

Reflections-1991-2011

A 20-Year Recollection of World Invitational Hula Festival

By MarshaRose Joyner

As we rediscover the marvels of Hula and its global community, we trust that this snapshot of World Invitational Hula Festival's first 20 years broadens the understanding and appreciation of its impact on the planet.

In 1991, the Chinese year of the Sheep, (also known as the Year of the Goat or



Ram. Metal Sheep, more than other Sheep, are culturally stimulated and hold a deep passion for the arts). Under the guidance of Executive Producer, Paulie Keakealani Jennings, Nona Beamer, Nalani Olds, Master Kumu Hula George Holokai, Keola Lake, Pulo Park, Olana Ai, World Invitational Hula Festival, "E Ho'i Mai i ka Piko Hula" began its 20 year successful endeavor.

Back in 1991, the 1989 recession officially ended, but layoffs, bankruptcies, and dismal economic forecasts were still the norm. The three big automakers, Chrysler, Ford, and General Motors, lost \$5 billion that year. GM alone announced the closing of more than 20 plants. One of the top issues leading up to the following year's election was the \$4 trillion deficit. (Sound familiar?)

This was also the year that we saw the Soviet Union dissolve, a bloody conflict in what was then Yugoslavia begin, and the end of the Gulf War. Gas prices were spiking but were still at it's lowest since 1947, pretax and adjusting for inflation, even with recent increases in state and federal taxes.

Natalie Cole and her father sang "Unforgettable". TV's Roseanne Barr made fat women lovable; Bill Cosby was a Doctor; and Baywatch had the slightest wardrobe. The year 1991 was the year that grunge music made its popular breakthrough. It was also the year contemporary Christian music, reached a new peak with Amy Grant. The massive success of Garth Brooks sets the stage for the influx of pop-oriented country musicians. Michael Jackson signed a contract with Sony, which generated 1 billion dollars for the company.

George H. W. Bush, 42nd President of the United States. John Waihe`e, was the first Hawaiian Governor of Hawai'i. Frank F. Fasi, in the middle of his final term as of Mayor. He had the distinction of being the longest serving Mayor in the history of the City & County of Honolulu.



Iz Kamakawiwo'ole's last recorded album with the group Makaha Sons of Ni'ihau was 1991's *Ho'oluana*. It remains the group's top-selling CD. Iz won two awards at the 1991 Na Hoku Hanohano

1991 Mahi Beamer won a Na Hoku Hanohano lifetime achievement award. Teresa Bright was the big winner of the Na Hoku Hanohano with five awards



Uncle George Na'ope, one of the Judges to the World Invitational Hula Festival wrote, "The hula is Hawai'i. The hula is the history of our country. The hula is a story itself if it's done right. And the hula, to me, is the foundation of life. It teaches us how to live, how to be, is the ability to create one's inner feelings and no one else's."

Taking a chance on passions and belief that the world would beat a path to the door, the little group of adventurers proceeded with the first WIHF, which was at the Neal S. Blaisdell Center. It was enough of a success to lead them on to the next year.

Eight weeks before second World Invitational Hula Festival, September 11, 1992, dawned with category 4 Hurricane Iniki. With only one day of warning Iniki slammed into the Islands in a few hours of raging winds and crashing waves. Iniki caused around \$1.8 billion (1992 US dollars) of damage and six deaths. The economy was in shambles, but not the WIHF's spirits.

"Without electricity in some parts of the Islands for as much as six weeks. We had reached a point where we had to make some basic decisions" said Paulie. "We were sure of the economic future. We knew it was changing and we knew we were changing too. We felt we were on the threshold of something big".

Something Big was an understatement- in 20 years WIHF has influenced Hula around the world. Can you imagine Hula in Belgian, Berlin, Paris and more Halau in Japan than in Hawaii? Hula in such places as Tulsa, Ok, Oshkosh, WI, Shawnee Mission, KS, Fairfax, VA, Peoria, Ill, Dayton, Ohio, Novi, MI, 3 Halau in Holland and 2 in Hopkins, MI, or dancing on the lawn in Central Park, N.Y. There are 50 Halau members of the Hula Association of the Midwest, advised by WIHF.

November 1992, Halau from various parts of the world came to hurricane-damaged Hawaii and gave the performance of their lives.

1992 Mai'ana represents the Netherlands

"Entering the World Invitational Hula Festival is one of the highlights of my years with Mai'ana, said **Kulewa** a dancer. At the age of eight, I started dancing with Mai'ana and ever since that moment a new world opened up for me! It was not only the beautiful dancers and style of dancing, but it gave me a complete new family! It is hard to believe that we will be going to Hawaii for three weeks..... it seems like a dream to me. I am very proud of what we have accomplished so far.



SUSAN MADEC - Cloverdale area of Surrey, British Columbia. Her education continued when she attended the Josie Debaat studio for twelve more years, entering the Surrey Festival every year. During that time, in 1993, she travelled with the DeBaat group to Oahu where they entered in the World Invitational Hula Festival in Honolulu. This experience was invaluable.



