

Lili'uokalani

Reflections of Our Queen

REVIEWS & UPCOMING SCREENINGS

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STARPOWER

Director weaves rich tapestry of Queen Lili'uokalani's life

Veteran filmmaker **Edgy Lee**, director of "Lili'uokalani: Reflections of Our Queen," likens Queen Lili'uokalani's story to a Hawaiian quilt.

"This film is kind of a tapestry, like the 'Queen's Quilt' sewn during her incarceration at Iolani Palace," said Lee, who also co-produced and co-wrote the film with **Marc Cohen**. "It's full of glimpses into the queen's personal and private life, and we focus on her music and lyrics, her writings, and through the remembrances from our (kupuna) storytellers, we attempt to bring to life a portrait of a woman who was a prolific writer, composer and an innovative thinker."

The documentary, screened at an invitational premiere Nov. 19 at the Kahala Hotel & Resort, will air from 7 to 9:30 tonight on KHNL with more viewings



HAWAII STATE ARCHIVES

to be scheduled eventually, here and abroad.

Like a quiltwork, the documentary embraces the fabric of community — descendant and kupuna remembrances, inspiration from the Queen Lili'uokalani Trust (the key sponsor of the 78-minute work), and cooperation and participation of Hawaiian cultural luminaries eager to properly pay tribute to the legacy of the monarch on the 100th anniversary of her death.

SHOW BIZ



WAYNE HARADA

"Lili'uokalani was an exemplary woman for any time period, but given hers was the Victorian era, and that the written Hawaiian language was only 20 years old when she was formally schooled, her intellectual accomplishments were remarkable," said Lee. "Her understanding of intellectual property rights and international politics was also an unexpected discovery."

Lee launched the project 18 months ago, tapping resources of Hui Hanai (publisher of books on the queen's life and music), but was challenged by the scarcity of kupuna who had first-person



COURTESY PHOTO

Edgy Lee

tales of the queen and could provide vivid firsthand recollections.

What this project is not: "a film that delves into the overthrow of the Hawaiian kingdom," Lee said.

What this film is about: "(Lili'uokalani's) inner strength and ability to weather political, economic, social and spiritual challenges, to remain 'onipaa' (immovable, steadfast) in her aloha and compassion."

Her compassionate leadership is detailed in storyteller **Watters Martin Jr.**'s reflection that "the queen sold everything, even her jewelry, to create a trust that was left to benefit the Hawai-

ian children."

Contributors include **Robert Cazimero** (narrator), **Marlene Sai** (who voices the queen) and chanter **Puka Asing**, who "have displayed a commitment, throughout their careers, toward the preservation and perpetuation of their native culture," said Lee, who collaborated with **Robert Wehrman** on the original music. Also featured throughout is music by Queen Lili'uokalani performed by the Galliard String Quartet.

Cazimero has embraced Lili'u's music throughout his career, and Sai has portrayed the monarch in stage and on film, here and abroad, galvanizing her legacy. ...

Cabaret, ol' chum

It was all about style, sentiment and substance when **Loretta Ables Sayre** converted Blue Note Hawaii into a genuine New York-style cabaret club Nov. 15. She served up swing in different forms: soft and sultry ("The Look of Love"), torchy and touching ("A House Is Not a

Home") and sweetly and seductively ("The More I See You"). In short, in spite of her laurels as stage actor and a Broadway Tony nominee, she was the joie de jazz. ...

Hana hou

Tickets to **Diana Ross'** return to Blaisdell Concert Hall Jan. 12 are \$45.50 to \$255.50 here; when she plays at the Wynn resort in Las Vegas Feb. 7 to 24, tariffs are \$60.50 to \$296, by comparison. Her Lifetime Achievement laurels bestowed Nov. 19 at the American Music Awards should buoy sales. And hurrah to local boy **Bruno Mars**, who earned six AMAs, including artist of the year, though he was absent and on tour. ...

"Allegiance," the filmed Broadway musical starring **George Takei** and **Lea Salonga**, will have encore isle screenings: Dec. 7 at Dole Cannery, Pearl Highlands and Maui Mall; and Dec. 9 at Dole, Windward Mall and Pearl Highlands. Go to fathomevents.com. ...

And that's "Show Biz" ...

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