

HSGA QUARTERLY

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by the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association

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A super photo of this year's Joliet Honored Guest, Ed Punua, who performs regularly at the Grove Cafe in Waimea on the island of O'ahu with his group, the Kama'ainas.

October: Our Final Joliet Get-Together

From Joliet Chairman, Don Weber

If you've never been to Joliet for our festival featuring the steel guitar, you'll want to be here for this one. After 27 years of music, friendship, food, and fun, this year marks the club's final get-together in Joliet. We're all going to meet for the festival on October 3-5, 2013 at the same hotel where it all started. The hotel has changed somewhat over the years, and I guess all of us attendees may have undergone some changes as well. Most of us are a lot better looking now.

Last year was the inaugural Joliet Hawaiian Music Festival, an effort to reach out to a broader Hawaiian music community with Saturday workshops

for steel guitar, 'ukulele, slack key and more. Everyone seemed to approve of the changes and attendance was decent for a first-year event. This year the Saturday workshops for steel guitar and 'ukulele are back. We hope to see more new faces again, as well as those we haven't seen in a while. Let me tell you what you can look forward to.

Our Honored Guest

This year's Honored Guest is Ed Punua from the island of Kaua'i. For the past 15 years Ed has performed weekly at the Grove Cafe in Waimea with his group, The Kama'ainas. He also works with Alan Akaka's Ke Kula Mele school to bring the steel guitar lessons

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HSGA QUARTERLY

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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.

JOLIET Continued from Page 1

to Kaua'i. Ed, a past HSGA board member and club treasurer, was Joliet's Honored Guest in 1996. At that time he brought his wife Vanessa with him along with his six-month-old son, Kawai'iki. Kawai'iki is now 17 years old and a student of Alan's. Ed will be performing daily at the festival, taking part in the Thursday evening "Talk Story," and will be featured in the Saturday Night Lū'au Show. He will also be conducting an advanced steel guitar workshop on Saturday.

Festival Registration

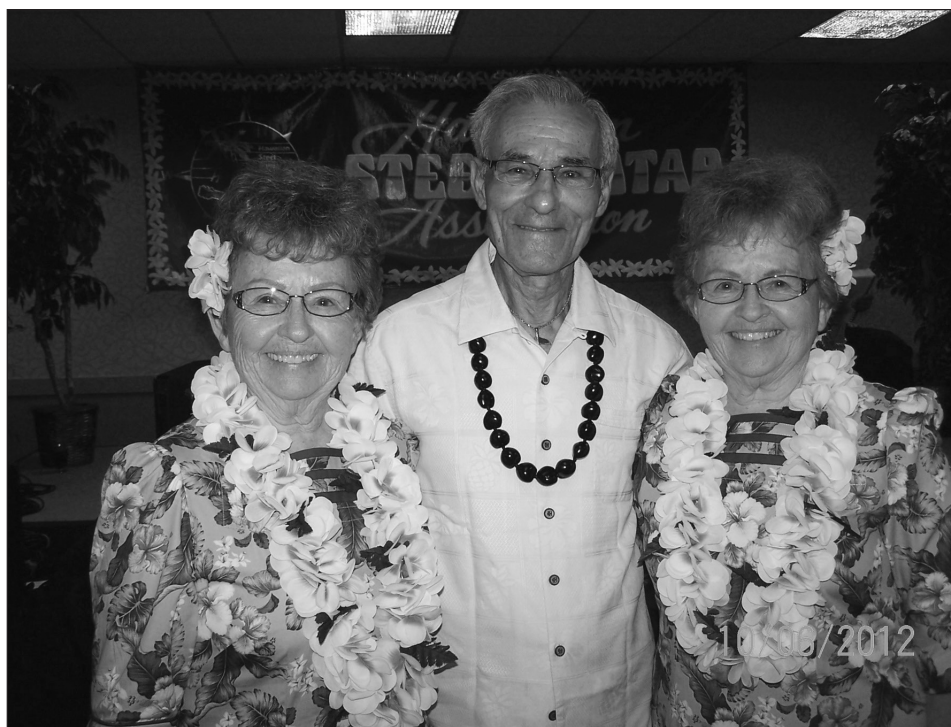
The festival is being held at the Joliet Holiday Inn Hotel Banquet and Conference Center located at 411 S. Larkin Avenue in Joliet, Illinois. As always, the Joliet committee needs your help in doing some of the planning. In order to set up the playing schedules, we need to know if you are coming. Fill out and send in the registration form that is included in this newsletter or use the form on our web-

site at www.hsga.org. Do it *now* while it's on your mind. *Don't wait*. We need to know if we can count on you being there. The convention fee is \$45 per person. You can send in your fee along with the registration form, or you can pay upon arrival. We do not accept credit cards or PayPal. We don't care when you pay, but we need your registration form as soon as possible. Please send the form to: Wally Pfeifer, 115 N. Clinton St., Dwight, IL 60420.

