

LEHUA FILMS PRESENTS

# Nā Kamalei

## THE MEN OF HULA

A FILM BY LISETTE MARIE FLANARY



### SYNOPSIS

*Nā Kamalei: The Men of Hula* captures the journey of legendary master teacher Robert Cazimero and the only all-male hula school in Hawai'i as they prepare to compete at the world's largest hula festival. Beyond deep-rooted stereotypes of 'grass-skirt girls', the film tells a story of Hawaiian pride as the men celebrate their 30th anniversary in continuing the revival of men dancing hula.

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### SUMMARY

From tourist kitsch to old Hollywood movies, many people are familiar with romanticized images of women dancing the hula in Hawai'i. While few are aware of the sacred traditions of the dance, the role of male hula dancers has long been overshadowed by Western concepts of gender and sexuality. From ancient times, when men learned the dance along with the martial arts of battle, to the suppression of the dance under missionary ban, the hula survived underground for many years until the cultural renaissance of the 1970's.

In 1975, at the height of this revival, master hula teacher Maiki Aiu Lake asked her student, legendary entertainer Robert Cazimero, to open a school for only male dancers. With six young high school students, Robert Cazimero founded Hālau Nā Kamalei and it suddenly became 'hot' for men to dance hula again. Celebrating their 30th anniversary, *Nā Kamalei: The Men of Hula* tells a story of Hawaiian pride through the examination of male roles in Hawaiian culture both in the past and the present.

Blending dance and culture with the personal stories of the men, the film follows the dancers—who range in age from 18 to 55 years old—as they return to the largest hula competition in the world. Often called the "Superbowl of Hula", the stakes are high at the Merrie Monarch Hula Festival. Though the school won over thirty years ago in 1975, the competition today typically favors women or the younger, more physically chiseled men's groups. These men, many of whom are the oldest in competition, instead seek not to win, but to dance with pride and masculine grace.

Capturing the grueling rehearsals and the nervous last minutes backstage to the preparations of their leis and offerings to the goddess of the volcano, *Nā Kamalei's* exciting return to the stage thrusts male hula dancers into the spotlight once again. Called a 'rare victory' for a men's group, Robert and his men sweep the awards with their warrior-like dancing. *Nā Kamalei: The Men of Hula* highlights the men's ageless joy of dancing to reveal a renaissance that is not fading, but continuing the proud legacy of men in perpetuating the art of hula.

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## THE MEN OF HULA

### CAST AND CREW CREDITS

#### FEATURING

##### **Robert Uluwehi Cazimero and Hālau Nā Kamalei**

Kyle "Boongie" Atabay  
Stanley "Spike" Cadinha Jr.  
Kyle Kaliko Chang  
Ke'ala Chock  
Brad Cooper  
Patrick "Gan" Kahea Ganhinhin  
Edward Bruce "Babooze" Hanohano  
Alvin "Gunnies" Hanzawa  
Weylin Hokutan  
Reginald Keaunui III  
Dean Kida  
Kapena Kim  
Mitch Kobayashi  
Keola "Bully" Maka'iau  
Daniel Nāhoopi'i  
Charles Padua  
Kaulana "Kauboy" Vares  
Nalu Won  
Keo Woolford

##### **Hālau 'Ohana & Kōkua**

Ray "Shorty" Abregano  
Frank Among  
Wayne Chang  
Moses Crabbe  
Mi'ilani Cooper  
Kilohana "Killer" Domingo  
Pi'ilani & Kalei Hanohano  
Edward Kahoali'i Hanohano Jr.  
'Anolani, Jacob, Jaeden, &  
Joseph Hanohano  
Kimberly, Parker, McKenna, &  
Maya Hanzawa  
Kenny Joyce  
Reyna & Uluwehi Keaunui  
Hau'oli Keawe-Aiko  
John & Kanoe Miller  
Byron & Julie Maka'iau  
Hattie & Andres Montoto  
Alike Parker  
Namaka & Moke Rawlins  
Todd Tajiri  
Hulali & Kaleopa'a Vares  
Burton White

