

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

5/14/09

KEOLA BEAMER & FRIENDS

Inter-Cultural Collaboration Inspired by Events of 9/11

Now a PBS Hawaii Special to Air May 21st

Keola Beamer and his wife Moana were in San Francisco for a concert tour on September 11, 2001 – the day the towers fell. The city shut down. Everything was canceled, but after a few days the promoter called Beamer and said, “... the audience wants to be together... maybe we could combine the different acts....” And so Beamer found himself performing a Hawaiian piece with a Shinto priest and Asian storytellers. “... there was a lot of beauty in this idea of people from diverse cultures, with their diverse skill sets, coming together to embrace a story,” he said.

That epiphany led Beamer to collaborations with other artists. For this PBS Hawaii special, Beamer is joined by R. Carlos Nakai and Geoffrey Keezer. Nakai is of Navajo-Ute heritage and considered the world’s premiere performer of the Native American flute. Keezer is a jazz pianist who has worked with virtually all of the living legends of jazz. The three men are joined by Beamer’s wife Moana – a gifted chanter/storyteller; jazz bassist John Kolivas and Calvin Hoe – a master of indigenous Hawaiian instruments.

Beamer reflects on introducing a sort of thematic storytelling concept to Nakai and Keezer. “I knew they were thinking, how can I help elevate this idea, how can I help tell the story? What do I have that I can bring into the picture? Because they are both so gifted. I think the results are obvious...the material becomes transcendent. It’s different. It’s nice. Aloha is born.”

PBS Hawaii VP of Creative Services Robert Pennybacker who is also Executive Producer of *Keola Beamer & Friends* said, “The show’s bridging of three musical traditions – Hawaiian, Native American and American jazz – is an inspiring model for how the different cultures of the world can get along better. It’s exciting to see these three brilliant musicians check their egos at the studio door and leave themselves open to the endless possibilities of inter-cultural collaboration. The end result is a new genre of music that defies categorization and is much greater than the sum of its parts.”

Keola Beamer & Friends – Bridging Worlds Through Music will air at 8:30PM, in both high-definition and standard definition, on May 21st. It was co-produced by Michael Harris and Keola Beamer, with Harris serving as director. Derek Hoppe was the

associate producer and Glenn Yamamoto was the director of photography. Sound and mixing was done by Gaylord Holomalia, and the editor was Michael Powell. The production was made possible by a grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The program will encore later the same evening at 11PM.

For more information

Linda Brock, 973-1383

lbrock@pbshawaii.org

PBS Hawaii, a member of the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) is a community-supported, noncommercial public television station broadcasting throughout the state of Hawaii. Its mission is to inspire, inform and entertain by providing high-quality programming and valuable services for our diverse island community. Major support of the station comes from the people and businesses of Hawaii. www.pbshawaii.org