

KATHOLO'ANA

And... Curtain!

JERRY SANTOS RETURNS TO SAN FRANCISCO

- by Constance Hale

In 1972 Jerry Santos left Hawai'i for the first time. After high school, he had started playing in O'ahu nightclubs, but it was time to "become a musician." He tried Los Angeles but was quickly drawn to San Francisco, home of the likes of Jefferson Airplane and Janis Joplin.

Being an unknown musician in San Francisco at the time wasn't easy. "There were so many musicians clamoring to play," Santos recalls. "I was doing open mikes and played street music—if my brothers had seen me doing that at home they would come slap me on the head and say, 'How shame!'"

Home was the wilds of Kahalu'u, on O'ahu's windward coast. "Up until then I hadn't really thought about who I was, where I came from, where I was going. Yet every time I played, the strength came from the foundation—from the place where, sometimes, it was just me and the horse and the mountain."

continued on page 5

HĀLAU STUDENTS TAKE THE PALACE STAGE

- by Jenny Des Jarlais

"Crazy crazy crazy crazy CRAZY! This may be the biggest logistical nightmare of my hula career," says Kumu Hula Patrick Makuakāne with a laugh. He's talking about the Hō'ike Nui (*hō'ike* meaning recital or show and *nui* meaning large) planned for October at the Palace of Fine Arts Theatre. About 240 of his hula students will perform in the biggest recital he's ever organized.

Logistics aside, Makuakāne is thrilled about the show, which will feature his beginning and intermediate students. He wants to give these *haumana*—who have been studying hula for anywhere from three to twenty years—an opportunity to perform. He also needed a

creative break from producing the annual San Francisco show for his dance company. "Doing that is taxing, creatively. I mean, many musicians don't even come out with a new CD every year," says Makuakāne. "But now I realize I traded one supreme challenge for another!"

Normally, Makuakāne's beginning students perform in a *hō'ike* after their class has been dancing together for two years. (Putting on a *hō'ike* is a common practice throughout the hula world, though exactly when and how *hālau* approach it varies.) The most recent beginner-class *hō'ike*, in May 2008, featured about 140 dancers and attracted more than a thousand spectators.

continued on page 4

HIT & RUN HULA

—by Jenny Des Jarlais

A family of four strolls along Pier 39 licking ice cream cones and listening to the sea lions bark. Suddenly, a bus pulls up and colorfully dressed men and women pour out and form lines. The group dances in unison, twirling and gesturing to the sounds of toe-tapping music. As spectators quickly gather, the family members turn to their neighbors in the crowd. “What the heck is this?”

“This” is Kumu Hula Patrick Makuakāne’s Hit & Run Hula, which will take San Francisco by surprise on Saturday, August 15. Makuakāne and his dancers will descend on up to ten different spots in the city that day. Most of the spots will be chosen ahead of time, but some will be spur-of-the-moment. No one, not even Makuakāne, knows exactly how the day will unfold.

The idea for Hit & Run Hula sprouted when leaders of the local nonprofit Dancers’ Group approached Makuakāne for a project to present dance outside the theater. They asked him how he might contribute to their efforts, and he imagined hula guerrilla style.

Makuakāne can’t wait to see the spectators’ astonished looks. “Did we really just see thirty-five people dancing hula in the middle of the street?” he imagines them asking. “The less people know what’s coming, the better!” he says. “I’ll be happy if they’re pleasantly surprised, bewildered, or even slightly bothered.”

