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VINCE HARDER AND TE VAKA BIG WINNERS IN VODAFONE PACIFIC MUSIC AWARDS

Much-loved music and dance group **Te Vaka** and multi-talented **Vince Harder** have taken out the top accolades at the 12th annual Vodafone Pacific Music Awards.

Te Vaka's achievement is significant as it secured both the Best Song and Best Album awards, while Vince Harder took home no fewer than three awards – for NZ Music Commission Best Pacific Male Artist, Auckland Council Best Pacific Urban Artist and MAINZ Best Producer – showcasing the diversity of his abilities.

Te Vaka has won the APRA Best Pacific Song award for 'Papua I Sisifo', written by band member Opetaiia Foa'i. The group also took out the Recorded Music NZ Best Pacific Music Album for 'Amataga', its 8th collection of songs released in late 2015.

For more than two decades **Te Vaka** has occupied a central space in Pacific music and dance, under the inspired leadership of Foa'i. The group has toured the world and performed at important global occasions including America's Cup events in Auckland, the Commonwealth games in Melbourne, the Rugby World Cup in Paris and the Olympic Games in Beijing.

Te Vaka is a regular visitor to the Vodafone Pacific Music Awards podium having won numerous accolades over the years. The group's songwriter and lead vocalist Opetaiia Foa'i was noticeably missing from the awards ceremony but for good reason; he is currently writing the soundtrack for the upcoming Disney film *Moana*.

Vince Harder has won the NZ Music Commission Best Pacific Male Artist and the NIU FM Best Pacific Urban Artist awards for his album 'Rare Vision'. Recognition of his talent as an artist was complemented by his win in the MAINZ Best Producer category, for album 'Rare Vision' and the song 'Start Again' which he co-wrote with Stan Walker.

Vince released his first song in 2008 and has enjoyed widespread mainstream success including topping the NZ Singles Chart with 'Everything', a collaboration with fellow artist P-Money.

Virgin Australia Best Pacific Female Artist goes to industry stalwart **Annie Grace** for her album 'The Journey'. In *The Journey*, Annie embraces each challenge and tells her story of hope and triumph,

sharing her real life experiences to help bring healing and restoration. Annie is a familiar presence in Pacific music circles and at the Vodafone Pacific Music Awards; this year marks the second occasion on which she has won the Best Pacific Female Artist with the first awarded in 2006.

This year's Flava Best International Pacific Artist award goes to **Common Kings** for the album 'Hits & Mrs'. Common Kings delivers a collection of inspirations orchestrated in an array of head rocking beats, feel good vibes and emotional fever. The band is known for delivering pop hits with rock, reggae and R&B influences.

Winning the SunPix Best Pacific Language Recording award this year is **Tha Feelstyle** for his single "Sasa". Real name Kas Futialo, **Tha Feelstyle** is a multiple award winner who has forged a presence in the movie industry with music in films including Siones Wedding, Number 2 and The Orator. He was also the first to introduce the Samoan language to hip hop music in NZ.

The NZ On Air Radio Airplay award and a Special Recognition Award for outstanding achievement is presented to **Savage** for 'Freaks', his collaboration with Timmy Trumpet. **Savage** is the alter-ego of Demetrius Savelio, a rapper of Samoan descent, and a former member of hip hop group the Deceptikonz.

In 2009, he became the first New Zealand hip hop artist in history to have a commercial single ("Swing") achieve platinum certification status in the United States for selling more than one million copies. Freaks topped the singles chart in New Zealand, was a top 3 hit in Australia and was certified triple platinum by Recorded Music NZ.

Another Special Recognition Award for outstanding achievement went to **Vika & Linda Bull**. The Tongan sisters have been making waves in Australia for 25 years with the Black Sorrows in the late 1980s and then with eight albums of their own. Their next project will see the sisters going back to the deep harmonies and spiritual resonance of traditional Tongan music.

Mikey Mayz wins the Phillip Fuemana Award for Most Promising Pacific Artist. Active since 2011, Mayz made his breakthrough in 2015 with the songs 'Sunshine' and 'Thunder', consolidating his success with 2016's 'Reload'.

Sol3 Mio's 'On Another Note' is the winner of the Radio 531PI Best Pacific Group, while **TJ Taotua** is the Auckland Council Best Pacific Gospel Artist for his song "Firstly". Both are previous winners in these categories demonstrating continued success in their respective genres.

