

# George Kahumoku to receive Lifetime Achievement Award

**'Renaissance Man' never stops moving between music, farming, writing, teaching**

**By JON WOODHOUSE**  
For The Maui News

Acclaimed as Hawaii's "Renaissance Man," longtime Maui musician George Kahumoku Jr. will be honored in Waikiki on Dec. 4, when he will receive the 2022 Hawaii Academy of Recording Arts Lifetime Achievement Award.

Recognizing many years of accomplishments and contributions to Hawaii's music industry, this year's awards recipients also include Dr. Randie Kamuela Fong, Cecilia Mona Joy Lum, Jim Linkner and Glen Smith.

"I just feel honored," Kahumoku said. "I know some of the other guys that have been awarded before, so I feel honored. It's because of the music, and the teaching, and for sharing our culture."

A multi-Grammy and Na Hoku Hanohano award-winning master slack key guitarist, this energetic dynamo is also a respected songwriter, teacher,

artist, author, filmmaker, chef and farmer, who has dedicated his life to perpetuating traditional Hawaiian ways.

Besides hosting his weekly Masters of Hawaiian Music shows at the Napili Kai Beach Resort (now available on video on demand), he tours the Mainland, presents annual workshops, operates a large organic farm in Kahakuloa, mentors music students, plants thousands of native trees with the Rotary Club, and is in the midst of publishing a raft of books.

How does he juggle so many projects?

It takes a supportive team, he said.

"I'm lucky I have a team, a network of people," he said. "Number one, I've got my wife Nancy. She keeps reminding me the things that are priority. The farm has always been on my passion, but I'm trying to spend more time writing and drawing. I'm writing more stories now and doing more drawing, and books I haven't finished."

He estimates he has about 38 books in the works, and he's currently focused on illustrating a compilation of his



Photo courtesy George Kahumoku Jr.

**Longtime Maui musician** George Kahumoku Jr., a master of slack key guitar who stays busy with his craft as well as side projects of writing books and farming, will be honored with the Hawaii Academy of Recording Arts Lifetime Achievement Award next month.

songs and a book of native wisdom.

"I'm writing about native practitioners, ways of planting passed on by my elders, my great-grandfather," he explained. "I want to leave a legacy as much as I can. Planting by the moon, hunting, fishing, all that stuff, and just getting it down. I've been teaching a lot

of students, one by one, all the things that I know. But I think I can reach more people if I write it down."

As for the song book, it features, "songs that are written over the last 50 years with musical notation, and that's kind of new so that other people can play your songs. We're going to have photographs and I'm

doing illustrations about the songs with a little story and the meaning."

Kahumoku's most recent albums have included "Priest of the Land," "Reminiscing" and "Renaissance Man." Next up, fans can expect a collection of audience favorites.

"I was in the recording studio in LA with Daniel Ho," he reported. "My next album is called 'By Special Request,' songs that everybody asks for. They ask, do you know this or that song?"

He recently teamed with Grammy winners Ho and Tia Carrere for a successful Mainland tour in September and October.

"It was fabulous," he said. "It was kind of like a reset button for all of us. Because of COVID, I was kind of stuck farming. Now, with Daniel and Tia's suggestion, I'm trying to get more back into the art. Our legacy is to the stories and the writing, the drawing and songs.

For the last 20 years, I've been feeding the homeless and doing stuff for nonprofits, planting trees. I planted 10,000 trees for the last 12 years with the Rotary Clubs of Maui."

In conjunction with the Life-

time Achievement Award, he plans to present a special concert on Maui.

"On December 4th it's on Oahu, so I want to do something more homegrown, a celebration on Maui, and raise money for the Institute of Hawaiian Music and the Bailey House, and help us pay off some of our farm debt," he said.

Looking back over his life, this iconic Maui musician feels especially proud to have mentored so many students.

"What brings me the greatest joy is seeing all the students that I have mentored in the past out on their own," he said. "One of my students, Marvin Junior Tevaga, I took to the Hokus when he was a sophomore (at Lahainaluna High School) and now he's been listed in the Hokus. There's Peter D'Aquino from my show and the Ukulele Sisters, and Anthony Pfluke. I'm so blessed that they continued the music."

The 2022 Hawaii Academy of Recording Arts Lifetime Achievement Awards ceremony will be held at The Royal Hawaiian Resort on Dec. 4. Tickets are available at [www.harahawaii.com](http://www.harahawaii.com).