

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 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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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 "Gunnie" 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
Alika 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]NDEPENDENTLENS 

[ITVS]



PACIFIC ISLANDERS
IN COMMUNICATIONS

'Nā Kamalei: Men of Hula' is a co-production of
Lehua Films, LLC and the Independent Television
Service (ITVS), and a presentation of Pacific
Islanders in Communications (PIC), with funding
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**TRIBECA
FILM
INSTITUTE**



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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

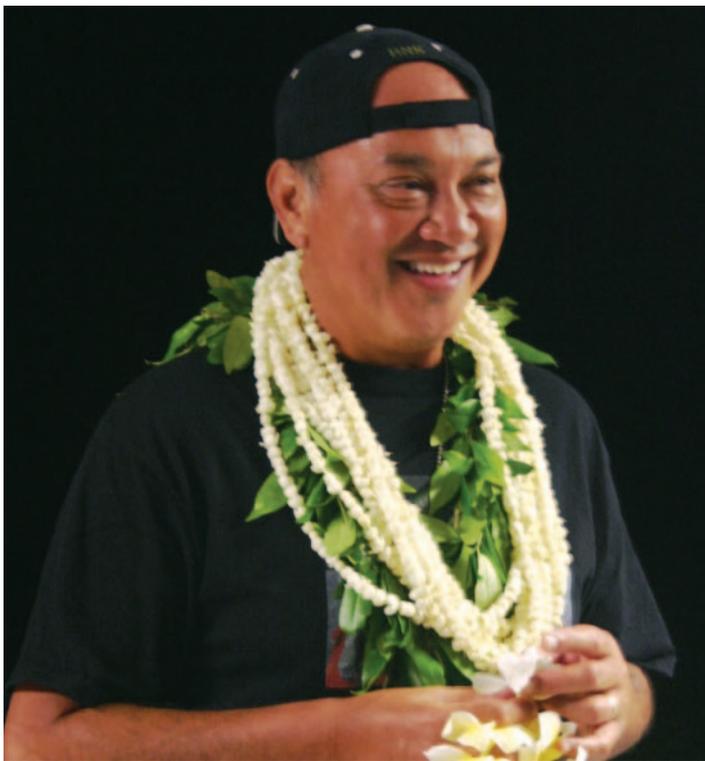
Not only is Keala a talented director of photography, but he also danced hula for master hula teacher, O'Brien Eselu. Born and raised in Hawai'i, he is an emerging talent in Pacific Islander filmmaking and a graduate of the Kamehameha Schools. Among Keala's many credits, he was the director of photography 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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Email: lisette@lehuafilms.com
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/
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