##### **Karl Veto Baker & Michael Casupang and Hālau I Ka Wēkiu**

##### **Manu Boyd and Hālau O Ke 'A'ali'i Kū Makani**

##### **Leina'ala Kalama Heine and Nā Pualei O Likolehua**

#### **Musicians for Merrie Monarch:**

Roland Cazimero  
Keao Costa  
Kaipo Hale  
Hōkū Zuttermeister

#### **Music by The Brothers Cazimero**

Courtesy of the Mountain Apple  
Company Hawai'i—  
The Source of Hawaiian Music

#### **CREW**

##### **Director/Producer**

Lisette Marie Flanary

##### **Co-Producer**

Keo Woolford

##### **Editor**

Tali Weissman

##### **Director of Photography**

Vincent Keala Lucero

##### **Additional Camera**

Lisette Marie Flanary

##### **Production Sound Mixer**

John Reynolds

##### **Production Coordinator**

Kimberlee Bassford

##### **Additional Hawai'i Crew**

Kaliko Palmieri  
Scott Mason

##### **Post-Production Supervisor**

Tiffany Ellis

##### **Music Supervision**

Jeanne DaSilva

##### **Stock Footage Researcher**

Clementine Wallace

##### **Post-Production Intern**

Esme Shigeko

##### **On-Line**

Arc Pictures

##### **Sound Post**

DuArt Sound

##### **Post Sound Mixer**

Kevin Wilson

##### **Fiscal Sponsor**

Hawai'i Cultural Foundation

##### **Publicity Stills**

Frank Among

#### **Archival Photographs**

Bishop Museum  
Donald Woodrum  
Edward Hanohano  
Robert Cazimero

#### **Archival Home Movie of Maiki Aiu Lake**

Biography Hawai'i  
Coline Aiu

#### **Archival Hollywood and Lū'au Footage**

Getty Images  
Historic Films

#### **Merrie Monarch Festival Footage**

KITV-4 Island Television  
The Merrie Monarch Hula Festival

#### **"Pau Hana Years" Footage**

Hawai'i State Department  
of Education

#### **Executive Producer for ITVS**

Sally Jo Fifer

#### **Executive Producer for PIC**

Ruth Bolan

**[I]NDEPENDENT LENS** 

**[ITVS]**



PACIFIC ISLANDERS  
IN COMMUNICATIONS

'Nā Kamalei: Men of Hula' is a co-production of  
Lehua Films, LLC and the Independent Television  
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Islanders in Communications (PIC), with funding  
provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

**TRIBECA  
FILM  
INSTITUTE**



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Mariko Gordon

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## THE MEN OF HULA



### DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY



As a filmmaker and a hula dancer, Lisette Marie Flanary creates documentary films about the hula dance that celebrate a renaissance of Hawaiian culture. She is the writer, producer and director of Lehua Films and recently completed *Nā Kamalei: The Men of Hula* which focuses on the revival of men dancing the hula by following legendary master teacher, Robert Cazimero, and the only all-male hula school in Hawai'i. The film premiered at the Hawai'i International Film Festival's Sunset on the Beach screening in October 2006 and was awarded the Hawai'i Filmmaker Award and an Audience Award for Best Documentary.

In 2007, *Nā Kamalei* screened in numerous film festivals and received the Audience Award at the San Francisco Asian American Film Festival, the VCFILMFEST Special Jury Award for Best Non-Fiction Feature, the Emerging Director Award at the New York Asian American International Film Festival, and Best Documentary at the San Diego Asian American Film Festival. The film will broadcast on the 2007-2008 Independent Lens series on PBS in May 2008.

Lisette's first feature, *American Aloha: Hula Beyond Hawai'i*, was an hour-long documentary that broadcast nationally on the award winning non-fiction showcase P.O.V. on PBS in 2003. The film focused on the hula dance and the Hawaiian community living on the mainland in California. Winner of the CINE Golden Eagle Award, the film screened in numerous film festivals and is now available on Netflix.com. *American Aloha* broadcast internationally on ITVS' TRUE STORIES series in 2007.

Since graduating from NYU's film school in 1995, Lisette has worked on many independent productions both in the US and abroad, as well as her own 16mm short film entitled *Kill Kimono*. She received her MFA in creative writing at the New School in 2000 and continued her traditional hula studies under master hula teacher, Patrick Makuakāne, in San Francisco, California. In 2006, she formally graduated as an 'ōlapa (dancer) in the Papa 'Ūniki Lehua class. Under the blessing and guidance of her teacher, Lisette formed a hui, or a group, called Nā Lehua Melemele and continues to teach classes that perpetuate the art of the hula in New York City.

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### CREW BIOGRAPHIES

**KEO WOOLFORD** Co-Producer / Los Angeles, CA

Keo is a multi-disciplinary artist, born and raised in Hawai'i, who began dancing hula in high school. In 1999, he became a member of Robert Cazimero's Hālau Nā Kamalei. Since then he has been performing hula with The Brothers Cazimero around the US and Japan. His career in theatre began in 1995 with his critically acclaimed and self-penned one-man show, *He Hawai'i Au*. In 2002, Keo completed his run starring as the King in *The King And I* at the London Palladium. He currently resides in Los Angeles where he continues his artistic pursuits. His new solo show, *I-land*, debuted off-Broadway in New York City in the Spring of 2007.

