

LIAR

R E S O U R C E U N I T

LI'A

THE LEGACY OF A HAWAIIAN MAN

A Documentary by Eddie and Myrna Kamae

Exploring Hawaiian Culture through the Life of One Man and His Music

Study Guide by
Myrna Kamae and Jane Yamashiro

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Eddie Kamae & The Sons of Hawaii

Eddie Kamae
P.O. Box 8230
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TO: THE TEACHER

RE: FILM DISCUSSION: LI'A -- THE LEGACY OF A
HAWAIIAN MAN

In putting this film together I learned so many things about myself and about Hawaiian culture. Sam Li'a, to me, was one of the kindest men I ever met -- a man who sincerely lived his beliefs in the true Hawaiian way. In the film I said, "Sam Li'a was never famous and he had no desire to be. He was a man of an older time and an older place, a man whose music, whose life was filled with the spirit of Hawaii... a man of Aloha." And Sam Li'a was truly this kind of man.

It has been my dream to be able to share with you, the teachers and the students, the knowledge and music of this wonderful man who was one of many kupunas who demonstrated the real essence of Hawaiian culture.

By bringing this film to the schools and through this study guide, I hope that all our children in Hawaii will have an opportunity to experience the life of Sam Li'a. Most of all, my hope is that students will be thinking about their life, their culture, their values and how they will carry forth the legacy of Sam Li'a. Your guidance and your thoughtful discussions will be an important component of this project.

Just as a way of preparing you for what I see this visit to be, I would like to have some preparation for the film. My plan is that you will give some background about the film to the students, show the film, and work some of the activities. Then when I come to your school, I would like to have the students talk with me about what they learned about themselves and what things they question about their values and the life they lead today. The Sons of Hawaii and I will be glad to answer any questions, and will be glad to tell you about our own experiences.

LI'A

Page 2

Eddie Kamae and the Sons of Hawaii will be playing some of the songs from the soundtrack and songs familiar to the students. If there are students who can dance the hula, or can sing, we would be glad to have them join us and share their love for the music and culture. We want this to be an opportunity for celebrating our Hawaiian culture and Sam Li'a.

We have enclosed a copy of the Eddie Kamae and Sons of Hawaii Visit Check List to help facilitate this event. Please complete the form, and send it to me so we can begin our plans. I will suggest a date and time for the event, and will be open to changes based on your schedule. For neighbor islands, the time is somewhat more restricted as we would like to have all the performances on your island during an assigned time.

Please use all available resources to promote the vision of this project. There are resource teachers, kupunas, your family and friends, as well as students in your class available to expand the knowledge of Hawaii and Hawaiian culture. I hope that you will see this as an opportunity for sharing and a time for reflection of your lives and your contributions. We thank you for your time and your commitment to this project.

Me Ke Aloha Pumehana,



Eddie Kamae

Sam Li'a Kalainaina
1881 - 1975
Mahalo for Your Music



LI'A -- THE LEGACY OF A HAWAIIAN MAN

Hawaii, 1988

60 minute documentary

Video and film

SYNOPSIS

Sam Li'a Kalainaina's story began in the mystical valley of Waipi'o... a region filled with mystery, legend and deep ancestral power. Nurtured and inspired by the beauty of this special place, Sam Li'a's music gave voice not only to the land but to the history and culture of the Hawaiian people.

Known as the songwriter of Waipi'o Valley, Sam Li'a was one of the last of the truly great Hawaiian poets whose eloquent language lives on through his music. Born in 1881, Sam Li'a's life bridged two centuries and two ways of life. He understood the ways of his Hawaiian ancestors and taught it through Hawaiian language, hula and song. This endeared him to the kupuna (elders) and to the younger generation in and around Waipi'o Valley.

It was LI'A's music so in harmony with the valley of his birth that inspired performer/researcher Eddie Kamae to preserve this unique legacy on film. This film is a tribute to the life and music of Sam Li'a Kalainaina and is a celebration of his home, Waipi'o on the Big Island.