Hotel Reservations

Make your hotel reservations *directly* with the hotel at 815-729-2000. We have found this greatly reduces any chance of errors. Be sure to tell them you are with the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association in order to get the special discounted room rate, which is good from October 1 through October 6. Your reservation must be received by the Holiday Inn and Conference Center before September 10, 2013. After that date the rooms being held for HSGA will be released to the general public and are not guaranteed to be available.

At last year's Joliet Hawaiian Music Festival, a terrific shot of our trusty newsletter "mail-out mogul" Bo' Bahret flanked by our Williams Twins, Joanne Parker (left) and Janis Crum.





A fine musician, Richard Briggs playing steel at the 2012 Joliet Festival with Virginia Grzadzinski and Dick Martiny on backup.

Room Rates

The room rate for this year is \$71 plus local taxes.

Breakfast

In the spirit of aloha, General Manager Debra Frend has announced that members staying at the hotel will again get a voucher for a free breakfast in the hotel dining room for each day they are registered. You will have to pick up your vouchers each morning at the hotel's registration desk.

Lunch and Dinner

All lunches and dinners are on your own. Your registration fee *does not* cover any meals. No group dinners are planned except for the Saturday Night Lū'au. The hotel restaurant is not open to the general public for lunch, but pre-ordered lunches will be provided for us. You must pre-order from their menu of available items by 10 AM for noontime serving. Pre-ordering is done during the morning music sessions in the main room. Menus will be available at the podium.

Member Playing Slots

Playing time is again 25 minutes *including setup time* and will be strictly enforced. If you do not comply, your fellow players will lose time from their set. Playing times will be assigned by the Joliet committee. It is *very important* that we get your registration form. We can't make up a program if we don't know who will be there and who wants to perform. If Wally doesn't get your registration, you won't have a playing slot. We can't guarantee which day or time you will appear on stage, but we will honor preferences when possible. When all playing times are filled, you will go on a standby list. So, don't miss out. *Register now.*

Limousine Services

Reserve your limo from the airport in advance. You can schedule a round trip at the same time, or during the festival get a group together to share the ride back to the airport and save some money.

Cox Livery Service (815-741-0583) provides very good service, and they are looking forward to working with you. Cash, check, or credit cards are accepted. For credit cards, add 5 percent. Cox charges a base fare of \$75 for the first person, and each additional person rides for \$5. Sharing the ride saves money for everyone. For service after 10 PM and before 5 AM, there is an additional charge of \$10.

When reserving, give the limo service your airline, flight number, arrival time, arrival airport (O'Hare or Midway), and the number of people. When you arrive at the airport, *get your luggage first.* Then call Cox at 815-741-0583 for further instructions. *Important:* There is no fuel surcharge from Cox. The driver is responsible for all fuel costs. Therefore, with today's gas prices, a 20 percent tip to the driver is recommended. The Joliet committee strongly urges that you follow that guideline.

Vendors

Vendor information is unknown at this time, but we know that John Hatton will be there with products and supplies to cover your needs.

Evening Schedules

Nothing is scheduled for Wednesday evening. Just eat, relax, talk story, jam, or sleep. Thursday evening is "Talk Story" time with this year's Honored Guest Ed Punua. Ed will talk about his history with HSGA, and what he's been

Continued on Page 4

Joliet Chairman Don Weber and member/vendor John Hatton give a Hawaiian style "thumbs up" at the 2012 Joliet Festival.



doing these past few years. The question and answer time is always the best. Friday evening is another open night to enjoy a leisurely dinner, relax with all your friends, new and old, or join in a jam session.