**TALI WEISSMAN** Editor / New York, NY

Tali worked as an editor on various Israeli productions until her move to New York City in 1999 when she came to study film and media studies at Hunter College. She recently cut the television version of Danae Elon's award winning film, *Another Road Home*, as well as CNBC's talk show "D-Life" and "Lockdown USA" which screened at the 2006 Tribeca Film Festival.

**TIFFANY ELLIS** Post-Production Supervisor / New York, NY

Tiffany is a graduate of Occidental College and will complete her Master's in visual anthropology at Oxford University in Spring 2007. Most recently, she has worked in post-production on a forthcoming documentary series on US immigration reform and as an Assistant Director on the short *Grief Becomes Me*. Her student documentary short *Urban Corroboree*, which examined the effects of tourism on indigenous dance traditions in the Australian rainforest, was awarded Honorable Mention at the 2004 Chris Awards.

**VINCENT KEALA LUCERO** Director of Photography / Honolulu, Hawai'i

Not only is Keala a talented director of photography, but he also danced hula for master hula teacher, O'Brien Eselu. Born and raised in Hawai'i, he is an emerging talent in Pacific Islander filmmaking and a graduate of the Kamehameha Schools. Among Keala's many credits, he was the director of photography on his own digital shorts entitled *Ho'omua* and *Wahine O Ke Kai* which were both featured at the Hawai'i International Film Festival. He received an Honorable Mention for his work at HIFF in 2005.

**JOHN REYNOLDS** Sound Recordist / Honolulu, Hawai'i

With over thirty years experience in sound for film and video productions, John has worked on a variety of films, television shows, and commercials in Hawai'i for the last twelve years. Recently he worked on such films as *The Big Bounce*, *Riding Giants*, and indie feature by local talent Nathan Kurosawa, *The Ride*, which premiered at HIFF in 2003. He has also worked on studio films such as *Pearl Harbor*, *Blue Crush*, and *Picture Bride* along with every other tv series ever shot in Hawai'i including *Lost*, *Hawai'i*, *North Shore*, *Baywatch*, & many more.



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### CAST BIOGRAPHY



#### ROBERT CAZIMERO

In the 1970's, Robert Cazimero was instrumental in the resurgence of Hawaiian music and culture. That resurgence began a career that almost thirty years later is stronger than ever. Musician, composer, kumu hula...his work in all of these areas is well-known throughout the world. His incomparable elegant voice is distinctive, whether he performs solo on piano or with his brother, Roland as The Brothers Cazimero. Collectively as The Brothers Cazimero and individually, Robert has released over thirty albums over the past three decades. A prolific composer, many of Robert's compositions have become classics and been performed by numerous musicians.

Robert Cazimero is also one of the most respected kumu hula of Hawaiian dance today, and his dancers, the men of Kamalei, appear with The Brothers Cazimero around the world. Hawai'i's popularity as a vacation destination has brought Hawaiian music beyond her shores and the popularity of this ethnic brand of music has allowed Robert to perform in locales such as Carnegie Hall in New York City, the Hollywood Bowl, the World Expo in Brisbane, Australia, Hong Kong, Tokyo; and annually in San Francisco, Los Angeles and Seattle to sell out crowds. The many talents of Robert Cazimero have established him as legend in Hawaiian music and culture.

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### PRODUCTION NOTES

Running Time: 57 minutes  
Shooting Format: Video—24p Mini DV  
Screening Format: Digi-Beta and Beta SP  
Aspect Ratio: 16 x 9 anamorphic  
Sound: Stereo  
Production Completion: September 2006  
Contact Information: Lisette Marie Flanary  
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646-418-7171 cell  
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Website: www.lehuafilms.com

For more information and downloadable publicity stills, please visit our website.

National Broadcast on PBS on the 2007-2008 Independent Lens series on May 6th, 2008 at 10pm.

Visit [www.pbs.org/independentlens/](http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/) for more information

### FESTIVAL SCREENINGS / AWARDS

- World Premiere, Hawai'i International Film Festival, Sunset on the Beach  
\*WINNER OF HAWAI'I FILMMAKER AWARD AND AUDIENCE AWARD
- San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival  
\*WINNER OF AUDIENCE AWARD FOR BEST DOCUMENTARY
- Martha's Vineyard Independent Film Festival
- Chicago Asian American Showcase
- Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival  
\*WINNER OF SPECIAL JURY AWARD FOR BEST NON-FICTION FEATURE
- Sydney Film Festival, Australia
- Maui Film Festival
- New York Asian American International Film Festival  
\*WINNER OF EMERGING DIRECTOR IN DOCUMENTARY FEATURE
- Rhode Island International Film Festival
- DC Asian Pacific American Festival
- Pacific Rim Film Festival
- San Diego Asian American Film Festival  
\*WINNER OF BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE
- Music on Film, Film on Music Festival, Prague