

‘RECALLING HAWAI’I’ TO PREMIERE ON KAUA’I...A MAGICAL KALEIDOSCOPE...& PEAK OF A LIFE WORK

by Dawn Fraser Kawahara

For a teacher, it seems there is no better reward than meeting a pupil who is passionate about their learning even years after being in class. My husband “Dee,” enjoys meeting old students here and there, hearing what they have done that may or may not be related to having attended a whole year of his biology classes at Kapa’a High—some “way back when” he was a new teacher to Kaua’i in the 1970s.

Ten years into his retirement from a long teaching career, he gains deep pleasure from hearing of students’ personal journeys that took them into medical fields, agro-science and botany, ecology related work, or any other calling—as long as they are passionate about *life* (which is what biology centers upon, after all) and continuing to learn along the way. This fits with the base theory of teaching he practiced: the fact that education is supposed to excite and promote the desire to learn, drawing out intelligent learning; this, in opposition to not stuffing an amount of predetermined material into ripening minds.

If anyone thinks back over a satisfying teaching career or a span of parenting, this central thought, or “backbone,” will often hold true. A “retirement” then can take place as the new, intelligent young ‘uns who are charged with fresh inspiration and drive take on their first life responsibilities, and eventually replace us in society, hopefully improving on mistakes or lacks of the past.

Such is the case with Kumu Hula Roselle Keli’ihonipua Bailey, who taught Hawaiian cultural classes, hula movement, chant and music for a long span of years on Kaua’i, also beginning in the 1970s (like Dee). When a move to Maui was necessary in the 1990s because of her aging parents needing support and care, she wisely appointed others to teach the classes of the Ka`Imi Institute, which she had founded. Naturally choosing the most dedicated and advanced of her student body, the assignments were made, and the school-without-walls continued through the present. It also grew in leaps and bounds that spread over the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.

Roselle, as those of us who know her well fondly call her, has not retired. She has handed over the staff of power, so to speak, to her various, dedicated and trusted teaching Kumu Hula on Kaua’i, Maui, O’ahu, in California, Virginia, Samoa. In the last span of years she has expanded to teaching and establishing classes in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland through Kaua’i students’ career and friendship networking



June 11, 2010 Heidelberg

Contributed photo

Bedecked in ti-leaf skirts and forest ferns, Leela Mohr and Wailana Booth (center and r.), members of Ka`Imi Na`auao O Hawai`i Nei Institute, are captured in a moment of joyous hula.

and, in one case, origin. It is mainly Master Classes she now teaches, for her advanced students and teachers.

A high point of the Ka`Imi Na Au`ao O Hawai`i Nei Institute’s spreading membership of students dedicated to learning “the truth of ancient Hawai’i” and “exciting through the medium of hula” occurred on the 20th Anniversary of Kauai’s Queen Emma Festival, when for the first time Ka`Imi dancers and musicians from Europe, the Mainland, and all over Hawai’i merged. In October 2008, they combined the result of their learning in a creative presentation to open the favorite festival. Flags of all the nations represented in that global microcosm fluttered in the sunshine to honor the chosen “Queen Emma” and her courtiers while the various Ka`Imi dancers, chanters, and musicians gave their gift of hula.

Roselle Bailey, I am sure, looked over that smiling and colorful group, and knew in her heart that the education offered through the Institute was going forward. Indeed, the process was drawing out ongoing learning, creativity, and respect for the Hawaiian people and their culture from each of “her” students in the great, spreading tree of cultural knowledge she had originally planted, then watered and nourished so well.

This year, a peak will be reached when that 2008 coming together of members of the various Ka ʻImi Institute hula branches expands into “Recalling Hawaiʻi,” a presentation that once again merges dancers, chanters, musicians and supporters from Hawaiʻi, the Mainland, and Europe.

The large *pu* will sound a deep and haunting call as it’s blown and air spirals through its chambers, the chanting will be begin — “*Aroha tatou, e na tupuna. . .*” (Aloha to our grandparents/ancestors) — the lights in the auditorium will



hands at Emalani

Photo Credit: Tim Delavega

Forest ferns and leaves, shells, and flowers adorn the heads of these hula sisters of Ka ʻImi Naʻauao O Hawaiʻi Nei Institute, captured here in a close moment after a hula performance.

