

WAIMEA CONSORT... 5 YEARS OF BEAUTY

In the spring of 1999 a group of amateur music lovers gave their first public performance led by Christian Veillet, a French astronomer with the Canada France Hawaii Telescope.

Christian had decided to create a small vocal ensemble made of no more than 12 singers who enjoyed sharing their love of vocal music. Their ultimate goal was to offer the community an opportunity to discover live rarely heard vocal works. Some would think that in such a small town it would be difficult to find an audience receptive to the rugged harmony of medieval polyphony, the delicacy and ornamentation of Italian madrigals, the strange, but so moving, chords of Debussy or Milhaud... performed "a cappella" with no instruments other than a dozen voices.

Five years and quite a few concerts later, the Waimea Consort has indeed found a very receptive audience. All of the

Waimea Consort's Waimea concerts take place in HPA's Davies Memorial Chapel. The Chapel—a stone, concrete and wood building generously offered by the school—has excellent reverberating acoustics appropriate to the Consort's repertoire.

"An evening with the Waimea Consort in the HPA Chapel has to be one of the memorable music experiences for me. I love renaissance music and the baroque, and experiencing close harmony, chromatic progressions, austere pre-Bach intervals, and the exquisite dynamics produced by the group in that vaulted stone and wood space is about as good as it gets," says Franz Solmssen.

The group also performs in The First United Protestant Church in Hilo, St. Andrew's in Honolulu, and the Mokuaikaia Church in Kona.

Some singers have been with the Consort since the early days. Others have come and gone as careers changed, or as age or illness made singing difficult, or as a busy life made finding enough time to join the



Waimea Consort director Christian Veillet prepares the group for its upcoming April 24 concert.

Photo courtesy of DOMINIQUE VEILLET

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meetings impossible. Once a week for at least two hours the group meets to practice. With a concert approaching there are more meetings to work on the quality of sound, the balance of voices, the nuances of expression.

Says former singer Sonja Pederson, "Singing with the Waimea Consort is a good and rare opportunity to learn and perform fascinating repertoire in the confines of an intimate ensemble. Not only do you have the weekly workout and satisfaction of making music in a home rehearsal space, which isn't very common in this age of television and web surfing, but you then actually take the plunge and share it with an audience in a lovely setting such as Davies Chapel. Though I am happy to be singing where I live now, I truly miss the music and comraderie of my Waimea Consort pals and I congratulate them on five years of music making."

For its 5th anniversary concert on April 24 at 7pm at HPA's Davies Memorial Chapel the Consort has prepared two very special musical treats: the

"Lamento d'Arianna," a 5-part madrigal by Monteverdi and one of his most dramatic a cappella works; and Bach's motet "Jesu, meine Freude," the longest, most musically complex work written for voices only.

The Consort had previously performed excerpts from these two magnificent vocal works, but for its 5th anniversary they will perform them in their entirety. The rest of the concert will feature one piece from each of the Consort's previous concerts, covering 8 centuries of a cappella. The concert will also give the past and current members of the Consort the opportunity to join for a couple of pieces and to thank the community for the encouragement and support they have so kindly given since 1999.

As usual, the concert will be free and worth a drive up the hill from either side of the island.



Sopranos Edie Kawai and Lisa Macalutas work on nuances of expression.

Photo courtesy of DOMINIQUE VEILLET

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