The Vodafone People's Choice Award goes to **Ill Semantics**, much loved for their pure New Zealand hip-hop style, and Team Dynamite took away the NZ Best Pacific Music Video for "Cosmos ReUp" directed by Eddy Fifield.

Pacific Underground were recognised with the Manukau Institute of Technology Lifetime Achievement Award for their continuous commitment to Pacific Music.

The Pacific Music Awards were thrilled to announce the MAINZ Pacific Scholarship for a Promising Artist at this year's awards. The scholarship provides up to \$8,000 in tuition fees towards a qualification from MAINZ.

"MAINZ provides qualifications focused on the music industry, and the recipient is offered the choice of studying music, event management, audio engineering and production, business or live sound and join the growing list of MAINZ graduates gaining prominence in our exciting industry," says Christine Fenton, MAINZ General Manager.

Vodafone Pacific Music Awards Trust chairperson Rev. Mua Strickson-Pua says this year's winners reflect the depth, breadth and enduring popularity of Pacific music.

"While the legends of the genre such as Te Vaka and Tha Freestyle continue to make their presence known, it is equally satisfying to see relative newcomers such as Team Dynamite asserting their talent and influence. The mainstream appeal of many of our winning artists, too, is a credit to Pacific culture and its place in the broader New Zealand community and internationally."

Strickson-Pua adds that in its 12th year, the Vodafone Pacific Music Awards have attracted more public support than ever, demonstrating widespread recognition of the talents of our Pacific artists

"Pacific music continues to lead the way in our industry and that's thanks to the remarkable efforts of all the artists who create, compose and perform," he says. "Congratulations to all of those who took home an award this year, and also to all who were nominated. We are so proud of all our Pacific artists and their immense talents. They are a credit to their families and communities they represent."

The Vodafone Pacific Music Awards and performance showcase were held tonight (June 9) at the Vodafone Events Centre in Auckland.

2016 Vodafone Pacific Music Awards winners by category:

VIRGIN AUSTRALIA BEST PACIFIC FEMALE ARTIST	Annie Grace <i>The Journey</i>
NZ MUSIC COMMISSION BEST PACIFIC MALE ARTIST	Vince Harder <i>Rare Vision</i>
RADIO 531PI BEST PACIFIC GROUP	Sol3 Mio <i>On Another Note</i>
AUCKLAND COUNCIL BEST PACIFIC GOSPEL ARTIST	TJ Taotua 'Firstly'
NIU FM BEST PACIFIC URBAN ARTIST	Vince Harder <i>Rare Vision</i>
FLAVA BEST INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC ARTIST	Common Kings 'Hits & Mrs'
MAINZ BEST PRODUCER	Vince Harder
NZ ON AIR BEST PACIFIC MUSIC VIDEO	Team Dynamite 'Cosmos ReUp'. Directed by Eddy Fifield
APRA BEST PACIFIC SONG	Te Vaka 'Papua I Sisifo'. Written by Opetai Foa'i
SUNPIX BEST PACIFIC LANGUAGE	Tha Feelstyle 'Sasa'
NZ ON AIR RADIO AIRPLAY AWARD	Savage 'Freaks'
VODAFONE PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD - BEST PACIFIC ARTIST	Ill Semantics
PHILLIP FUEMANA AWARD –MOST PROMISING PACIFIC ARTIST	Mikey Mayz
RECORDED MUSIC NZ BEST PACIFIC MUSIC ALBUM	Te Vaka 'Amataga'
SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD – Outstanding Achievement	Savage
SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD– Outstanding Achievement	Vika & Linda Bull
MANUKAU INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD	Pacific Underground

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About the Vodafone Pacific Music Awards:

In 2004 the Pacific Music Awards Committee (PMAC) was formed to realise a vision and the inaugural Pacific Music Awards debuted at Pasifika Festival in March 2005. Encouraged by the success of the awards the PMAC set about developing an annual event as a significant highlight of the New Zealand music industry calendar. The awards committee formed a Charitable Trust to organise and host the awards, and are driven by a simple core objective: to create and manage an event that acknowledges the success of Pacific artists, celebrates and promotes excellence in Pacific music and encourages young Pacific musicians to aspire to a higher level of achievement.

www.pacificmusicawards.org.nz

Issued for Pacific Music Awards Trust by Pead PR

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