

Brotherly Harmonies

Robert and Roland Cazimero distill their music and memories into a time capsule.

BY MAILE KANG | FEB 20, 2013

TELEVISION / Forget the British Invasion.

To anyone who was around during the Hawaiian political and cultural renaissance of the late 1960s–’70s, our homegrown, long-haired boy bands will always be first in our hearts. Take those cute, sweet-voiced Brothers Cazimero, Robert and Roland.



“I was very young, in my teens, when I first saw Robert and Roland at Primo Garden, and I was slain from the start,” says Mihanna Souza of Puamana. “My mother would get mad at me because I was a ‘wild thing,’ but she was always appeased when I told her I went to see the Brothers,” adds Souza, whose mother also happened to be the great musician Irmgard Farden Aluli.

The Caz’s sold-out live shows still cause traffic jams all over town, but now television viewers can kick back and enjoy them in *Na Mele: Pure Caz*, a new PBS Hawaii special that airs Thu., Feb. 21 at 8 p.m.

As part of the station’s *Na Mele: Traditions in Hawaiian Song* series, the brothers are filmed playing in PBS’s bare-bones studio, empty save for the two musicians, their instruments and hula dancer Sky Gora. “We chose to feature them now because important artists reach a time in their career when they need to be documented for history. It’s clear when you watch the special, they’re in their prime,” says producer Robert Pennybacker, PBS Hawaii vice president of creative services.

In their first meeting about the show, “I asked Robert [Cazimero], if this show were put in a time capsule that was to be opened a couple hundred years from now, what songs would you want to be remembered by?” Pennybacker says. The brothers chose a playlist ranging from classics like “Heeia” to their own compositions and those of Dennis Kamakahi and Henry Kapon.

“We loved the whole idea,” the brothers commented in an email to the *Weekly*. “We tried to incorporate songs that have become part of us, woven into our life.”

The two-hour show, a fundraiser for PBS Hawaii’s new building, alternates segments of the performance with live commentary from the brothers and long-time friends in the studio manning the phones. The roster, still growing as of press time, includes Souza, Amy Hanaialii Gilliom and John Cruz. Asked what song he’d add to the Cazimero time capsule, Cruz told the *Weekly*, “If there is one song that really was influential on the contemporary Hawaiian music scene, it would have to be ‘Kawika,’ from the Sunday Manoa. That song really had a huge effect on singers, guitarists and especially ‘ukulele players. The drums on the intro, the ‘ukulele motif and of course the soaring vocals make it the classic that it is and will always be.”

In addition to the music itself, the brothers have always played and shared in the inclusive spirit of ‘ohana, inspiring and mentoring other musicians and dancers like herself, Souza says. “They have been leaders, always. They were introducing the Hawaiian Renaissance to young people, the love of ‘aina. They were, and are, very supportive of everyone,” she adds.

Since that youthful renaissance, the Cazimeros, other ‘ohana and extended ‘ohana—Beamer, Kamakahi, Kuo, Kahumoku, Pahinui and others—have led a Hawaiian Invasion of the mainland and abroad. But it always feels best to see them at home.

Na Mele: Pure Caz, PBS Hawaii, channel KHET-11 (10), Thu., 2/21, 8–10pm