

Kauala'a o Wa'ahila

Hilo, Welehu, 2020

MFA Hana Keaka: Spotlight on Current Program Candidates Website Launch

Our program is proud to feature some of Hawai'i's most brilliant upcoming Kanaka Maoli theatre artists! Following the graduation of our lehua, Kau'i Kaina, in 2017 we have tripled the program's students in as many years!



First to be spotlighted here is **Ākea Kahikina**, from One'ula, Honouliuli. His work focuses on the diversity of perspectives and attitudes toward Kanaka Maoli identity, language, culture, and futures. He is interested in showing the current status and hi'ohi'ona of our lāhui through stories that are happening today in our communities. His qualifying play, *Da Kine Dating*, combines the realities of two insidious developments, the COVID-19 pandemic and our artificial intelligence technologies, in order to highlight how far we humans will go to connect to each other in times of isolation and social media. The protagonist, Raynelle, signs up for a new dating app designed for Hawai'i locals in quarantine called "Dakine Dating." The app's artificial intelligence, A.K.A.M.A.I, can speak Pidgin, 'Ōlelo Hawai'i, 'Ōlelo Ni'ihau, and 'Ōlelo Māhū. Danger encroaches as the app slowly learns Raynelle's every move and attempts to take over her life to find "that special somebody o'wateva."

His thesis production, *Ho'olina*, investigates the questions, "If you had all the money in the world to help the lāhui, what would you do? What would be your ho'olina?" After the passing of a wealthy matriarch, Mrs. Ellis, a Kānaka Maoli family is set to receive their share of the finances, but is rudely interrupted by an American malihini at the door, claiming her share to said assets. Chaos ensues and family secrets are revealed as the future of Mrs. Ellis' legacy falls subject to new ambitions for the lāhui.

Ākea sees his kuleana in hana keaka as to bring marginalized voices to the field, whether it be a certain type of language or an identity/perspective that is unfamiliar to the public eye. *Da Kine Dating* plays with the diversity of language within our local culture. We hear many different languages, e.g. 'Ōlelo Hawai'i Kulanui, Ni'ihau, Māhū, and Pa'i'ai. Each has their own identity and perspective. Each has their own nuances and culture. *Ho'olina* more directly plays with marginalized identities. All but one character, Leihua, speaks 'Ōlelo Hawai'i (a rare situation in today's Hawaiian society.) Already we start off in the world of a marginalized community represented by the

world of one 'ohana. Furthermore, each character represents a "trope" within our current lāhui.

Ho'omaika'i e Ākea! E kūlia i ka nu'u!



'O **Kaipulaumakaniolono** ka moho a'e e ho'ike'ike 'ia nei ma nei nūleka, he keiki no nā pali Hāuliuli o ke Ko'olau i Kahalu'u. His work focuses on the development of a contemporary hana keaka form, focusing on the adaptation traditional knowledge into modern context. In this endeavor he seeks to expand the domains of hana keaka beyond traditional and historical mo'olelo to include modern day experiences by speaking to modern day issues, pulling in ripe topics prevalent in the (social)media, directly addressing a present-day audience with familiar and self-evidently keen content.



In conveying familiar ideas that are naturally prevalent in lāhui community discourse, Kaipulaumakaniolono hopes to then push the audience to reconsider and improve upon the language used to articulate those ideas. He will utilize elegantly fluent 'ōlelo Hawai'i speaking characters to elevate Kānaka Maoli proficiency and fluency in the Hawaiian language thereby empowering Kānaka Maoli identity and consciousness. These key elements of Kaipulaumakaniolono's style is aimed at encouraging kānaka to tell their stories and celebrate the Hawaiian people's collective story so that the lāhui may make explicitly clear that the Hawaiian people are not on display only at Bishop Museum or on old wax cylinder tapes, that we are rapidly evolving and so too should how we operate in the world.

His two brief qualifying productions, *Ninaninau* and *Ke Kūpāpā Nui Weliweli o ka Ma'i Kolonā* tackle these issues head on. *Ninaninau* is a 10 minute play that interrogates the ideas of a resumé and what it means to be "qualified". A young aspiring businesswoman, 'Alohi, is poised to interview for an administrative position at a local bank for which she has prepared a study of the bank's economic analytics and drafted a proposal on how the bank may improve, however, she is stumped when the interviewer, Momi, insists on asking her, "Nā wai ke kupu 'o 'oe?" The interview then becomes a fierce competition of genealogies, language fluency, haku mele and ho'opāpā which serves to reveal not only whether or not 'Alohi is qualified, but

also whether or not she is mākaukau. *Ke Kūpāpā Nui Weliweli o ka Ma'i Kolonā* is a retelling of the traditional story of Keakokū who battles the great mo'o of Konahuanui, Lanihuli. In the retelling of this story, the haku mo'olelo, takes the liberty of expanding on significant details especially fitting the battle we are now facing with COVID 19.

