

HSGA QUARTERLY

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by the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association

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"Prez" Paul Kim at the Lei Day show in the park during the Honolulu 2011 Convention.

Honolulu 2013 Convention Update

From Kamaka Tom

We're all set for the Honolulu 2013 Convention! The dates are Monday, April 29 and Tuesday, April 30 for day-time activities in the Peacock Room on the third floor of the Queen Kapi'olani Hotel. We also have planned activities on Wednesday, May 1 and Thursday, May 2 within walking distance of the hotel. If you've never been to Hawai'i, the convention is a great launching point to catch Hawaiian steel guitar playing around Waikiki and see the sights around O'ahu.

Registering for the convention is a two-step process: registering with the hotel and registering with HSGA for the convention. Please complete and

mail out the convention form included with your newsletter along with proper payment as soon as possible. *Important: Members are responsible for booking their own rooms—the Queen Kapi'olani Hotel does not handle convention registration.* As always, check the HSGA website at www.hsga.org for late-breaking developments.

Hotel Reservations

To make a reservation, you must contact the hotel directly or, even better, you can book rooms via the Internet using a direct link to the hotel provided at the bottom of our home page. To make a reservation by phone, call the hotel toll-free at 866-970-4164. When

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HSGA QUARTERLY

Volume 28, Issue 109



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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association is a tax-exempt, nonprofit educational corporation in the State of Hawai'i under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Our primary purpose is to develop a global network of players and lovers of traditional Hawaiian music and to encourage the study, teaching, and performance of the Hawaiian steel guitar. Our primary financial goal is to provide scholarship assistance through donations to steel guitar students who demonstrate the ability and intent to become accomplished performers.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to all steel guitar players and non-players around the world who support the perpetuation of the Hawaiian steel guitar. Annual dues are US\$30. The membership year begins July 1. Members receive the *HSGA Quarterly* and other group benefits. The *Quarterly* is mailed four times a year First Class to addresses in the United States and by Air Mail to foreign addresses. Members can obtain an Associate Membership for a spouse or family member at a cost of \$10, added to the annual dues; an Associate Member is entitled to discounts at certain HSGA functions and can vote in HSGA Board elections.

SUBMIT LETTERS & EDITORIALS TO:

HSGA Quarterly, 2434 Waioma'o Rd, Honolulu, HI 96816-3424 USA. Our e-mail address is hsga@hsga.org. Articles and photos should also be e-mailed directly to the newsletter editor at johnely@hawaiiansteel.com.

HONOLULU 2013 *Cont. from Page 1*

reserving, don't forget to give the reservations agent our group discount code 'HSGA2013'. The Queen Kapi'olani Hotel is located two blocks from Kuhio Beach on the Diamond Head end of the Waikiki hotel district. The address of the hotel is: Queen Kapi'olani Hotel, 150 Kapahulu Avenue, Honolulu, HI 96815.

Convention Registration

In addition to making your hotel reservation, you need to register for the convention. Use the form provided in the newsletter insert and mail it to the Honolulu address given on the form, *or* you can use the convenient online form on our website. The convention fee is \$120 per person, which includes a lunch buffet on Monday and Tuesday in the Peacock Room. Walk-in guests may order luncheon on those days for \$40 but only if seats are available. Please make checks payable in U.S. dollars to 'The Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association'. You can also pay your registration fee via PayPal on our website. If you decide to attend at the last minute or you are coming from over-

seas and don't want to deal with currency exchange until you arrive, you will be able to pay your convention fee on the first day of the convention.

Convention Schedule

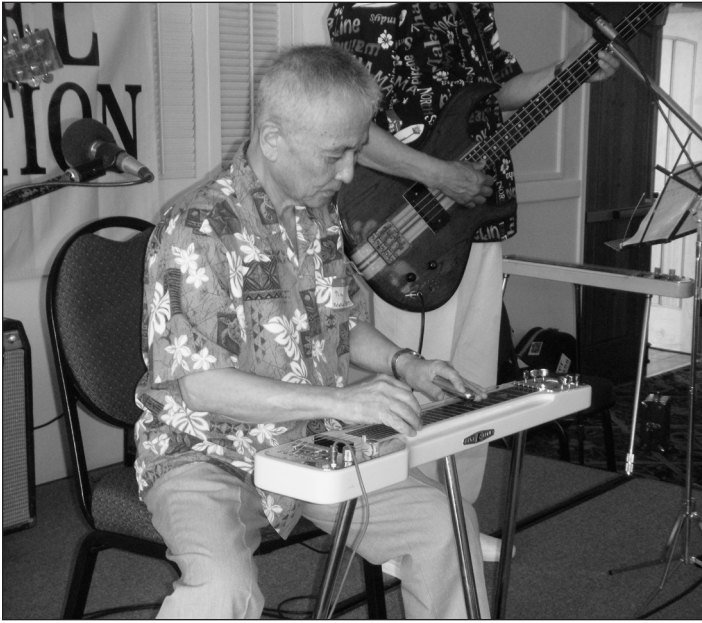
The convention starts on Monday, April 29, in the Peacock Room, third floor. Registration starts at 8:30 AM. We will have live member stage performances from 9 AM to 3 PM with a buffet luncheon provided for registered guests. Ditto for Tuesday, April 30—live Hawaiian steel from 9 AM to 3 PM with buffet luncheon.

On May 1, HSGA will host member performances from 10 AM to 3 PM as part of the Annual Lei Festival in Kapi'olani Park. The festival features daylong entertainment on the main stage with appearances by the Royal Hawaiian Band and others. HSGA will perform on a separate stage next to the display area for the Lei-Making Contest winners. Steel soloists need to sign up to perform (see below).

On Thursday, May 2, HSGA will host a Hawaiian steel guitar mini-concert at the Waikiki-Kapahulu Public Library from 1-3 PM. Open to the public, admission free.

At Honolulu 2011, Terry Saito (left) with steeler Bobby Ingano and "Lion" Kobayashi.





Katsutoshi Ogata playing a nice looking steel at Honolulu 2011.

Performer Time Slots

If you're planning on performing on Monday and Tuesday in the Peacock Room, complete the bottom part of the convention form and mail it to the address shown on the form. Playing slots are filled on a first come, first served basis. Plan to perform 25 minutes on stage and please bring two sets of chord charts for your backup players.

Please notify me if you are available to perform at our May Day show in the park or at the Waikiki-Kapahulu Public Library mini-concert. You will need to be scheduled in advance. Contact me using the following information:

Convention Coordinator, Kamaka Tom
Email: gktom007@yahoo.com
Tel: 808-392-4583

Other Events Around Convention Time

The Fifth Annual Maui Steel Guitar Festival will be held on April 19-21 at the Ka'anapali Beach Hotel featuring workshops, steel guitar performances and jam sessions. (See Alan Akaka's article on page 4 for details on this event.)

The annual Lei of Stars concert, sponsored by the Hawaiian Music Hall of Fame, is set for May 1 at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel Monarch Room. This year the Hall of Fame is celebrating the induction of Harry Owens, George Kainapau, the Makaha Sons, Ka Leo Hawai'i and Kumu Hula George Naope. Alan Akaka will play steel guitar as part of the Ka Leo Hawai'i group. Doors for the event open at 4 PM. A meal is served at 5 PM and the concert begins at 5:45 PM. Tickets are \$125. For reservations or more information, please call Karen Aiu at 808-226-0600 or Ann Shinsato at 808-392-3649.

Local Steel Guitar Hotspots

As many of you know, it can be tricky tracking down the local weekly steel guitar spots around the island and even trickier tracking down the players! Here's what we know so far: Alan Akaka is playing steel with Auntie Genoa Keawe's granddaughter Pomaika'i Keawe Lyman at the Waikiki Beach Marriott Hotel on Thursdays, 6:30-9:30 PM. Gary Aiko and Auntie Momi are also in the band. Isaac Akuna joins Kuuipo Kumukahi every Friday except the first Friday of the month (that's convention week... bummer!), 6-7:30 PM at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel street-side. The Sunset Serenaders feature Wayne Shishido on steel guitar on Fridays and Saturdays at the Halekulani Hotel's House without a Key, 5:30-8:30 PM. We hear Jeff Au Hoy has been performing with Cyril Pahinui on Wednesday evenings, 6-9 PM, at the Kani Ka Pila Grille at the Outrigger Reef on the Beach (located behind the Halekulani Hotel off Lewers Street).