Saturday Festival and Workshops

Saturday is a busy time at the festival. There are a lot of things all going on at the same time. You can choose those that spark your interest. In the main room there will be "Steel Guitars in Concert" from 9 AM to 3 PM. These are all-day music sessions. Also from 9 AM to 3 PM, festival goers will have the option of attending beginning to advanced steel guitar workshops taught by Ed Punua, Chris Kennison, and Kay Das. *[Note: for the steel workshops, bring your steel, bar, picks and a small amp.]* There are also beginning to advanced 'ukulele workshops taught by Terry Truhart. The workshops and the music sessions will be going on at the same time between 9 AM and 3PM. For details, see the complete Saturday schedule on page 5.

Lū'au and Show

Tickets for the Saturday Night Lū'au and Show will be sold during the festival, not in advance. The cost as always is \$25 per person. The highlight of the evening will be the performance by our Honored Guest Ed Punua and the show band.

No Sleep Jam Sessions

Be alert for jam sessions to break out at any time during the evenings. They have been known to last until breakfast!

Joliet Item For Sale

Wally Pfeifer is busy accumulating items for sale and for the raffle as he has done for the past several years. Says Wally, "This year we are going to have some very special items that should bring a lot of dollars into the HSGA treasury. Be prepared to bring a lot of cash or your checkbook. Some items will be sold by auction. Be there!"

Since this is the final Joliet get-together, members will have a chance to purchase the HSGA amp, which has been stored and used at the Joliet conventions for many years. It's a Fender Twin Reverb that has wheels and comes with a stand. It once belonged to Vern Cornwall and was purchased from him by the Joliet committee so that we would no longer have to continue renting one every year. Proceeds from the sale will go to the HSGA Honolulu office.

Wondering where your bass guitar is??

Last year after the Joliet festival, someone left behind a bass guitar. We have emailed the membership and put articles in the newsletter, but so far no one has come forward to claim

Joliet Schedule

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2

Check into the hotel, set up, talk story, have dinner, sleep, or jam.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3

9:00-9:30 Opening ceremonies
9:30-12:00 Music sessions
12:00-1:30 Lunch (on your own)
1:30-6:05 Music sessions
6:05-8:30 Dinner (on your own)
8:30-9:30 Talk Story with Ed Punua. No-sleep jam session follows.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4

9:00-10:00 Annual membership meeting
10:00-12:05 Music sessions
12:05-1:30 Lunch (on your own)
1:30-6:05 Music sessions
6:05-???? Dinner (on your own)
????-???? Free night. Jam. Relax.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5

Main Room

9:00-11:30 Steel Guitars in Concert
12:00-1:00 Lunch (on your own)
1:00-3:00 Steel Guitars in Concert
3:00-5:30 Room closed for rehearsal

Heritage Room Workshops

9:00-10:00 Beginning Steel (Chris Kennison)
11:00-12:00 Intermediate C6 Steel Workshop (Kay Das)
2:00-3:00 Master Steel Class (Ed Punua)

Rialto Room Workshops

9:00-10:00 Beginning Uke (Terry Truhart)
11:00-12:00 Uke Sing-Along (Terry Truhart)
2:00-3:00 Intermediate Uke (Terry Truhart)

Saturday Night Lū'au

3:00-5:30 Main room closed for rehearsal
5:30-7:00 Cash bar and social time
7:00-8:00 Lū'au dinner
8:00-???? Lū'au show and time for Aloha

it. We will have the bass available at this year's festival. If you think it could be yours, contact Wally Pfeifer or Don Weber. If you can correctly describe the instrument to us, you can take it home with you. ■

Joliet Workshop Offerings

Beginning Hawaiian Steel (C6th)

This starting-from-scratch C6th steel guitar workshop will cover the basics: using the bar, picking, basic blocking (muting), and how to play chords. *Instructor: Chris Kennison.*

Intermediate Hawaiian Steel (C6th)

This intermediate workshop covers: C6th playing patterns, techniques for playing in any key and for harmonizing while playing the melody or backing a singer. *Instructor: Kay Das.*

Advanced Hawaiian Steel (C6th)

Intermediate to advanced topics and techniques will be discussed by our Joliet guest artist. *Instructor: Ed Punua.*

Beginning 'Ukulele

This intro class focuses on the basics of left hand and right hand technique. Bring your uke and be prepared for fun! *Instructor: Terry Truhart.*

'Ukulele Sing-Along

This workshop is open to anyone who wishes to sing. We will stick to basic standards. You don't have to sound great; just have joy in your heart! *Instructor: Terry Truhart.*

Intermediate 'Ukulele

This intermediate to advanced 'ukulele workshop will add spice to your playing with new chord forms, rhythms and styles. *Instructor: Terry Truhart.*

COCO WIRE



At a recent wedding gig, Kaua'i member Jess Montgomery (with Bakelite Rick), hula dancers and bandleader Troy Waialeale.

