

issue is the critical aspect of cultural loss and perpetuation of Hawaiian culture and tradition, as exemplified by how much traditional Hawaiian fishing knowledge has been lost and how much remains to be transmitted to the next generations. Finally, the issue of identity is brought out as we listen to Ben's and Aku's narratives about what fishing means to them and their wish for their children to one day carry on the traditions with their own families (see also *Viewer's Guide*, 4).

This video should be of great value for classroom teaching as well as for educating the public about traditional Hawaiian subsistence fishing, resource management, and Hawaiian culture in general. The script not only is well written and informative but also reveals great sensitivity for the people of Kalapana. (A general map of the Big Island showing the Kalapana area in the Puna District would have been helpful to those viewers unfamiliar with the geography and place names of Hawai'i.) Short black-and-white clips of the early days of the Hauanio fishers throwing nets are nicely woven into the footage and act as an engaging contrast to the contemporary "ethnographic moment." Finally, the outstanding photography by five camerapersons skillfully features the Hauanio men fishing on the breathtaking cliffs overlooking the Kalapana shore. In addition, there are some vivid underwater shots of elusive ulua themselves and the eels that are used for bait and chum. In summary, the generous sharing of Hawaiian fishing culture by members of the Hauanio family coupled with the conscientious documentation by a talented production crew have made for a video that

may well be the best short documentary yet produced about an important aspect of traditional Hawaiian culture.

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Oltobed a Malt (Nurture, regenerate, celebrate). The Ninth Festival of Pacific Arts in Koror, Palau, 22–31 July 2004.

Delegations from twenty-seven Pacific nations gathered in Palau from 22–31 July 2004 for the Festival of Pacific Arts, a magnificent celebration of Pacific cultures that takes place every four years. Launched in 1972 in an effort to safeguard Pacific art and performance traditions, this Islander-organized and Islander-oriented festival remains the foremost arts event in the region.

For participants, selection as a delegate offers a marvelous opportunity to travel to a different part of the Pacific, to learn about the practices of other Pacific islands, and to proudly represent the home culture through carefully prepared presentations or cultural displays. Many report an increased pride in their own heritage and greater awareness of its importance as they reflect on the similarities and differences that mark Pacific cultures. For the observers who come from around the world, the event presents continuous performances and exhibitions that run from morning until late at night, providing an unparalleled concentration of outstanding music and dance as well as access to an incredible array of Pacific

Island traditions in one locale. Exhibits of modern visual arts, festival booths displaying beautifully crafted local products not easily found elsewhere, culture-specific demonstrations (featuring everything from traditional medicines and food preparation to tattooing, wood carving, and weaving), an ecumenical worship service, and ample opportunities to listen or dance to popular Island music now enliven the festival program and extend its dimensions far beyond the traditional music and dance performances emphasized in the early years. In addition, symposia, film showings, and cultural presentations provide venues for intra-Pacific dialog and a chance both to follow emerging regional trends and to hear Pacific artists and cultural representatives discuss issues of current interest to Pacific Islander artists.

Given the range of people who participate in the festival—as organizers, performers, artists, cultural representatives, government officials, observers, documenters, and scholars—it is possible to appreciate the event from several different angles. My viewpoint, as a scholar documenting music and dance performances, is only one small part of the picture, albeit one that draws on attendance at five of these festivals as a point of comparison.

The choice of Palau as host for this Ninth Festival of Pacific Arts proved to be a truly excellent one. Previous gatherings have taken place in Fiji (1972), New Zealand (1976), Papua New Guinea (1980), French Polynesia (1985), Australia (1988), Cook Islands (1992), Sāmoa (1996), and New Caledonia (2000); this was the first time the festival had invited the member

nations to experience Micronesian hospitality. Although many initially wondered if a community the size of Palau (population approximately 20,000) could accommodate such a substantial and concentrated influx of over 2,000 visitors, Palauans proved beyond a doubt that thoughtful planning, careful execution, clearly defined lines of responsibility, and close attention to detail could override any concerns about their ability to deliver a large, multinational event.