On the windward side of the island, you can catch steel guitar a couple nights a week at Honey's At Ko'olau in Kaneohe at the Ko'olau Golf Club. On Friday evenings it's Derrick Mau on steel with Albert Ka'ai's band, 6:00-8:30 PM. Paul Kim is there Sundays, 3:30-7:00 PM. Honey's is located at: 45-550 Kionaole Rd, Kaneohe, HI 96744; Tel: 808-247-7088.

On O'ahu's North Shore you can catch the Waimea Valley Kanikapila (jam session) hosted by the Abrigo 'Ohana with Timi Abrigo on steel guitar and any participating steel players who happen to show up. The Kanikapila are held on the third Sunday each month, Noon to 3 PM at the Waimea Valley Pavilion. ■

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Maui 2013 Hawaiian Steel Guitar Festival Update

By Alan Akaka

The Ka'anapali Beach Hotel will be the site of this year's Maui Hawaiian Steel Guitar Festival. The festival—previously promoted as the Henry Allen Steel Guitar Festival—will again be presented by the Maui-based Arts Education for Children Group (AECG) and will feature steel guitar performances, classroom educational enrichment presentations, and musical and cultural workshops. AECG has asked me to assist them with this year's festival, which will be held on April 19-21.

The festival has been developed to promote appreciation and interest in the Hawaiian steel guitar as a uniquely Hawaiian music genre. The festival, free and open to the public, will feature performances by steel guitar masters Greg Sardinha, Bobby Ingano, and myself. Also featured will be Maui's own Geri Valdriz and Ross Ka'a'a. We will also visit school classrooms to give presentations about the Hawaiian steel guitar to help promote interest and participation. Saturday festival workshops at the hotel will feature presentations about the Hawaiian steel guitar including Playing Techniques and Styles, How to Record Music, Jam Session Protocols, and an Introduction to Hawaiian Music Business Basics. Other Hawaiian cultural workshops will also be offered.

We will have *kani ka pila* jam sessions Friday and Saturday nights and everyone is invited to play along with the masters. This is a great opportunity for guest musicians, students, and aspiring young artists to share their talents and learn from the masters. The Saturday evening *Ho'olaule'a*

Familiar faces gather around for the workshop led by Alan Akaka and Greg Sardinha (left) at last year's Maui steel guitar festival.



Greg Sardinha (front) playing steel guitar with Gordon Freitas while Duke Kaleolani Ching "chimes in" on his triple-neck.

will feature entertainment by the masters, guest artists and hula dancers. Saturday workshop participants will be invited to participate. The masters will also provide entertainment at the hotel's Sunday brunch.

We are also offering uncompensated stage time to any group that includes a Hawaiian steel guitar. Performance time slots will be concurrent with other festival activities, and performers will be expected to cover their own transportation expenses.

For those of you planning to attend the Honolulu HSGA convention at the end of the month, the Maui festival provides an opportunity to add to your Hawaiian steel guitar experience. Please consider joining us in Maui!

Please visit our festival website at www.mauisteelguitar-festival.com to get more information about the festival, to sign up for stage time, or to find out how you can be a supporter of the festival. ■

Treasurer's Report

(as of December 31, 2012)

General Fund.....	\$14,450.31
Scholarship Fund	\$14,193.53
Joliet Checking	\$ 452.82
Japan Account	\$3,699.98

Grand Total **\$32,796.64**

COCO WIRE

We heard from **Lanet Abrigo** that Waimea Valley is adding a *lū'au* to the regular Waimea Valley kanikapila! The kanikapila (traditional Hawaiian music jam sessions) are now held on the third Sunday of every month from Noon to 3 PM. The event is free and is hosted by the award-winning group **Abrigo 'Ohana**, which features **Timi Abrigo** on steel guitar playing in the tradition of the Rogers family.

The latest inductee into the Steel Guitar Hall of Fame is steeler **Kayton Roberts** who established his reputation over a 30-year period as a member of Hank Snow's Rainbow Ranch Boys along with countless appearances on the Grand Ole Opry. He is also known for his unorthodox technique of bending strings behind the bar with some of his left-hand fingers to simulate the sound of pedal steel. The induction ceremony was held on September 1, 2012 at Scotty's convention at the Millennium Hotel in St. Louis.

Big congratulations to **Alan Akaka** who will be inducted into the Hawaiian Music Hall of Fame as a member of the group *Ka Leo Hawai'i!* One of Alan's students, Gale Warshawsky, lays it out for us: "In 1977 a recording was released by an assortment of poets, vocalists, and instrumentalists who had a loving desire to preserve and promote *ka 'ōlelo Hawai'i* (the Hawaiian language). They called themselves *Ka Leo Hawai'i*, and they were part of an all-Hawaiian language radio program aired on KCCN 1420-AM in the 1970s. The program—hosted by U.H. language professors Larry Kimura and Pila Wilson—featured guest speakers along with a support group of faculty, students, and friends to embellish the program with musical renderings throughout the broadcast. This "in-house band" would often begin the show with a mele (song) honoring the featured guest's place of origin in the Islands. The album *Ka Leo Hawai'i* is a collection of many such mele used during the broadcasts. Members of *Ka Leo Hawai'i* included: Mary Kawena Pukui, Malia Craver, Larry Kimura, Lolena Nicholas, Haunani Apoliona, Daniel Akaka Jr., Lance Koyama, Haunani Bernardino, Ainsley Halemanu, Kalena Silva, Keoki Maguire, Aaron Mahi, George Kuo and Alan Akaka. ■

Buy & Sell

Instruments Wanted

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Note: Buy & Sell ads are free for paid-up members. Send your ad to the editor at johnely@hawaiiansteel.com.



Hall of Famer Kayton Roberts at Scotty's convention in St. Louis.

Member Alert: HSGA Moving to an "E-Newsletter"

In these tough economic times, the HSGA Board is recommending a cost saving measure for our club that should help us conserve funds in our year-to-year operations. One of our big costs is the printing and delivery of our quarterly newsletter.

Starting with the upcoming membership year, we will move to an online newsletter for members who have Internet access. Details on the delivery method have to be worked out, but it would likely involve printing or downloading a PDF file via the HSGA website. *Important: Members who do not have Internet access would be unaffected—they will continue to receive a printed version in the mail.*

A few notes regarding this change. The online version of the newsletter will be very high quality and as such will allow members to print out a high quality copy of the newsletter. An added benefit is that the online version will be in full color.

Dues will remain the same—\$30 per year regardless of whether a member receives the mailed out version or the online version.

The first issue affected is the Summer 2013 issue. The Spring 2013 issue will be mailed out to everyone as we have done in the past. We'll include details on how to access the online version in the next newsletter. Again, members without Internet will continue to receive the hard copy as before. We understand that there are pluses and minuses to the plan, but we're confident that the decision will help us better weather the increase in costs that we are seeing. ■

Jerry Byrd's RCA Recordings With Ernie Lee, Part II

By Anthony Lis

In this series we are covering the seventeen RCA Victor sides on which Jerry Byrd helped back country music singer Ernie Cornelison (aka Ernie Lee), recorded between 1947 and 1950 in Chicago and Atlanta. As Hawaiian music scholar John Marsden has observed, these practically unknown recordings are of interest in that they occurred on the cusp of Byrd's Mercury recordings of 1949-1954, which established him as a "name" instrumentalist.

Byrd and Lee first recorded together in October 1940 as the Happy Valley Boys, at a Victor field recording session in Atlanta, while the two were working the Kentucky-based "Renfro Valley Barn Dance" program on the NBC/CBS radio network. Lee appears to have worked steadily on the program until October 1944, while Byrd apparently returned to his hometown of Lima, Ohio sometime in 1941 to recuperate from pneumonia. (While back home, Byrd played several local venues and also married.) In the latter half of 1943, a recuperated Byrd toured the Midwest and Southeast with a tent theater incarnation of the Renfro Valley program.

In late August 1944, Byrd and Lee moved to Detroit, where they eventually played three programs on WJR radio with three other musicians. When Byrd and Lee's WJR gig ended, Lee moved on to Cincinnati station WLW while Byrd joined the backup band of honky-tonk star Ernest Tubb. By the time of Byrd's first RCA recordings with Lee in December 1947, Byrd had waxed twenty-eight sides with Tubb, eleven with his new employer, Red Foley, whom Byrd knew from his Renfro Valley days, and eight with twenty-four-year-old rising star Hank Williams, Sr.