"The Songwriter of Waipio'o Valley," an article in the October 1987 issue of Honolulu Magazine, expands on the story of making the film about Sam Li'a. Directed by Eddie Kamae, the film is narrated by gifted chanter and Hawaiian historian Ka'upena Wong and features music by Eddie Kamae and the Sons of Hawaii.

LI'A -- The Legacy of a Hawaiian Man premiered at the Hawaii International Film Festival as the festival's Opening Night Documentary. It also received a special award from the East-West Center's Festival for showing sensitivity toward the culture it recorded.

LI'A promises more than a musical journey into the life of this legendary musician and his place of birth. Using the isolated region of Waipi'o Valley as a back drop, the 60 minute documentary combines the rich musical heritage of the islands with actual oral histories of the people of that time and of that place.



EDDIE KAMAE (LEFT)

SAM LI'A (RIGHT)

LI'A -- THE LEGACY OF A HAWAIIAN MAN
STUDY GUIDE

GOAL: TO PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF CULTURE AND TO LOOK AT HAWAIIAN CULTURAL VALUES.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To learn about Hawaiian Culture
2. To identify cultural values within their lives
3. To define their own culture and their values and to compare it with Hawaiian cultural values
4. To look at filmmaking as one way to preserve and perpetuate their culture

QUESTIONS:

1. What does culture mean?

Teacher generates, with the help of students, a list of items which identifies concepts of culture and cultural values. This list could include items as beliefs, foods, religious practices, music, organizations, etc. Generalize from the list and expand the concept that culture is an extension of one's life and all the practices within it.

In Hawaii, music has been one of the keys to the culture, linking history and legend and language and terrain and community life. It is one of the very important facets of culture.

Music has served as a way to express emotions, enjoying time together, a bonding with the ohana or family. It is a way of preserving local history and stories and a means of celebrating the Hawaiian love for cherished places.

NOTE: We believe all cultures in Hawaii are important. Hawaiian culture began in Hawaii and continues to grow and change. For this reason we feel the importance of nurturing and preserving it here.

2. What was Sam Li'a's culture like? What did Sam Li'a and his friends do? What were their values and beliefs?

Generate a list of concepts such as kindness, love of his wife, love of the land, sharing, music, talents such as rugmaking, respect, etc.

3. **What are some of the values and beliefs of your culture? Are there any similarities with that of Sam's?**

(The purpose of this question is to identify the values of the students. The intent is to see that cultures share many similarities, and that the differences are far less important than the things that unite us.)

4. **This film was made by Eddie Kamae who is a musician, and is now a filmmaker. He devoted many years of his life to gathering this information. If you were a filmmaker, making a film of Hawaiians and their lives today, what would your film be about?**

5. **Sam Li'a was known by many people. What are some of the ways he is remembered?**

Sam was a choirmaster, music teacher, typesetter for the Hilo newspaper, muleskinner, musician, student at Lahainaluna, husband, father, composer, poet, artist and caretaker of animals.

6. **Music is a way to express one's feelings. Sam loved it. What instrument did he play and how did he get it?**

Sam first began playing the fiddle when he was eight years old. He was inspired by the music of serenaders who had come to his home at Christmas time. He made his own fiddle with bamboo, number ten thread, and mango tree wax.

At twelve, he was given a real violin. He began to write songs and play his music.

7. **The film is called, "LI'A --The Legacy of a Hawaiian Man." The word legacy means things handed down by from an ancestor, something which is handed down from one generation to another.**

Each of us will be leaving a legacy to this world. For what contribution would you like to be remembered? What would you like your legacy to be?

