

KENNEDY THEATRE

Media Release • 2014-2015 Season

Department of Theatre and Dance
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 26, 2015

Hawaiian Mo'olelo bursts onto the Mainstage

World Premiere of "Lā'ieikawai" at Kennedy Theatre

The Department of Theatre and Dance at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa is proud to present the third Mainstage production of this season, "Lā'ieikawai." This new play is the inaugural production of the Hawaiian Theatre program at UHM. "Lā'ieikawai" is also Kennedy's first Mainstage Hawaiian medium show. It incorporates the traditional Hawaiian performance forms of hula (dance), mele (song/Hawaiian poetry), oli (chant) and hula ki'i (puppetry) to create hana keaka (drama). The show will be performed on the Mainstage Feb. 20, 21, 27, and 28 at 8 p.m., & Feb. 22 and March 1 at 2 p.m. A pre-show chat will precede the performance on Feb. 21 and 28 at 7 p.m. Feb. 21 chat is called "Mo'olelo & Ka'ao: The Perpetuation of Hawaiian History, Stories and Tradition," while the Feb. 28 chat will be called "Haku Hana Keaka: The Journey & Process," and will feature all collaborating kumu.

"Lā'ieikawai," adapted for the stage and directed by Assistant Professor Tammy Haili'ōpua Baker, follows the story Lā'ieikawai (played by Kau'i Kaina), one of famed separated Lā'ie twins Lā'ieikawai and Lā'ielohelohe, who were separated at birth. The story focuses on her isolation from the outside world, and the numerous suitors that seek her hand. Among them is Kaua'i chief 'Aiwohikupua (played by Ioane Goodhue), who brings his Maile sisters,

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renowned for their fragrant scents, to help him woo the princess. Ultimately failing, he leaves his sisters behind. Grief stricken and lost, they go to the princess for help. Eventually, a bond of sisterhood is formed between them that will help them weather the seemingly insurmountable challenges ahead.

The show will be performed in ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i, that is, the Hawaiian language, and marks a turning point for the department and for the university on a much broader level. A work 20 years in the making, a fully realized Mainstage Hawaiian show is finally coming to the University of Hawai‘i. Baker's academic work focuses on the revitalization of Hawaiian language and culture, particularly in the realm of theatre. She is a co-founder of Ka Hālau Hanakeaka, a Hawaiian medium theatre troupe whose productions have toured internationally and throughout the Hawaiian archipelago. In addition to her Hawaiian medium plays, Baker's English and Pidgin (Hawaiian Creole English) plays have been produced at many theatres in Hawai‘i. But just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes many minds and sets of knowledge to stage a production. As specialization was practiced in traditional Hawaiian society, a cadre of kumu, or teachers/experts, contribute their expertise as collaborators on this groundbreaking production.

Kumu Kaliko Baker, an instructor of Hawaiian at Kawaihuelani Center for Hawaiian Language, serves as the dramaturge and language coach for the production. Assistant Professor of Pacific Island Studies, Moana Nepia, contributes his modern dance expertise.

Kumu R. Keawe Lopes Jr., Assistant Professor at Kawaihuelani Center for Hawaiian Language, is a native of Nānākuli, O‘ahu. He currently teaches Hawaiian language courses that include the study and practice of mele to enhance language acquisition and is working with original compositions of chant and hula for the production. Kumu Keawe and his wife Kumu

Tracie Lopes are kumu hula of the award winning hālau hula Ka Lā‘ōnohi mai o Hae‘ha‘ e. Snowbird Puananiopaoakalani Bento is also native of Nānākuli, O‘ahu and kumu hula of the prestigious hālau, Ka Pā Hula o Ka Lei Lehua. Kumu Snowbird is contributing with original mele compositions and choreography for the production. Both hālau will be featured in a hula segment in the production.

This production is presented by the Department of Theatre and Dance and is hosted by the Asian Theatre Program. It is also co-sponsored by the UHM Hawai‘inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge, the Kawaihuelani Center for Hawaiian Language, and Halele‘a Arts Foundation.

Tickets for “Lā‘ieikawai” are available online at etickethawaii.com, by phone at (808) 944-2697, at participating outlets, and at the Kennedy Theatre box office. The box office is open from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Friday, with extended hours on performance dates. Prices are \$25 for general admission; \$22 for seniors / military / UH faculty and staff; \$15 for non-UHM students; and \$8 for UHM students with a valid Spring 2015 UHM photo ID. All service fees are included in ticket prices. For more information, please visit hawaii.edu/kennedy or call the theatre at (808) 956-7655. For disability access, please call the theatre.

EVENT: “Lā‘ieikawai”

PRESENTED BY: UHM Department of Theatre and Dance

WHEN: Feb. 20, 21*, 27, and 28* at 8 p.m.
Feb. 22 and March 1 at 2 p.m.
* Free post-show discussion on Feb. 21 and 28

WHERE: Kennedy Theatre
1770 East-West Road, Honolulu



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\$22 seniors / military / UH Faculty and staff
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