In the wake of a summer 1947 signing with RCA, Ernie Lee recorded ten sides in Chicago on August 12 with his WLW backup quintet, dubbed "the Midwesterners" by RCA. By early October, RCA had issued two couplings from the session; unfortunately, neither release cracked the country Top 40. The polished trumpet- and vibraphone-infused recordings were likely too "pop-sounding" for country music consumers accustomed to the somewhat edgier sounds of Ernest Tubb, Merle Travis, Tex Williams, and Bob Wills, who all enjoyed chart success in 1947. Lee—reflecting on the recordings' lack of success in a 1976 interview with Douglas B. Green—opined that "a trumpet, a vibraharp, [and] an accordion . . . was a mixture like they had never heard on [a country] record before. . . . [The records] would not sell. [They] . . . just didn't have the right kind of a sound for [a country] . . . record."



Ernest Eli Cornelison, aka Ernie Lee, around the time of his 1947-1950 RCA Victor recordings with Jerry Byrd.

For his second RCA session in Chicago on December 4, 1947, Lee—perhaps in an effort to effect a more country sound—asked Byrd to join his backup band (again dubbed "the Midwesterners"). Byrd travelled to Chicago from Nashville, where he and his wife Thelma had recently settled.

Rounding out the Midwesterners this time were three accomplished Chicago radio musicians, accordionist August ("Augie") Klein, violinist Dave Bohme, and bassist James Palacek, plus Cincinnati Roy Howard Lanham on guitar.

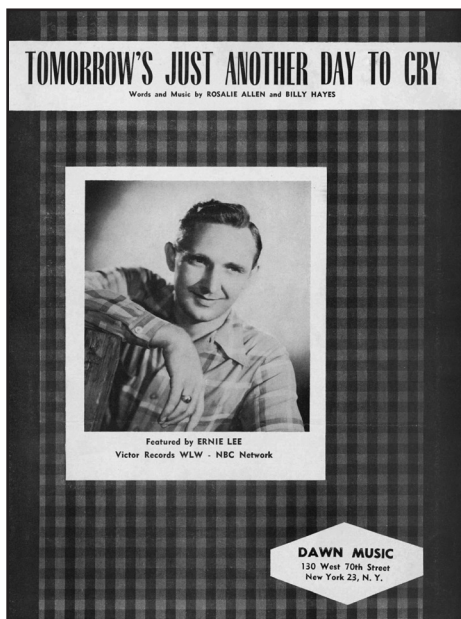
Klein's background included a bit of experience making Hawaiian-themed recordings. In 1940, he accompanied Chicago's Prairie Ramblers on two *hapa haole* songs on guitar, and in the late 1940s, he accompanied Roy Rodgers on two *hapa haole* tunes (including Sol Bright's "Hawaiian Cowboy") on accordion. Polish-born Bohme immigrated to the Windy City in 1928; he and Palacek performed as the Dawnbusters on Chicago's WLS radio around the end of World War II. Kentucky-born Lanham—who joined WLW as a staff musician in 1943—would go on to back steel guitarist Speedy West on twelve recordings in the early 1960s.

According to RCA's session sheet for Ernie Lee's December 4, 1947 recordings, Lee, Byrd, and the Midwesterners recorded eight sides between 9:30 AM and 4:30 PM, with an hour break for lunch. To infer from the notation "Chicago C" on the session sheet, the recordings were apparently made in NBC's Studio C in the mammoth Merchandise Mart building on Chicago's Near North Side, which had been recently remodeled and updated.

Lee's day of recording began with "Easy to Please," a dated tongue-in-cheek bit concerning a girlfriend's unattractive appearance (politically incorrect by any measure today) assembled by Red Foley and Betty Wade. Foley had recorded the song in Nashville back on August 12 with Byrd on steel guitar. Byrd's role on Foley's recording (pitched in G major) had been minimal—he merely played fills, which were largely overshadowed by Foley's rather enthusiastic electric guitarist Zeke Turner. Byrd assumed a larger role on Lee's cover (recorded down a whole-step), playing striking, high register fills on his Rickenbacher Electro over the chorus (made all the more impactful by the fact that Byrd had laid out for the opening forty bars). Byrd also supplies an upper register, eight-bar solo before the third verse and chorus.

Tomorrow's Just Another Day to Cry—an abandoned lover's lament composed by Rosalie Allen and Billy Hayes—was recorded next. Pennsylvania-born Allen was a yodeling singer

Sheet music to "Tomorrow's Just Another Day to Cry" brought out by New York City's Dawn Music sometime in 1948. (From the collections of the Center for Popular Music, Middle Tennessee State University)

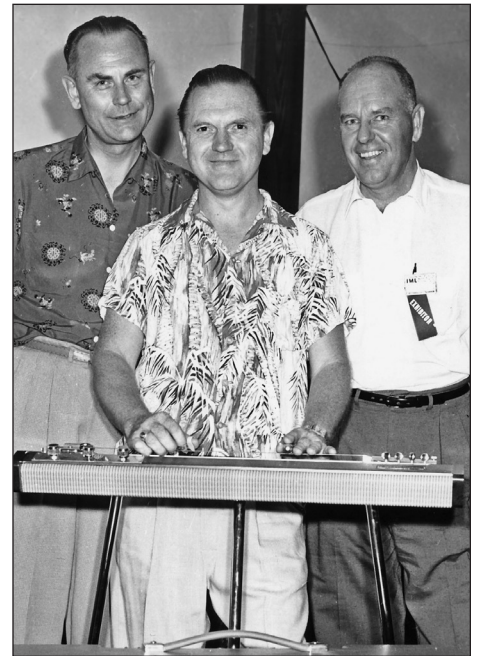


and disc jockey, while New York City-born Hayes is best remembered as the co-composer of "Blue Christmas." Byrd plays no solos on the side, only high register fills (particularly at the beginning of the verse and the end of the chorus). In what was soon to become a Byrd trademark, Byrd improvises a sustained, high-register counter-melody against Lee's vocal line the last time through the tune.

"Tomorrow's Just Another Day to Cry," coupled with "Easy to Please" as the "A" side, was released by RCA Victor in early 1948. *Billboard* in its clipped, slangy style described "Tomorrow's Just Another Day" in a January 31 record review as "romantic Lee warbling with sweet fiddle undertones and subdued guitar work," while characterizing "Easy to Please" as a "Red Foley-penned ditty well suited for full Lee piping [i.e., singing]," opining that the Midwesterners' "instrumental aid" was "capable."

Sometime in 1948, New York City's Dawn Music issued a sheet music version of "Tomorrow's Just Another Day" with Lee on the cover. On March 13 of that year, Lee made his "Grand Ole Opry" debut singing an up-tempo rendition of the tune along with "Hominy Grits," a blues influenced novelty song from his August 12 recording session. Jerry Byrd—then a member of Opry emcee Red Foley's backup band—played four-bar introductions to both songs (as well as more prominent high-register fills during the balance of both numbers). Lee also sang "Tomorrow's Just Another Day" during his second Opry appearance, in August 1948.

The last song Lee, Byrd, and the Midwesterners recorded before breaking for lunch was "The Last Time I Saw Mary," written by Red Foley's sister-in-law, Jenny Lou Carson. (Carson is best-known for composing "Let Me Go, Lover!," a Top 10 hit on both the country and pop charts in the mid-1950s.)



Jerry Byrd doing promo for Rickenbacher at the 1957 Int'l Music League convention.

Regarding "The Last Time I Saw Mary"—which concerns a passed-away lover—Carson's biographers Arnold Rogers and Jerry Langley remark that "'Mary' had a sweet and tender melody, but it was basically an old fashioned tearjerker. Thanks to Ernie's fine performance, however, the song managed to rise above the excessive suds."

Lee's sincere reading of Carson's lyrics helps avoid potential melodrama. Byrd plays a four-bar introduction, as well as the first half of a mid-song break divided between his steel guitar and Dave Bohme's violin. RCA released "The Last Time I Saw Mary" in early 1949 with "Arkansas," a rollicking tune from Lee's August 12 session as the "B" side. *Billboard* gave the coupling a fairly lukewarm review in their February 26 issue, remarking of "The Last Time I Saw Mary" that "[the] ballad to a deceased sweetheart doesn't have the sincerity here to convince," adding that "Lee's warbling is okay, but short on folk feeling" (a statement with which the author must disagree).

