, get ready for the event. Jimmy Borges received a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Voting in most Hoku categories is restricted to HARA members, but the categories of Hawaiian-language performance and haku mele (for song or chant in Hawaiian) are judged by a panel of Hawaiian-language specialists. The winner in the Favorite Entertainer of the Year category is determined by public vote.

The only other album to earn more than one award was "The Hawaiian Music Hall of Fame Presents -- Na Lani 'Eha," by Ku'uipo Kumukahi and the Hawaiian Hall of Fame Serenaders, which was named Album of the Year over Zuttermeister's. The album won a second award in the graphics category with Stacey Leong Design receiving a Hoku for the album art.



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Hoku Zuttermeister, recipient of several awards including Male Vocalist of the Year, receives the award for best Hawaiian Language Performance.

Zuttermeister wasn't the only first-time winner. Napua Greig lost to Zuttermeister for most promising artist but prevailed over four previous winners to take the female vocalist category. Veteran slack-key guitarist Jeff Peterson also went home a winner for the first time; his "Pure Slack Key" won the instrumental album category and he won the slack-key artist award.



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During the cocktail reception is prior to the start of the ceremony. (L) Robert Cazimero talks with (m) Bertil Long and (r) Kathy Long during the reception. Cazimero wins award for liner notes.

Most of last night's other winners had "been there, done that" in years past. Veteran record producers Don McDiarmid Jr., Donald "Flip" McDiarmid III and Harry B. Soria Jr. added one Hoku each to their individual collections.

"It's been a long time and we're very, very thankful to the people who worked with us," said Soria, mentioning Kimo Alama Keaulana, R. Keawe Lopes and his "front-line editor," his wife Holly, in receiving recognition for his anthology on Bill Ali'iloa Lincoln.



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During the cocktail reception is prior to the start of the ceremony. (L to R) Gaye Beamer, Mahi Beamer and Nina Kealiwahamana during the reception.

Maunaula -- Bruce Spencer, Kahi Kaonohi and "Uncle Bobby" Moderow Jr. -- made it three-for-three when their latest album, "Ho'okanaka," earned them Group of the Year honors; the trios' previous albums also were Hoku winners.

Cyril Pahinui, Keali'i Reichel, John Cruz, Amy Hanaiali'i, Frank De Lima and engineer Dave Tucciarone were among the other music industry veterans who were honored once again for their contributions to Hawaii's music.

WINNERS' LIST

Song of the year: "Ka Lehua 'Ula," Weldon Kekaouha from "Ka Lehua 'Ula," Weldon Kekaouha ('Ohelo)

Album of the year: "The Hawaiian Music Hall of Fame Presents -- Na Lani 'Eha," Ku'uipo Kumukahi and the Hawaiian Music Hall of Fame Serenaders (Hawaiian Music Hall of Fame); Isaac Akuna, Karen Aiu, Ku'uipo Kumukahi and Steve Kramer, producers

Entertainer of the year: Hoku Zuttermeister

Ki ho'alu slack-key award: Jeff Peterson

Group of the year: Maunaula, "Ho'okanaka" (Lokahi)

Female vocalist: Napua Greig, "Pihana" (Pihana)

Male vocalist: Hoku Zuttermeister, "Aina Kupuna" (Kaleiola)

Most promising artist: Hoku Zuttermeister, "Aina Kupuna" (Kaleiola)

Compilation album: "Aloha Slack Key -- A Tribute to Gabby 'Pops' Pahinui," various artists (Hula), Donald P. "Flip" McDiarmid III and Donald McDiarmid Jr., producers

Religious album: "Redeemed," Gary Haleamau (GSK)

Contemporary album: "One of These Days," John Cruz (Lilikoi)

Anthology: "Bill Ali'iloa Lincoln -- Hawaii's Falsetto Poet," Bill Ali'iloa Lincoln (Cord International/HanaOla), Harry B. Soria Jr., producer

R&B/hip-hop album: "More Than Just a Song," Nigel Kauanui (no label)

Reggae album: "From the Heart," Natural Vibrations (Natural Vibrations)

Island music album: "He'eia," Cyril Pahinui (Dancing Cat)

- Music video DVD:** "Kukahi -- Live in Concert," Keali'i Reichel (Punahale)
- Instrumental album:** "Pure Slack Key," Jeff Peterson (Peterson)
- Hawaiian album:** "Aina Kupuna," Hoku Zuttermeister (Kaleiola)
- Christmas album:** "A Hawaiian Christmas," Amy Hanaiali'i (Tiki Man)
- Jazz album:** "For All We Know," Joy Abbott & Betty Loo Taylor (Ladybug)
- Rock album:** "Where You Are," Koa (Firestarter)
- Comedy album:** "Hawaii, I Love It," Frank De Lima (Pocholinga)
- Graphics:** Stacey Leong Design for "The Hawaiian Music Hall of Fame Presents -- Na Lani 'Eha," Ku'iupo Kumukahi (Hawaiian Music Hall of Fame)
- Liner notes:** Robert Uluwehi Cazimero for "Aina Kupuna," Hoku Zuttermeister (Kaleiola)
- Hawaiian-language performance:** Hoku Zuttermeister, "Aina Kupuna" (Kaleiola)
- Hoku mele:** "Mili'opua" by Cody Pueo Pata for "He Aloha ..." Cody Pueo Pata (Ululoa)
- Moe Keale "Aloha Iz" Award for Community Service:** Nina Kealii Wahamana

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