

Interview 4 with Emma Kauhi (4/90)

Earlier, Emma Kauhi, Rebecca Pau and G-girl Keliioomalua (Na leo Kani o Puna) were videotaped by students, singing for a group at Kalani Honua. We are planning to videotape a conversation about singing to go with it. EK asked what they should talk about at the upcoming videotaped conversation. I said about singing in her childhood, mentioned that maybe there might be some other songs besides those the trio sang at Kalani Honua, for example 'Alekoki, Waipi'o (sung by her grandmother). She said yes, she'd been told her GM sang that song.

CL: Kohu mea 'akamai kou 'ohana Punahoa i ka himeni 'ana a me ka ho'okani pila 'ana.

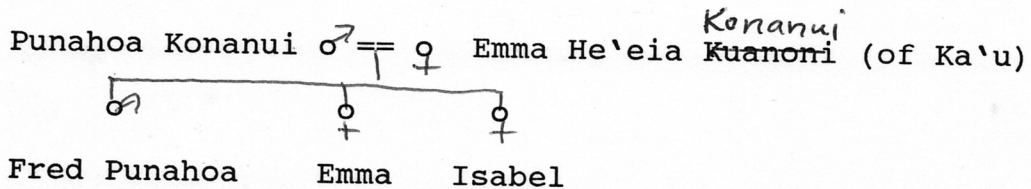
EK said yes and spoke of them:

MB 'Apelahama--known for ki ho'alu; ho'opa'i i kekahi pa as Abraham Kalauli

MS Luika--played ki ho'alu, had a good voice; used to sit on the porch and play in the ahiahi

MB Mokuhalii--had good voice, sang in leo ki'eki'e, also MB Kawika (lived 'Opihikao)--when the two got together, with a few drinks, they sang and sang only her mother didn't sing, except along w. everyone else

Fred Punahoa (famous for ki ho'alu)--keiki of Punahoa Konanui (her MB)



EK especially liked "Honeysuckle Rose" and Fred Punahoa would play it whenever he saw her. His two sisters had sweet voices, especially that of Isabel was like a bell.

Fred was born later than his sisters. They lived far from the school they attended (at Hilea), 5 miles. After the two sisters finished school, Fred hardly went; he only finished second grade.

He started playing guitar when he was smaller than the guitar and he couldn't even get his arms around it. He could play guitar in back of his neck, between his legs, with his feet; could play and play, really dazzle you with his tricks; was the first to play with his fingers inside a paper bag--get a different sound that way.

He played for Lena Machado. She wanted him to sign a contract, but he said no. (Maybe he didn't understand the contract, because he couldn't read.)

Kona 'ano--when he felt like playing, he could dazzle you, just play and play. When he didn't feel like it, you could beg him and he wouldn't play. He'd say his fingers were sore. If you persisted, he'd finally say he was going to the lua and disappear. (That's another reason he didn't want to sign a contract.)

He never made a record and died young.

Emma He'eia--she was like a kumu hula in her time, though not called that in those days. She taught hula (that's who EK learned from), himeni, used to hana kapalo (tableaux) e.g. did that for gatherings at Ola'a Catholic Church. She was a choreographer--especially used himeni of the various mokupuni, each with its appropriate lei and costume (including the mokupuni o Molokini--had many mele).

continues enumeration of her family who have talent:

Becky Pau (her MMdd) has good voice
Lui (her B) had a good voice, ki'eki'e; had leo alaka'i
(=soprano, called leo alaka'i because can sing by
itself). She used to sing alto w. his soprano.

But not only her family, many po'e Hawaii had good voices. Remembers Piliialoha Waipa. They used to like swimming at Punalu'u [Queen's Bath], and it was more fun if there were more kids there, so they all tried to go together. When the Waipa kids came down from Kapa'ahu mauka, Piliialoha would sing all the way from her house down to Punalu'u (just her). Ko makou ho'ailona kela. They'd know the Waipa kids were coming and would go meet them.

Also a Hauanio boy, younger brother of John Hauani'o Sr., Hulihe'e. He leo falsetto. He just would sit there and smile, while his voice pi'i i luna. Ua lohe au ua hana 'o ia i kekahi hana kolohe, a lawe 'ia i ke kula kione'ula (reform school) i Kane'ohe. He got pneumonia there and died. His body was sent back to Kalapana.

I mentioned, will be good for your trio to play for the kupuna another time, to be videotaped, because... they understand the words, etc.

Yes, she said--used to be the words were important: people laughed or applauded when they heard the words, reacted to them; now, these just listened with a straight face and only appreciate the voice, whether it is good or bad. Before, if a kolohe song and had a few drinks, that's when the men hoihoi, when felt like it would stand up to hula (like Virginia Enos told of her father Robert Waipa; like brother Robert Keli'iho'omalu--good at hula kolohe; like her husband too). And when the man stood up, two-three-four women would stand up too to dance with him. Those days people didn't ask for someone to hula, people just danced when they felt like it.

Later on that day, EK mentions Regina Ka'apana. The daughter of her MB Oulu Konanui (lived in Kapa'ahu). Mother of Hui 'Ohana.