Tiare w RKB 11/08

Photo Credit: Tebo Booth

Kumu Hula Roselle Keliʻihonipua Bailey (r.) stands proud with “Queen Emma” Shantel Tiare Santiago, of the 20th Anniversary of The Queen Emalani Festival.



come up on colorfully-costumed figures before a background screen filled with images of Kauaʻi and Hawaiʻi, and the multi-media chronicle, “Recalling Hawaiʻi” will be off and running for most of the next two hours. Hopefully, everyone in the audience will be as mesmerized as I was at first seeing a video of the first European performances, performed in June 2010 in Germany, Austria and Switzerland by invitation, and then in rehearsal with the Kauaʻi group.

My overall impression of the imaginative choreography and ways of staging was that I was seeing patterns through a magical kaleidoscope. The dance sequences of this presentation unfold like time lapse photography of a rainbow bouquet of buds unfurling into blossoms, drawing in, renewing, and rearranging. Because “Recalling Hawaiʻi” is not quite like any hula show I’ve ever seen, I asked Roselle, the artistic director, about this when she came in March to observe the first Kauaʻi rehearsal. She was quick to say she had departed from “Merrie Monarch style choreography” and ways of staging, and was continuing the tradition of Hawaiian creativity in finding new ways to blend the old with the new in this choreographed presentation. She also stressed that she hoped any person with Hawaiian ancestry would gain renewal and personal pride from the content of the program. She wishes the same for anyone who respects and dedicates to learning the truth of the Hawaiian culture.

This show’s theme revolves on aspects of Hawaiian culture that are alive and well today. A focal point is the legacy, or legacies, of Hawaiian leaders of the past, and how these bequests of the Aliʻi (Chiefs and Chiefesses/Kings and Queens) translate in modern-day Hawaiʻi to benefit our people. The legacies of Liliuʻokalani, Emalani, Kalakaua and the like are well worth remembering and celebrating in

“Recalling Hawai‘i,” which will take place on May 28, 7 p.m., at the Kaua‘i Community College Performing Arts Center.

The cast of chanters, dancers and musicians will number over forty for this Kaua‘i premiere, a special public performance to be staged by members of the educational non-profit Ka ‘Imi Na‘auao O Hawai‘i Nei Institute. Right now, clusters of dancers and musicians from different schools under the Ka ‘Imi Institute “umbrella” are in rehearsal for the day when they will come together on our island to pool the results of their dedicated learning and practice. From Kaua‘i comes the main host group under the directorship of Kumu Hula Sally Jo “Keahi” Manea, who teaches Ka ‘Imi Institute’s Kapa‘a classes. From Westside membership comes a group working with long-time Ka ‘Imi member, Waimea High School teacher Joanne “Kealamai” Parongao, the music director of “Recalling Hawai‘i”. The Kaua‘i host team will also include dancers from Kumu Hula Perle Puamohala Kaholokula’s halau, well-known musician and recording artist Robbie Kaholokula, and other professional musicians.

Tickets are available through all Ka ‘Imi members, various Kaua‘i outlets, and also online at www.kaimi.org or call locally 212-1340 (\$15 in advance). People who would like to attend with disability or special needs, please call by May 20.

The opening chant to ask permission to enter each class of the non-profit Ka ‘Imi Institute states that the person is weary and hungry, and desirous of what is offered. The reply of welcome is very much in keeping with Dee’s central idea of education in that those within the place of learning—and especially the teacher—offer welcome, comradeship and upholding, “food” for thought until the seeker is fully satisfied.

Kumu Hula Roselle Bailey

Contributed photo

Kumu Hula Roselle Bailey (l) shares a light moment with former student “Queen Emma” Shantel Tiare Santiago (r), attended by her lady-in-waiting and a child at the 20th Anniversary of the Queen Emma Festival held in Koke‘e in October 2008.



Ka ‘Imi group shot post-perform. Photo Credit: Tebo Booth

Members of Ka ‘Imi Na‘auao O Hawai‘i Nei Institute from Kaua‘i, O‘ahu, Maui, California, Virginia, Austria, Germany and Switzerland gather in Koke‘e following their combined 2008 20th anniversary special performance at the Eo e Emalani i Alaka‘i Festival when many of the Institute’s students/dancers and teachers convened from “far and wide” with the Kaua‘i groups to perform and present the flags of their culturally-represented home islands, states and countries.

RECALLING HAWAI‘I ‘A multi-media chronicle’

Date: Sat., May 28, 2011

Place: Kaua‘i Community College Performing Arts Center

Time: 7 p.m.

Tickets \$15 advance, \$20 at door

Info and tickets online
HYPERLINK <http://www.kaimi.org> or call (808) 212-1340
*Disability or special needs, call by May 20.