This festival was like a finely tuned dance. The planning for the festival was superb, and festival coordinators were remarkable in their ability to keep everything on schedule. In contrast to some previous festivals where overbooked performing commitments and widely spread venues left participants little time to interact with other delegations or even to enjoy the festival themselves, Palau's organizing committee skillfully designed both a well-paced, varied program and a strong central hub of activity around the bustling festival village in downtown Koror. Close attention to the myriad logistical details required by such a large gathering meant that delegations arrived at the proper place on time, venues were well equipped with sound and light systems, police kept the traffic moving, and we awoke each day to a clean town and renewed festival village.

Festival organizers attributed the success of the festival to their reliance on traditional Palauan social structure and being able to adapt established chains of command to the festival context. Assigning host sister states to assume the responsibility for each delegation had several benefits. The festival was no longer purely a "city"

event; it moved into the lives of people from other states on a very direct level where friendships were built by working personally with the guests. Delegations hosted by outer island states (such as Peleliu) were invited to travel to the home of their hosts, bringing at least a small part of the festival to even the remote areas of the country. For the central organizing committee, reliance on this traditional structure trimmed the lines of communication to a small committee of host representatives instead of a long list of individual providers. Islanders took their responsibilities seriously. As one elder told his village, “When you walk out of your house in the morning, look back at it. Your actions throughout the day will reflect on your family and on your ancestors.”

Although the organization and logistics of this festival were particularly admirable, there were many artistic highlights as well. It was, for example, a special privilege to see an exceptionally wide selection of Micronesian performances. The Marshallese jobwa dance from Ujae Atoll—a stick dance performed only for and with the permission of the Iroi jlaplap (paramount chief) and in the presence of the Iroj (chief)—has only been performed four times outside of the Marshall Islands. Presented by a group of teenage males, it was full of energy, vitality, and precision of movement. The Northern Marianas and the Federated States of Micronesia (represented by Yap and Kosrae) also had performing delegations, with the vigorous Yapese stick dances standing out particularly as a crowd pleaser. Kiribati once again demonstrated the amazing discipline, exactness, and beauty of well-coordinated movement

that has been a hallmark of their dancing at previous festivals. Guam was present in full force with three different performing groups reflecting very different approaches to the arts revitalization movement that is taking place on Guam. The absence of Chuuk and Pohnpei performances was unfortunate given the relative proximity of the festival, but it is not uncommon for Island nations to decline an invitation due to finances or local politics.

Team Palau—the collective name for the Palauan delegation headed by the two matriarchs of Palau, *Bilung* and *Ebilreklai*—worked diligently to prepare a number of dances that were beautifully presented by different age groups. The Young Ngarachamayong girls prepared four traditional dances under the watchful eye of *Bilung* Gloria Salii, Queen of Koror. Her involvement with the dance preparations was a direct one as she assumed the role of teacher; her delight and pride in her young dancers was obvious. It was impressive to see well-rehearsed Palauan boys performing the traditional ruk dance celebrating heroic deeds and war escapades; girls of high school and college age from the two highest clans of Palau dressed in the traditional colors of their clan affiliations and performing the Delal a Ngloik (literally, Mother of Dances); and the fine performances given by many very young dancers (the youngest of whom was four years old). The Micronesian flavor of the gathering was further enhanced by special events such as the reenactment of a Palauan first birth ritual at the new Ngarachamayong Cultural Center in Koror. This fascinating presentation featured construction of the

ritual house where a new mother is treated with special herbal preparations; then—wearing traditional clothing, covered with oils and turmeric, and accompanied by the women of her clan—she is publicly presented to the assembled families. The accompanying explanation provided an informative and interesting look at both local customs and the social practices of a matrilineal society.

