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Sodagreen does it again

Despite a slew of nominations and gongs, Jay Chou shunned this year's Golden Melody Awards

BY HO YI
STAFF REPORTER

In an evening that saw the comeback of big-name stars, Jay Chou (周杰倫) triumphed, picking up the Best Composer and Best Song awards for the single *Blue and White Porcelain* (青花瓷), which also won his long-term partner Vincent Fang (方文山) the title of Best Lyricist. Even Chou's music work for his directorial debut *Secret* (不能說的秘密) won big in the usually overlooked instrumental music categories, grabbing top honors in Best Composer and Best Album Producer sections.

The biggest surprise of the night was Karen Mok, who walked home with the Best Mandarin Album award. The 19th Golden Melody Awards (第十九屆金曲獎)

Sodagreen was a hit at this year's Golden Melody Awards, unlike Jolin Tsai's outfit.

PHOTOS: AFP AND TAIPEI TIMES

took place at Taipei Arena (台北巨蛋) last night, with pop music awards handed out in a total of 23 categories chosen from among more than 100 nominees by a 33-member panel of judges after four rounds of jury meetings.

The nominees in this year's pop music categories contained many familiar faces. Jay Chou (周杰倫) garnered the most nominations including Best Song, Best Mandarin Album, Best Composer and Best Lyricist. Tanya Chua (蔡健雅) was another strong contender with seven nominations, followed by folk-rock band Sodagreen (蘇打綠) with six.

The coveted Best Band award went to last year's titleholder Sodagreen (蘇打綠), beating out all-girl rock band Cheery Boom (櫻桃幫) and the more experimental Hakka hip-hop outfit Kou Chou Ching (拷秋勤).

In the hotly contested Best Mandarin Female Singer category, Tanya Chua (蔡健雅) beat out strong contenders A-mei (張惠妹), Stefanie Sun (孫燕姿) and Fish Leong (梁靜茹) to walk away with the trophy. The Best Mandarin Male Singer went to Gary Tsao (曹格) from Malaysia.

Despite the large number of nominations for his album *On the Run* (我很忙), Chou did not attend the

ceremony. The Chairman was busy touring China instead.

Among the best-dressed stars were members of pop-rock band Won Fu (旺福樂團), who might have started a new trend when they showed up decked out in retro disco era-duds. Karen Mok (莫文蔚) was, as always, easy on the eyes with her long legs and tasteful yet revealing dress.

Pop diva A-mei (張惠妹), unfortunately, ditched her *tai mei* (台妹) look and went for an unflattering all-black evening dress that made her look flat-chested and slightly chubby. Hong Kong's Eason Chan (陳奕迅) grabbed attention with a noticeably receding hairline.

The "Queen of Cute," Rainie Yang (楊丞琳) decided to adorn her whole-some good looks with a dull one-piece dress and black stockings, while Jolin Tsai (蔡依林) looked like she was trying too hard in a dress that resembled a pink-and-white knot.

Hip-hop outfit Da Mouth (大嘴巴) won for Best Singing Group category. When asked backstage how she felt about her group's winning the award for their debut album, Japanese starlet-turned-hip-hop artist Ai Sha (愛紗) said, "we are all in shock."

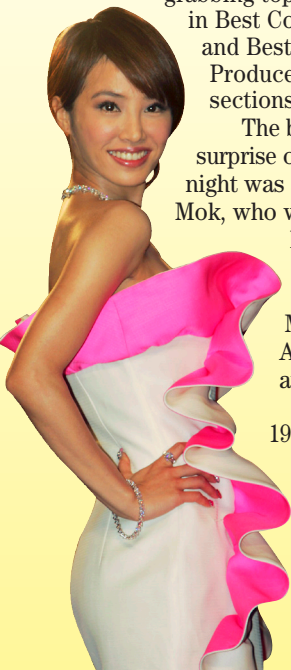
This year's jury was unusually keen on giving artists two awards. Not surprisingly, visually-impaired musician Hsiao Huang-chi (蕭煌奇) beat out last year's titleholder Shih Wen-bin (施文彬) and veteran crooner Wang Shi-xian (王識賢) to pick up the Best Taiwanese Male Singer trophy. Hsiao also won Best Taiwanese-language Album later last night.

Ipay Buyci took top honors in both the Best Aboriginal Album and Best Aboriginal Singer categories for her pop-music album sung in Atayal (泰雅).

