

Paula Kauapālaukī Rudman

Paula was brought up, and began singing, in the American folk tradition of Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie, Theo Bikel and Jean Ritchie. She was named for Paul Robeson, the great African-American singer, actor and political activist. While her musical taste is extremely wide-ranging, key influences later included American and British Isles folk and folk rock artists ranging from The Byrds to Jean Redpath, The Incredible String Band and Steeleye Span.

She first set foot on the Big Island of Hawai‘i about twenty years ago, and “it was both a homecoming and a revelation to finally be in this place where *‘aina* and *moana* are sacred and there is no separation between the spiritual and the everyday.” She immediately fell in love with Hawaiian music, beginning with the Sunday Manoa and Gary Haleamau.

Her work as a subtle-energy healer and her love for the Big Island led her to study with Lanakila Brandt, the *kahuna* of the *heiau* at Pu‘uhonua o Honaunau, and later with other Hawaiian kupuna and healers. Meanwhile, she became one of the first members of Na Leo Nahenahe, San Francisco’s a capella Hawaiian chorus, “so I wouldn’t be too homesick for Hawaiian music when I was on the mainland.”

Her involvement with the local Hawaiian community in northern California increased when she met her close friend Pili (teacher, healer and musician Lyn ‘Unihipiliowailelepualu Moreno Hilliard), to whom she owes much of her knowledge of Hawaiian *‘olelo* and *mele*. Pili later gave her the Hawaiian name Kauapālaukī (the rain that strikes the ti leaves), which he received as an *inoa pō* (a name that comes in a dream). Then, in 2003, Jim Romano, a longtime neighbor she’d never met, came by to give her a ride to a Reiki master class they were both attending. “My immediate reaction when I opened my front door and saw him standing there is best conveyed by his beautiful *kīhō‘alu* tune, *Lilo Loa I Kou Maka*. We started singing – and doing healing– together that first day.”