And finally, Kaipulaumakaniolono's thesis, *He Leo Aloha*, is a comedic love story of fervent passion and conflicting desires in a poetic fast-paced battle of wits in which Ha'eha'e, a transfer student from Hilo, moves to O'ahu to pursue a Masters at UH Mānoa. The weekend before school starts he is acquainted with 'Ano'i, who is dreading her current boyfriend Nahe, and the two new friends fall prey to the fervent fires of youthful love and lust. Traditional mele and original oli will be utilized to communicate and highlight the power of the leo, the voice. Staged with the players will be a four piece chorus as a Hawaiian band, featuring an 'ukulele, guitar, steel guitar and upright bass. They will play the mele and interact with the players to accentuate comedic points. *He Leo Aloha* is a story about the power of our language and the vital importance of communication, articulating that a mastery of language is the power to remedy any situation.

Ho'omaika'i e Kaipu! E kūlia i ka nu'u!



And our newest candidate in the program is **Lily Hi'ilani Okimura** from Maunalua, O'ahu! Admitted just this fall, she is looking to focus on themes of resilience, representation, solidarity, and mental health awareness. She understands that the world of theatre is changing everyday. BIPOCs are writing their own stories and being their own voices and empowering each other. As a Kanaka Maoli actress, she sees it as her kuleana to honor and share our people's mo'olelo, as well as work with and uplift fellow Kanaka Maoli artists and creators, to remind the world that theatre is not just western stories for western audiences. She believes it is important that our lāhui sees our work, so that more artists and creators from our community will join and create more space for us. It is also important for non-Kanaka Maoli to listen to us, understand, and be in solidarity.

Ho'omaika'i e Hi'ilani! E kūlia i ka nu'u!

Contact Us

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The Hawaiian Theatre Program is thrilled to announce the launch of our new official website manoa.hawaii.edu/hanakeaka! The program website houses our program's history, course offerings, program application, a list of Hana Keaka resources as well as a few scripts coupled with curriculum for various levels of language fluency and development. Please share feel free to share and contact us with any questions!

Upcoming Events

THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MĀNOA
THE HAWAIIAN THEATRE PROGRAM &
KAWAIHUELANI CENTER FOR HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE

Ka Pō Le'a o Halāli'i

HANA KEAKA SHOWCASE

A virtual hō'ike & discussion of developing hana keaka led by Kumu Haili'ōpua Baker.

*In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master's of Fine Arts in Hawaiian Theatre.



Akea Kahikina Kaipu Baker Ka'iu Baker

Featured Work:
Ho'olina, Ninaninau, Hale 'Ope'a, Dakine Dating,
Nā Hoa Pupu'u o ka Ho'ilo,
& Ke Kūpāpā Weliweli o ka Keakaokū lāua 'o Lanihuli

December 3, 2020 5-7pm | [Link: https://www.facebook.com/hshkuhm/](https://www.facebook.com/hshkuhm/)

Ka Pō Le'a o Halāli'i

A Showcase of Hawaiian Theatre

December 3rd, 2020 on HSHK and Kanaeokana Facebook Live.

Ka Pō Le'a o Halāli'i is a new series that the Hawaiian Theatre Program is debuting this semester where we will be showcasing new works by Kānaka Maoli Theatre artists in honor of Halāli'i, an ali'i of Ni'ihau and Kaua'i who was a celebrated patron of the arts. **Ka Pō Le'a o Halāli'i** is an extension of our previous guest lecture series, **Ka Unulau o Halāli'i**, in which we featured esteemed Kumu Hula **Kealii Reichel**, **Keawe Lopes**, **Kekuhi Kanaka'ole**, **Kaumakaiwa Kanaka'ole**, **Kalani Akana**, **Kapono'ai Molitau** and 'Auli'i Mitchell as well as local Kanaka Maoli artist **Meleana Meyer** and the world-renowned father of Māori language revitalization, **Sir Timoti Karetu**. This first installment of **Ka Pō Le'a o Halāli'i** will feature **Ākea Kahikina** and **Kaipulaumakaniolono**'s qualifying productions for their MFA in Hawaiian Theatre, *Da Kine Dating*, *Ke Kūpāpā Nui Weliweli o ka Ma'i Kolonā* and *Ninaninau* as well as a sneak peak at **Ākea Kahikina**'s thesis *Ho'olina* with a special scene from undergraduate **Ka'iukapu** entitled *Nā Hoa Pupu'u o ka Ho'ilo*. All of these works have been developed as a part of HAW: 485: Haku Hana Keaka, a Hawaiian language playwriting course designed to carry the tradition of ha'i mo'olelo.

I am Lot Lane (a solo effort)

December 4th, 2020 on [this link](#)

The Hawaiian Theatre Program is proud to be supporting another of our fellow Kānaka Maoli in the department, Keali'iikeola Simpson, with his original thesis production that satirizes history.