Another double winner was veteran Hakka musician Ayu Huang (黃連煜), who garnered Best Hakka Album and Best Hakka Singer for his album *2007 Banana*. Brimming with gratitude during his acceptance speech, Huang first thanked the jury for being nice enough to give an award to someone who made his first solo album at the age of 50. The long thank-you list Huang read from included "those friends who have lent me money and dared not ask me to pay it back."

The recipient of this year's Lifetime Contribution Award was Chen Chih-yuan (陳志遠), one of the key figures in the folk music, or *minge* (民歌), movement in the 1980s. Chen is best known for his many award-winning arrangements for pop singers such as Tsai Chin (蔡琴), Pan Yue-yun (潘越雲), Su Jui (蘇芮) and, more recently, A-mei.

Gongs for the 19th Golden Melody Awards' Artistic and Traditional music categories were handed out late last month to little fanfare.



Are the Golden Melody Awards just a night of backslapping and self-aggrandizement for the music industry or do they encourage innovation and Taiwanese creativity? Four musicians, music critics and industry insiders give their verdicts.

Yeh Yun-ping (葉雲平), is a music critic and past Golden Melody Awards jury member.

Taipei Times: What do you think of the Awards' language-based categories? YY: Yun-ping: They're backward. The language categories are unique among the world's music awards. I can understand why the system was adopted a long time ago, because back then there weren't many different genres. But I believe now it's time to make a change as there's greater diversity in music. Some would argue that music nowadays is all hybrid, which makes it nearly impossible to tell which style an album belongs to. If that's the case, we could have more awards for singles rather than albums.

TT: What could be done to improve the Golden Melody Awards? YY: The Golden Melody Awards lack a clear direction and guidelines for what the event wants to encourage. Each year [the emphasis] differs depending on the jury members' tastes. That's why it's impossible to make predictions and why the media are always surprised at the results. This is one of the problems with the event being funded by the government. The Best Composer and Best Lyricist categories should be scrapped. No other music awards in the industry use this classification. We already have the Best Song award, so why keep the other two gongs?

Elaine Hsiung (熊鷹賢), is the founder and director of Wild Fire Music (野火樂集). She has worked in the music industry for more than 20 years.

Taipei Times: Why are the Golden Melody Awards important? Elaine Hsiung: The event's biggest value is to encourage local musicians and professionals as well as industry-related workers. But the Golden Melody Awards



are restricted by a bureaucratic mindset that is devoid of creativity. The award categories make it seem like there are only producers, composers and lyricists working in the industry. What about art designers, photographers and album planners? There are too many unsung heroes and heroines, and too many important aspects of the industry are overlooked.

TT: Are the Golden Melody Awards keeping up with developments in the music industry?

EH: That's the Golden Melody Awards' biggest problem. In the Internet age, you should encourage and support new forms of music content and delivery. If you continue limiting yourself to the shrinking offline market, you'll end up backslapping those who don't embrace innovation.

Jeannie Chen (陳冠伶) has 15 years of experience playing alternative music in bands such as Braces (牙套) and Peppermint (薄荷葉). Now she's part of the pop manufacturing industry by day and bassist of 88 Balaz (88顆芭樂籽) by night.

Taipei Times: Who's your money on? Jeannie Chen: Chalaw Passiwali is great [nominated for Best Aboriginal Album and best Aboriginal singer]. For the mainstream, Jay Chou's music is nice.

TT: Who do you think should win the Best Female/Male Singer awards?

JC: Hsiao Huang-chi (蕭煌奇) in Best Hakka Singer Award. The reason: though he can't see, he sings the most beautiful notes in the dark.

TT: What's wrong with the Golden Melody Awards?

JC: The awards are populated by too many foreign pop idols. Also, it's bizarre to use

Clockwise from right: Protest hip-hop artist Chang Jui-chuan, 88 Balaz bassist Jeannie Chen, and Wild Fire Music founder Elaine Hsiung.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF INTERVIEWEES

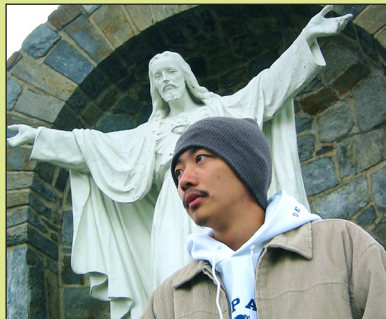
language categorization for the awards. Say if the same thing applied to China, then you'd get something like the best Beijing singer and best Sichuan singer, and so on.