Continued on Page 8

Following lunch, recording resumed with a waxing of Bob Miller's topical song "There's Only One Kind of Red in the Red White and Blue." Country music scholar Bill Malone has tagged Memphis-born Miller as country music's first full-time songwriter. The composer scored a success during World War II when Elton Britt had a Top 20 pop hit with his "There's a Star-Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere," penned in the wake of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

"There's Only One Kind of Red in the Red White and Blue,"—which Miller wrote with his wife and occasional songwriting partner Esther Van Sciver—was an attempt to assemble a similarly topical hit amid American fears of Soviet expansion in post-war Europe. (By the time Lee, Byrd, and the Midwesterners recorded Miller and Van Sciver's song, Winston Churchill had delivered his "Iron Curtain" speech and President Truman had announced the Marshall Plan, to boost the economies of Western European countries and help check the spread of Soviet Communism. The "red" in the song's title is a play on the derogatory Cold War-era term for the Soviet Union, with Van Sciver's lyrics speaking of "never fly[ing] the red of tyranny" and "keep[ing] our red the red of right.") On the recording, Byrd shares a thirty-two-bar mid-song break with Augie Klein's accordion. Elsewhere, Klein furnishes various trumpet fanfare-type riffs on his instrument, in an attempt to conjure up a "martial" atmosphere.

RCA issued "There's Only One Kind of Red" in early spring 1948. In a "This Week's RCA Victor Release[s]" advertisement in the March 13 issue of *Billboard*, the label trumpeted the release by proclaiming "it's one for the money and RCA has waxed it first!" adding that the song "reminds you of 'Star Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere!'" Unfortunately, despite Lee's spirited recording (and *Billboard's* two exclamation points) and a cover made by cowboy film star Rex Allen eleven days later, Miller and Van Sciver's song failed to strike a nerve with the Truman-era public.

In the opinion of the author, the gem of Lee and the Midwesterners' December 4 recording session was their rendition of Clifford E. Sundin and Frances Lewis's "The Girl That Belongs to Somebody Else (Is the Girl That Belonged to Me)," a wonderfully tuneful, melancholy waltz from 1942 given an Island "ambiance" via Byrd's sweet, Hawaiian-sounding fills and slides. Sundin was an Oakland songwriter and businessman whose other compositional collaborations included "White Cross on Okinawa," another country hit inspired by World War II, which went to #1 at the end of 1945 via a recording by Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys.

John Marsden—referencing "The Girl That Belongs" in a November 2012 letter to the author—noted that "Jerry



Chicago's massive Merchandise Mart, where Byrd and Lee made their first recordings together on the RCA label in December 1947. (From Wikimedia Commons)

[Byrd] sound[s] more Hawaiian [here] ... He ... [has] a wider vibrato, and ... [the] song [definitely] does have a marked Hawaiian flavour."

Byrd plays the second half of a sixteen-bar break shared with Dave Bohme, who furnishes a rich, mellow violin solo. Byrd also contributes a fine, high-register countermelody the second time through the tune. Elsewhere, Bohme provides nicely melodic fills. RCA released the side in early autumn 1948, coupled with Lee's song "Love Me Now or Never," from his August 12 session. In a fair world, the recording would've given Ernest Tubb and Red Foley a run for the money on the country charts, but unfortunately the side failed to enter the Top 40. *Billboard*—in a Christmas Day 1948 review—was, of course, negative, opining that "[the] warbler [Lee] displays okay voice on this slow waltz tune, but the studied performance generates little appeal."

Lee and the Midwesterners next waxed "You Never Grow Too Old To Learn," a lively ditty, which Lee composed with Louisiana bassist-songwriter Reggie Ward. The song's protagonist, a rather indifferent sort in his younger days, used to toss his sweethearts' love letters; now, however, enlightened with age, he carefully preserves each one, advising listeners to do the same as a means of preempting a breakup.

Byrd takes an active role on the recording, using it as a vehicle to show off his ability to easily render "chimes" (harmonics). Byrd makes consistent use of chimes in the first verse and chorus and the second verse, before reverting to mostly non-chime fills over the second chorus. The third verse is given over to a sixteen-bar, mid-register solo from Byrd, with violinist Bohme answering him in call-and-response fashion. In the third chorus, Byrd returns to playing harmon-

ics. RCA released the recording in spring 1948, as the “B” side of “That’s What She Wrote,” another side from the August 12 session.

The Midwesterners’ penultimate side was Lee’s own “My Baby Said Maybe,” a 1930s-style tune detailing the tribulations of an impatient suitor. Curiously, RCA never released the recording; it is hard to divine the reason, as the side is a fine one, featuring Byrd in his most active role. Byrd plays not only a four-bar introduction and an eight-bar solo in the instrumental break between the first and second stanzas, but also a high-register, rather “western swing”-ish, sixteen-bar break before the final return of the chorus. (The author was able to hear a “test-pressing” of this side through the gracious assistance of Harry Rice, Sound Archivist at Berea College, who knew of a dub of the pressing made by Ohio record collector Reuben Powell.)

The Midwesterners’ final side was “My Mother’s Smile,” a eulogy for a departed mother assembled by Denver Darling, Vaughn Horton, and Ray Smith in 1945. Darling and Smith performed on various American radio stations, while Pennsylvania-born Horton is best known for having composed the

1951 pop and country chart hit “Mockin’ Bird Hill.”

RCA coupled “My Mother’s Smile” with Lee’s song “Love Me Now Or Never” (yet another August 12 product). The pairing was released in early fall 1948 with the latter recording as the “A” side. Regarding “My Mother’s Smile,” ever-negative *Billboard* sniffed in an October 9 review that there was “nothing special” in what it dismissed as a “specimen of super-sentimentality.”

Super-sentimental though the recording may be, the gently repetitive and gradually ascending melody does grow on one. Byrd effects a “sweet” sound here similar to his work on “The Girl That Belongs to Somebody Else (Is the Girl That Belonged to Me),” playing a four-bar introduction and rather frequent fills. A rather striking sound is effected in the middle of the side before Lee’s recitation, where Bohme and Klein play the melody in parallel motion while Byrd provides an accompaniment of clearly ringing harmonics. On the final time through the tune, Byrd plays a soaring obbligato line in the high register of his steel as he had done on “Tomorrow’s Just Another Day to Cry” and “The Girl That Belongs to Somebody Else.”

Unfortunately, despite the addition of Byrd’s steel guitar, the “A” sides from Lee’s December 1947 recordings, “Easy to Please,” “My Mother’s Smile,” and “The Last Time I Saw Mary,” again failed to crack the country Top 40. Lee did face some rather stiff chart competition between late-January 1948 and February 1949 (the approximate time-frame for the release of his sides), going head-to-head with newcomer Eddy Arnold’s string of five consecutive number one hits, which occupied a whopping sixty weeks on the charts in 1947 and 1948. Lee also faced challenges from such other popular releases such as Jimmy Wakely’s “One Has My Name (The Other Has My Heart)” and Red Foley’s “Never Trust a Woman” and “Tennessee Saturday Night,” the latter two sides ironically featuring Jerry Byrd’s steel guitar! In a sense, Byrd’s developing reputation was helping undermine his good friend Ernie Lee’s chances for chart success.

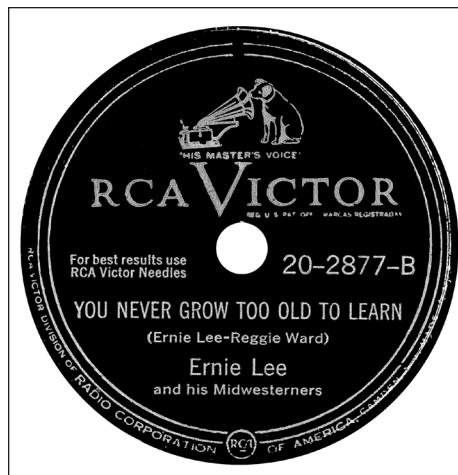
Ernie Lee’s 1976 interview with Douglas B. Green was conducted in Tampa, Florida on February 25 as part of the Country Music Foundation’s Oral History Project (interview OH90-LC).