8. **Draw a picture of scenes or episodes from the film.**

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:

1. Move forward in time and write an imaginary news article that would appear in your local newspaper which describes you and the legacy for which you are remembered. Tell something about the kind of life you led, and the contribution you made.
2. List words that would describe Sam Li'a.
3. If you were a songwriter, what would you write about? Write some lines for a song.
4. Provide a map of Hawaii and prepare some activities on the geography of Waipi'o Valley, e.g. location, climate, fauna, flora, history, and myths or legends.
5. Interview a person or a kupuna who has special knowledge or talents of cultural issues. Describe the person in terms of their legacy, and their contribution.
6. Learn one of the songs of the film. (Two songs are included at the end of this guide).
7. Do you consider Sam Li'a's life a success? What is success to you? What would you do to be successful?
8. One of the values Hawaiians (and many other cultures) cherish in is their love of the land. What are some of the things that are valued in your culture?

THE Songwriter OF Waipio Valley



Tutu Man Li'a, fiddle player and songwriter, was never famous outside the Waipio area on the Big Island. But now another musician, Eddie Kamae of The Sons of Hawaii, is collecting Li'a's songs and interviewing his family and friends for a documentary film

By James D. Houston

Photographs
by Boone Morrison



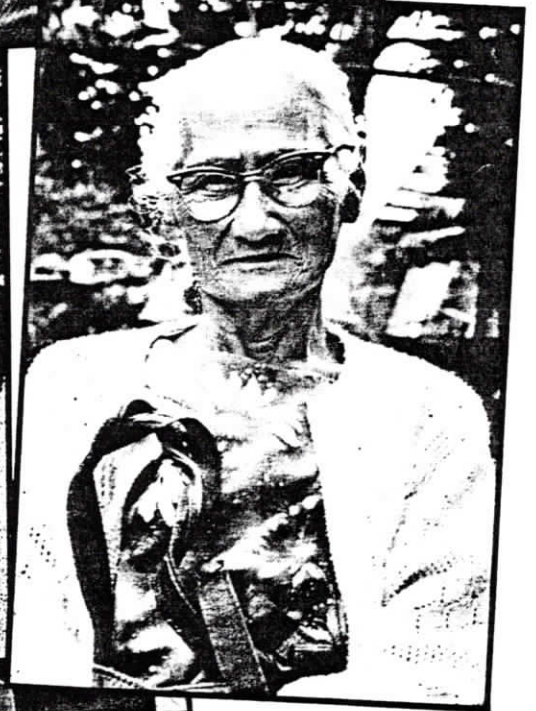
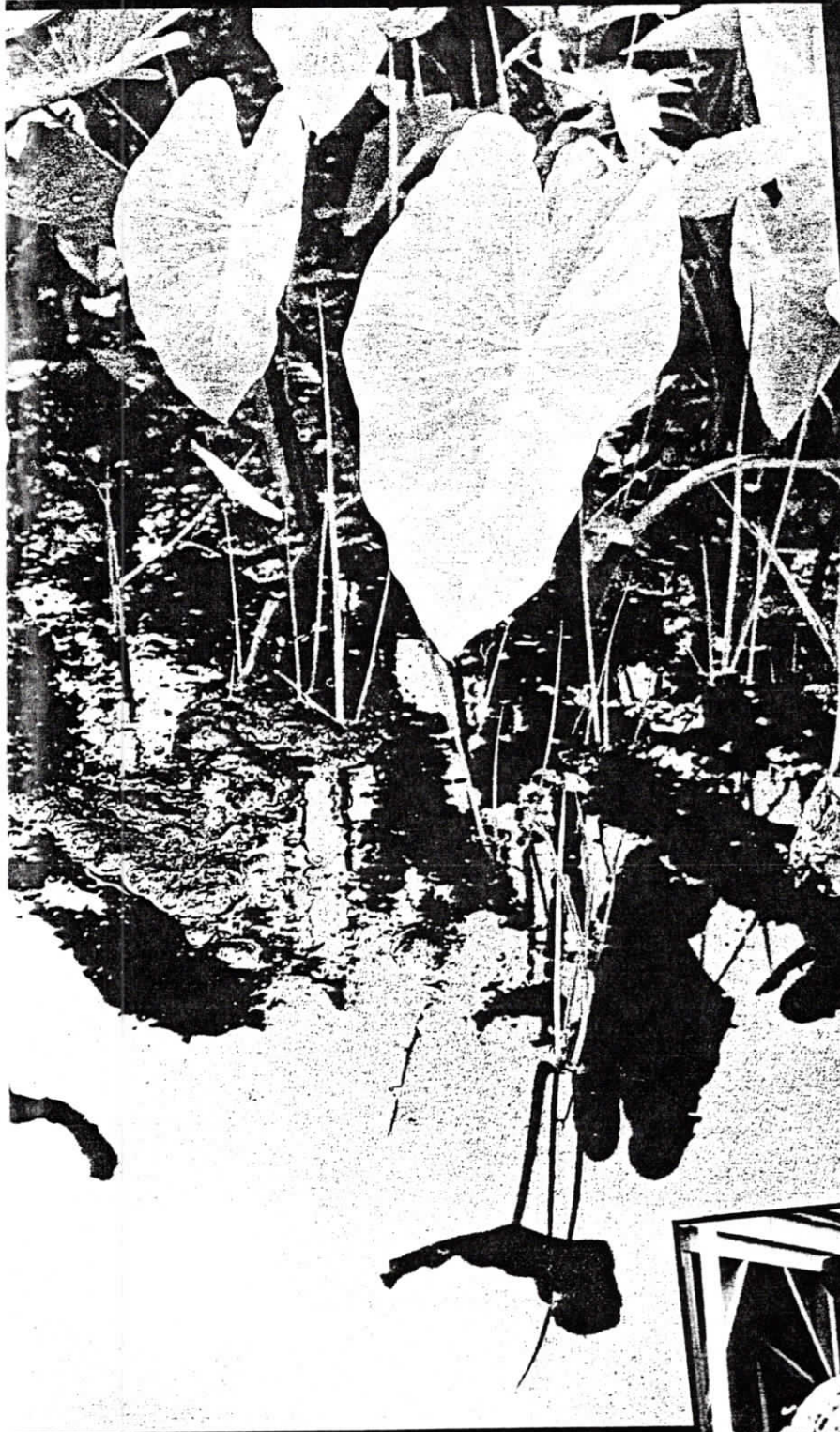