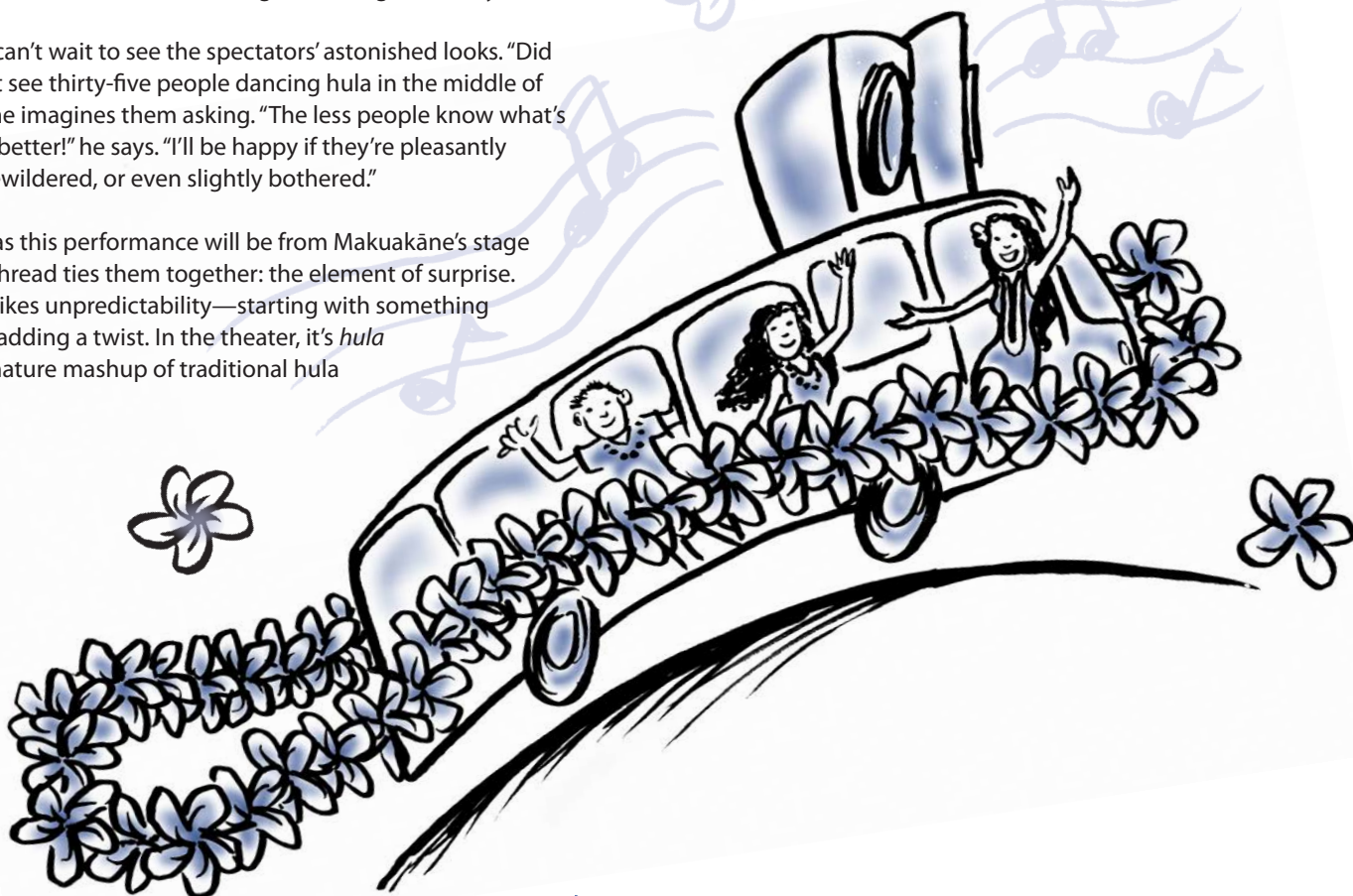
As different as this performance will be from Makuakāne’s stage shows, one thread ties them together: the element of surprise. Makuakāne likes unpredictability—starting with something familiar and adding a twist. In the theater, it’s *hula mua*, his signature mashup of traditional hula

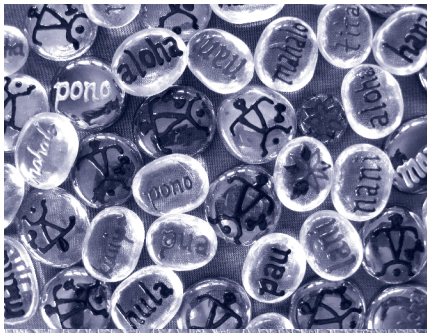
movements with modern, non-Hawaiian music. In Hit & Run Hula, it’s Hawaiian dance out of context. “He likes to break people’s preconceptions of hula and shake things up—the package, the form, the way it’s experienced,” says dancer and hālau business manager Julie Mau.

