

“Mele Kahea” and “Ha’ina”

Modern hula dancers are almost always accompanied by ukuleles. The earlier mentioned term, “vamp” or “turnaround” refers to the short musical break between verses that allows the hula dancer to change direction. In many hula performances, the lead singer or the lead dancer will call out the first word of the verse being danced to as a reminder to the troupe (*halau*) of the next series of movements. This call out is the “*mele kahea*” or just “*kahea*”. Most songs (*mele*) composed for hula repeat each verse twice, so the call outs are insurance that everyone stays together.

To get a feel for this, in this clip, you can hear the lead singer calling out the *kaheas* to this hula, “E Huli Makou”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SU1KHGKNegQ>

You may have noticed in the clip, “*ha’ina*” is called out. This refers to the traditional line that signifies the last verse. A further definition is:

Ha’ina (ha-ee-na): A saying, declaration or statement to indicate a song's final two verses, which restate the song's subject or purpose. “*Ha’ina ’ia mai ana ka puana*” which translates loosely as “Tell the story in the refrain.” There are at least a half-dozen translations of *ha’ina* lines, variously translated as “tell the refrain,” “the tale is told,” “this is the end of my song.”

You may even hear some leaders follow the second “*ha’ina*” verse with “*Ha’ina ho’u*” which means “*ha’ina* again”.

This clip of Amy Hanaiali’i Gilliom performing “Haleiwa Hula” demonstrates this: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUIWzurgptk>