

Rema and Davido were the top winners at the 2023 Trace Awards, which were held in Kigali, Rwanda, on Saturday (Oct. 21).

The Trace Awards are a new awards franchise created by Trace, a global TV and multimedia platform. The purpose of the awards is to recognize African and Afro-influenced musicians.

Rema won song of the year for his global smash “Calm Down.” A remix of the song with Selena Gomez reached No. 3 on the Billboard Hot 100. The Nigerian star also won best global African artist (in a tie with Nomcebo).

Davido also won two awards — best male and best collaboration. He won the latter award for “Unavailable,” a collab with Musa Keys from South Africa.

Burna Boy from Nigeria won album of the year for Love Damini.

The Trace Awards included performances by approximately 50 Africa and Afro-inspired artists from around the world, including Davido, Yemi Alade, Mr Eazi and Diamond Platnumz.

Olivier Laouchez, chairman and co-founder of Trace, said in a statement, “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.”

Several other award shows have added categories recognizing African music in the past year. Wizkid was the inaugural winner of favorite Afrobeats artist at the American Music Awards in November 2022. “Calm Down” by Rema & Selena Gomez was the inaugural winner of best Afrobeats at the MTV Video Awards in September. The nominees for the inaugural Grammy Award for best African music performance will be revealed on Nov. 10.

In addition to the competitive categories listed below, awards were presented in three categories in which no nominees were announced. They were: a lifetime achievement award to Nigeria’s 2Face, a Change Maker award to Mr Eazi (also from Nigeria) for his philanthropic work and the aforementioned best Global African artist award to Rema and Nomcebo.