

KEAKA Hawaiian Language Theatre Festival slated for this weekend

The Hawaiian language will reign Friday and Saturday, June 14-15, on the stage of the University of Hawaii at Hilo Performing Arts Center during the KEAKA

Hawaiian Language Theatre Festival.

This free event is offered to the community as a way to celebrate the living Hawaiian language through innovative theatrical performances.

The festival was born in 2016 at the UH-Hilo Performing Arts Center with a diverse offering of Hawaiian language performances and presentations by UH-Hilo, UH-Manoa's department of theatre and dance, Ke Kula 'o Nawahiokalani'opu'u and Kamehameha Schools Hawaii High School. More than 600 people attended the events throughout a two-day period.

Schedule of events

Friday, June 14

4-8 p.m.: Food available for purchase on lanai

4:30 p.m.: Opening ceremony

5 p.m.: "Mo'o Huelo: Tale of a Tail," a musical for keiki

6-7 p.m. Hawaiian entertainment on lanai and comic book signing by special guest Chris Carvalho, creator of *Mana Comics*

7:30 p.m. "Ho'oulu," written and performed by the students of Ke Kula 'o Nawahiokalani'opu'u

Saturday, June 15

6:30 p.m.: Doors open

7 p.m. "Ke Kaula O Kuamo'o" ("The Battle of Kuamo'o"), an opera by Kamehameha Schools Hawaii High School

**All events are at the University of Hawaii at Hilo Performing Arts Center, 200 W. Kawili St., in Hilo.*

With that inaugural event, it became apparent that there is a thirst for offerings such as this in the Hawaiian language.

This year's festival includes a series of drama workshops incorporating the Hawaiian language offered to students of Nawahiokalani'opu'u's summer program, Ho'oulu, and Kamehameha Schools Boom Shaka Laka Hana Keaka program. The week will end with performances of three original works in the Hawaiian language: "Mo'o Huelo," Ho'oulu" and "Ke Kaula O Kuamo'o."

"Mo'o Huelo: Tale of a Tail" is a children's play about a boy who goes on a quest to help a superhero and in the process discovers his own special ability. During his adventure he encounters a variety of strange characters, including talking 'Ua'u birds, a grouchy Happy-Face Spider and a chorus of crazy crickets, as well as the superhero "Geckoman," who is a character plucked from the pages of a real Hawaii comic book series called Mana Comics.

Performers ages 5-65 from Hilo's Hawaiian language community have come together to bring this musical to life.

For "Ho'oulu," students from Ke Kula 'o Nawahiokalani'opu'u wrote original works exploring the choices they face as young people in today's complex world.

Their performances explore decisions about bullying, lying, stealing and disrespecting elders. The issues are looked at from multiple angles, dealt with and resolved, leading to deep learning for all involved.

"Ke Kaula O Kuamo'o" ("The Battle of Kuamo'o") is an opera performed by Kamehameha Schools Hawaii high school students, telling the story of the fateful conflict after the death of King Kamehameha between regional chief Kekuaokalani, loyal to the traditional customs and religion, and Liholiho, the new king swayed by his regent mother to end the old ways and make way for the new.

Through music, traditional dance and chant, the story is retold of the fate of an island nation shaped by a single battle.

For more information, email KEAKAfest@gmail.com or call 932-7491.