Continued on Page 20

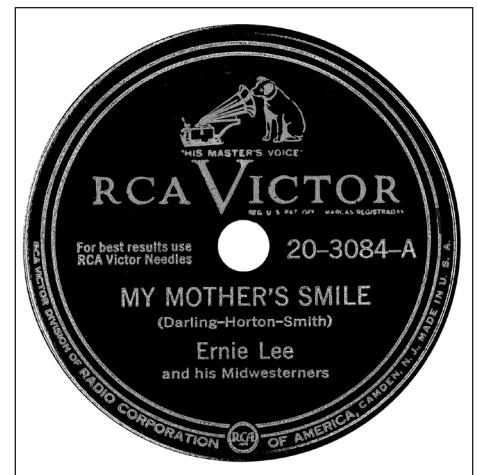
The RCA record label for Lee and Byrd’s recording of Sundlin and Lewis’s 1942 waltz “The Girl That Belongs to Somebody Else (Is the Girl That Belonged to Me).” (From the author’s personal collection)



The record label for Lee and Byrd’s recording of “You Never Grow Too Old to Learn,” which Lee co-wrote with multi-instrumentalist Reggie Ward. (From the author’s personal collection)



The record label for Lee and Byrd’s recording of the Darling-Horton-Smith mother tribute, “My Mother’s Smile,” the final Chicago side. (From the author’s personal collection)



Hawaiian Hula Eyes

(Harbottle – Oness)

Arrangement by Alan Akaka

Moderato (♩ = 85)

Vs

Chords: G, E7, A7

strum strum

E														
C#	T													
A		2	3	4	5	4	5	5	7	10	9	12	11	10
F#	A								7	10		12	11	10
D#	B									10				10
B														10

Steel Gtr. (B11th)

Chords: Am7, D7, G, Bb0, Am7, D7

T						0	0	0	0	0	0			
A	3	2	3	5	5	5	5	4	3	2	3			
B	3	2	3		5	5	5	4	3	2	3			

Chords: G, E7, A7

strum and slide

T														
A	5	4	6	5	8	9	10	9	12	12	11	10		
B	5	4	6	5	8	9	10		12	12	11	10		

Chords: Am7, D7, G, C, F7, G

strums

T														
A	3	2	3	5	5	6	3	6	10			5	6	
B	3	2	3			5	3	6	10					

Br

G7 C A7

T	8		6 7	8			10
A	8	10 10 9	8		7 7 6	7	10 12-12-11
B		10 10 9	8			6 7	10 12-12-11

22

Am7 D7(#5) G E7

T		10	8	9			5
A	10	10	7	9	4	5 5 4 5	5 6 7
B	10	10	6	8	4	5 5 4 5	5 6 7

27

A7 Am7 D7

T	10-10						5
A	10 10	9 9 12-12 9 9	10 9 8 7	5 4	3	2 3	5 5
B		9 9 12-12 9 9	10 9 8 7	5 4	3	2 3	5 5

31

G C F7 G Br G7 Db C

T	3	3	10	10 9	8	8 8 8	10	4	3	8 9 10
A	2	3	10	10 9	8	8 8	10 10 8 8	4	3	8 9 10 10
B		3	10			8	10 8 8 8	4	3	8 9 10 10

Hawaiian Hula Eyes (continued)

36

A7 Am7

T 8 7 8 8 9 9 | 10 10-10-12 12 | 10 10 | 3 4 5

A 7 7 8 8 9 9 | 10 10-10 12-10 | 10-10 10 4 | 3 3 3 3 4 5

B 6 7 8 8 9 9 | 10 | 10-10 4 | 3 3 3

40

D7 G G7 F#7 F7 E7 A7

slide

T 5 5 4 3 | 8 7 6 | 5 4 5 7 8 9 | 10 12

A 5 5 4 3 6 | 5 8 7 6 | 5 4 5 7 8 9 | 10 9 10 11 12 12 12 11

B 4 3 | 5 8 7 6 | 5 4 5 7 8 9 | 10 9 10 11 12 12 11

44

Am7 D7 G F#7 F7

T 10 10 10 | 3 3 2 3 | 5 5 | 8 8 7 6

A 10 10 10 | 3 3 2 3 | 5 5 | 8 8 7 6

B 10 | 3 3 2 3 | 5 | 8 8 7 6

48

E7 A7 Ab7 Tacet G

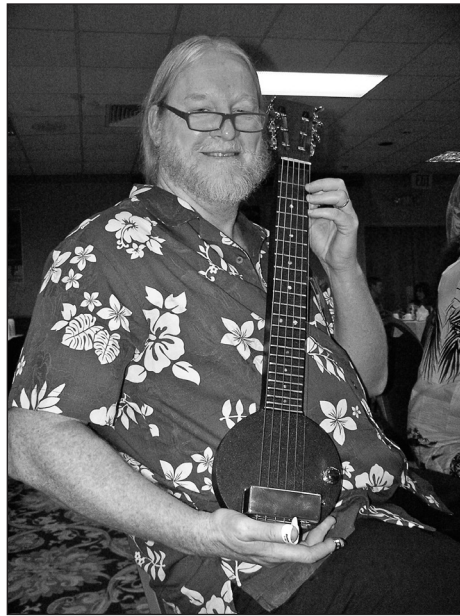
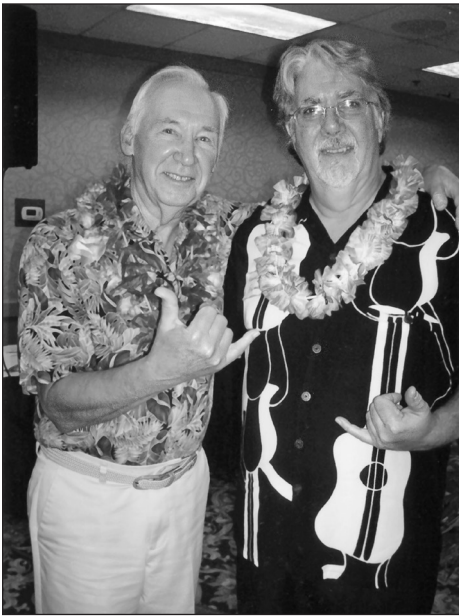
strum and slide rubato

T 5 11 10 | 10 9 | 5 3 3 6 4 | 8 0

A 5 11 10 | 10 9 | 5 3 3 6 6 4 4 | 8 8

B 5 11 10 | 10 9 | 6 4 4 | 8 8

let ring -----



More Joliet 2012 Photos

(Clockwise from upper left) Convention Chairman Don Weber and Chris Ken- nison; builder Rick Aiello showing off one of his creations; Hawai'i's Derrick Mau; at the Saturday Night Lū'au, (back row) Joanne Parker, Mark Prucha, Bev Notestine (sister of the Williams Twins), Alan Akaka, Janis Crum, Joan and Don Woods, (front row, r. to l.) Ted and Doris Woods from Indiana and Ted's sister Olive from California; Board member Ivan Reddington with his wife Dee; and former Board member Dick Lloyd with his wife Donna.



Beryl Harrell, Steel Guitar's "Hawaiian Cowgirl"

By John Ely

Looking back at the history of steel guitar and its great players it's hard to avoid the observation that steel guitar has largely been a man's preoccupation. However, the Hawaiian music craze of the '20s, '30s, and '40s gave rise to a teaching network that reached deep into small-town America, and the result was widespread study of the steel guitar by women. It seemed inevitable that, despite the dictates of traditional societal roles, some women would emerge and establish bona fide steel guitar careers.

I first became aware of Beryl's Harrell's story a couple of years back. Asleep at the Wheel alumnus and prominent steel guitarist Cindy Cashdollar had mentioned to me her efforts to gain recognition for West Coast steel guitarist Marian Hall, who established her reputation through TV appearances with Tex Ritter, Merle Travis, and others in the 1950s. But Beryl Harrell, a genuine talent and breathtaking beauty, had preceded Marian in rising up through the ranks of the West Coast music scene. Her story is both remarkable and heart-breaking. Her rise was meteoric and over the course of her career, she played the best clubs in Southern California, made numerous television appearances, and received offers to tour with Merle Travis and perform as part of Harry Owens's Royal Hawaiians at Honolulu's Royal Hawaiian Hotel. Slowly the details of her life and career are coming to light thanks to Deke Dickerson's story "The Trailblazer" in the Fall 2011 *Fretboard Journal*, Richard Bell's article "The Story of Guitar Stylist, Beryl Harrell" and Dave Sichak's

From the 1938 Rickenbacher catalog, endorsers The Sweethearts of the Air, with Maxine (uke), Beryl Harrell, and guitarist Boots holding her Rickenbacher round neck, the first known photo of anyone holding a solid body electric guitar in the standard way.