Sure, some people who see a Hit & Run Hula performance will be those who knew about it and planned to be there, but the rest will be passersby, tourists, people on errands, joggers, and others who don’t expect it. Wayne Hazzard, executive director of Dancers’ Group, likes to call them the “accidental audience.” “The accidentals will get this surprise, this gift, this treat,” says Hazzard. “How fun to see a group of dancers out of the blue, across the street or off in the distance on a hillside.”

The dancers will be in for surprises, too. “It’ll be a big challenge for us to change costumes in the bus as it races across the city,” says Makuakāne. “But our hālau thrives on zany adventures.” 🌺

To get wind of the Hit & Run Hula performances being revealed ahead of time, visit www.naleihulu.org/calendar.





From bottom to top: "Jelly for Jake" lamp by J. Revelo / "Pink Lady" bowl by J. Revelo / Hawaiian quilt gourd ornaments by J. Espiritu / Petroglyph gourd ornaments by J. Espiritu / Painted glass pebbles by J. Espiritu

Hana No'eau Nā Lei Hulu launches crafts festival



—by *Melanie Walas*

Gourds, feathers, fronds, shells, and richly grained woods were the paints and pastels of ancient Hawaiians. These Polynesians turned nature's bounty into items for everyday use and for royal adornment. Contemporary artists have continued—and expanded—the rich tradition of these Hawaiian crafts, and for the first time Nā Lei Hulu I Ka Wēkiu is bringing these creations to its audiences.

Always committed to preserving and sharing the Hawaiian culture, Nā Lei Hulu will sponsor its first arts and crafts fair, called "Hana No'eau," in the lobby of the Palace of Fine Arts Theatre in conjunction with its performances in October. *Hana no'eau*, or "art," comes from the Hawaiian words *hana*, for "work," and *no'eau*, for "skillful" or "artistic." The fair will showcase the work of contemporary local artisans, vendors of *mea Hawai'i* (the term preferred today over "Hawaiiana"), and members of the hālau. In fact, each hula class will host a table with crafts created or donated by its members.

One of the items you're sure to find is the feather lei, for which Nā Lei Hulu is named. Ancient artisans took many hours to painstakingly gather, sort, and tie or sew feathers into leis or onto treasured items such as capes, helmets, loincloths, or skirts. The state of mind of the craftsman was important, as all his thoughts imbued the item with his spirit, or *mana*.

Another featherwork item you'll see at the fair is the *kahili*, a long pole with a crown of feathers. The feathers are attached in a spiral around the end of the pole in a design thought to be modeled after the *ki* plant. For the ancient Hawaiians, these staffs became the royal scepters; some were carried by the *ali'i*, or "nobility," and others, by attendants who announced the nobles' ranks.

You'll also see crafts made with gourds, which Hawaiians cultivated more expertly than did any of the surrounding island peoples. The gourds were used for food as well as to make bowls and platters, containers, tools, and drums, or *ipu heke*, that beat out the rhythm of ancient Hawaiian chants and dances. They were decorated with designs that craftspeople carved, dyed, painted, or burned onto them. One of the artists whose work you'll find at the fair is hālau member Jerome Espiritu, who has designed stage decor and costumes for Nā Lei Hulu for more than ten years. Espiritu has created a series of ornaments combining sections of gourds, which are burnished with intricate designs and shells. He was inspired to work with gourds after a recent show had him making *mākini*, the gourd helmets worn by warriors and ocean canoe paddlers.

Visitors to the fair will also find jewelry, quilts, note cards, clothing, and glassware etched with tropical ferns and flowers.

When you come to Nā Lei Hulu's show in October, plan to come early or stay late: shopping at the arts and crafts fair starts two hours before the performance and continues two hours afterward. 🍷

Artists interested in participating in the arts and crafts fair can email Jerome Espiritu or Janie Revelo at NLHcraft.2009@yahoo.com.

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HĀLAU STUDENTS TAKE THE PALACE STAGE *from page 1*

As its name suggests, the Hō'ike Nui, which will combine five classes, will be even bigger.

Makuakāne has set several goals for the Hō'ike Nui. Most importantly, he wants to shine a spotlight on his students, giving them a chance to perform numbers they've practiced for years. Dancers are motivated to work toward something like this, says Makuakāne. "An exciting end goal, like a show on the Palace stage, can help to hone the skill of a dancer. There's a certain caliber we want to present."

