

## Pacific Heartbeat film anthology honors heritage of Pacific Islanders

By Pamela Ellgen  
The Asian Reporter

**P**acific Heartbeat, a series of artful documentaries celebrating the people, culture, and history of Pacific Islanders — the indigenous people of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia — kicks off its third season on Oregon Public Broadcasting during Asian Heritage Month. The series is available through a collaboration between independent producers and three public television organizations: PBS Hawaii, Pacific Islanders in Communications (PIC), and American Public Television (APT).

The new season of Pacific Heartbeat includes four segments. Musicians Robert and Roland Cazimero are the focus of the first show, while research about a rare disease found on a remote island is brought to light in the second. The 50th anniversary of the Merrie Monarch Hula Festival is featured in the third episode and two people who are considered masters in Hawaiian culture are highlighted in the fourth.

### “Pure Caz: Music of the Brothers Cazimero”

Viewers can lose themselves in the soothing harmonies of brothers Robert and Roland Cazimero in “Pure Caz: Music of the Brothers Cazimero.” The documentary features a compilation of music performed in studio as well as conversations between the brothers about their childhood, their evolution as performers, and their lasting legacy.



Robert confesses that initially he didn't appreciate traditional Hawaiian music. “We did not like Auntie Genoa, we didn't like Mahi Beamer, and all those people, because we were rock 'n' roll kids,” he says, laughing. However, eventually they had a chance to meet these legends and changed their tune.

“All these people knew our mom and dad, and so, we were accepted, and we were loved because of that. And with that acceptance came support, and love, which made it so much easier for us in so many different ways.”

The brothers recall their last performances at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel in

1994. Although their audiences have not seen the show in 20 years, they still remember it as if it were yesterday.

“If we can, as the Brothers Cazimero, hit a certain note, play a certain chord, do a song that they love and get somewhere close to what they remember it being, we live on,” Robert says. “If 200 years from now, a capsule was opened, I think I would like for whoever is there to say, ‘This is a part of a living culture that lives 'til today.’ That would be an amazing, amazing feat.”

“Pure Caz: Music of the Brothers Cazimero” airs May 6 at 11:00pm on Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB). The show repeats May 13 at 8:00pm on OPB

**GOLDEN CELEBRATION.** The history and culture of Pacific Island culture is featured in Pacific Heartbeat, a series airing on Oregon Public Broadcasting during the month of May. In “Hula: The Merrie Monarch's Golden Celebration” (pictured), which airs May 20 at 11:00pm, viewers have a front-row seat to the 50th anniversary of the Merrie Monarch Hula Festival. (Photo courtesy of Pacific Islanders in Communications)

Plus.

### “The Illness & The Odyssey”

In “The Illness & The Odyssey,” filmmakers follow years of scientific research and uncover competing hypotheses about the nature of Lytico-Bodig, a deadly neurodegenerative disease affecting up to 10 percent of Guam's population at one time and as many as 35 percent in the small village of Umatac. Could it be genetics? Diet? Environment? While scientists try to find the answers, the people of Guam grow weary of the endless testing and continued suffering.

“The Illness & The Odyssey,” which airs May 13 at 11:00pm on OPB with a repeat on May 20 at 8:00pm on OPB Plus, offers a heartbreaking but compassionate look at the individuals affected by Lytico-Bodig and even explores unscientific, spiritual explanations for the disease. The film's mystery will keep viewers entranced — and hypochondriacs a little on edge — from beginning to end.

### “Hula: The Merrie Monarch's Golden Celebration”

“Hula: The Merrie Monarch's Golden Celebration” gives viewers a front-row

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