

## KEALOHA KALAMA

Kealoha Kalama is a kumu hula, producer, entertainer, musician and recording artist. In 1971, she opened her hula hālau on the premises of the Bishop Museum and named the hālau, "Hālau Hula O Pohai Kealoha", which means "hula studio of encircling love".

Growing up to lots of music, hula, and most of all, a good life, is how

I was raised in the country, ~~and is expressed in my music.~~ I was fortunate

to have parents who gave us what they could...education and a beautiful

home in Nānākuli. I was always involved in music, singing, playing the

ukulele, piano and even tried to play the guitar. My big love was the hula.

I learned hula in elementary and intermediate schools from ~~our~~

teachers and some times from our kūpuna in the community. My mother,

Mrs. Virginia Hamau Kalama, was the community association president,

the Nānākuli Hawaiian Civic Club president, and was very much involved in

politics. She was a true ~~and true~~ republican. While growing up, I have

~~seen her~~ work hard for ~~that~~ community. <sup>ing her</sup> But she always played music and got

~~the~~ children involved. I always say that <sup>new</sup> my mother was ~~my~~ the biggest

inspiration in my entertainment life (and will always be).

Miss Puanani Alama was my first hula instructor. She was such a

beautiful hula dancer and a wonderful instructor. (Back in the 1950's, hula

was a big thing in Hawai'i.) We didn't do many chants because it wasn't as

important as it is <sup>today.</sup> nowadays. I <sup>also</sup> met John Piilani Watkins and was very

*All this is expressed in my music*

honored to perform for his group. He was ~~also~~ my kumu in hula and

sometimes music. (Brother John was such a great composer, beautiful

singer, musician, and fanatastic entertainer)

Back <sup>then,</sup> in the late 50's, we

were very busy putting ~~on~~ <sup>at</sup> shows ~~in~~ the military bases, the old Kapahulu

Tavern, the Waikiki Sands Club and <sup>even</sup> on the neighbor islands. In the early

60's, we had the pleasure of going to the Mainland for about a month where

we entertained from Los Angeles up to Washington State. I was very

excited because it was my first trip to the Mainland. (new) I met Joseph

Kamoha'i Kaha'ulelio through Brother John. Joseph and Aunty Pauline

Kekahuna were looking for hula dancers for their big show in the Princess

Kaiulani ~~Hotel~~ and the Moana ~~Motel~~. I was very honored to dance for these

great entertainers. I also danced for Aunty Vickie Li, Genoa Keawe, and ~~her~~ <sup>new</sup>

~~group~~, Uncle Bill Aliiloa Lincoln, Louise Kaleiki, Leinaala Haile (whom I <sup>or</sup> ~~Heini~~

love as a sister), and ~~a wonderful lady~~, Leinaala Simerson, and ~~her group~~.

Before I started taking hula lessons with Joseph K. Kahaulelio, I got

~~my~~ blessings from John Piilani Watkins to <sup>get</sup> ahead in my Hawaiian and

learn great and beautiful olapa. I was blessed and enjoyed taking lessons

from two of Hawaii's outstanding and wonderful kumu. (I also had the

privilege of traveling to Japan and the Mainland with Uncle Sol Bright and

Hawaii's songbird, Aunty Lena Machado.

When I returned from the Orient, I started to work for the State Department of Transportation as a <sup>Visitors'</sup> Information hostess and in the Communication Department as a pager system announcer. Aunty Lei Collins and Uncle Joe Kahaulelio were my immediate supervisors. We also did a lot of entertainment for all the big VIP's who arrived in Hawaii, ~~We~~ greeted <sup>in</sup> people at Hickam Airforce Base, <sup>including</sup> ~~even~~ the President of the United States. My biggest thrill was greeting Elvis Presley when he did a concert in the old stadium. <sup>Now</sup> ~~On Tuesday~~ <sup>On certain</sup> evenings I <sup>also</sup> ~~used to~~ dance at the Halekulani Hotel and ~~at the Moana Hotel on Wednesday nights.~~

I was asked to be the ground hostess for Aloha Airlines. Working there was the biggest blessing in my life. <sup>because I</sup> ~~I also~~ travelled for the Hawaii Visitors Bureau and <sup>throughout</sup> ~~traveled all through~~ the mainland, the Orient, Australia, New Zealand and many other places.

In 1969, I started my own Hawaiian Revue at the beautiful Ulumau Village in Kaneohe for about two years. ~~Then~~ I was asked to open a Polynesian Revue for the Waikiki Resort Hotel. I had the most beautiful dancers and wonderful musicians. They were Atta Isaacs, Harold Hakuole, Billy Hew-Len, Larry Asing, Peter Mendiola, Arthur Hew-Len and sometimes Pua Almeida, Gary Aiko, Frances Kamahele, and Samoa's fantastic fire dancer, Falaniko. I also produced shows at the Reef Hotel,



the Hyatt Regency Hotel, the Halekulani Hotel, the Bishop Museum and for the Hawaii Visitors Bureau. I ~~also~~ had the pleasure of entertaining with ~~my~~ friends, Brother George Holokai and Kimo Alama Keaulana, both who are great in 'auana and kahiko, and who worked on my Polynesian Revue in Waikiki.

I met Aunty Rosalie Stevenson who had such a beautiful strong voice and sometimes sang with the late Alfred Apaka. Being her lead dancer, I used to get the hula dancers for her. We had such a wonderful time traveling to Kwajalein, Johnson Island, Okinawa, Guam, Saipan and most of the Micronesian Islands. We also had a lot of neighbor island jobs.

For the past two years, I've been with the kupuna/kumu Hawaiian Studies <sup>P</sup>rogram under the ~~State~~ Department of Education at the Admiral Nimitz Elementary School.

It has really been a challenge to teach military children. I <sup>but</sup> ~~really~~ enjoy helping them to learn our culture, sing Hawaiian songs, and especially learn how to pronounce our Hawaiian words.

After twenty-five years, I still have my hula hālau, "Hālau Hula O Pōhai Kealoha". ~~Before that, I taught hula and helped around the hālau for my past kumus.~~ In whatever I do, I always thank the people who helped me and I make sure that I work hard in my entertainment life. After being in

the entertainment field for over thirty-five years, I feel that I've paid my dues.

Having been a judge for many hula competitions in Honolulu, Hilo and on the Mainland, I find our culture <sup>hard</sup> ~~is expanding~~ all over the world. ~~Is it~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~for the good?~~ I really don't know. I ~~also find that~~ so many young instructors are coming out from all over the place.) I find a change in our beautiful hula and our 'olapa <sup>and</sup> I guess it has to be because ~~nowadays~~ it's so competitive. ~~in our steps and movements.~~ I find it very interesting.

Throughout my life, my wonderful husband Wilfred T. Cabral, has always been there <sup>to</sup> ~~in helping~~ me with getting all my things together for my shows. He has always made me feel good about myself; never a negative word, <sup>He still</sup> ~~and always~~ <sup>s</sup> ~~filled~~ my life with so much love. ~~A hui hou e malama pono.~~