His students are hip to his expectations. Akemi Tom Mease, a dancer in the Wednesday 6:30 p.m. class, recalls her reaction when she found out about the Hō'ike Nui: "I thought, 'Are we gonna be good enough to perform at the Palace? It's like you're learning how to drive and your dad lets you drive his sports car, his baby. Kumu's trusting us with this show, and we don't want to mess it up.'"

Makuakāne is, in fact, trusting his students to present a collection of special dances. "We have beautiful hulas in our repertoire that don't get performed by our dance company. I want to share them with an audience," says

that will bring the dances to life. Makuakāne often reminds his students that without expression, the dance isn't complete. In preparation for the Hō'ike Nui, he's even made "handshake contracts" with many of his students, shaking on their promise to express themselves in every hula they dance.

One student from the Wednesday 8 p.m. class, Sally Vrana, is taking the promise to heart. She's become so inspired by hula that she has decided to move to Hawai'i for a year, or maybe longer. She moved earlier this year and will fly back to San Francisco to participate in the Hō'ike Nui. "I imagine that when I come back it will be with a deeper perspective, a broader understanding, so the dancing will be that much more meaningful," says Vrana. "I hope there will be that much more in me to bring to the dancing."

Helping his dancers understand what they're dancing about is part of how Makuakāne inspires his students to dance to the utmost of their ability. But it's often a challenge to get dancers to turn it on during class, and he hopes that practicing for a big performance will be the nudge that they need. "Preparing for the Hō'ike Nui allows me to work with

my students in the way that I work with my dance company," says Makuakāne. "Rather than just going over a dance or chant, I'm helping them to create the magic of performance. I'm watching them become better dancers."

Makuakāne also wants the Hō'ike Nui to be a tool for strengthening the Nā Lei Hulu community. Students are so cloistered in their separate classes that the hālau rarely comes together as a whole, says Makuakāne. He believes that the show and all the rehearsal time will help bring the hālau members closer together.

"I'm helping them to create the magic of performance. I'm watching them become better dancers."

— Patrick Makuakāne

Makuakāne. "Seeing the dances performed on stage in costume instead of in those raggedy old *pā'ū* (practice skirts) that people wear in class really breathes new life into them."

And it isn't just the lights and costumes but the dancers' facial and physical expressions



HŌ'IKE IN THE PARK

"Being close" may take on new meaning given all the students participating in the Hō'ike Nui: they may not be able to fit on stage together for a final dance. Even a quarter of the 240 participants would pack the stage. "Maybe we'll all crowd on there and do a 'dwarf' version of 'Puamana,'" Makuakāne muses, "kāholos in place, elbows never leaving our sides, hands poking out from our armpits [*laughing*]. That would be provocative!"

Months after the Hō'ike Nui's final curtain, the students who performed will enjoy one more thrill: the money raised from ticket sales will go toward bringing a Hawaiian language teacher to San Francisco for a month. After all, says Makuakāne, studying the Hawaiian language is a great way to improve as a hula dancer. 🌺

Jerry Santos

Returns to San Francisco from page 1

After “a lot of self-reflection” Santos wrote the song “Ku’u Home o Kahalu’u” (My dear home in Kahalu’u), which expresses both affection for a place and a wistful awareness that one can’t ever go back to the past. Not surprisingly, that song is beloved by almost every member of Nā Lei Hulu I Ka Wēkiu. Why? For one thing, members of several classes have learned to dance to the beautiful melody. For another, it resonates with many who have, like Santos, left Hawai’i, even temporarily.

“Ku’u Home o Kahalu’u” is sure to be a favorite number in the performances of music and hula by Santos and Nā Lei Hulu on October 17 and 18. Building a show around the music of one musician is new for Makuakāne, but starting with Santos seemed natural because of

Santos’s strong connection to San Francisco. And Makuakāne remembers the emergence in the seventies of Santos’s group, Olomana. “I grew up with Jerry’s music,” Makuakāne says. “He represents a phase when I was in high school and groups like Sunday Manoa, Cecilio & Kaponu, and Olomana were bringing a fresh, young approach to Hawaiian music.”