IN HAWAIIAN the word *wai-pio* means "curving water." It is the name given to a tree-lined river that winds through lush and mysterious terrain on the north shore of the Big Island. It is also the name of the valley fed by this year-round stream of curving

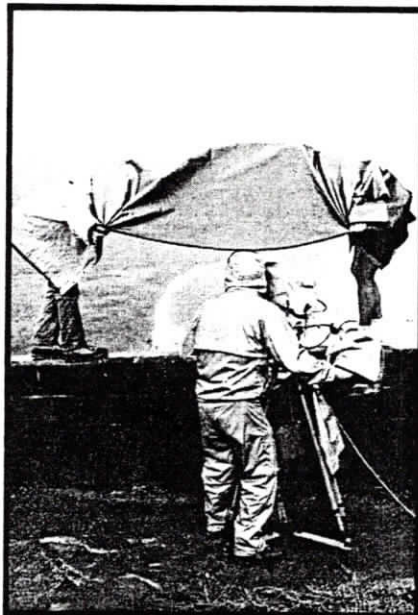
water. Steep-walled and legendary and self-contained, Waipio has always been a place apart. Its link to the rest of the world is a narrow, rutted and plunging trail that rent-a-cars are forbidden to attempt, unless they have four-wheel drive. A dozen families

Opposite page, upper left: Sam Li'a Kalainaina with his fiddle.

Opposite page lower right, and above: Eddie Kamae and Tutu Man Li'a, early 1970s.



*Tutu Man's friends and neighbors:
Andoy Batalona (top), Ruth
Kaholoaa (middle), and John Holi
Mae and John "J.P." Purdy
(bottom).*



James D. Houston, a Santa Cruz-based writer, is a frequent visitor to the Islands. He was a Distinguished Visiting Writer at UH Manoa in 1983. He and his wife, Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, co-authored Farewell to Manzanar, the highly acclaimed account of life in a Japanese-American detention camp during World War II. Houston's latest book, The Men in My Life, a collection of non-fiction stories, was published this summer.