An update from member **Jess Montgomery**, our unofficial reporter in Kaua'i: "Since quitting my cooking job in February, I've been playing some with **Troy Waialeale**. We do Monday nights at Wahoo's Restaurant in Kapa'a along with some weddings and casuals. We did a wedding a few weeks back (see photo above). Figured since it was at a zillion-dollar beach house I ought wear shoes. What-do-i-know?? It's a tough job, but somebody has to do it!"

We received a letter early this year from **Ronald Carpenter**, trustee in the estate of recently departed member **John Muir** of Plymouth Township, Michigan. In short, Ronald informed us that John had bequeathed \$25,000 to our club. We are overwhelmed by this generous posthumous gift, and we thank Ronald for his able assistance in administering the donation. HSGA relies on such donations to support our activities and mission, but few indeed rise to this extraordinary level. On June 30, the HSGA Board voted to invest the full amount in an interest bearing account separate from the General Fund and the Scholarship Fund. ■

Please Contact Us!

Send news or comments to: HSGA Quarterly, 2434 Waiomao Rd, Honolulu, HI 96816-3424. Email us at hsga@hsga.org and copy also to your editor at johnely@hawaiiansteel.com.

Did You Pay Your 2013-2014 Annual Dues?

This is your FINAL issue if your newsletter mailing label still shows "X 6/13" in the upper right corner of the label. Dues are \$30, which includes First Class delivery (Air Mail overseas).

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Acoustic Steel Guitar Pioneer, Charles Oponui

This is the second installment in our series covering the two acoustic steel guitar greats featured on Grass Skirt Records' recent release (GSK-1005) of the complete recordings of Jim & Bob and those of George Ku and his Paradise Islanders. The first installment and John Marsden's review of the CD appear in the Spring 2013 issue. In this issue, we turn to the work of George Ku and His Paradise Islanders with focus on the group's virtuoso steel guitarist, Charles Oponui. The story that follows is drawn from the release's superb 32-page booklet, which covers much of what is known about Oponui and George Ku. Your editor has reflowed and edited the material (with some additions and minor corrections) so that the piece reads more like a "beginning-to-end" story. Kudos to booklet contributors Les Cook, Michael Messer, John Marsden, Stacy Phillips, Martin Wheatley, Bob Brozman and especially to Cyril LeFebvre who pieced the group's combined research into a coherent whole.

From the GSK-1005 CD booklet, Martin Wheatley writes, "Charles Oponui was a steel guitarist of the very highest rank, although stylistically very different from Bob Pauole. The tuning he employs is F#9th (bottom to top, F#-A#-E-G#-C#-E), a development of Sol Ho'opi'i's C# minor tuning, which is usually associated with later ... electric players. To get the most out of this tuning it is necessary to be fluent on all parts of the fretboard, which he clearly is, and to treat different groups of strings almost as sub-tunings, which he clearly does." Wheatley goes on to point out that Oponui had the uncanny ability to play in tune beyond the top of the fretboard and the equally rare ability to freely mix straight bar with forward and reverse slants without negatively impacting phrasing or intonation. John Marsden adds, "Acoustic steel guitar was never more beautifully played than in these Paradise Islanders tracks. They were made just months before Joseph Lopez, with the Noelani Hawaiian Orchestra, took an electric guitar into the recording studio in February 1933, and permanently changed the sound of Hawaiian music."

The Early Years

Charles Kodili Oponui was born in Honolulu on July 14, 1896. His parents, Charles Oponui Sr. and Marie Kakanui already had a daughter, Hattie. Little, if anything, is known about his early years. His military records indicate that he had been a musician in Dallas for a year or so before joining the U.S. Navy in July 1918. Oponui embarked from San Francisco as a navy fireman and served on both the USS Wilmington and the USS Brooklyn in a series of operations



A rare photo of George Ku and His Paradise Islanders from the April 10, 1935 edition of the Washington Post. (l. to r.) George Ku, Charles Oponui, Spencer Kulaniakea (?) and Dave Chang.

between Shanghai, Manila and Vladivostok. But onboard discipline hardly suited him—gambling and insubordination would ensure his return to civilian life and the vaudeville stage in August 1919.