Santos’s musical legacy is rooted in his own experience. He was the ninth son in a family of Hawaiian, Portuguese, German, and English heritage. It was a rowdy household with lots of people and animals. “I had one of everything as a kid,” he says, “a horse, a pig, a goat.” He picked up first the ‘ukulele at Waihole Elementary School and, later, the guitar. In seventh grade Santos began boarding

at the Kamehameha Schools, where he met classmates who would, like him, take a place in Hawaiian culture (from *continued on next page*)



Jerry Santos: Forty years making music

Nā Lei Hulu I Ka Wēkiu presents

Hō’ike Nui

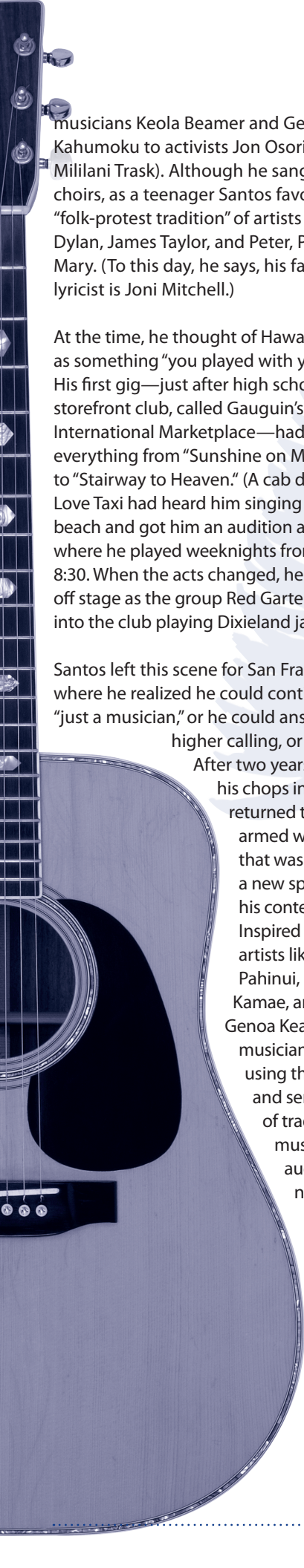
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musicians Keola Beamer and George Kahumoku to activists Jon Osorio and Mililani Trask). Although he sang in school choirs, as a teenager Santos favored the “folk-protest tradition” of artists like Bob Dylan, James Taylor, and Peter, Paul, and Mary. (To this day, he says, his favorite lyricist is Joni Mitchell.)

At the time, he thought of Hawaiian music as something “you played with your family.” His first gig—just after high school in a storefront club, called Gauguin’s, in Waikiki’s International Marketplace—had him playing everything from “Sunshine on My Shoulders” to “Stairway to Heaven.” (A cab driver for Love Taxi had heard him singing on the beach and got him an audition at Gauguin’s, where he played weeknights from 5:30 to 8:30. When the acts changed, he had to jump off stage as the group Red Garter marched into the club playing Dixieland jazz.)

Santos left this scene for San Francisco, where he realized he could continue being “just a musician,” or he could answer a higher calling, or *kuleana*.

After two years honing his chops in the city, he returned to Hawai‘i armed with material that was in line with a new spirit among his contemporaries. Inspired by older artists like Gabby Pahinui, Eddie Kamae, and Auntie Genoa Keawe, these musicians were using the sound and sensibility of traditional music to draw audiences to new ideas—about saving the land, the language, and the precious waters of Hawai‘i.

In 1973 Santos teamed up with his friend Robert Beaumont and formed Olomana, named after twin mountain peaks in Maunawili. The duo was a kind of Simon & Garfunkel gone native—Beaumont the dark, Hawaiian guitarist and Santos the golden-locked crooner in aviator shades.

Santos sees Olomana as a bridge. “I was interested in creating a conversation about Hawaiian issues,” he says. The group’s English-language songs (“Seabird,” “Come to Me Gently”) expressed island themes, while Hawaiian-language songs like “Mele o Kaho‘olawe” were more explicitly polemical.

“The music provided an opportunity to draw people to new ideas,” Santos says, “and it provided an opportunity to meet *kupuna* (elders), to go out into the community.” Among the *kupuna* was one who became a mentor: Auntie Emma Defries, who coached Santos in the Hawaiian language and even wrote one of his hits, “E Ku‘u Sweet Lei Poina ‘Ole.”

