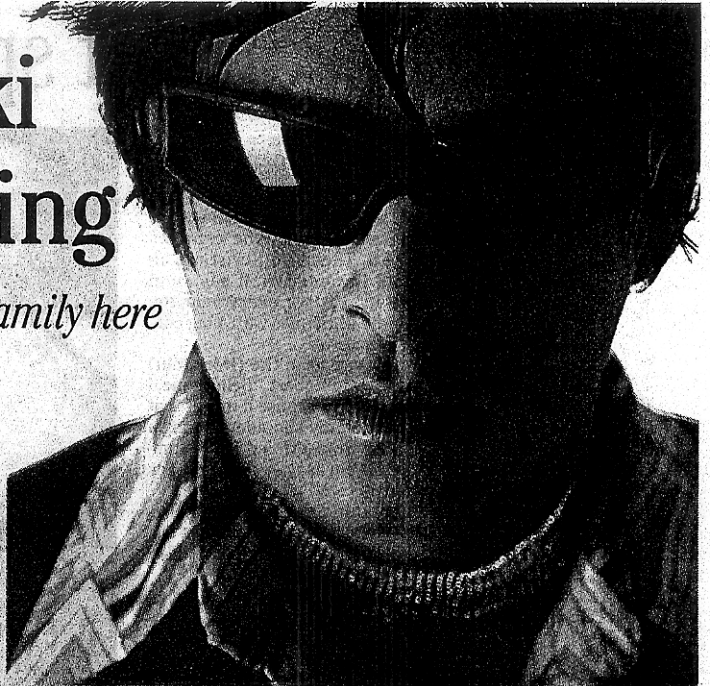


Superstar DJ Keoki keeps the party going

The flamboyant artist will also be visiting family here



IN A SCENE WHERE the kids and ravers are usually the center of attention, with their colorful costumes and tweaked personalities, the anonymous DJ providing the night's beats is usually content to spin in the shadowy confines of a sound booth.

But few could ignore Superstar DJ Keoki. The flamboyant Keoni Franconi will jack up the crowd at tomorrow night's "Supa Luv II" extravaganza, and probably will dance and sing a bit as part of his three-hour set starting around 11:30 p.m.

Tomorrow also marks the birthday of Keoki's younger brother Kekoa, which explains the homecoming. Franconi's family lives in Kailua, and the road to fame has been a long, strange trip for the DJ who moved with his family to Kihei, Maui, from El Salvador at the age of 8.

"Did I experience culture shock after we moved here? Sure, but in a good way," he said by phone from his New York City home last week. "It was fabulous, like living in a fairy tale."

Six years after moving to Maui, the family moved to Kailua, where Franconi's sense of the outrageous bloomed even more. "While I was attending Kailua High, one day me and my two friends dressed up like Bow Wow Wow."

"Supa Luv II"

*With special guest Superstar DJ Keoki
Also featuring Gearwhore, DJ Koa from
Denver, DJ Quikstiva from San Diego and
G-Spot*

Where: Richards Street YWCA, downtown
When: 9 p.m. tomorrow
Admission: \$15 before 10:30 p.m., \$20 after.
First 50 people get in free.
Call: 591-3500 or go to
www.double-o-spot.com

But after graduating from Kailua, "I knew I wanted to be somewhere as far away as possible. Not because of some feeling of 'rock fever,' but just because I knew there was more out there."

"I first went to some airline school in California, but that didn't work out. I've never been able to hold down a regular job! So I moved to New York City."

His soon-to-be-career/lifestyle hit the fast track when, while working as a busboy at the city's trendy Danceteria club, "I kept bugging a nearby club's manager to, please, please, please let me DJ there. I told him I knew how to do it, even though I only had a small collection of records and one turntable at home."

"He let me play a lounge gig on some of the slower nights. He told me to 'play whatever the f--- you want, so long as they stay,' words I've continued to live by to this day."

Franconi advertised himself as Superstar DJ Keoki, a tag that raised eyebrows for its audacity, but his self-proclaimed status has become begrudgingly accepted in the most cliquish of dance club circles. He doesn't care either way.

"I've always felt the same, both about myself and the music I play. I always keep the music positive, even though the industry itself is not fun."

From 1990-96, Franconi's was the resident bad-boy DJ for Lime-light nightclub's notorious Disco 2000 night, described in magazine write-ups as "the weekly techno/rave extravaganza, complete with drugs, sex and murder scandal galore" (Mixer) and "the club night where unsupervised drug use was the norm and patrons routinely stripped naked for a 3 a.m. bacchanalian ritual" (Urb).

Dance music writer Jennifer Warner's memory of meeting Franconi was documented on About.com: "I was marking the side of a mile-high stack of party invites with a huge purple pen," she wrote, "and this body appeared, covered in silver glitter, wearing what looked like a diaper and dragging a boy (Michael Alig, Franconi's roommate and de facto leader of the city's club kids), also sporting a falling-off diaper, minus the glitter but made up like a clown."

After Alig's reputation and Franconi's relationship with him went down the tubes (fueled by constant drug use), Superstar DJ Keoki cleaned up and carried on, spinning around the country and the world and releasing albums like 1997's "Ego Trip" and this year's "Jealousy," his 8th CD.

While he says, "I put no tittle to my music, like 'intelligent jazz acid-rock,'" Franconi is pleased when told "Jealousy" plays out like one long history of '80s dance music. "That's it exactly! No one else has gotten that yet!"

It's hard to miss when Bauhaus/Love and Rockets guitarist Daniel Ash guests on the title cut. "This Ain't No Disco" and

"Kiss Kiss Bang Bang" namechecks a couple of Talking Heads and Specimen club faves, and it all ends with Keoki's version of Frankie Goes to Hollywood's 1982 classic "Relax."

But the events of Sept. 11 have put a chill on the party scene. "Everyone's crawling back into the cocoon," Keoki said. "But, it's New York, the Rome of now, and I still want to be there. Ever since the towers came down, nothing will ever be the same. It's been sad, but an exciting, roller coaster kind of sad. But I'm glad to see the evil that's out there now. It's opened up my mind, where even though terrorism can strike us down at any minute, it's important to keep an aura of positive energy."

"Unfortunately, you can't call anything 'the bomb' anymore," he said with a rueful laugh. "And no one wants to pay me for a large tour, so I've had to downsize and regroup in a sense."

And it was a good time to come home with his new husband Alfio. "I'll be visiting my family, mother and brothers, and stay a week."

"I also like to keep my motorcycles (in Hawaii) and ride them around when I visit. They're my mojo!"