Hawaiian steel guitar greats Dick McIntire (left) and Sol Ho'opi'i in a promo shot for Dickerson Instruments, autographed for Beryl Harrell in 1938 around the time when she was a student of Sol's.

story on the Hillbilly-Music.com website. (A simple Internet search on 'Beryl Harrell' will pull up almost all of the Internet stories about her as well as links to existing recordings she made.) Materials for the above stories (and this one) come primarily from Beryl's surviving son Don Triolo. Reading through the available materials and conversing with Don at some length, I came to the conclusion that her career, impressive though it was, was in part an exercise in what could have been, what should have been.

Beryl Deane Harrell was born on September 23, 1918 in Vancouver, Washington, but the family soon relocated to the Los Angeles area. Her mother Leona proved to be something of a "stage mother" and with the Hawaiian music craze in full force it's not surprising that young Beryl was pushed into playing the steel guitar.

Deke Dickerson writes the following from his article in *Fretboard Journal*: "Her teacher ... was not your average steel guitarist. Sol Ho'opi'i is generally acknowledged to be one of the greatest ... steel guitarists in history. A native Hawaiian, Ho'opi'i stowed away to the mainland in 1915. (As legend has it, when he and his two teenage friends were discovered aboard the ocean liner Matsonia, Ho'opi'i's group performed their Hawaiian music and so enthralled the passengers that a collection was taken up to pay for the stowaways' fares to San Francisco.)

"By the early 1930s, after relocating to Los Angeles, Ho'opi'i had established himself as one of the top entertainers in the country, and recorded groundbreaking, landmark steel guitar discs for Decca and Brunswick Records. He was present at the beginning of the instrument's electrification, playing one of the first electric ... steels made by George Beau-

champ and John Dopyera at a fundraising party for the National company (soon to be splintered off into National, Dobro, and Ro-Pat-In/Electro/Rickenbacker) hosted by millionaire Ted Kleinmeyer.

“Ho‘opi‘i also taught lessons at Nainoa’s Music Center on South Broadway in Los Angeles. For the princely sum of 25 cents per lesson, young Harrell learned how to play steel guitar from one of the masters of the instrument.”

Harrell quickly advanced on the instrument and at age 19, pushed by her mother, she joined an all-girl Hawaiian music trio, the Sweethearts of the Air. The group was pictured as endorsers in a 1936 Rickenbacher catalog probably through the influence of Sol, who also endorsed the Rickenbacher line. Deke Dickerson writes, “What makes the 1936 photo of the Sweethearts of the Air important is that the rhythm guitarist of the group, ‘Boots’, is shown playing the Spanish (round neck) version of the Rickenbacher Bakelite electric guitar. This is the first known photo of anyone playing a solid body electric guitar held in the Spanish (standard) way.” The group was short lived as Harrell’s band mates became involved in a love triangle with another woman resulting in the murder of Boots by the group’s ‘ukulele player Maxine—an inauspicious beginning to say the least for a young musician barely out of her family home.

Beryl Harrell went on to work with another all-female trio known as the Hula Bluettes featuring Joyce Kalehua on ‘ukulele and guitarist Ula Jewel Nainoa, daughter of the man who ran Nainoa Music Center. Following a change in the lineup of the trio, tours up and down the West Coast and appearances at the Keyhole Club on Catalina Island, the group disbanded, and Beryl joined another all-female group, Eva Harpster and her Four Co-eds Orchestra. The group did

A publicity shot taken at the George Lam studios of the original Hula Bluettes with uke player Ula Jewel Nainoa (left), Beryl Harrell with her Bakelite Rick, and guitarist Joyce Kalehua.



A later incarnation of the Hula Bluettes with guitarist Sunny Vogel (left), Beryl Harrell, and ‘ukulele player Irene Lunning.

a record-breaking twenty-six-week run at the Glendale Hotel’s Silver Room.

It’s worth mentioning that, though Harrell enjoyed some success with these all-female groups, there were serious barriers to their further advancement in the business. They would typically be billed simply as an all-female group; rarely would they be mentioned by name or even by their group name. Beryl Harrell would need further exposure to get a break.

During Harrell’s tenure with the Four Co-eds, she met fighter plane mechanic Carl Triolo and they were married in 1943. A son Don was born the following year and within three months mother and son were abandoned, with the marriage officially ending three years later. One can only imagine the additional burden this placed squarely on Harrell’s already overburdened shoulders.

Around this time and especially after the war, country music and western swing began to dominate in California as it did in Texas and most points in between. Scores of western clubs popped up around Los Angeles including the legendary Palomino Club in North Hollywood and Lawndale’s Red Barn at Hawthorne and Redondo Beach Boulevard. In May 1948 Beryl took a job at the Red Barn fronting the Saddle Dusters seven nights a week. They also did frequent spots on radio station KXLA. Harrell, who came through the ranks playing in the Hawaiian style, would have no problem adjusting to the new sound, although she never lost impor-

Continued on Page 16

tant elements of her Hawaiian sound. Don Triolo recalls that around this time Sol Ho‘opi‘i would sometimes drop in to catch his former student playing at the Four Aces club, a popular Los Angeles hotspot for western music.

On March 11, 1950, she did her first recording with the Dusters on the London label, a 78 rpm coupling of “I Can’t Find the Keyhole” featuring Dusty Ellison on the vocal and the instrumental “Goofus.” On “Keyhole” Harrell plays tasty unobtrusive backup fills behind Dusty’s vocal and a classic western swing chord solo in the style of Noel Boggs and others, but again, her playing retains a distinctly Hawaiian flavor. “Goofus” is a typical swing instrumental western bands of the day used to feature their soloists. Harrell plays perfect counterpoint to the accordion theme and throws in a fine chord solo, one you could just as easily hear on a Spade Cooley or a Billy Jack Wills recording.

At the end of the Saddle Dusters contract at the Red Barn, Harrell stayed on playing stints with various groups including Carl Cody and his Southerners. In 1949 she married the band’s drummer Roy Ball, a marriage that would last until 1961.

Harrell seemed to have the knack for working with musicians who would be historically important in the evolution of the music of the period, which undoubtedly speaks to her standing in a vibrant, competitive West Coast music scene. Some such associations include her work with Porky Freeman, Eddie Cletro and others. Porky Freeman’s guitar sound on

A 1945 promo shot of Eva Harpster and Her Four Co-eds with a winning smile from 27-year-old steel guitarist Beryl Harrell (left).



Another shot of the later Hula Bluettes with Sunny Vogel (left), Beryl Harrell, ever with her Bakelite Rick, and Irene Lunning.

recordings like “Guitar Boogie” is considered by many to be an important bridge connecting country guitar to the rock ‘n’ roll sound that was just around the corner. Eddie Cletro, one of the first endorsers of the Fender guitar line, played a very early Stratocaster prototype that Leo Fender gave to him. Eddie Cletro’s sponsor, Bert Phillips, is the one credited for coming up with the term ‘western swing’, a term he used to describe the sound of Spade Cooley’s big band. [For details on these interesting historical developments, Deke Dickerson’s *Fretboard Journal* piece is a “must read.”]

Beryl Harrell made several appearances on the dominant Los Angeles-based country music television shows, *Cliffie Stone’s Hometown Jamboree* and the *Town Hall Party* show. On the former show, Cliffie Stone dubbed Beryl “the Hawaiian Cowgirl,” further evidence that she retained elements of her original Hawaiian sound. *Town Hall Party* was the show that also featured the great female steel guitarist Marian Hall. In fact, Marian got the job as the result of Harrell’s departure from the show. It’s worth mentioning that Beryl’s tenure on the show was during the time just before TV came of age; she got only a fraction of the exposure Marian would shortly profit from. That said, Harrell’s presence on the show got her lots of jobs playing roadhouses and barn dances throughout Southern California, including tours with Joe and Rose Maphis, the Collins Kids, Molly Bee, Fiddling Kate, Johnny Bond and Les Anderson. Don Triolo recalls a show, possibly at Sierra Creek Park, where Les and his mom did a “killer” version of “Steel Guitar Rag” that brought the house down.

During this period, Harrell played on many demo recording sessions. Some of these acetate 78s still exist, notably a version of “Caravan” recorded at Les Paul’s famous garage studio in Hollywood where he did his groundbreaking work in multi-track recording and produced his early pop hits

with Mary Ford. Writes Deke Dickerson, “It is a guitar geek’s dream to look at Harrell’s acetate of ‘Caravan’ and realize that the disc was cut on the recording lathe that Les Paul so famously created using a Cadillac’s flywheel.” Regarding the playing on the cut, Dickerson continues, “Harrell’s playing is confident and professional. The Hawaiian influence continues with her distinct vibrato technique and phrasing.”

