



Best Hawaiian Wedding Entertainment Company 2022

The magic of Bula Akamu's soulful voice is perfect for any special event – especially a wedding. Indeed, Bula Music and Performing Arts is a full-service wedding entertainment company that supplies incredible music and awe-inspiring Hawaiian performances.

Authentic Hawaiian entertainment is hard to come by; however, Bula Music and Performing Arts is the real deal. The company was founded with the mission to 'share our aloha and perpetuate Hawaiian culture through an authentic and iconic island experience,' primarily for luxury wedding events. As such, over the past 11 years, Bula Music and Performing Arts has catered for over 1,000 couples across six continents, leaving each one with a positive experience.

Bula Akamu specializes in the 'ukulele and guitar, heading the company as the lead musician, entertainment choreographer, and recruiting director. Yet he is perhaps best known for his warm, soulful voice, deep tones, and magical ability to engage with crowds, leaving them emotionally touched. The alum of the prestigious Berklee College of Music has been the recipient of numerous awards, including Wedding Wire's Couple's Choice Award, which he has received for nine years straight and The Knot's Best of Weddings, for the last six years. He is also a prominent fixture within The Knot's Hall of Fame. Their extensive reach, complimented by Bula's devotion to customer service and quality, has resulted in Bula Music and Performing Arts becoming Hawaii's top-rated wedding entertainment service, with hundreds of five-star reviews under its wing.

Growing up in the small sugar cane plantation town, Pahala, Bula didn't have much – but what he did have was his treasured 'ukulele. What Pahala lacks in luxury and extravagance, it more than makes up for in spirit. It is the embodiment of aloha and care for 'the 'aina (land), kai (ocean), and its po'e



(people).' This great sense of island culture, community, and love molded Bula into the man he is today, both personally and professionally. In essence, perpetuating such values is the core aim of Bula Music and Performing Arts. Their entertainment brings people together with rich traditions and heartfelt performances which pay tribute to ancient Polynesian history and the sacred spirit of Aloha.

He and his wife, Ash, met in 2009 at a luau – two years later, they created Bula Music and Performing Arts. Ash acts as the company manager and entertainment coordinator. Within her roles, she primarily focuses upon correspondence, itinerary planning, song selection, and helping couples to plan even the finest details to ensure seamless wedding entertainment. The graduate of the University of

Wisconsin-Madison worked for ten years as a wedding and events manager at an oceanside resort prior to going full time with Bula Music, for which she won numerous coordinating awards.

Together they have created a company that is not only successful, but also holds a great cultural impact. 'Hawaii is a melting pot in itself with so many people originating from the outer Polynesian islands and various places around the world but everyone is tied together with the embodiment of Aloha,' the couple explains. 'Each member of our staff has a passion for performance and shares in our underlying belief of the importance of culture.'

Consequently, Bula Music and Performing Arts has attracted clients from around the globe. From Africa to North America, and Australia to Europe, Bula Music and Performing Arts boasts an impressively wide reach. It's not uncommon for Bula to perform songs in various languages and research popular songs from their country to add into their DJ playlist. 'The weddings which we service often include families from all over the world who come together to share in a couple's love. Our main focus is to develop personal connections and genuine authenticity with each couple and their guests, showing them a good time and helping them to bond together in the spirit of love and aloha. Each place has their own traditions, languages, and values and we make an effort to learn about them and what is special to each' they explain.

Speaking of a couple that left a lasting impression on them, 'We recently performed at a multicultural wedding where the bride gave her thank you toast to the guests in French, English, and Japanese. It was so touching and impressive to watch her relate to each guest and bring everyone together. We feel honored to not only share Hawaii's culture with our clients but to gain knowledge of their cultures as well. It's our Kuleana (responsibility) to honor the traditions of where they are from and to tie aloha into that.'

'My wife and I, along with our guests, were blown away by Bula's infectious energy and good vibes! He was the highlight of our special day, playing tunes at our ceremony, and then coordinating a special night of hula dancing and song at our beachside reception! All our guests raved about the wonderful entertainment! Bula graduated from one of the top music conservatories in the nation and it showed in the high quality and placemaking musical set he delivered - the spirit / essence of Aloha and Hawaii really shone through! We also loved his all-white colored equipment and lighting set - which matches well with any wedding decor. His manager / wife Ash was also fantastic to work with and quick to respond to our emails! Would highly recommend Bula / Ash to any couple looking to get married on the Big Island. We planned our wedding virtually and Bula / Ash made the



planning seamless. He wowed our guests and exceeded our expectations - we're so glad to have Bula / Ash as part of our special day!" comment Mr Lester (and Qili) Kao in a five-star Google Review.

However, the company's journey to success hasn't always been smooth sailing. The Covid-19 pandemic had a monumental impact on Hawaii's wedding industry – according to the State of Hawaii, Department of Health, the marriage rate saw a sharp decline in 2020 dropping from an average of 1671 weddings per month to 641. On top of this dramatic decline in amount of weddings, they were limited to 10 attendees and then 25 attendees for a majority of the pandemic. Along with guest count limitations, Hawaii's strict restrictions were some of the most stringent in the country and, also included travel bans, mask mandates, testing requirements, and even bans on dancing.

Subsequently, Bula Music and Performing Arts underwent a complete transformation during this period – 'We shifted focus and spent much of the pandemic researching the latest wedding entertainment trends and the newest most innovative gear. We rebranded our look, updated our website, switched up all of our gear to "wedding white," and invested in intelligent lighting and industry leading sound systems.' It was also during this time that Bula honed his skills in DJing thanks to a range of new entertainment packages.

Once the industry reopened, Bula Music and Performing Arts was able to take flight. The new entertainment packages and revamped style proved to be a success, and the company began to document behind the scenes footage for couples. Featured upon the Bula Music YouTube channel, which now sits at over 20,000 subscribers, the company also delved into creating cover songs of their top requests, and content for those looking for examples of what is available to them.

'With our new services, we are able to provide a larger variety of options to fit the vision of each individual couple and are having so much fun partying the night away with them!' Bula and Ash express. They then express their gratitude for the continued support of the business, the talented vendors they work alongside, the magnificent venues that they get to visit, the loving couples that they get to celebrate with, and the unique cultures they get to experience.

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2nd Page Photography: Nomadic Creative Media