

Benefit luau to honor 'Big Doric' Yaris

Fund-raiser scheduled for October 12

By Jon Letman
Kaua'i People

Back in the early 1970s, when he was still a young boy, people used to call Doric Yaris "Big Doric" and his father, with whom he shared the same name, was known as "Little Doric."

It was a running joke shared by friends when Yaris's father was performing at the Coco Palms Resort. The older "Little Doric" was a professional entertainer who played bass at Coco Palms over 14 years with local musicians like Bernard Naiea and Ernest Palmera.

Yaris followed in his father's footsteps and, for almost three decades, has performed, studied and taught some of Hawai'i's best young talent. This month, Yaris' many friends have the chance to say mahalo for all he has given over the years during a lu'au and benefit concert, staged in

part to help Yaris with medical expenses (see sidebar).

Born and raised in Pakala Village, Yaris had already taken up the bass and 'ukulele when he met kumu hula Kapu Kinimaka Alquiza in 1984 at the Hanapepe gas station where he worked.

"Doric offered to help me tune my 'ukulele and that's how we met," Alquiza recalls. "He offered to play music for my halau and when I first heard him, I immediately knew he had great talent."

Yaris went on to play 'ukulele and sing for Alquiza for six years during which time he became increasingly interested in hula.

As Yaris grew professionally, he started his own entertainment group called Kaleo Club with five musicians. Around the same time, he began to choreograph and teach hula to another group called Na Molokama and adopted the Hawaiian name Kaleonui or "big voice."

Alquiza says that listening to Yaris sing was "like being in heaven," adding, "we'd all get chicken skin to the max."

Yaris started teaching hula and in 1986 took his first trip to perform in Japan with Alquiza. Later, independently, he traveled regularly to Japan with hula dancers to perform in Tokyo and resort towns around the country.

"In Japan, I did hula shows for six months at a time," says Yaris, whose career has coin-



photo by KENPOSNEY.COM

Born and raised in Pakala Village, Doric Yaris is one of the Island's most respected musicians and kumu hula.

cided with a Japanese hula boom that began in the 1980s and continues today.

"One of my biggest accomplishments in Japan was a show I developed for Spa Resort Hawaiians," Yaris says.

Built in Iwaki, an old coal mining town in rural northern Japan, Spa Resort Hawaiians is a massive Hawaiian-themed resort that was developed as the local economy shifted from the dying coal industry to one based on resort tourism.

Yaris stayed at the resort for 10 weeks as choreographer and

over the ensuing years, became widely respected as a kumu hula and cultural ambassador. Initially Yaris spoke no Japanese but says he learned through immersion. What he did observe, language notwithstanding, were the differences in how many Japanese saw hula strictly as a form of entertainment rather than in its traditional cultural and historical context.

Yaris says, however, that over 17 years he has seen a transformation in how hula is practiced and understood in Japan.

"Today Japanese are very

LU'AU OF LOVE

To honor kumu hula Doric Kaleonui Yaris, and in appreciation for his many years of sharing with the hula community, a fundraising lu'au and hula benefit concert will be held on Sunday, Oct. 12 at the Kaua'i War Memorial Convention Hall. Doors will open at 4 p.m. with a lu'au from 5 to 6:30, followed by a concert from 7 p.m.

Headline acts will include Holunape, Leilani Rivera Bond and Na Molokama. Tickets are \$40 in advance; \$45 at the door. Lu'au only \$15/\$20; concert only for \$30/\$35.