Taking up quarters on New York's West 14th Street with his wife June, Oponui divided his acting and musical talents between the Broadway stage and touring. He appeared in the *The Happy Time Revue* and the *The Gibson Revue* of Charley Morton in Alabama and Florida through October 1925, and then with David Munson and David Manaku in the *Half-Caste* at New York's National Theatre from March to December 1926. He recorded for Victor on October 19, 1925 with his Oponui Trio, but the resulting side "Oponui Blues" was never released.

The Paradise Islanders Era

Charles Oponui's legacy is due largely to his work with George Ku's Paradise Islanders. It is believed that Ku first formed the Paradise Islanders in 1924, a quartet that included Oponui, Spencer Kulaniakea and Dave Chang. In a 1980 interview for the magazine *Ha'ilono Mele* by Ken Emerson, musician Ernest Deale recounts the early days of his Honoluluans, a mainland Hawaiian group that, between 1924 and 1930, performed semi-professionally in clubs around Washington, D.C. and over the air waves on RCA broadcasts. Ernest recalled very clearly that the Paradise Islanders would come to play in the capital city every year from January 1924 onwards, with the line-up of George Ku on guitar, Oponui on steel guitar, and Kulaniakea and Chang on guitars and 'ukuleles. Oponui would give Ernest lessons on Hawaiian steel guitar while Oponui's wife June taught the

hula to Harriet Poole, the Honoluluans' haole dancer. In 1929 he invited Ernest to join him playing on one of the Matson liners sailing from San Francisco to Hawai'i.

Dave Chang left the Paradise Islanders circa 1931. The band's popularity was growing rapidly due to concert broadcasts twice a week over powerful New York NBC affiliate WJZ. In newspapers and over the radio, the group was now referred to as the George Ku Trio, or George Ku and His Paradise Islanders. In 1932 the trio recorded a handful of instrumental and vocal sides for both Victor and Brunswick, the only recordings we have of the band or of Charles Oponui's playing.

In late 1934 the band signed a contract to play at the Hi-Hat Club of Washington's Ambassador Hotel, and soon became known as the Hi-Hat Islanders, then the Ambassador's Hi-Hat Islanders, or even the Royal Hawaiians. Based on a press photo from this period, the group became a quartet again with the addition of a second rhythm guitarist. The band's contract with the hotel lasted until December 1936 after which the musicians went their separate ways.

If George Ku deserved to be known as the band's leader and organizer, there was no disputing Charles Oponui's claim as the band's virtuoso performer. Clients of the Hi-Hat Club would endlessly request his instrumental versions of "Song of the Islands," "About a Quarter to Nine" "Wahoo," and "St. Louis Blues." The latter tune would sometimes be repeated twenty times in a row. British singer and actor Don Novis, friend of Duke Kahanamoku and himself a steel player, declared Oponui to be "the best steel guitarist in the business."

The California Years

Following the disbanding of the Paradise Islanders, Oponui headed for California where he formed his own band. From the late-1930s and throughout the 1940s and 1950s, Charlie Oponui's Hawaiians appeared regularly on KPMC, the premier station in Bakersfield, California. The group played Los Angeles nightclubs including the Embassy Hotel, the Aloha Club where Ernest Tavares brought his pedal steel to the group in 1947, and the Farmers' Market of Los Angeles where they appeared with Andy Iona in June 1951. The group was even billed above Alfred Apaka at the Bakersfield Country Club's 1953 lū'au. The band at this time included Tommy Ainahau, Sonny Kamahale and hula dancer Lei Aloha.

Living on Los Angeles's Las Palmas Avenue with wife June, Charles Oponui followed a parallel career in the movies. He appeared in several films: beside Hilo Hattie in *Tahiti Nights* (1944); as an Eskimo on *The Thing From Another World* (1951); and in *Around the World in 80 Days* (1956). His final known screen appearance would be the most memorable; playing the part of Polynesian sailor Kris Kamana in Richard E. Cunha's 1958 cult classic *She*



Charles Oponui (right), "killed off" early in the 1958 cult film "*She Demons*," one of four known Hollywood films he appeared in. Also pictured, stars Irish McCalla (left), Victor Sen Yung and Tod Griffin.

Demons, he perishes with his side pierced by spears like a St. Sebastian painting by Giuseppe Caletti. Honolulu-born film director Richard E. Cunha was the son of composer, bandleader, pianist, singer, publisher and Congressman Albert "Sonny" Cunha, whose 1914 collection titled *Famous Hawaiian Songs* provided an important part of the hapa haole repertoire that Oponui had drawn on.

