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19th Annual Kani Ka Pila Grille Talent Search – Call for Entries

Winner receives month-long contract to play at OUTRIGGER Reef Waikiki Beach Resort's Kani Ka Pila Grille



2025 KKPG Talent Search Winners 'Ōlauniu – who took their name from the wind of Kapālama - from L-R with Luana Maitland – Keali'iokalani Kalima (guitar), Kyle Moriguchi ('ukulele) and 'Elia Akaka (bass).

HONOLULU – The Kani Ka Pila Grille (KKPG) Talent Search contest returns for its 19th year, continuing OUTRIGGER Resorts & Hotels' long-standing commitment to celebrate & showcase local musical talent. Up-and-coming musicians from across Hawai'i are invited to enter for a chance to perform live at the finals, taking place on August 22, 2026, during the 32nd Annual Made in Hawai'i Festival at the Hawai'i Convention Center.

The winner will receive a month-long contract to jam at the home of Hawaiian music, Kani Ka Pila Grille at the [OUTRIGGER Reef Waikiki Beach Resort](#), which includes four performances within a month in 2027. In addition, the winning artist or band will receive a personalized social media marketing package featuring an electronic press kit and promotional audio/video clips recorded at Honolulu Community College's Mike Curb MELE Studios.

"Every year, the Kani Ka Pila Grille Talent Search introduces us to remarkable new talent and reinforces the importance of preserving and perpetuating Hawaiian music," said Luana Maitland, OUTRIGGER's Area Director of Cultural Experiences. "We're excited to celebrate these artists and provide a platform where their passion, creativity and cultural connections can shine."

To enter, aspiring traditional and contemporary Hawaiian musicians are invited to share a DVD music sample or digital link to a past performance. Registration must be completed by July 15, 2026, and include the name and high-resolution photo of the artist or group, along with a contact name, address and phone number. Submissions can be sent to luana.maitland@outrigger.com or Luana at Kani Ka Pila Grille, c/o OUTRIGGER Reef Waikiki Beach Resort, 2169 Kaila Road, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96815.

Four finalists will be announced on July 27 and invited to perform live at the Made in Hawai'i Festival main stage in front of a panel of renowned Hawaiian music industry professionals.

The competition's reputation for discovering rising stars is reflected in the success of its alumni: each of the past four Kani Ka Pila Grille Talent Search winners - 'Ōlauniu (2025), Rickey Kamai (2024), Kahiau Lam Ho (2023) and Anthony Pfluke (2022) - has been nominated for a 2026 Na Hōkū Hanohano Award.

All-Time Kani Ka Pila Grille Talent Search Competition Winners

2025 - 'Ōlauniu	2016 - Puuloa
2024 - Rickey Kamai	2015 - Waimanalo Sunset Band
2023 - Kahiau Lam Ho	2014 - Kaiao
2022 - Anthony Pfluke	2013 - Na Pali Trio
2021 - Kekoa Correa	2012 - Kamakakekahu Fernandez
2020 - Hui Mele	2011 - KeOahu
2019 - Hawaiian Blend	2010 - Pule Ohana
2018 - Ke Olu	2009 - Kupaoa
2017 - Ei Nei	2008 - Mānoa Voices

Located poolside at the OUTRIGGER Reef Waikiki Beach Resort, Kani Ka Pila Grille is Honolulu's home for nightly live Hawaiian music. Since opening in 2009, Kani Ka Pila Grille has welcomed legendary artists including Ledward Kaapana, Kawika Kahiapo, Ka Hehena, Kapena, Ho'okena, Kala'e + Kalena Parish, Weldon Kekauoha, Kalani Pe'a, Sean Nā'auao, Kimié Miner, Amy Hānaiali'i, Paula Fuga, Bobby Moderow, Ei Nei, Kala'e Camarillo, Robi Kahakalau, Jake Shimabukura and Nathan Aweau, while hosting approximately 2.6 million guests over the years. Partnerships with Hawai'i Academy of Recording Arts (HARA) and the Henry Kapon Foundation, combined with the leadership of Luana Maitland and OUTRIGGER's ongoing commitment to Hawaiian culture, continue to position KKPG as one of Hawai'i's most important stages for live local music. For reservations or restaurant information, call (808) 924-4990 or visit: www.outrigger.com/events/music/kani-ka-pila-grille.

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ABOUT OUTRIGGER RESORTS & HOTELS

For more than 75 years, OUTRIGGER has charted a journey of discovery – expanding from Hawai'i to premier resort destinations including Fiji, Mauritius, Thailand and the Maldives. The privately held hospitality company invites guests to 'Come Be Here' with authentic Signature Experiences and the [OUTRIGGER DISCOVERY loyalty program](#) – a member of the award-winning Global Hotel Alliance (GHA). OUTRIGGER's multi-branded portfolio includes OUTRIGGER Resorts, Hawaii Vacation Condos by OUTRIGGER®, The Kapalua Villas Maui and OUTRIGGER Honua Kai Resort & Spa while also managing select properties from top international hotel brands including Embassy Suites by Hilton®. Find out more at OUTRIGGER.com or visit @OUTRIGGERResorts on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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