

The Garden Island

Tuesday, March 10, 2020

Bali Comes to Kaua'i

By Dennis Fujimoto



Image: Dennis Fujimoto/The Garden Island

Master artist I Ketut Wirtawan performs with vocalizations with the Balinese shadow puppets as I Madé Widana and I Madé Moja support the demonstration, Sunday during 'A Night in Bali' at the St. Theresa School.

KEKAHA — Ursuline Munar said her family was planning a trip to Bali, but the COVID-19 situation changed their plans, Sunday at the St. Theresa School.

"They were going to Bali, later in the spring," Munar said. "But with the COVID-19 situation, they decided to stay home. And, how coincidental is this? We have 'A Night in Bali.'"

St. Theresa School hosted the public to an evening of Balinese culture, including a hands-on shadow puppet making, a demonstration of the different types of shadow puppetry, and traditional Balinese dancing provided by the University of Hawai'i at

Mānoa, Department of Theatre & Dance, Asian Theatre Program.

Initially billed as a “bring-your-own-chair and pack a picnic lunch” event, about a hundred people braved the Kekaha evening chill to enjoy the Balinese presentation and the appearance of Hoku’s, and Pineapple In Paradise food trucks in the magic light of sunset on the Westside.

“Don’t feel bad about getting up and getting your food from the food trucks,” said Nezia Azmi, one of the performers, and from Arts Focus Southeast Asia who provided financial support enabling the troupe’s visit to Kaua’i. “This is a true community event.”

Professor Kirstin Pauka of the UH theatre & dance department, Asian Theatre Program, said the Kaua’i visit is part of outreach programs hosted by the program, the intention being to bring the theatre to places where it would not be available otherwise.

“We just finished a big production, ‘The Last King of Bali’ that played to sold-out audiences at the Kennedy Theatre,” Pauka said. “We had visiting master artists from Bali here for six months working with the students and cast of the production. With help from supporting organizations like our local non-profit *Arts Focus Southeast Asia*, we could extend their visits and bring them out through the outreach program.”

Among the visitors, Malia Speetjens is a graduate of Kaua’i High School, and handled costuming duties for ‘The Last King of Bali.’ She said the outreach program will play and work with students from the Waimea Canyon Middle School, the Kaua’i Performing Arts Center, and one of the senior care homes in Waimea before returning to Honolulu.

“People were really excited to learn of this,” said Wendy Castillo, principal of St. Theresa School. “In fact, when Hoku’s (food truck) heard about this, he said he was definitely going to be here. He even wanted to do some Balinese recipe offerings.”

Retrieved June 22, 2021: <https://www.thegardenisland.com/2020/03/10/hawaii-news/bali-comes-to-kauai/>