Other recordings Harrell made include a session with Al Vaughn on “A Penny For Your Thoughts” and “Don’t Look Down On Me For Loving You.” On the former tune, Harrell plays just what is required and no more, on both backup and on the solo. Her way of playing tremolo style (rapidly alternating two notes on two different strings) on electric steel is very, very good—a technique originally used to keep the sound from fading out on acoustic instruments. Harrell also played on a 1952 recording made in Hollywood of “Kiss of Fire,” which featured Bonnie Lee (Sloan) and Jack Carter’s Black Mountain Band. Bonnie Lee would later record a few sides with Tex Williams. Harrell’s playing on the track is perfect, chording softly and weaving short single-note lines around Bonnie’s vocal in call-response fashion without intruding.

Don Triolo sent me samples of surviving studio demos that help further document his mother’s playing style. The quality of the recordings has obviously degraded over time but Harrell’s playing comes through very clearly. On “Panhandle Rag” and “Draggin’ the Steel” (a reworking of “Fourth Street Rag”) Harrell shows real polish on fast single-note lines. On the latter tune, she does a jazzy chord solo at the end reminiscent of Sol Ho’opi’i’s chord work on the original C# minor tuning. Her beautiful Hawaiian touch comes through on the classic ballads “Sing Me a Song of the Islands” and “Song of the Islands.” Hopefully, more of her recordings will surface now that her story is finally being told.

Another shot of the ill-fated Sweethearts of the Air, Harrell’s first group circa 1936: Maxine (left), Beryl Harrell, and Boots.



The Honey-B’s circa 1960 at the El Cortez Hotel in Las Vegas, featuring Beryl Harrell on the Fender “Quad” she bought from Eddie Bush, Clair “Tex” Smith (left) and Betty Jay Holland.

During this period, Harrell continued to endorse Rickenbacker steel guitars and by 1950 had moved to a double-neck Rick, the one with a metal body and metal necks. Around this time, she road tested the Paul Bigsby volume-tone pedal, the one that produced that famous “doo-wah” sound later used by Speedy West and others.

Beryl played with Merle Travis several times in early ‘50s, and he tried repeatedly to get her to join his band. She accepted but only on condition that her husband Roy Ball would come along as the drummer. Beryl and Roy were a “package deal” most likely at the insistence of Roy, and this arrangement would have consequences for Harrell’s career. For Travis, known for “fraternizing” with his female band members, it was a “no go.”

At some point around 1953 Beryl and her husband were offered a lucrative one-year engagement in Anchorage, Alaska for a combined \$700 a week, big money at the time. They made the difficult decision pull up stakes in California, but their son Don had to stay with Harrell’s parents at their 94th and Vermont home in Los Angeles. Don recalls that it was not the happiest of years for him or his mother.

With the move to Alaska, Beryl Harrell may have begun to lose her way in the music business and perhaps even in her personal life. Around this time, possibly on the recommendation of Hilo Hattie, Beryl received an offer to play with Harry Owens and His Royal Hawaiians at the “Pink Palace” in Honolulu. But that offer did not include her husband, Roy. Another missed opportunity. Don Triolo thinks the offer may have come as a result of legendary Hawaiian steeler Eddie Bush’s departure from the band.

In June 1954 with the Alaska contract behind her, Harrell made the move to America’s new entertainment capital, Las Vegas, to work with Polly Possum and husband Sunny Joe

Continued on Page 20

The Dallas “Non-Pedal Sessions” Live On!

By Jeff Strouse

For the past few years, steel guitar without pedals has had a growing presence at the Texas Steel Guitar Association’s annual convention in Dallas. The first person to spark the idea of a non-pedal room at the Dallas show was HSGA member Wade Pence. Wade was instrumental in running it the first year, and in subsequent years, Chuck Lettes and George Piburn took the reigns. In 2008, Rick Alexander took over the event, and hosted it in the sports bar of the hotel, calling it the Non-Pedal Sessions. It was a big success and with the audience growing, Rick had to expand to a bigger room for the 2009 show. Finally, the non-pedal steel was gaining ground at one of the biggest international steel guitar conventions. But with Rick’s untimely passing two months after the 2009 show, its future was in jeopardy.

I contacted my friend and fellow HSGA member Howard Reinlieb, and we both agreed that the show was important for the steel guitar world. After all, most mainland conventions, other than those held by HSGA and AISGC, are all-pedal conventions. Howard and I decided we would do our best to keep the show going as long as we could, and now we are into our fourth year.

Because TSGA does not fund the show, we are supported entirely by donations. Rick did not want to charge admission and neither do we. We want people to come and enjoy the music. We also have a pizza party for the players and those in the audience. This formula of music, food, fun, and fellowship has kept the atmosphere enjoyable for all. In the evenings, after the show, folks are welcome to have an informal jam session in the room until everyone is too tired to pick anymore.

Members L.T. Zinn (left) and Scotty at Scotty’s 2012 convention.



Cindy Cashdollar (left) and Billy Robinson backing Red Kirby at the 2011 Texas Steel Guitar Association non-pedal session.

In 2012, our list of performers included several HSGA members: Margie Mays, Wade Pence, Ivan Reddington, Dewitt “Scotty” Scott, Dave Kolars, Sharon Denney, and Gene McGowan. Of special note, Kevin Brown joined us all the way from England. Kevin plays acoustic steel in the sweet Hawaiian style. Many of the videos of the show can be seen on YouTube by searching on ‘Rick Alexander Non-Pedal sessions’.

All kinds of music are featured at the non-pedal sessions: Hawaiian, jazz, western swing, country, oldies, bluegrass, folk and cajun. It’s nice to see the different styles of music played without pedals, which shows how versatile our instrument really is. Many pedal players at the convention have taken an interest in lap steel and are joining our celebration. For details on the convention each year, check the website at www.texassteelguitar.org. The convention hotel fills up fast, but there is an official overflow hotel and other hotels within walking distance.

This year’s two-day event was held on Friday and Saturday, March 8-9, which was around press time for this issue, so details on the sessions will have to wait. The following artists were scheduled: Billy Robinson, Doug Jernigan, Carco Clave, Bobby Black, Herb Steiner, ‘Reece Anderson, Rose Sinclair, Jim Evans, Dewitt “Scotty” Scott, Chuck Lettes, George Piburn, Mark Roeder & Kristy Larson, Albert Talley, Dan Tyack, Ivan Reddington, Bob Blair, Murnel Babineaux & The Cajun Boys, Carroll Benoit & Friends with Eddie Ortego on dobro, Austin Stewart, Jim Newberry and others. ■

Mahalo, Members!

Keep those letters and photos coming! If possible, send original photographs or high-rez digital camera output. Send to: HSGA Quarterly, 2434 Waiomao Rd, Honolulu, HI 96816-3424; Email: hsga@hsga.org and johnely@hawaiiansteel.com.

CLOSING NOTES

Mike Auldridge (Feb. 9, 1929 – Sept. 2, 2012)

We are sorry to report the passing of dobro giant Mike Auldridge at the age of 73. He worked primarily out of the Washington, D.C. area and was founding member of the legendary bluegrass band, the Seldom Scene. The band established their reputation at the Birchmere in Alexandria, Virginia, a restaurant that famously posted signs banning dancing and discouraged talking during performances.

Mike almost single-handedly brought dobro into the modern era as a solo instrument incorporating blues, jazz, and folk colors giving the instrument a much broader appeal. Coming out of the older style of Josh Graves, he paved the way for today's top players like Rob Ickes and Jerry Douglas.

