



Jake Shimabukuro

Saturday in
Castle Theater

with Maui Pop Orchestra members

>> **Jake Shimabukuro will perform** with members of the Maui Pops Orchestra at 7:30 p.m. Saturday in Castle Theater at the Maui Arts & Cultural Center in Kahului. Tickets are \$45, \$55, \$65 and \$85 (plus applicable fees) and are available at the box office, by calling 242-7469 or by visiting www.mauiarts.org.

Ukulele star takes notes from Music City on most recent album

Since his early days, **Jake Shimabukuro** has been pushing boundaries and exploring the potential of the humble ukulele. With his most recent album, "Nashville Sessions," this virtuoso takes another leap, boldly stepping into Jeff Beck-style fusion territory.

The CD cover photo of blazing molten lava hints at the smoldering music inside from the opening "Hemiola Blues" blastoff to the

epic, incendiary closing, "Kilauea."

The new recording project results from a trip Shimabukuro made last year to Nashville, to col-



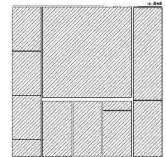
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laborate with two session musicians, drummer Evan Hutchings and bassist Nolan Verner, for six days of jamming and songwriting. The resulting album, as Ukulele Magazine notes, "manages to

sound like nothing else he's done before."

"It's so different from my other stuff, I wasn't sure how it would be perceived," he says. "Even my brother was, 'What is this?' It was so much fun to record, and everything was written and created in the studio. We'd just play and jam. It's the first time I've done anything like that. One tune, "Kilauea," was just a one-take completely improvisational piece."

And that's where he unleashed his inner rocking Beck. "He's one of my heroes," says Shimabukuro. "I love it when he creates those really dissonant sounds out of his gui-





tar. He's such an amazing talent."

With his extraordinary soloing on tracks like "Motown" and "6/8," Shimabukuro verges into blissful Santana territory, and on the rocking "Man of Mud," he truly attains the crown as the Hendrix of ukulele.

"I've always tried to maintain a balance of being respectful to the traditions of the instrument, the acoustic sound and the way the instrument is played," he continues. "With this one, I wanted to be respectful, and I had so much fun experimenting with other ukuleles like the baritone, the standard and the electric tenor, to get some really interesting sounds, things I had never experimented with before. It was exciting."

He says he had so much fun making "Nashville Sessions," he plans to head back to the studio in March to work with the same drummer and bassist and add some keyboards, strings and special guests.

"I'm going to try and collaborate with some of my favorite instrumentalists, people like Jerry Douglas and Vince Gill."

The ukulele master returns to the Castle Theater on Saturday accompanied by members of the **Maui Pops Orchestra**.

"I'm really looking forward to the concert because I've got a lot of new arrangements," he says. "We'll do a tribute to the 442nd battalion and a bunch of stuff. The Maui Arts & Cultural Center is one of my favorite places to play."

For those unfamiliar with superstar DJ **Steve Aoki**, here's some background.

One of the most successful and highest-paid DJs in the world, Aoki's annual income has been estimated by Forbes at around \$23 million.

He often plays to stadiums and massive crowds at the biggest dance festivals in the world including Belgium's Tomorrowland be-

fore 180,000 fans.

He's set a mark recognized by Guinness World Records as the most traveled musician in the world in one year (161 shows in 41 countries). And he has a record for receiving the longest crowd cheer.

His dad, Rocky Aoki, founded the iconic Benihana restaurant empire.

At his concerts, diehard fans (mostly female) hold up signs begging him to "cake me."

He has his own Netflix documentary, "I'll Sleep When I Die," and somehow, he's found time to bring his extravaganza to our little island.

"I love Maui," says Aoki about performing here. "I've been coming to Hawaii for many years. I have a lot of family in Hawaii. I'm playing in Honolulu, and of course we're going to swing by Maui."

A pioneer of EDM, the distinctive style of electronic dance music, this Grammy-nominated artist plays as many as 300 shows a year, mixing everything from Calvin Harris to Jimi Hendrix to Daft Punk to Future.

Reviewing one of his shows, Rolling Stone magazine noted: "Soon enough, he straps two smoke-machine cannons to his wrists and climbs on top of the DJ booth to let them rip — an EDM cyborg priest, opening his arms to his congregation."

So, what's he love most about DJing?

"I love that I can play music and produce music and connect with people on a global scale," he responds. "I can go from Italy to Australia to Malaysia and South Korea and China and down to Brazil, and all the way to Maui and there's a connection. It's incredible."