Left: On location, filming *The Songwriter of Waipio Valley*.

live in the valley now. A hundred years ago 2,000 Hawaiians still fished and farmed there, raising taro and chickens and pigs.

Last spring, work began on a film about a man born into that remote world in 1881, a man whose 94 years bridged two centuries and two ways of life. His name was Sam Li'a Kalainaina, a farmer, a sugar plantation hand, a typesetter, a choirmaster, a musician and composer. When completed, *The Songwriter of Waipio Valley* will be a documentary tribute to this man and his songs and the spectacular landscape that gave him inspiration.

He was never famous. Though he was a celebrated fiddle player in and around the valley, few people outside his home region have ever heard of him. Only one of his compositions, "Heha Waipio," was recorded commercially during his lifetime. But on the Big Island there are many who still remember Sam Li'a, tell stories about him and sing his songs, which were written in Hawaiian and often given away, in the old Hawaiian manner, as a holiday gift, perhaps, or as a wedding present.

A film about Sam Li'a is the long-time dream of another musician and composer, Eddie Kamae, who conceived it as a way of paying homage to the mentor who enlarged his understanding of his own past and the meaning of Hawaii's rich musical heritage. Much of the film will deal with how their two lives intertwined and how the legacy of a musician

from an earlier world was passed on to a modern-day performer. It makes a compelling and very touching story, in part, because of the place Kamae himself holds in contemporary Island life.

He has been a key figure in the Hawaiian cultural renaissance, which most authorities say found its first voice in *The Sons of Hawaii*, the charismatic band formed by Kamae and Gabby Pahinui in the early 1960s. In the years since then Kamae has distinguished himself as a singer, as a recording artist and producer, and as a researcher into the archives of long-neglected melodies and lyrics. He was

among the first well-known Island performers to systematically seek out the sources and origins of traditional Hawaiian music. For a time he served as director of the Hawaiian Music Foundation. In 1974 he helped produce the album, *Music of Hawaii*, part of National Geographic's prestigious "Music of the World" series. In 1979 he was designated a "Living Treasure of Hawaii."

Today Kamae is a folk hero. The vigor of his singing style, both guttural and lyric, carries the spirit of an ancient vocal tradition into the 1980s. Thirty-five years ago, when his talent

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The Sons of Hawaii (from left to right): Dennis Kamakahi, Joseph Marshall, Eddie Kamae and Claybourne Smith.

