

# And the Melody Lingers on

By Barbara Del Piano

Several nights each week, the enchanting ambience of the Koa Lanai is further enhanced by the harmonious voices of the Teves Trio as they stroll among the tables playing a favorite song for kamaaina, *Hauoli La Hanau* to a birthday celebrant, or *Ke Kali Nei Au* to a newly-wed couple. There's not a song they don't know; their enormous repertoire encompasses all the classic "oldies," popular hapa haole tunes, and the latest Hoku Award-winning compositions.

Strolling musicians are a tradition in the Outrigger dining room, going back to 1967 when newly appointed Assistant Manager Agenhart Ellis suggested the idea to his boss, Peter Van Dorn.

Ethelynn Teves, Ella Correa and Harris Kaleikini comprised the original trio. When Ella left a few months later, Louise Freeman filled in until Ramona Teves, Ethylene's sister-in-law, replaced her, more than 36 years ago. For several years, until her retirement, Ramona dashed to the Club after a full day's work at Sears Roebuck. When Harris passed away in 2004 Jeffrey Teves, Ethelynn's son became a regular, after filling in for more than 15 years.

The trio's leader, Ethelynn Teves, has been spreading her musical talent and gracious smile around the Club for more than 40 years. The Teves Trio remains a "family affair" with Ethelynn on guitar, Ramona strumming the ukulele, and Jeffrey plucking the bass.

Musical groups in Hawaii are flexible and when one musician can't make it, there is always someone eager to fill in. A musician might also play with more than one group. On Wednesday Evenings, Ethelynn and Ramona are joined by Noelani Mahoe.

Along with Noelani and Annette Pagalinwan, Ethelynn and Ramona often perform at other venues as a quartet known as Leo Nahinahi. Together they have made four recordings.

Completely self-taught, Ethelynn, who spent her early years in Hilo, learned to sing Hawaiian songs listening to records on her grandmother's Victrola. She picked up guitar playing by watching musicians and noting just how they held a chord.



The Teves Trio in 2008: Jeff, Ramona and Ethelynn Teves.

After the family moved to Honolulu, Ethelynn attended McKinley High School, a member of the class of 1947. Her exceptional talent soon led to a career in music. Her first professional debut was with a group performing at the Sheraton for Jo Flanders who put on lavish luau at the hotel every Tuesday night for several years.

She also worked for Kaneda Catering, long-time Honolulu food provider. Stints at the Fort DeRussy Officers Club and Hawaiiana Hotel kept her busy as well. For 25 years Ethelynn was part of a group that performed world-wide for the Hawaii Visitors Bureau and Aloha Airlines...all while playing at the Outrigger.

In 1952 Ethelynn married Bernard "Gene" Teves whose family had long been involved with horses. Ethelynn soon learned to be an adept rider and in 1967 was selected Queen of the Aloha Week Parade. In 1971 she reigned as Queen of the King Kamehameha Day parade.

In 2004, Ethelynn and Ramona were chosen as the backup group for *Prairie Home Companion* when the well-known nationally-aired show was broadcast from Hawaii.

Ethelynn says that in addition to providing music to the dining patrons, she feels an important part of her job is to make people happy. When a nostalgic song elicits tears, Ethelynn wants to make sure they are tears of joy.

Come on down and enjoy the beautiful music of the Teves Trio Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights in the Koa Lanai.



Teves Trio circa 1970s - Ethelynn Teves, Ella Correa and Louise Freedman.