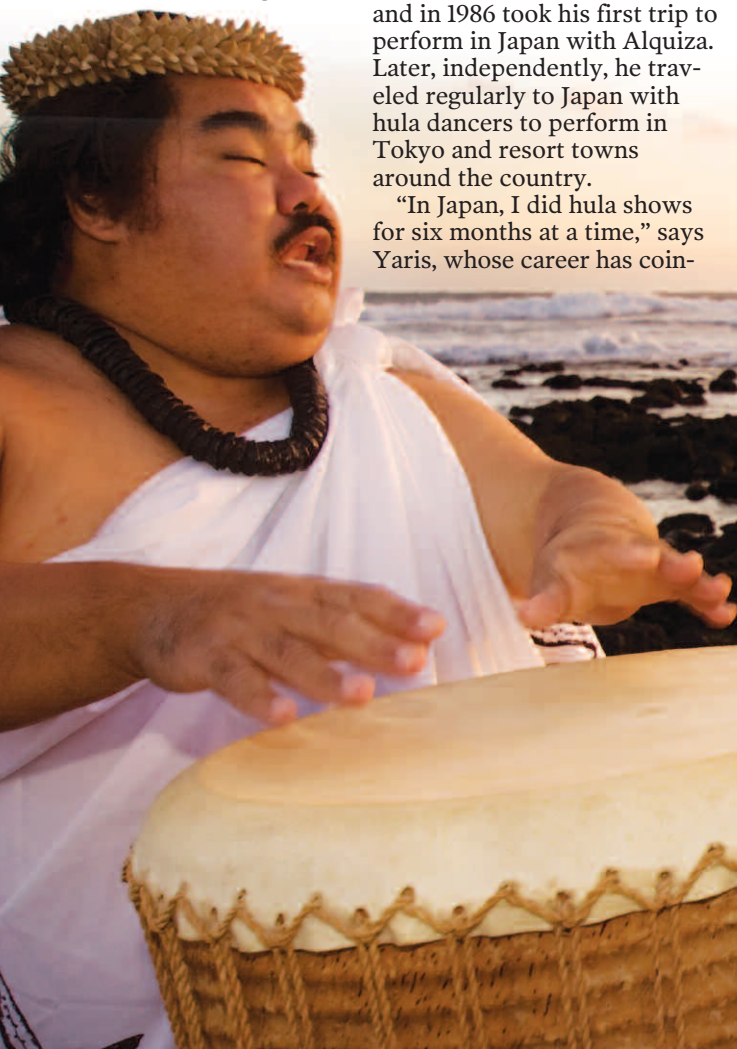
All proceeds will help support Doric with self-funded medical expenses.

For more information, call 482-1880 or visit www.doric-yaris.com.

culturally aware," Yaris says. "They tend to be very disciplined, very dedicated and want to know the meaning of every word and movement. Instead of putting down another culture for using our traditions as a hobby, we are actually doing something to teach them the right way."

He says there has been a collective effort by many kumu hula who have gone to Japan

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Kumu hula Doric Yaris has taught on Kaua'i and in Japan for more than two decades.

Photography by KENPOSNEY.COM

Big Doric: Longtime kumu hula

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with vision and taken the responsibility to teach the cultural side of hula. As a result, Japanese understanding of hula has broadened and deepened as it has matured.

One of Yaris's most memorable moments in more than a decade of teaching in Japan was the first time he approached a studio near Tokyo that was designated for his use. "When I got there I found they had painted a picture of me with my name on the whole side of the building. I thought, 'Oh my God!' It looked like me, but not quite ..."

Having taught all over Japan and hosted many Japanese hula halau on Kaua'i, Yaris still maintains close ties across the Pacific. This month, unable to attend a ho'ike (recital) in Japan, Yaris has requested Maka Herrod, a hula brother with whom he studied, to go in his place.

Herrod, also a kumu hula, along with Yaris and fellow hula brother Nathan Kalama and their kumu hula Puna Kalama Dawson, have formed a group called Hui O Kalamaola, which pools their energies and talents to hold workshops and other hula related events.

In 2005, Kalama, Herrod and Yaris all went through 'uniki (a formal graduation ceremony) with their kumu Dawson.

Dawson recalls first teaching Yaris who had initially began studying with her mother Aunty Lani Kalama.

"All I did was finish," Kalama Dawson says before clarifying her statement.

"The 'uniki acknowledges one has accepted the kuleana (responsibility) to malama (care for) what one has been taught and to pass it on to one's own students. Actually, 'uniki is not finishing, but a beginning."

Dawson speaks of Yaris with aloha. "He is detailed and aims for perfection, but he's also fun loving and finds joy in everything he does. If I had to describe his smiling face, I would really be describing his smiling heart."