Besides being a revered DJ, Aoki releases popular albums like "Neon Future I" and "Neon Future II," produces artists and runs his own record label, Dim Mak.

As a deft remixer, he's worked

with Drake, Kanye West, Eminem, the Killers and Snoop Dogg. And the night before our interview, he appeared on "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon" for the U.S. television debut of "Just Hold On," a new collaboration with former One Direction singer Louis Tomlinson.

Aoki's shows have attained legendary status as massive spectacles that typically include throwing inflatable rafts into the crowd, tossing cakes into faces and showering fans with champagne.

"With 300 shows a year I'm adding different things and seeing what works and what doesn't work," he says. "One thing that's stayed is the cake."

He first "caked" a crowd in 2011. "I made a YouTube video

See AOKI on the next page of it and put it online and it got a couple of hundred thousand views pretty quickly. I knew there was an allure around it. The fans started making signs. If you make a sign, I want to cake you."

A fan of hardcore and punk, at the age of 19 he founded Dim Mak Records out of his college dorm, with a friend, for \$300 in 1996.

Over the course of 20 years, Dim Mak has helped shape the careers of artists from Bloc Party to the Kills in the alternative world and from Deorro to the Chainsmokers in the dance music movement.

"I'm so happy that we've been around for 20 years," he says. "We have over 880 releases so far. I'm proud of that."

Next up, Aoki will release "Neon Future III," featuring collaborations with artists like Blink 182's Travis Barker, rapper Lil Uzi Vert and South Africa's Lady-smith Black Mambazo.

■ The Dim Mak 20th Anniversary show with Steve Aoki and friends, including Autoerotic and Max Styler, will be held at 6 p.m. Feb. 17 on the MACC's Events Lawn. General admission tickets are \$45 and \$55 in

advance, and \$60 the day of show (plus applicable fees), and are available at the box office, by calling 242-7469 or by visiting www.mauiarts.org.

One of the most sublime singers in the world of devotional chanting, **Simrit Kaur** returns to Maui on Sunday on her "Songs of Resilience Global Unity" tour to perform at the Makawao Union Church.

Fusing Gurmukhi chant (from Northeast India) with contemporary pop and rock sung in English, she creates a unique, hypnotic hybrid that is often spellbinding. Kaur's exceptional album, "From the Ancient Storm," topped the iTunes World Music chart, and her latest release, "Songs of Resilience," is equally as impressive.

Working with producer Paul Mahern (Willie Nelson, Neil Young), Kaur has crafted a haunt-

ingly beautiful new work that merges Indian devotional mantras with pop-rock influences, and African Kora, harmonium and cello accompaniment.

For her Maui concert, she will be joined by cellist **Shannon Lee Hayden** and Fulbright award-winning tabla player **Daniel Paul**.

Mesmerizing in concert, she says she loves collaborative kirtan singing. "The energy exchange is the greatest thing. It's so special. I get really ecstatic."

■ Simrit Kaur will perform at 7 p.m. Sunday at the Makawao Union Church. Advance tickets are available for \$25 at MacNet in Kahului or at Maui Kombucha in Haiku (cash only), or online at www.simritkaurmusic.com. Day-of show tickets are \$35 (cash only).

Singer-songwriter **Donavon Frankenreiter** will celebrate

Valentine's Day on Maui performing at Charley's Restaurant and Saloon in Paia. Then on Wednesday, he heads to Fleetwood's on Front St. in Lahaina for a show.

Fleetwood's will also feature a Valentine's Day performance from 5 to 10 p.m. Tuesday that will feature **Mick Fleetwood** and friends, including **Gretchen Rhodes, Eric Gilliom, Mark Johnstone, Lenny Castellanos, Paul Marchetti** and **Kenny Gieser**. The teen Beatles' tribute band the **Mockers** will open.

■ Tickets for Frankenreiter's 9 p.m. show at Charley's are \$35 in advance and \$40 at the door. Tickets for Frankreiter's 9 p.m. show at Fleetwood's on Wednesday are \$45. Visit www.DovePresents.com for more information. Tickets for Fleetwood's Valentine's show range from \$80 to \$375 and are available at www.fleetwoodsonfrontst.com.



Steve Aoki, one of the top DJs in the world, will perform live at the Maui Arts & Cultural Center on Feb. 17.

Photo courtesy the artist