Other highlights of the festival included a series of symposia that provided a venue for beneficial Islander discussion of issues facing Pacific arts. A special meeting of the Study Group on the Musics of Oceania (a subgroup of the International Council for Traditional Music) took place immediately following the festival and offered music and dance scholars a chance to present research, exchange ideas, and listen to the comments of Palauan organizers and cultural officials (see “Meeting Report: Study Group on Musics of Oceania of the International Council for Traditional Music,” by Barbara B Smith, in *Pacific News from Mānoa* 3 [July–Sept 2004], UH Center for Pacific Islands Studies). Special festival events also included an apparel exhibit in the new wing of the Belau National Museum that featured traditional materials used in novel ways and designs; a unique public display (also at the museum) of the gifts presented to the two matriarchs by each delegation at the opening ceremony of the festival; a multi-delegation weaving project in the festival village; and the collaborative wood carving of a permanent monument for the new cultural center. In short, there was a full spectrum of activities and an opportunity for people to engage

with the festival on many different levels.

There were only a few uncomfortable situations in an otherwise exceptional event, and each centered on a new Asian influence that created a debatable addition to the program. The last-minute addition of a group from Irian Jaya (West Papua) prompted some to argue that the presence of the group, selected and controlled by the Indonesian government, was designed as blatant propaganda and intended merely to convey the impression that “all is well.” To this reviewer, however, the participation of this delegation was infinitely less problematic than the performances sponsored by the governments of Taiwan and Japan, both of which paid large sums of money to support the festival and were anxious to translate their financial support into a visible presence. The Taiwanese group featured the songs and dances of the Austronesian Ami people, attempting to underscore the connection between them and the invited Pacific nations. However, numerous cultural glitches (an overly excited announcer, high volume, Chinese-influenced singing styles, a seemingly never-ending program, a dance with exposed false breasts and buttocks that many Islanders found offensive, and the delegation’s practice of distributing religious literature) immediately set them apart from the other delegations and aroused some undercurrents of resentment—all of which Palauan leaders calmly chose to overlook. The Japanese delegation, comprised predominantly of Tokyo transplants, performed Micronesian marching dances maintained on Ogasawara (Bonin Island). Although older Palauans

enjoyed hearing the songs (even in a partial form) and laughed happily at the performance, there were a number of issues (eg, representation, transmission, performance quality) raised by these performances as well.

Much larger questions surround this Asian presence, however, not the least of which is the fact that the overriding purpose of this festival is to celebrate Pacific cultures. In many ways the festival is coming face to face with the same issues raised by academics as they consider Islander ideas of self and the presentation of culture in a changing Pacific. How will Islanders define this changing island world? Where do the boundaries fall? To what extent should foreign governments be allowed to influence programming in an event like the festival? Furthermore—and echoing the challenges confronted by events such as the Merrie Monarch Festival in Hilo, Hawai‘i—what is the role of transported or diasporic traditions in the presentation of Pacific culture? Should non-Pacific Islanders be welcomed as part of the event? These were just some of the issues the festival organizers had to deal with as they attempted to meld Pacific needs with financial realities and to do so with grace and hospitality.

Financial resources obviously drive many festival decisions, including stage locations. Unfortunately, in Palau this resulted in performing venues that fell short of expectations, with audiences far removed from the stage and performances at the main venue framed by painted slogans on a

nearby building, or, in the latter days, industrial blue tarps. In contrast to the beautiful venues chosen for the Tahiti (1985) and Cook Islands (1992) festivals, the elaborate soundstages constructed in Palau (as in Noumea in 2000) forced performers onto cramped stages and resulted in an equipment-heavy, “rock concert” setting of metal construction that detracted from traditional performances rather than enhanced them. While this was a minor frustration in an otherwise exceptional and vibrant event, this reviewer hopes that organizers of the next festival in American Sāmoa (2008) will plan carefully for the visual aspects of Pacific performance as well as the technical requirements of it.

This Ninth Festival of Pacific Arts ultimately earned high marks for being able to accomplish what gatherings in other larger, wealthier countries with advanced infrastructures and wider resources have not always been able to do—to present an interesting, full agenda of activities in an organized manner while retaining an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation. That this was accomplished by turning to indigenous systems of organization stands as a wonderful example to the rest of the Pacific. That this was done with such an extraordinary level of hospitality and dignity stands as a powerful message to future hosts of the festival.

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