Economist discusses future outlook

First Hawaiian Bank's economics advisor Leroy Laney gave a snapshot of how Kaua'i and Hawai'i are being affected by national economic conditions during the Kaua'i Chamber of Commerce's 34th annual Kaua'i County Business Outlook Forum.

His message was a recap of bad news along with somewhat of a positive outlook.

"Kaua'i's economy has decelerated along with the rest of the state of Hawai'i and may see little or no growth during 2008 after an 11-year expansion," he told the audience.

Laney, who is also a professor of economics and finance at Hawai'i Pacific University, said factors in the slowdown on the Garden Island include a weaker tourism industry, thanks in part to airline and cruise cutbacks, and the nation's economic woes, as well as last month's announcement that Gay & Robinson would harvest its last crop of commodity sugar in 2010, meaning Kaua'i will no longer



Movies like Paramount's blockbuster "Tropic Thunder" can help Kaua'i's decelerating economy.

grow cane for traditional uses.

Other factors include a slump in retailing; slower job growth and higher unemployment; a severe drop in housing sales, although prices are holding up well, he said.

A series of developments earlier this year caused downward revisions to a state forecast that was already soft and even more factors signal a formula for a

flat economy, Laney said. "And though the plateau may not be like falling off a cliff, it could be several years before the next up-cycle begins and the economy fires on all cylinders," he said.

On the positive side, Laney noted that all of the Hawaiian banks are in better shape than those on the Mainland and that Hawai'i unemployment is rising

but is still well below national levels.

Another plus is that the movie industry can serve as an important stabilizer in a down economy, as evidenced by the economic benefits to Kaua'i during the filming of "Tropic Thunder," according to Laney.

He also spoke about other economic benefits. "In leaner economic times, we always appreciate more the sectors of the economy that aren't that closely related to the main cyclical drivers like tourism, real estate, and construction."

In closing, one of Laney's comments was that the business cycle will always have its ups and downs and that we wouldn't want to be in the boom mode forever without cooling off.

"That cooling is required for infrastructure to catch up and for slowly rising incomes to help bring affordability back," he said. "Simply put, the economy occasionally needs to catch its breath."

wellness events to keep our island healthy

Kauai Arthritis Walk 2008

Sunday, October 12 • Vidinha Stadium

Registration begins at 9:00 am • Walk begins at 10:00 am

The Bone and Joint Center at KHC is proud to help sponsor the 4th Annual Arthritis Walk. Join them for lots of fun! There will be a kids zone with face painting, balloons and much more! Refreshments and entertainment will be provided. Special appearance by Hawaii's own Olympic Gold Medalist Bryn Llanoy.

When you participate and raise money to help fight Arthritis, you can win some great incentive prizes!

\$100.....Free Walk T-shirt
\$200.....Movie Theatre Passes for 2
\$500.....Pod Shuffle
\$1000.....\$100 Best Buy Gift Card
\$1750.....iPod Nano
\$2500.....Pod Video

Walkers that raise \$500 or more will enjoy a VIP Room, which includes a hot breakfast & massages!



Heidi or Haylee WHT
Event Chair



Bryn Llanoy, Olympic Gold Medalist
Event Co-Chair

4 Easy ways to Register:

1. FAX this completed form to (808) 594-2004
2. CALL Arthritis Foundation at (808) 594-2000
3. Register ONLINE log on to: www.arthritisfoundationhawaii.com
4. MAIL completed form to: Arthritis Foundation, 815 Piikoi St., Suite 1100, Honolulu, HI 96810

First Name _____ SU _____ Last Name _____ Date of Birth _____
Home Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____ Home Ph. _____
Work/Cell _____ Company, School, Org. _____ Email _____
Gender: Male or Female (circle) _____ T-shirt size: S M LG XL GIGL. *raise \$100 and get a free t-shirt _____ I am walking as an individual _____ I would like to volunteer to help at the event
_____ I am a team member (team name) _____ Team Captain _____
_____ I would like information on forming a team. My fundraising goal is \$ _____
_____ I am unable to participate, but I want to support the fight against arthritis. End of trail donation \$ _____ My company has a matching gifts program _____



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