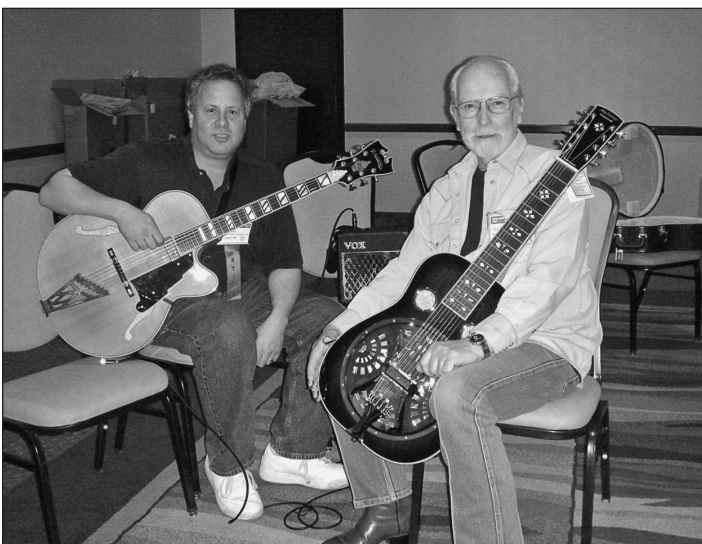
Mike won a Grammy award in 1994 for his work on *The Great Dobro Sessions* album, was inducted into the International Bluegrass Music Association Hall of Fame as a member of the Seldom Scene, received a lifetime achievement award from the International Bluegrass Music Association and was honored last year with a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Readers may recall that Mike Auldridge played a solo dobro piece during departed HSGA member Dave Giegerich's memorial service a few years back. ■

It's Dues Time Again!

Remember, HSGA's membership year begins on July 1, 2013. Dues are \$30 and all issues go out 'Air Mail' (see the insert that was included with this issue). Renew today! Don't miss out on the latest steel guitar news, recordings reviews and instruction.

Late dobro master Mike Auldridge (right) pictured here with our own Gerald Ross at a recent Dallas steel guitar show.



MEMBERS CORNER

John Marsen, Sheffield, England

We received the following letter from HSGA's "resident" Hawaiian music collector, archivist, and historian:

"The *Quarterly* continues to be a really excellent and authoritative publication. Anthony Lis's series especially is a real coup. All we collectors will now have the challenge of finding the Ernie Lee/Jerry Byrd 78s! They've remained largely unknown until now!

"Tim Mech's also excellent article on Sol Ho'opi'i's electric steel guitar, accompanied by a photo of Sol, which I'd never seen before (!), reminded me of the as yet unsolved mystery of the second steel guitarist heard in a Novelty Five session recorded on February 16, 1936. [Selections from that session include:] 'To You, Sweetheart, Aloha', 'Hula Breeze', 'Kapuana', 'Hilo Hattie', 'Maui No Ka Oi', 'Waikapu', 'Duke Kahanamoku' and 'Hawaiian Honeymoon'. Bob Cutter handles the vocals in the first five titles. Dick McIntire has been suggested as the backup steel player, and there are a couple of photos showing Sol and Dick together. However, I wonder if Belva Dickerson Dunn might also be a possibility? She can be heard in some of the titles recorded at the Tutmarc home and now available on CD from Greg Tutmarc. Her style was famously like Sol's. Might Belva be the player in this 1936 session?

"Does any HSGA reader know? It's a long-standing mystery, which would be very nice to clear up!"

Beat Iseli, Winterthur, Switzerland

I always enjoy reading your newsletter with all the interesting information on steel players and events. It also gives me the opportunity to try and practice new tunes. This summer, after what seems like a long time, my family and I will finally enjoy a two-week holiday in Hawai'i from July 29 through August 9. Would it be possible to send me some information on steel guitar music on O'ahu during that time? [ED: Check the steel hotspots listed on page 3, Beat. Hawai'i steel playing members, keep us in the loop and let us know about any weekly jobs you have.] ■

HSGA Donations

Thanks, HSGAers for some generous donations this past quarter in a continuing tough economy.

Robert Padwick from Burnaby, British Columbia donated a very generous \$100 to the General Fund and \$100 to the Scholarship Fund! **Ray Aubrey** of Kane'ohe gave \$100 to the General Fund. Mahalo nui loa!

The following member(s) donated at least \$10: Terry Cass, of Ashkum, Illinois.

E Komo Mai! Welcome, New Members

Is your address correct? Please notify us!

UNITED STATES

JAMES NOTTAGE, 10770 Sawgrass Drive, Fishers, IN 46037

HARRY MOXLEY, 400 8th St, NW, #502, Washington, DC 20004

PAT CARVALHO, 7915 Clubhouse Estates Dr., Orlando, FL 32819-5026

“HAW’N COWGIRL” *Cont. from Page 17*

Wolverton, who had worked extensively with Les Paul in the 1930s. Harrell worked with the Polly Possum Show for two years, with the band playing alternating stints at the Golden Nugget in Las Vegas and the Riverside Hotel in Reno.

Beryl Harrell and Roy Ball were divorced in 1961. Shortly thereafter she joined another all-female trio, the Honey B’s, who performed regularly at the El Cortez Hotel. The band featured Clair Smith and Betty Jay Holland with Beryl now playing a Fender 4-neck Stringmaster that she bought from Eddie Bush, who also performed regularly at the hotel.

Apparently, the El Cortez was a “class establishment” that frowned on hillbilly entertainment. Don Triolo recalls that if someone in the audience requested something like “Okie Boogie” or “Steel Guitar Rag,” his mom would try to sweet talk the person into a traditional Hawaiian tune such as “Sweet Leilani” or “Hawaiian War Chant.”

The El Cortez gig led to weekend appearances at the Silver Dollar, a well-known western music club at the time, but Harrell’s career was winding down fast. Though gracious to her fans with an unfaltering, engaging stage smile, she confided to her son Don that she thought she was too old to be on stage. Soon after, she quit the music business altogether. She sold her four-neck Fender steel guitar in 1963 and stayed on in Las Vegas working as a hotel PBX operator at the Desert Inn. Perhaps she underestimated the importance of music in her life; for whatever reason, it is

likely that she began to slip into depression around this time. She was offered studio work in 1969, but she turned it down. Some time later, there was a reunion with her first husband Carl Triolo, but a year later he disappeared again, leaving Beryl inconsolable.

Deke Dickerson writes the sad conclusion of the story: “Harrell’s once glamorous life had a tragic end. In 1977, when she knew her son was going to be out of town for the weekend, she wrote a long letter to him explaining why she didn’t want to live anymore and mailed it to him on a Friday. When Don returned and got the letter in the mail the next week, his mother had already taken her own life. In the letter, Harrell told her son that she wanted him to know that the two things in life that had brought her the most happiness were music and her son.”

About the tragedy, Don writes: “I do believe the move to Alaska in 1953 took her “off the map.” That compounded with Roy [Ball] overpowering her on decisions. He was jealous of her talent. She turned down many opportunities because they did not include him. Being raised by an unkind overbearing mother, marrying the only man she ever loved, a man who left us and returned 27 years later only to do the same thing again—these things all had the makings of a serious depression that I was just too young to recognize. To this day I carry blame for not doing so. She was probably the most unaffected, humble human being I have ever met.”

Each year, Don Triolo publishes a memorial to his mother, Beryl Harrell, on the date of her birth in the local Las Vegas newspaper. ■

JERRY BYRD *Cont. from Page 9*

The author was able to hear a recording of Lee and Byrd’s March 13, 1948 Grand Ole Opry performance through the assistance of Harry Rice (who furnished the author with a copy of a recording of the performance that had been donated to Berea College’s Hutchins Library by Joe Fothergill, a cousin of Lee’s). Definitive information on the various couplings of Lee’s recordings was gleaned from Dave Sichak’s informative Ernie Lee page (including a discography compiled by Wayne Daniel) at Sichak’s hillbilly-music.com website. The quote concerning Jenny Lou Carson’s “The Last Time I Saw Mary” was taken from Rogers and Langley’s 2005 book Many Tears Ago: The Life and Times of Jenny Lou Carson. Thanks to Joe Fothergill for pointing the author to the quote.

In the next installment—Ernie Lee’s eight RCA sides of February 1949 with Byrd once again backing him on steel—another eclectic assortment, including renditions of several recently composed songs (including an early effort of the soon-to-be-famous, husband-and-wife songwriting-duo Felice and Boudleaux Bryant), two quasi-spirituals, and a lively remake of a British dance hall tune from the mid-1920s. ■

Going to Honolulu?

Don’t delay registering for our biennial Hawai’i convention, which will be held April 29-May 2. First, fill out and send in the convention form included with your newsletter as soon as you can. Second, secure your reservation at the Queen Kapi’olani Hotel. Call 1-866-970-4164 (toll-free) or 922-1941 (local Hawai’i number). To get the best rate, be sure to give the reservations agent our group discount code ‘HSGA2013’ when booking. You can also book a room via the Internet using the link provided on our home page at www.hsga.org.