

ISLAND MELE

Keawe posts high mark

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'Hawai'i Island...Is My Home'

John Keawe
(Homestead Productions)



Veteran slack key guitarist John Keawe made history this month when he became the first Na Hoku Hanohano Award winner in the new Slack Key Album category. Most of Hawaii's top slack key artists either took last year off or, in the case of Led Kaapana, were competing in other categories, but Keawe's musical tribute to his home island would have been a strong contender any year. It now stands as a great benchmark for future winners in the category.

Keawe establishes the theme with the title track, one of several on which he sings as well as plays. The instrumentals that follow demonstrate his command of ki ho'alu techniques.

Keawe sets a fine example for younger artists by using traditional Hawaiian percussion where it fits. Keawe's liner notes share the stories behind the songs, and scenic photos help the listener visualize the some of the things he mentions in the lyrics.

www.JohnKeawe.com

- ▶ "Hawai'i Island...Is My Home"
 - ▶ "Faces of Pele"
 - ▶ "Guitarra"
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