

# Māhealani Uchiyama



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Kumu Hula Māhealani Uchiyama is an award-winning dancer, musician, composer, choreographer, recording artist, author and teacher. She studied hula primarily under Kumu Hula Joseph Kamoha'i Kahā'ulelio. She is the founder and director of the Māhea Uchiyama Center for International Dance (MUCID) of Berkeley, California (a non-profit organization) and is Kumu Hula (hula teacher) of Hālau Ka Ua Tuahine. She is the creator and director of the Kāpili Polynesian Dance & Music Workshops, and the African American Mbira Project. She trained in traditional hula and Tahitian 'ori under the late Kumu Hula (hula master) Joseph Kamōha'i Kahā'ulelio. Ms. Uchiyama is one of very few widely recognized Kumu Hula of African descent.

A teacher and performer of Polynesian music and dance for over 40 years, her passion and mastery of Hawaiian and Tahitian performing arts has led to numerous concert tours to Tahiti, New Zealand and the Islands of Hawai'i. She has taught workshops throughout the United States and Mexico. She was professor of Hawaiian Language at Stanford University.

She has participated in and been awarded top honors in competitions in California as well as in Hawai'i, including the King Kamehameha Hula and Chant Competition in Honolulu, and the invitational Kū Mai Ka Hula Hula Competition of Maui.

Mahea has led performance tours to Tahiti, New Zealand and the Islands of Hawai'i, and has taught workshops throughout the United States and Mexico. She has taught Hawaiian Language at Stanford University and authored the Haumāna Hula Handbook for Students of Hawaiian Dance, and The Mbira, An African Musical Tradition (both published by North Atlantic Books / Penguin Random House).

She has released numerous collections of Hawaiian and Tahitian music. Her CDs "Tatau" and "Pasifika" are widely used by Polynesian dance organizations worldwide. She has two recordings of mbira, the spiritual music of the Shona people of Zimbabwe, "Ndoro dze Madzinza" and "The Sky That Covers Us All". Her CD "A Walk by the Sea" was awarded a Hawai'i Music Award for Best World Music Album.

Ms. Uchiyama has served on the panel of judges for the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival and the Tahiti Fete of San Jose and Hilo. She is the former President of the Board of Directors of World Arts West, and former Co-Artistic Director of the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival. On January 22, 2019, the City of Berkeley, California, recognized her by declaring Māhealani Uchiyama Day.

She is currently using her unique perspective as a lineally recognized Kumu Hula and one of (possibly the only) Kumu Hula of African descent to inform her next recording project, Pōpoloheno: Songs of Resilience and Joy – The Untold Stories of Africans in Post-Contact Hawaiian History, supported by grants from the Gerbode Foundation and the Kenneth Rainin Foundation.