After Beaumont died in 1982, Santos went through more self-reflection, asking himself, “How can I continue the spirit of what I’ve been doing and yet move in a new direction?” Olomana’s music had always had a Hawaiian feeling—with acoustic guitars, lilting melodies, and lovely harmonies—but it was hardly traditional.

He surprised his fans by joining forces with Haunani Apoliona, a community activist, composer, and slack-key guitarist. “Haunani knows the language; she’s very scholastic,” says Santos, who sheepishly attended Hawaiian classes in the 1990s with a group of musicians eager to bone up on the language of their grandparents.

The new Olomana specializes in traditional Hawaiian tunes (though both Santos and Apoliona continue to compose new ones). In fact, Santos opened a recent solo show at Chai’s Island Bistro in Honolulu with a string of songs that are part of the Nā Lei Hulu repertoire, from “Make’e ‘Ailana” and “Ei Nei,” to “Kāne’ohe” and “Na Pua Lei ‘Ilima.” He also loves medleys and followed a sappy cover of Elvis Presley’s “Can’t Help Falling in Love” with the bawdy “Teve Teve,” which uses the metaphor of fishing for the *‘o‘opu* (goby fish),

to speak about searching out and catching sexual delicacies.

Santos plays slack-key guitar in the *nahenahe* style—sweet, gentle, and perfectly in keeping with his folk sensibility. His voice is clear and bell-like—he hits the high notes without going into falsetto. “He has a pure sound—sweet, but powerful,” says Makuakāne. “His elocution is beautiful, but there is also a rawness there.”

Also quite a storyteller, Santos easily translates lyrics as he sings and often offers

Santos sees Olomana as a bridge: “I was interested in creating a conversation about Hawaiian issues.”

long preambles to songs. “What’s special about Jerry,” says Eddie Kamae, the ‘ukulele master who stops by Chai’s most Monday nights, “is his stories, and the way he presents them with the music.”

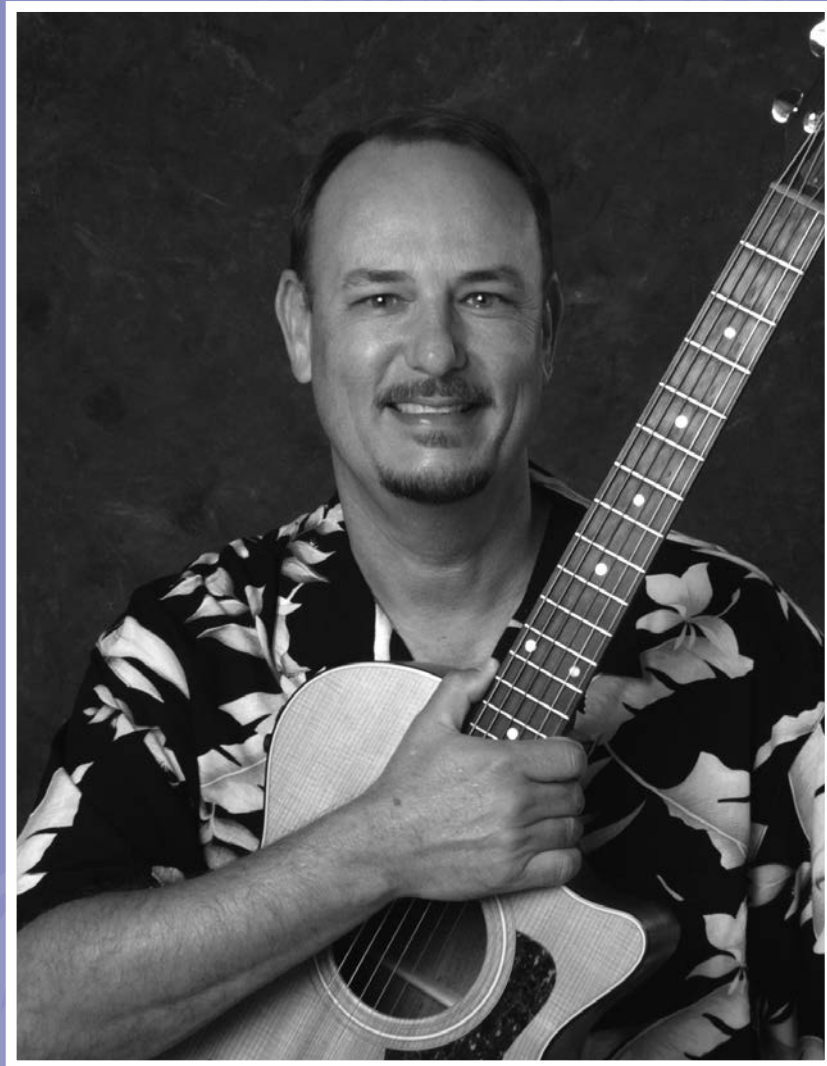
Certainly Santos has changed during his forty years as a professional musician. If he looked like Jesus in aviator glasses in the 1970s, today he looks like a Zen master in a Hawaiian shirt and jeans. Behind the ebb tide of a receding hairline, his hair is cropped close to the scalp. A vertical crease divides his forehead in two, hanging like a bindi over his almond-shaped eyes, which recede on stage but, up close, form pools of blue.