Charles Oponui retired from music and acting at the end of the 1950s. He died in Los Angeles on November 24, 1973 and was buried with military honors as a veteran of World War I at the Los Angeles National Cemetery. [ED: Apparently Oponui's less than exemplary service record had long been forgiven by the U.S. military.]

The George Ku Story

Born on December 22, 1899 in Honolulu, George Sam Ku left Hawai'i for Chicago in 1916. Shortly thereafter he was recruited by impresario Edward Marsh for Princess Pauhi's Hawaiian Song Birds group (sometimes billed as Princess Pauhi and her Eight Royal Hawaiians). The group also included David Burrows, Sam Clement, Walter Ho, Johnny Kaaihue and Zachary Pali. The show's star Princess Pauhi was not in fact Hawaiian. Her real name was Lizzie Wallace, a black entertainer who had sung and danced with the Black Patti Troubadours led by soprano Sissieretta Jones—the name "Black Patti" referencing Jones as a sort of "black equivalent" to Italian opera star Adelina Patti—and then with Ben Wieze's Bronze Review, a troupe of twenty black-face minstrels who toured the U.S. and in 1916 traveled as far as Hawai'i. The visit to Hawai'i inspired Lizzie to don a

Continued on Page 8

grass skirt, learn to dance the hula, and adopt her Hawaiian stage persona.

The Hawaiian Song Birds debuted in late December 1917 in Chicago and enjoyed a run into the following year in theaters across Illinois, Minnesota and Indiana. Then they all went their own way, some of them finding their way into prominent musical positions. Lizzie Wallace went back to wearing the little black chambermaid's dress that she had been previously known for on the stage. David Burrows left to play with native American Toots Paka, before offers to work with Johnny Noble, Mike Hanapi and other luminaries. Johnny Kaaihue, who had arrived the year before with the orchestra that accompanied Duke Kahanamoku in his surfing demonstrations on beaches throughout America, went on to form his own trio in Chicago. He would eventually become a mainstay of the Harry Owens band for over 15 years under the name 'Johnny Ukulele'.

George Ku spent the 1920s working in various Hawaiian bands. As mentioned, he was leader of his Paradise Islanders from 1924 until the group disbanded in December 1936.

We don't meet George Ku again until after World War II, this time in the company of Andy Iona, Mel Peterson, Danny Kuaana and Al McIntire. These musicians made up the Hawaiian quintet of the "Hollywood Ice Review," the major show on ice featuring Norwegian skater and movie star Sonja Henie. During the group's two-week stint in Chicago in January 1950, Jerry Byrd flew in from Cincinnati to meet Danny Kuaana who had been his partner in a trio in Detroit back in 1944. Byrd and the Hawaiian quintet (minus Andy Iona) recorded eight sides at Chicago's RCA studios with George Ku on guitar and harmony vocals. Mercury would issue the sides as its 1950 release *Nani Hawaii*, featuring Jerry Byrd with the band listed as Danny Kuaana and His Islanders (MG-25077).

George Ku stayed on with the Hollywood Ice Review through its final performance at New York's Madison Square Garden in January 1951. We don't know what became of him after that. The trail goes cold.

The Recordings

As mentioned in the last installment (in the Spring 2013 issue), local radio stations in the early 1930s were upgrading their transmitters allowing them to reach regional, even national audiences. Local radio musicians could now be heard far beyond their usual clientele of local clubs and theaters. Via the airwaves, some of them, George Ku's Paradise Islanders among them, became instantly famous even in the most remote rural areas. As mentioned in the last issue, however, this kind of success did not often result in successful recording careers—the connection had yet to be made



The Hawaiian group featured in Sonja Henie's "Hollywood Ice Review": Mel Peterson (left), Andy Iona, George Ku, Danny Kuaana and Al McIntire. (From the May 1947 issue of Music Studio News)

between radio play and record sales. True to form, despite their success over the air waves, the Paradise Islanders were offered only three recording sessions within the lifetime of the group—a single session for Victor in 1932 and two short sessions for Brunswick, also done in 1932.

As pointed out in the Bob Pauole story, the record labels themselves were notorious for incorrect attributions, omissions and dubious spellings of the artists' names. The labels of the Paradise Islander Victor issues credit "The Paradise Islanders", then simply give us the names of the three musicians followed by "Hawaiian guitars," sometimes adding "with vocal refrains." Recording ledgers listed guitars, ukulele and tiple without crediting any particular musician. The Brunswick 78s simply credit "George Ku and his Paradise Islanders." Small wonder that for many years it was thought that the beautiful steel guitar parts came from the band's leader George Ku.

