

Ka Nūpepa



UNIVERSITY
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HILO

POINT OF VIEW

Auditions - A Collaborative Opportunity

By Justina T. Mattos
Assistant Professor, Performing Arts

This spring marks 200 years since Christian missionaries first came to Hawai'i. By the time they arrived in 1820, Kamehameha I had passed away and the traditional kapu system had been overthrown. Traders in sandalwood and other goods were exerting their influence, whaling ships were flooding local ports with lusty sailors, and the local population was being decimated by foreign diseases. Hawai'i was in upheaval, and the intervening two centuries have continued to bring drastic change.

People today reflect upon that turbulent time with mixed feelings, seeking to pinpoint exactly where things might have gone differently. Victoria Nalani Kneubuhl's play, *The Conversion of Ka'ahumanu*, examines this pivotal period in Hawai'i's history by focusing on five women who represent the locus of this change: two missionaries, two Hawaiian women, and a Queen.

The UH Hilo Performing Arts department will present Kneubuhl's play to acknowledge this bicentennial and to provide an opportunity to reflect upon our history and our present as a community. In addition to encouraging dialogue, the production invites collaboration in two ways: by partnering with Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u Hawaiian Language Immersion School, and by inviting the public to audition for the five central speaking roles.



Director Justina Mattos in rehearsal with UH Hilo alumna Angie Nakamura and HawCC student Samantha Leatualii
Photo credit: Glenn Fernandez

Students at Nāwahī will study the play and this period in Hawaiian history for their English and Social Studies classes. They will write poems on the subject, and they will contribute to the production by performing hula, singing, and sharing their poetry.

The community is invited to audition for the play on January 23 and 24 at 6:30 p.m. at the UH Hilo Performing Arts Center. Roles available include American missionaries (Lucy and Sybil), Hawaiian women (Hannah and Pali), and Queen Ka'ahumanu. The script is published and available in local libraries. A perusal copy is also available at the theatre. For more information, call 932-7491 or email jmattos@hawaii.edu.

Performing Arts at UH Hilo: A History of Inclusiveness and Collaboration

RENT performance at UH Hilo's theatre

Photo credit: (UHH alumna) Leah Wilson

By Justina T. Mattos
Assistant Professor, Performing Arts

College is exciting, but it can also be overwhelming. Students often struggle to figure out who they are and where they belong while contending with pressure to quickly lock into a career. They have little time to explore options -- or to imagine options that might not yet exist. But that sort of "outside the box" thinking is what is needed in our future leaders. This is why we encourage students to engage in Performing Arts early in their college experience.

There is plenty of research about the psychological, neurological, and physical benefits of singing, dancing, playing music, and acting. Since most performing arts are collaborative, participants must think creatively, communicate clearly, and problem-solve efficiently; so, there are social benefits as well.

UH Hilo's Performing Arts department offers a supportive environment where students gain the tools to help themselves and each other grow. Reflecting on the impact of a beginning acting class, Jennifer Chew, a junior majoring in Administration of Justice, says, "This class allowed me to discover myself in a way that I didn't know was possible. I gained confidence and I view myself in a more positive way...I am more comfortable in my own skin..." Christina Rico, a Performing Arts major, added: "Performing Arts ignited the light that empowered my dreams to emerge from the shadows." She credits the performing arts with giving her the confidence to take on a high-pressure leadership role as the General Manager of University Radio Hilo.

The arts don't just support personal development; they enrich society as well. The arts can explore universal human values, reflect upon topical concerns, or examine issues relevant to the immediate community, with the aim of broadening perspectives, deepening understandings, and inspiring thoughtful conversations that might improve our world.

At UH Hilo, the Performing Arts department shares works that appeal to a broad spectrum of the community. Music, dance, and dramatic performances, for both children and adults, seek to touch hearts, open minds, and connect

people. In support of this, students explore the history, theory, and practice of various forms of dance, music (vocal and instrumental), drama, and technical theatre.

The Performing Arts department serves all students at UH Hilo: those seeking a major, minor, or certificate in Performing Arts, as well as those from other disciplines who simply wish to take a class or get involved in a production. Welcoming students from all majors fulfills UH Hilo's commitment to providing a variety of educational and extracurricular opportunities to students throughout the university.

Performing Arts classes often require students to participate in productions, thus connecting them with the larger community. For example, dance classes recently collaborated with Hawai'i Community College and other local dance groups to revive a beloved Hilo favorite from the 1990s: *The Hawaiian Nutcracker*, featuring nearly 100 dancers ranging in age from toddlers to kupuna. The internationally recognized UH Hilo Jazz Orchestra, composed of both students and alumni, wrapped up the fall semester by rocking the house with their 7th annual Zappa Tribute concert. Then, choral classes celebrated the holidays by inviting other community choral groups, soloists, and the Orchid Isle Orchestra to share the stage in *A Season of Lights* as their annual winter offering.

For over forty years, UH Hilo has welcomed the community to participate in productions alongside our students, both on-stage and back stage. This connection is important because students learn from the more experienced members of our community, who in turn, enjoy the vivacity of working alongside our students. Many community members are alumni, and involvement in productions allows them to stay connected with their alma mater.

Located on an island, in a rural community, the UH Hilo Performing Arts program has always been small. It would not be able to thrive without the eager and willing support of alumni and other community members working symbiotically with UH students. Thanks to this spirit of cooperation, the arts are alive and well in Hilo.

THE PHYSICS OF PŌ AND THE PŌ OF PHYSICS

FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 7PM-8PM



Join us for a special evening presentation by Larry Kimura, Associate Professor, Hawaiian Language & Hawaiian Studies and Doug Simons, Executive Director, Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope on studies done on the first 11 lines of the Kumulipo, incorporating astronomy theories on the origins of the Universe.

Kumulipo is the most significant and historic Hawaiian creation chant that has survived to modern times. With more than 2,000 lines, it tells of a fathomless source of power (deep darkness) that evolves increasingly into complex life forms. It has been compared to ancient Greek accounts of creation.

Tickets: \$10 Non-Member/ \$8 Member



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