TT: If you were in charge of the awards, what changes would you make? JC: I would set a rule that the competition would only be open to musicians and singers who had sold more than 20,000 copies of their albums ... Then there should be a singing contest. Each nominee would go head-to-head.

TT: What categories would you like to see added to the awards?

JC: Theater music. We have the Golden Horse Awards that cover movie soundtracks and the Golden Melody Awards covers music in general. Musicians who work in theater should have their own awards so that they are motivated to make more original work.

Chang Jui-chuan (張睿銘), is a lecturer in the English department of National Chengchi University (國立政治大學) and a hip-hop artist who raps about political issues.



Taipei Times: What's the point of the Golden Melody Awards?

Chang Jui-chuan: To be honest, I have no expectations for Golden Melody Awards and today's pop music in Taiwan. The general public doesn't believe that pop music can be serious and address important social issues. It's just entertainment. Secondly, people who make pop music in Taiwan don't believe they have a responsibility to make a difference or change society through their work. Music is entertainment or, worse, just a way to make money. You may think I'm being idealistic, but looking back to the US in 1960s you can see how pop music was an essential part of a cultural movement that turned society upside down. Forty years later, and tens of thousand of kilometers away, that legacy endures. Such is the power of pop music. Golden Melody Awards is just a backslapping fest. Of course, occasionally we have great work by people like Chthonic (閃靈), Joy Topper (豬頭皮), Pur-dur (陳建年) and Kou Chou Ching (拷秋勤). But the are few and far between.

TT: Are Golden Melody Awards more than just a product of a commercial process? CJ: It doesn't matter if Golden Melody Awards are just a product of a commercial process or not. Music needs markets to survive. Even I want a record label to promote my music and ideas. The difference is whether or not you are aware that the production of music or cultural artifacts carries social responsibilities. Mainstream music and film awards in the US pay tribute to people with social convictions like Bob Dylan, Rage Against the Machine and Michael Moore. That doesn't happen in Taiwan.

— HO YI

— The 19th Golden Melody Awards nominees and winners —

Pop Music category (演唱類)

◆ Best Song
最佳年度歌曲
* *Incomparable Beauty* (無與倫比的美麗) in *Incomparable Beauty* (無與倫比的美麗) by Sodagreen (蘇打綠)
* *Darwin* (達爾文) in *Goodbye & Hello* by Tanya Chua (蔡健雅)
* *Blue and White Porcelain* (青花瓷) in *On the Run* (我很忙) by Jay Chou (周杰倫)
* *Love Song in Wonderland* (未來) Khalil Fong (方大同)
* *Against the Light* (逆光) in *Against the Light* (逆光) by Stefanie Sun (孫燕姿)
* *Blink of an Eye* (一眼瞬間) in *Star* by A-mei (張惠妹)

◆ Best Mandarin Album

最佳國語專輯獎

* *Incomparable Beauty* (無與倫比的美麗) by Sodagreen (蘇打綠)
* *Star* by A-mei (張惠妹)
* *Against the Light* (逆光) by Stefanie Sun (孫燕姿)
* *Goodbye & Hello* by Tanya Chua (蔡健雅)
* *Live Is ...* (拉活) by Karen Mok (莫文蔚)
* *On the Run* (我很忙) by Jay Chou (周杰倫)

◆ Best Taiwanese-language Album

最佳台語專輯獎

* *Love of Life III - Companionship* (人間有愛 3—歡喜作伴) from TV sound track
* *Love Songs* (真情歌) by Hsiao Huang-chi (蕭煌奇)
* *Kou! It's Coming Out!!!* (拷!!!出來了!!!) by Kou Chou Ching (拷秋勤)
* *Toilet Paper* (衛生紙) by The New Formosa Band (新寶島康樂隊)
* *Close to Home* (厝邊) by Cheng Chiu-hsuan (鄭秋玄)

◆ Best Hakka Album

最佳客語專輯獎

* *2007 Banana* by Ayu Huang (黃連煜)
* *Hair Bun Flower* (髻髻花) by Cheng Chao-fang (鄭朝芳)
* *An Old Tree, New Branches* (老樹新枝) by Liu Jung-chang (劉榮昌)
* *In Love with Old Mountain Railway* (戀戀舊山線) by Chiu Hsing-yi (邱幸儀) and Chiu Li-ling (邱俐綾)

