African music stars shine bright at inaugural Trace Awards

Global music powerhouse and Afro-music tastemaker, Trace staged the first-ever Trace Awards to mark its 20th anniversary and celebrate the creativity, talent and influence of African and Afro-inspired music and artists. The Awards, taking place on 21 October 2023 in Kigali, Rwanda, showcased the excellence and diversity of Afro-centric music in genres such as Afrobeat, Dancehall, Hip Hop, Afro-pop, Mbalax, Amapiano, Zouk, Kizomba, Genge, Coupé Décalé, Bongo Flava, Soukous, Gospel, Rap, Rai, Kompa, R&B, and Rumba.

Image supplied

Competing in 26 award categories were Africa and Afro-inspired artists from more than thirty countries in Africa, South America, the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean and Europe.

Davido took home the prizes for Best Male, and shared Best Collaboration with South Africa's Musa Keys for *Unavailable*. Rema scored in the Global African Artist, and Song of the Year categories, with *Calm Down. Love Damini* by Burna Boy scored the prize for Best Album and Vivian Chidid received the plaudits for Best Female.

The Best Artist - East Africa was won by Diamond Platnumz, while Rwandan local hero Bruce Melodie triumphed in the Best Rwandan Artist category.

Didi B took home the silverware for Ivory Coast as Best Artist Africa - Francophone, while his fellow countrymen KS Bloom and Tam Sir scored in the Best Gospel Artist, and Best Producer categories, respectively. Lisandro Cuxi was named Best Artist Africa - Lusophone.

Recognising his long and storied music career, Nigeria's 2Face took home the prize for Lifetime Achievement.

Rutshelle Guillance was named as Best Artist - Caribbean, while Goulam triumphed as Best Artist - Indian Ocean, and Dystinct won Best Artist - North Africa. Yemi Alade's hit "Baddie" took home the prize for Best Video.

Music maker and entrepreneur, Mr Eazi, took home a special ChangeMarker award for his philanthropic work.

Looking further north, British rapper Central Cee triumphed as Best Artist - UK, while Tayc took home the trophy for Best Artist - France & Belgium. Ludmilla took home the trophy for Best Artist - Brazil and Michael Brun was named Best DJ for Haiti.

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All the winners...

Best Female	Viviane Chidid (Senegal)
Best Male	Davido (Nigeria)
Best Global African Artist	Rema (Nigeria)
Song of the Year	"Calm Down" - Rema (Nigeria)
Best Music Video	"Baddie" - Yemi Alade (Nigeria)
Best Newcomer powered by Luc Belaire	Roselyne Layo (Ivory Coast)
Best Collaboration powered by Martell	"Unavailable" - Davido (Nigeria) with Musa Keys (South Africa)
Best DJ	Michael Brun (Haiti)
Best Producer	Tam Sir (Ivory Coast)
Best Gospel Artist	KS Bloom (Ivory Coast)
Best Live	Fally Ipupa (DRC)
Best Dancer	Robot Boii (South Africa)
Change Maker	Mr Eazi (Nigeria)
Best Artist - East Africa	Diamond Platnumz (Tanzania)
Best Artist - France & Belgium	Tayc (France)

Best Artist - UK	Central Cee (UK)
Best Artist - The Caribbean	Rutshelle Guillaume (Haiti)
Best Artist - Indian Ocean	Goulam (Comoros)
Best Artist - Brazil	Ludmilla (Brazil)
Best Artist - North Africa	Dystinct (Morocco)
Best Artist Africa - Francophone	Didi B (Ivory Coast)
Best Artist Africa - Lusophone	Lisandro Cuxi (Cape Verde)
Best Artist - Rwanda	Bruce Melodie (Rwanda)
Album of the Year	"Love Damini" - Burna Boy (Nigeria)
Best Artist Africa - Anglophone	Asake (Nigeria)
Lifetime Achievement	2Face

Olivier Laouchez, chairman and co-founder of Trace, commented, "Tonight has been a triumphant demonstration of the power and creativity of African and African-origin artists. All the nominees and performers at the Trace Awards underlined exactly why African contemporary music has become a global phenomenon. We congratulate all the nominees, winners and performers for their achievements and for demonstrating their talent, imagination and creativity to a global audience."