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AN EVENING OF ALOHA & HAWAIIAN CULTURAL ARTS WORKSHOPS

Eugene, Oregon – January 24th, 2009 — Mele Ohana of Oregon, a Hawaiian music players group based in Eugene, is presenting the **Second Annual Evening of Aloha** featuring the talented ukulele virtuoso, Herb Ohta Jr. and slack key and ukulele sensation, Steven Espaniola on Friday, February 13th at the Lane Events Center (Aloha Celebration Stage) starting at 7:30pm. Doors open at 6:30pm (for those who purchase a light-meal package). At 6:45pm, pre-show entertainment will be provided by Iron Mango Orchestra; a community performing group consisting of mainly ukulele players who are also of members of Mele Ohana, along with the students from the Monroe Middle School After-School Ukulele Program. Monroe Middle School was last year's recipients of ukuleles that were purchased from some of the proceeds raised for the Ukes for Kids Program from last year's event. The main show will begin at 7:30, opening with new local hula halau (or school), Halau Hula Na Pua O Hawaii Nei led by Kumu Hula, Pekelo Day, followed by Steven Espaniola and Herb Ohta Jr. and ending with the drawing of door prizes for the evening's participants. Our hosts for the second year in a row will be KMTR's newscaster, Nohelani Graf, and long-time emcee and one of the original founders of the Asian Celebration, Tony Lum. The concert's success is attributed to the generous support of local businesses and individuals sponsoring the event and the growing popularity of ukulele and Hawaiian cultural events in this area.

In addition to the concert, Mele Ohana of Oregon is offering a variety of **Hawaiian Cultural Arts Workshops** being held throughout the festival weekend (February 14th and 15th) from 10:30am to 5pm, in the Ohana Room of the Lane Events Center (see map in the official Program Guide). These workshops will offer a unique opportunity to the community to experience Hawaiian cultural arts first-hand that will include learning the hula, ukulele instruction from the Masters performing at the Evening of Aloha, and the ever-popular lei-making and card-making. For more information about the workshops, visit the Asian Celebration website at: www.asiancelebration.org/ or www.meleohana.net. The concert and workshops will offer a unique opportunity to listen, experience, and learn Hawaiian music and cultural arts performed and taught by individuals who are either from Hawaii or have learned their craft from masters of their discipline in Hawaii.

It is the goal and mission of Mele Ohana of Oregon to bring more informative and entertaining Hawaiian cultural events to the community. The concert will be a fundraiser to not only help sponsor these types of events, but to also raise funds for a future ongoing program (**Ukes for Kids**), in order to buy ukuleles for local schools and youth organizations who would like to start a ukulele music program. We are pleased to announce that McCornack Elementary School will be our first recipient of this project to provide additional ukuleles for their after-school ukulele program. For more information about the impact of this program at other locations, visit the Ukulele Guild of Hawaii's article on their website at the following URL: <http://www.ukuleleguild.org/press.php>. **Also, a school visit and assembly with the headline artists is scheduled at Monroe Middle School on Friday, February 13th at 10:00 am** for the students to enjoy these talented masters of ukulele.

The ukulele has been experiencing a phenomenal resurgence of popularity in recent years that continues to this day. Mele Ohana of Oregon is one of two ukulele groups in the area that meets regularly on every second Friday of the month at a local church. The increasingly large number of people who attend monthly is a great indicator of how truly popular this little instrument has become in this community and around the region. In

this monthly gathering, members (Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian alike) get to enjoy authentic music and dance that is very reminiscent of how it is in Hawaii. It has become a home-away-from-home for many who have moved from the islands or for those who simply have a connection and love for all that is Hawaiian. It is Mele Ohana's goal to transcend that aloha spirit beyond those walls and hopefully bring these same opportunities for the rest of the community to be able to experience, while perpetuating the Hawaiian culture.

For additional information about Mele Ohana of Oregon, the Evening of Aloha, or the Hawaiian Cultural Workshops, contact: Maggie Matoba (541) 484-5754, (541) 915-0599, email: yasoualoha@comcast.net, or visit Mele Ohana's website: www.meleohana.net.

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