La'ela'eikealookalaumaile Sundberg- Boulder Colorado began her studies of Hawaiian hula and chanting in Kailua, O'ahu, in May 1989. She represented her homeland Germany Winner at the World Invitational Hula Festival, 1993 & 1995 & 2001 (Solo Performance) - La'ela'e is currently the representative for the State of Colorado to the Hula Association of the Midwest.



Keapu'uwai - My Hawaiian Name given by Kumu Michael De La Cruz

Trained formally under Kumu Hula Michael Dela Cruz, he performed on the Hula Show as the Kahiko demonstrator in the famous Bishop Museum in 1997. He performed on the World Invitational Hula Festival as the first Japanese Kane (male) Soloist in 1997.

Now He appears in Hawaii and Japanese hotels, etc. elsewhere with his Kumu Michael Dela Cruz.



Na Hanona o ka Halau Hula Makahikina Berlin November 2000 - World Invitational Hula Festival, Solo: Hula Kahiko, Oli, Hula Auana von Monika Lilleike ALS Vertreterin des Hula Hālau Mele, O'ahu, unter der Leitung von Kumu Hula John Keola Lake



Halau Hula O Na Mele 'Aina O Hawai'i - For over thirty years, we have taught students in the New York area -- young and old, experienced and new, native and foreign- what the art of hula is, and how it has become a way of life to those who have learned it. Dance School of the Songs of the Land of Hawaii, meet on a patch of grass just inside the entrance to Central Park at 72nd Street and Fifth Avenue. The group meets twice a week as it prepares to represent New York at the World Invitational Hula Festival.

Paulie Jennings, organizer of the festival, sees nothing inherently odd about the Halau's origins, though this is the first time the city will be represented at a major hula competition. She has previously served as host to Halau from Namibia and Iran. "Hula is global," Ms. Jennings, said, Halau from locations outside of Hawaii would be showcased with one another.

Over the last twenty years hula has had a home in Paris, France. Today there are more than thirty active members in **Hula Halau O Manoa**. Hawaiian history, language, song and dance are taught halfway across the world.



Kumu hula Kilohana Silve was a Hawaii transplant in France, bringing the heart of hula to the City of Light. One of her alaka'i explains, "In France there's a lot of Tahitian dances that can be seen, they perform, but we're the only one's to actually dance hula." Some of the dancers have never

even been to Hawaii. Yet their passion for hula is evident. Ten year- old Tiffany Verdier says, "I like everything, the costumes, the dances, the songs, just everything!"



Kumu Hula Greg Lontayao

1997 - World Invitational Hula Festival - Hawai'i Kane Solo Winner. Since 1992, he has been teaching hula for the State of Hawai'i, Department of Education, Community Schools Adult Education Program at Kaiser High School. He is the Kumu Hula for Hālau Kawaihoa, which

was established in August 2000. Kumu Hula Greg Lontayao is now performing with WIFH



Derek Kia'áina Nu'uhiwa studied hula from the young age of 14 years old under the direction of the late Darrell 'Ihi'ihilauakea Lupenui, Kumu Hula of the world-renowned Men of Waimápuana. Derek is the Winner of WIFH Combined 'Olápa & Combined 'Auana Winner 1995-2001.

World Hula 2009

Kealoha, an internationally acclaimed poet and storyteller danced Hula in the 2009 World Invitational Hula Festival. In 2010 he was selected as a master artist for a National Endowment for the Arts program.





Dancers of Halau Hula O Ka Wehi Kau I Ka Pali perform during the 14th annual World Invitational Hula Festival; "E Hoi Mai I Ka Piko Hula" drew more than 400 dancers from Japan, Mexico, Samoa, California, Alaska and Nevada to join Hawaii dancers at the Waikiki Shell

Peoria master teaches hula classes



Erin Thomas, left, focuses on hula teacher, Kalena, right, as they practice hula hand and feet movements that tell a story. The group practices at Arrowhead Montessori, in Peoria on Thursdays.

Valley residents who are intrigued by the art of hula dancing have the chance to learn from a true master - a Peoria Kumu hula (teacher) who has

been asked to perform at the World Invitational Hula Festival in November.

Kalena, 49, who was raised in Michigan, is honing her moves and doing some fundraising as she prepares to perform at the World Invitational Hula Festival. She is excited about performing for the first time at the huge competition in Hawaii, which draws dancers from such points as Europe, Asia, Mexico, Canada and the U.S. mainland.

She will join members of her group's sister school, **Napu'a O'Polynesia** of Providence, R.I., to perform at one of the intermissions during the competition, which runs Nov. 10-12.



Napua O' Polynesia, of Providence, RI, have been invited to perform at the World Invitational Hula Festival, Honolulu, Hawaii. They will perform with her sister Halau hula (hula school)—Kalena, of Glendale, AZ. Napua O' Polynesia will represent Rhode Island. Kalena will represent Arizona. Kalena and Carolyn are both honored to have been given this opportunity to perform.