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## CRESCENDO

# Story of Hawaii princess made music flow easily

By Stephen Warbeck

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This weekend's world premiere of the "Princess Ka'iulani Suite" by the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra represents both a musical and cinematic journey.

I first read the script for the film "Barbarian Princess" in 2007. When I finally met the director, Marc Forby, it was in a London hotel foyer in the depths of a gray English day. The story of Princess Kaiulani had fascinated me; it was a history I knew little of, this powerful emotional description of a woman caught in the center of epochal change.

I walked into the dull foyer, and within a few minutes of watching the film, I was transported to another world.

The first thing that struck me about the film was the vibrancy of the colors in the sequences I was watching. Although this was just a laptop with a collection of shots, I felt more deeply drawn into the story by images of shells, the sea and Princess Kaiulani herself.

I was eager to start writing music, but a film composer waits for the whole story. A few days later I went to Norfolk in England to watch some of the scenes shot there — scenes of gray and stifling formality — and I saw more pieces of the jigsaw come together.

When the first cut arrived, I started work. And, as I find with truly emotional stories, the ideas started to arrive quite soon. If there is a human story with an emotional heart, I think it feels as though the music writes itself, and this story seemed to contain a nation's heartbreak.

A FEW WEEKS later I was flying halfway around the world to Oahu to record the music with Andreas Delfs and the musicians of the Honolulu Symphony. I arrived on an island where the blues were just as blue as in the film and every bit as beautiful.

I found the orchestra skilled and willing to show the flexibility that recording film music requires, and I was delighted by Andreas' attention to detail and sensitivity. At the end of the orchestral recording, I was

privileged to be there for the recording of some of the Hawaiian music in "Barbarian Princess."

Not often does a film take you on such a journey.

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English composer Stephen Warbeck wrote the original score for the soon-to-be-released film "Barbarian Princess," which was recorded by the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Maestro Andreas Delfs. The "Princess Ka'iulani Suite" is drawn from Warbeck's score for the film. Warbeck's other credits include composing the music for such films as "Mrs. Brown," "Shakespeare in Love," "Billy Elliot," "Captain Corelli's Mandolin" and "Charlotte Gray." He received an Academy Award for his score for "Shakespeare in Love." "Crescendo" appears before each concert of the season to illuminate works to be performed.

## 'Princess Ka'iulani Suite'

Presented by Honolulu Symphony


» **Place:** Blaisdell Concert Hall

» **Time:** 8 p.m. Friday and 4 p.m. Saturday

» **Tickets:** \$19, \$26, \$40, \$52, \$70 (including service fees); 20 percent discount for military and seniors; \$10 for students and children; available at Ticketmaster (800-745-3000), Macy's, [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com) and [www.honolulusymphony.com](http://www.honolulusymphony.com). Call 792-2000 (weekdays) or 524-0815, ext. 245 (evenings).

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