Songwriter

Continued from page 55

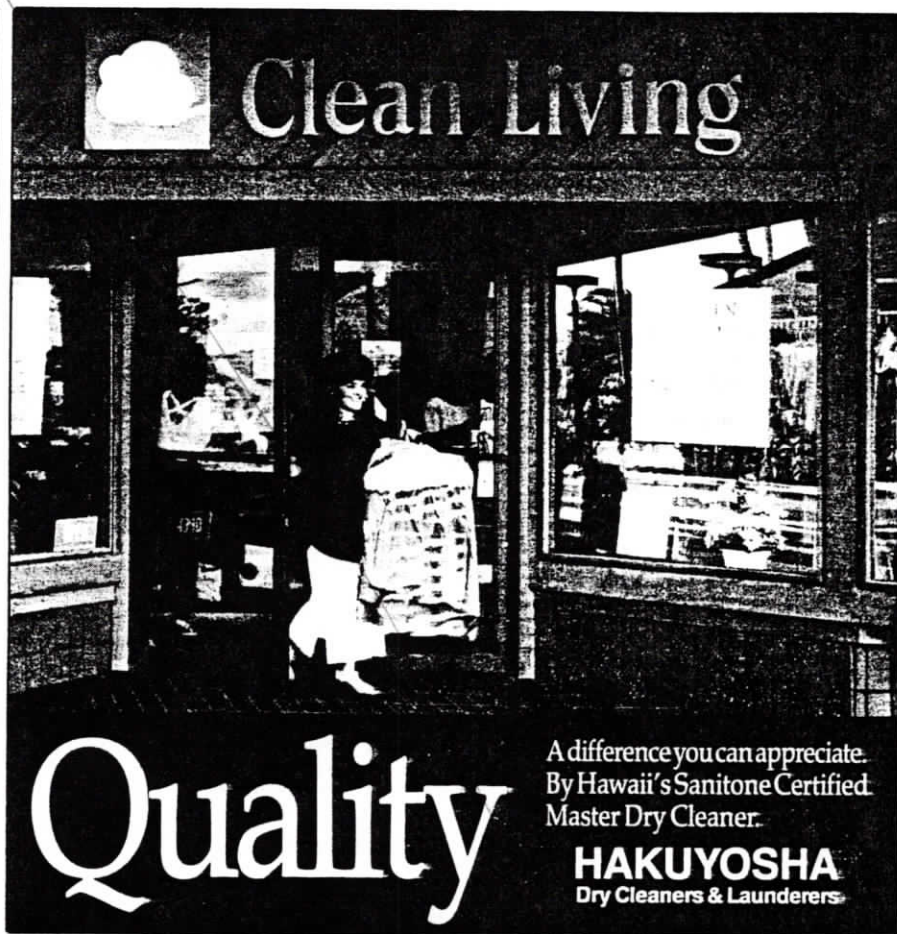
was first being recognized, he was making a very different sound. Born in Honolulu, he came of age playing jazz and swing and American folk standards, in club combos and with Ray Kinney's big touring band. His principal instrument was, and still is, the ukulele, for which he developed a virtuoso picking style that made his early reputation. The discovery, or re-discovery, of his homeland's musical tradition, was spurred by two remarkable encounters. The first was a month-long jam session, in 1959, with Gabby Pahinui, whose emotional intensity and extensive repertoire awakened in Kamae his own ties to the power and poetry of Hawaiian songs. The second encounter occurred 12 years later.

Kamae's pursuit of musical sources has taken him not only into the libraries of the Bishop Museum and the University of Hawaii. It has taken him to the towns and villages and backroads of all the outer islands. In 1971, following a lead from Mary Kawena Pukui, then the foremost expert on Hawaiian language and lore, Kamae set out in search of an old musician known as Tutu Man Li'a. Tutu Man was 90 at the time and said to be living alone in the small community of Kukuihaele, on the Big Island's north coast, not far from the Waipio Valley trailhead. Though Kamae had sent no advance word, Tutu Man somehow knew he was coming to visit.

"I didn't know how he knew," Kamae says, "but he was waiting for me, sitting on the front porch of his old frame house wearing his best suit. He was tall and lean and very dignified. In Hawaiian he said, 'I've been expecting you.'"

Immediately both men felt they had been destined to meet. Kamae himself has strong ties to the Waipio region, family ties that go back several generations. His father, Hawaiian and Cherokee, was born there. In Sam Li'a, Kamae not only had found a fellow musician who shared his love for the old songs, he also had met a spiritual father. Li'a, meanwhile, knew Kamae had been sent as the one to receive what he knew and remembered.

"People tend to wait for the right people to come along," Sam said, soon after they met. "You remind me

