



## And the children led them at this year's holiday shows

**B**efore the memories fade and the glow of the holiday season dissipates, we want to acknowledge a developing trend emerging from the plethora of Christmastime concerts: Hawaii's youthful element, not commonly enlisted for community holiday specials, provided variety and validation that goodness comes in all sizes.

Starry names sell tickets, but fresh and budding talents also connect with audiences and provide hope and inspiration for the future.

Among the sparks:

>> **The Kamehameha Schools' Children's Chorus** joined the roster of talented guests assembled by maestro **Clarke Bright** and the **Royal Hawaiian Band** in a freebie one-nighter Dec. 10 at

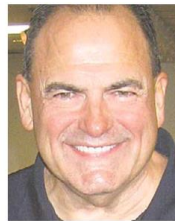
the Hawaii Theatre. The youths rendered Hawaiian and holiday faves, singing and dancing under the direction of **Lynell Bright**, wife of the conductor, amid a bounty of local names:

**Frank De Lima**, **Karen Keawehawaii** and **Jerry Santos** of **Olomana**. Imagine the students' thrill when catching a glimpse of these stars backstage. Great move, Clarke!

>> **Jake Shimabukuro**, wizard of the ukulele, included a strumming segment spotlighting the **Kalihi Kai Ukulele Club** on Dec. 12 at the Hawaii Theatre. What an honor this was for the students to appear alongside their mentor (and guest acts **Brent Nitta**, pianist, and **Maia Yamamoto**, dancer). Shimabukuro was a Turn-around Artist in residence at

Kalihi Kai as part of a federal President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities initiative. He did a powerful shout-out from the stage calling for public support of performing arts in Hawaii schools, punctuating his message by enlisting the youths. Support is one thing; providing an arena for sharing is another. Way to go, Jake!

>> When **Amy Hanaiali'i** teamed up with **Willie K** for a three-day residency at the Hawaii Theatre Dec. 18-20, a seven-member corps of drummers from McKinley High School put the pa-rum-pa-pum-pum cadence into "The Little Drummer Boy." The drummers added a vital element to the holiday classic. Further, budding keiki stars — the enthusiastic hula stylings of Miss Keiki Hula **Faith Paredes** of Halau Kekuaokala'au'ala'iliahii and Master Keiki Hula **Inoalani Aloiau** of the same halau — continued a tradition started several years ago by the **Brothers Cazimero**, who annually provided the perfect spotlight for young female and male hula royalty. These youngsters are likely to evolve as adult soloists or next-generation kumu hula.



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**Frank De Lima**

Hana hou!

>> At **Jay Larrin's** holiday songfest Dec. 13 at the Hawaii Prince Hotel, the singer, pianist and composer showcased 14-year-old **Aidan James**, the budding uke sensation, in a solo slot. A former student of **Roy Sakuma's** ukulele studio, James is working toward a career like the aforementioned Shimabukuro's. He has the musical skills to wow 'em but needs to work on stage presence and audience camaraderie, and this is a sound way to build that foundation. A good inspiration, too, would be **Streetlight Cadence's Jonathan Franklin**, **Brian Webb**, **Jessie Shiroma** and **Chaz Umamoto**, who, like James, are



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**Jake Shimabukuro**

relocating to Los Angeles to further their careers. The foursome guested at Larrin's show (along with **Melveen Leed** and **Chad Takatsugi**) and have profited from precisely this kind of gathering. Cheerio!

>> **Ben Vegas** and **Maia Gibson's** Christmas hoopla Dec. 20 at the Ala Moana Hotel also enabled the aforementioned Streetlight Cadence the opportunity to strut its stuff and earn more hometown creds while expanding its mainland reach. Other revelers included **Kuana Torres Kahele**, **Kapena** and **Ho'okena**, but

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**Aidan James**

no keiki troupers. Next year, maybe?

>> Over the decades, youth ensembles profited holiday programs, notably **Roy Hallman's Honolulu Boy Choir**, which shared its cherubic charm in Christmas week dinner shows at the prestigious Monarch Room of the Royal Hawaiian Hotel thanks to its widely known "Numbah One Day of Christmas" hit, the local-style interpretation of "The Twelve Days of Christmas." That was a compelling indicator that youthful performers can succeed. ...

And that's "Show Biz." ...