Despite the changes, he is never simply nostalgic. As the words of “Ku‘u Home o Kahalu‘u” insist, he sees change as a positive force as long as we hold fast to memories and values.

Santos recognizes a similar sensibility in Makuakāne. “I always admired Patrick’s work,” he says, recalling Makuakāne’s days dancing at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. When Santos was invited to San Francisco and Makuakāne mentioned his penchant to perform to nontraditional songs like Cindi Lauper’s “Time After Time,” Santos says he started to get excited. “I love innovation, and I love doing medleys,” he says, the wheels turning. “Maybe we can do “Mr. Bombastic” and “Tewe Tewe.” 🍷

Director/Kumu Hula Patrick Makuakāne & Nā Lei Hulu | Ka Wēkiu present

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JAPAN, HO! *– by Jason Laskey*

When I was in college in 1997, I spent a semester in Japan. Though my language skills didn't blossom the way I'd hoped, the culture's beauty and quiriness left me smitten. I promised myself I'd be back one day.

Little did I know I'd get there through hula. This fall, I'll be joining three of my hula brothers and our kumu, Patrick Makuakāne, for a two-week, eight-city tour on the main island of Honshu. We won't be going alone: we were invited by Makuakāne's own former kumu, Robert Cazimero, who regularly takes his hālau from Hawai'i to perform in Japan.

Makuakāne was touched to get the invitation from his kumu. "What an honor," he says. "Shoots, I'd even go to Petaluma if he asked!"

So, why Japan? Simple: the Japanese are hooked on Hawai'i. They love vacationing there—a walk down the main drag in Waikīkī will make that clear—and they love the Hawaiian culture. One Japanese hula magazine (yes, you read that right) estimated that Japan is

home to more than 220 hula schools and 250,000 hula students. Cazimero's hālau has performed in Japan more than nine times, and the crowds can't seem to get enough.

As a dancer in a San Francisco hālau, I feel I have something in common with these Japanese enthusiasts. We're perpetuating the Hawaiian culture outside of Hawai'i, and we're occasionally subjected to criticism for it. "Are the kumu hula qualified?" the critics ask. "Does the dancing show enough depth?" "Do the dancers accurately embody tradition?"

The critics seem to worry that we're straying from the roots of hula. Perhaps the art form is evolving in Japan and elsewhere. But there's something else: When I danced hula while growing up in Hawai'i, I loved it but took it for granted. It was part of my childhood, something I practiced with friends and never thought to explore more deeply. Now that I'm dancing in San Francisco, every detail of the hula sparks my curiosity. Our hālau makes a focused effort to preserve tradition while

prudently encouraging the survival of hula. Not bad for a mainland hālau.

Still, I wonder: What will the Japanese think of a San Francisco hālau? How will the four men from Nā Lei Hulu be perceived by the others on tour? Mostly, though, I'm excited to get back to Japan, to meet the dancers from O'ahu, and to share this experience with my kumu and hula brothers.

Oh, and I'm counting on improving my language skills—seven years of Japanese, and I still can't confidently order a cheeseburger. ❄️



Cazimero hops a train from Tokyo to Osaka