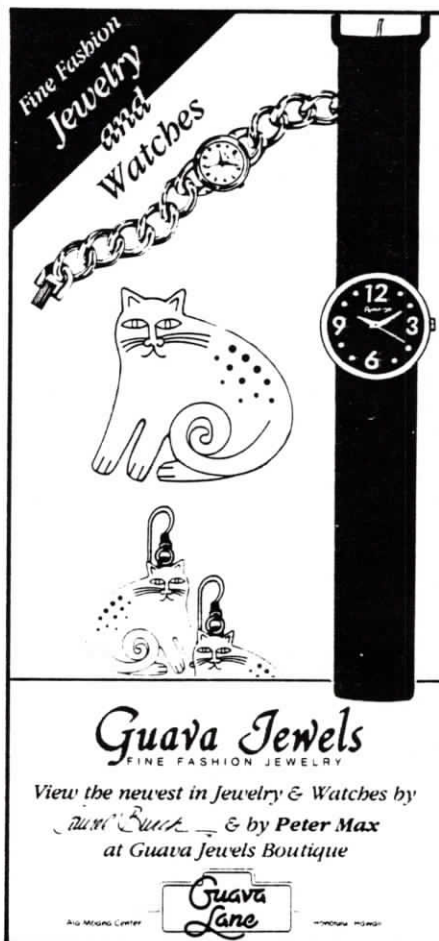


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parts up w/0 of his part

of me when I was a young man."

Kamae soon realized that here was a living repository of songs from an older era, songs written in the Hawaiian language by a man who *thought* in Hawaiian, whose mind was in harmony with the valley of his birth. For Li'a, a song was a poem, written not to be sold but to celebrate a moment. What Kamae sensed in these songs was a vision that had been formed in the pre-20th century time when words and music and landscape and the fate of two lovers immersed in that landscape were all of a piece.

During the next four years he traveled to the Big Island several times to collect the old man's stories on tape, along with the songs Sam could still remember—a tribute to the valley itself, a love song to the wife he lost in 1951, a song written in 1918 when Prince Kuhio, then Hawaii's delegate to Congress, spent a day with the farmers in Waipio.

After Sam passed away in 1975, Kamae continued to visit the region, seeking out people who had known this rare and heartfelt man. He found relatives. He found old-time musicians who had played with Sam. He met a former plantation timekeeper who


remembered musical parties in Waipio Valley before World War II. He met a husband and wife who still sing and cherish the song Sam gave them as a Christmas present while the husband was overseas, fighting in Vietnam. He met an elderly Hawaiian woman who once sang in the church choir Sam led. She remembered the gentleness of his manner.

"He would play the organ," she said, "and he would never embarrass you or scold you in front of the group. If you were off-key he would come and stand next to you and sing the note until you got it."

During this period Kamae began to envision a film that would include testimonials from the wide range of Island people whose lives had been touched by Tutu Man Li'a. It would include songs sung and played by those who had received them as gifts. And it would include his songs as they have been performed by The Sons of Hawaii, the band Kamae now leads. In the spring and summer of 1987 this vision at last became a reality. Shooting in video, with the help of an independent, local production crew, Kamae filmed on three islands—Oahu, Maui and Hawaii—

to assemble the footage for his 90-minute documentary.

The finished product will be more than a film about the Tutu Man. Like a good Hawaiian song, it will be about a named and specific place and a life that has been affected by that place. It will be a film about musicians in a land where music has been a key to the culture, linking history and legend and language and terrain and community life.

Because music was his life, the Tutu Man's story conveys something essential about the spirit of these Islands. It is easy to lose touch with that spirit when you are caught in a traffic jam in midtown Honolulu. But in the music it is revealed day after day, most poignantly in the older songs, written in Hawaiian and delivered by the skin-prickling voices of certain singers whose notes seem to rise straight out of the earth. Eddie Kamae has such a voice. So did Sam Li'a Kalainaina. When you hear him on the sound track, it is not hard to imagine that Waipio itself is speaking, singing. He spent most of his life in that valley. It nourished and inspired him. He in turn gave voice to the beauty and the power of the place. 

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Written by Robert L. and Martha S. Bessley
Photographed by Yal Kim

"My knees feel like the weight of the A-feet, are they still timent seems more dit. I going to get up. is forming on my bac any others show signs one in front, he's not hav. But, of course, he's used an instructor and all."

INTERVIEW/Dan Boylan
Charles Toguchi

The superintendent of the DOE talks about classroom size, teacher salaries and ways to improve our public schools