◆ Best Aboriginal Album

最佳原住民族語專輯獎

* *Auba! The Most Beautiful Tribe* (藍芭!最美的部落)
* *Nasi* (生命) by Sauniaw (少妮瑯)
* *My Name Is Bai Lang* by Bai Lang (蔣進興)
* *Ipay Buyci* (依拜維吉) by Ipay Buyci (依拜維吉)
* *Chalaw Passiwali* (查勞·巴西瓦里) by Chalaw Passiwali (查勞·巴西瓦里)

◆ Best Composer

最佳作曲人獎

* *Wu Ching-feng* (吳青峰) for *Incomparable Beauty* (無與倫比的美麗)
* *Hsiao Huang-chi* (蕭煌奇) for *Love the Song* (愛這首歌)
* *Gary Tsao* (曹格) for *Blink of an Eye* (一眼瞬間)
* *Tanya Chua* (蔡健雅) for *Blank Space* (空白格)
* *Jay Chou* (周杰倫) for *Blue and White Porcelain* (青花瓷)
* *Lin Chi-yu* (林俱玉) for *Lucky to Have Your Love* (慶幸你有愛我)

◆ Best Lyricist

最佳作詞人獎

* *Yeh Kuo-chu* (葉國居) for *Hair Bun Flower* (髻髻花)
* *Liao Ying-ju* (廖瑩如) for *Against the Light* (逆光)
* *Hsiao Han* (小寒) for *Darwin* (達爾文)
* *Deserts Chang* (張懸) for *After All* (畢竟)
* *Vincent Fang* (方文山) for *Blue and White Porcelain* (青花瓷)
* *Qi Qin* (齊秦) and *Chang Chen-yue* (張震嶽) for *Love Sickness* (思念是一種病)

◆ Best Arrangement

最佳編曲人獎

* *Wu Ching-feng* (吳青峰), *Shih Chun-wei* (史俊威), *Hsieh Hsing-i* (謝馨儀), *Liu Chia-kai* (劉家凱), * *He Ching-yang* (何景揚), *Kung Yu-chi* (龔鈺琪), *Lin Wei-tse* (林暉哲) for *Incomparable Beauty* (無與倫比的美麗)
* *Hsiao An* (小安) for *Agent J* (特務J)
* *Martin Tang* for *Against the Light* (逆光)
* *Chen Chien-chi* (陳建騏) for *J'Adore* (崇拜)
* *Huang Chung-yueh* (黃中岳) for *Darwin* (達爾文)
* *Tu Hui-yuan* (涂惠源) for *Wake-up Song* (起床歌)
* *Chung Hsing-min* (鍾興民) for *Blue and White Porcelain* (青花瓷)

◆ Best Album Producer

最佳專輯製作人獎

* *Ayu Huang* (黃連煜) for *2007 Banana*
* *Tsao Teng-chang* (曹登昌) for *Ipay Buyci* (依拜維吉)
* *Tanya Chua* (蔡健雅) for *Goodbye & Hello*
* *Terry Chan* for *Live Is ...* (拉活)
* *Gary Tsao* (曹格) and *Tu Hui-yuan* (涂惠源) for *Super Sunshine*

◆ Best Single Producer

最佳單曲製作人獎

* *Chung Cheng-hu* (鍾成虎) for *Pussy*
* *Chen Chien-liang* (陳建良) for *Fool* (傻瓜)
* *Tank* for *Anti-Terrorist Squad* (反恐小組)
* *Adia* (阿弟仔) for *Agent J* (特務J)
* *Ma Yun-fen* (馬韻芬) for *Blink of an Eye* (一眼瞬間)

◆ Best Mandarin Male Singer

最佳國語男歌手獎

* *Eason Chan* (陳奕迅) for *Admit It* (認了吧)
* *Tank* for *Keep Fighting* (延長比賽)
* *Shin* (信) for *I Am I* (我就是我)
* *Yang Pei-an* (楊培安) for *Pei-an Yang's Album No. 2* (楊培安II)
* *Gary Tsao* (曹格) for *Super Sunshine*
* *Khalil Fong* (方大同) for *Wonderland* (未來)

◆ Best Taiwanese Male Singer

最佳台語男歌手獎

* *Shih Wen-bin* (施文彬) for *Be Together Tonight* (今夜我陪你)
* *Wang Shi-xian* (王識賢) for *Man of Iron* (堅強)
* *Hsiao Huang-chi* (蕭煌奇) for *Love Songs* (真情歌)

◆ Best Mandarin Female Singer

最佳國語女歌手獎

* *A-mei* (張惠妹) for *Star*
* *Stefanie Sun* (孫燕姿) for *Against the Light* (逆光)
* *Fish Leong* (梁靜茹) for *J'Adore* (崇拜)
* *Tanya Chua* (蔡健雅) for *Goodbye & Hello*
* *Karen Mok* (莫文蔚) for *Live Is ...* (拉活)
* *Joi Tsai* (蔡淳佳) for *Joi Blessed* (慶幸擁有)

◆ Best Taiwanese Female Singer

最佳台語女歌手獎

* *Chen Si-an* (陳思安) for *Appreciation* (體會)
* *Chan Ya-wen* (詹雅雯) for *Life Highway* (人生公路)
* *Sun Shu-mei* (孫淑媚) for *Chance to Love You* (愛你的機會)
* *Showlen Maya* (秀蘭瑪雅) for *Homesickness* (望鄉思情)
* *Liu I-chun* (劉依純) for *Lonesome Moon* (孤單的月娘)

◆ Best Hakka Singer

最佳客語歌手獎

* *Ayu Huang* (黃連煜) for *2007 Banana*
* *Lin Tzu-chun* (林姿君) for *Hakka Girl* (客家妹)
* *Liu Jung-chang* (劉榮昌) for *An Old Tree, New Branches* (老樹新枝)
* *Sinco Chiu* (邱幸儀) and *Aileen Chiu* (邱俐綾) for *In Love With Old Mountain Railway* (戀戀舊山線)

◆ Best Aboriginal Singer

最佳原住民族語歌手獎

* *Sauniaw* (少妮瑯·久分勒分) for *Nasi* (生命)
* *Amoy* (林熙玉) for *Beautiful Voice of Aboriginal Music* (原聲中之美聲)
* *Bai Lang* (蔣進興) for *My Name Is Bai Lang*
* *Ipay Buyci* (依拜維吉) for *Ipay Buyci* (依拜維吉)
* *Chalaw Passiwali* (查勞·巴西瓦里) for *Chalaw Passiwali* (查勞·巴西瓦里)

◆ Best Band

最佳樂團獎

* *Cherry Boom* (櫻桃幫)
* *Mrs This* (這位太太)
* *Sodagreen* (蘇打綠)
* *Won Fu* (旺福樂團)
* *Mavis Fan Plus 100%* (范曉萱+100%樂團)
* *Kou Chou Ching* (拷秋勤)

◆ Best Singing Group

最佳演唱組合獎

* *Da Mouth* (大嘴巴)
* *Nan Quan Mama* (南拳媽媽)
* *Soler*

◆ Best Newcomer

最佳潛力新人獎

* *Debbie Hsiao* (蕭薔碩) for *Shuo's Map Album* (碩一碩的流浪地圖)
* *Olivia Yan* (閻韋伶) for *Silly Child* (傻孩子)
* *Connie Lu* (呂華) for *Moment of Love* (心動的時刻)
* *Lo Si-rong* (羅思容) for *Everyday* (每日)
* *Chris Wu* (吳衍翰) for *Stay Up* (徹夜未眠)
* *Wow for The Big Hits* (頭號人物)

◆ Best Music Video Director

最佳音樂錄影帶導演獎

* *Hsu Yun-hsuan* (徐筠軒)
* *Chen Hung-yi* (陳宏一)
* *Chou Ke-tai* (周格泰)
* *Chu Hsueh-yi* (區雪儀)
* *Chung Wei-chuan* (鍾偉權)

Instrumental Music category (演奏類)

◆ Best Album

最佳專輯獎

* *Fantasia of Tuscany* (托斯卡尼我想起你)
* *Sizhukong* (絲竹空)
* *Mr Bebu* (Mr比布)
* *Secret* (不能說的秘密)

◆ Best Album Producer

最佳專輯製作人獎

* *Lee Cin-yun* (李欣芸)
* *Peng Yu-wen* (彭郁雯)
* *Jay Chou* (周杰倫)
* *Denise Juan* (阮丹青)

◆ Best Composer

最佳作曲人獎

* *Lee Cin-yun* (李欣芸)
* *Chang Shih-he* (章世和)
* *Jay Chou* (周杰倫) and *Terdsak Janpan*
* *Denise Juan* (阮丹青)

◆ Lifetime Contribution Award

(特別貢獻獎)

* *Chen Chih-yuan* (陳志遠)

SOURCE: GOLDEN MELODY AWARDS