Conclusion

From the Grass Skirt CD booklet, some final thoughts by established resophonic players: Writes Stacy Phillips, "Charles Opunui was another master of the National tricone. His solos on 'Nā Ali'i' presage the chordal approach of the western swing steel guitarists of the 1940s. And, oh, that sweet, insouciant swing solo on 'Eleu Mikimiki'... Both Opunui and Pauole are geniuses at milking the sweet tone of the National Tri-cone for all it is worth. For me, these cuts are the summit of Hawaiian acoustic guitar artistry." From the late Bob Brozman: "I would add that Opunui was fully the equal of the other greats! He was very modern considering the dates of his recordings with George Ku and a highly innovative player."

The CD is available direct from Grass Skirt (www.Grassskirt.co.uk) and at Amazon.com. HSGA members in the USA can purchase the CD by sending a check for \$15 to Robert Armstrong, 213 Grant Avenue, Winters, CA 95694. ■

2013 Waikīkī Beach Walk Steel Festival a Success!

By Alan Akaka and Gale Warshawsky

Under clear, blue island skies, the Fourth Annual Hawaiian Steel Guitar Festival was held on July 20, 2013 at Waikīkī Beach Walk, O‘ahu, Hawai‘i. An enthusiastic audience attended the free festival. They sat on chairs and on mats on the grass in front of the stage and listened to the enchanting sounds of Hawaiian music from 3 to 7 PM.

Featured steel guitarists and backup musicians included: Greg Sardinha with Gordon Freitas on guitar and Dennis “Bla” Keohokalole on bass; Casey Olsen with his father Hiram Olsen on guitar and Bla on bass; Timi Abrigo and Justin Alderfer with Lanet Abrigo on bass, Quinn Abrigo on ‘ukulele and Emily Abrigo on guitar; Bobby Ingano with Kaipo Asing on guitar and Gary Aiko on bass; Jeff Au Hoy also with Kaipo on guitar and Gary on bass; and Alan Akaka again with Kaipo on guitar and Gary on bass.

In addition to the professional musicians, the audience enjoyed the performances of Ke Kula Mele’s Next Generation steel guitar students: Quincy Maka‘awa‘awa, Mālie Lyman, Keen Ching, Alexis Tolentino, Sid Pang, Kalyn Aolani, and Mark Prucha. The Ke Kula Mele Next Generation steel guitar students range from nine years of age to college age. Each played a solo steel number while the others provided backup on ‘ukuleles, guitar, and bass.

Festival attendees were also treated to an awesome display of vintage steel guitars from the collections of Alan



“Heavy hitters” at this year’s Waikīkī Beach Walk Hawaiian Steel Guitar Festival, (l. to r.) “Bla” Keohokalole, Alan Akaka, Casey Olsen and Hiram Olsen. (Photo courtesy of Colleen Ricci)

Akaka and Greg Sardinha, ranging from simple 6-string lap models to multi-neck console steels.

The festival concluded with a lively jam featuring steel guitarists Greg Sardinha, Casey Olsen, Bobby Ingano, Jeff Au Hoy, Alan Akaka, Mark Prucha, and Keen Ching.

Our thanks to Hawaii News Now, KITV News, Cheryll Tsutsumi of the Star-Advertiser, and calendars from various publications for their support and help getting the word out. And big mahalos to our sponsors: Waikīkī Beach Walk, Outrigger Enterprises Group, Kia Enterprises LLC, the

Continued on Page 20

Performers at the 2013 Beach Walk steel festival, (l. to r.) Abrigo kids Timi, Quinn and Emily with Justin Alderfer, and the kids’ mother, Lanet Abrigo. Sharp! (Photo courtesy of Colleen Ricci)



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Arrangement by Alan Akaka

A G A₇

Steel Gtr. (C6th)

5 A_m D₇ G B^b_{dim} A_m D₇ G

10 A₇ A_m D₇

15 G A_m D₇ **B** G A₇

20

A_m D₇ A_m D₇ C C_m G D₇

T	4	6	7	6	7	6	5	8	8	7	2	4	2	3	5	6
A	4			5			5		8	7					5	6
B																

25

G A₇

T	7	6	7	10	9	8	7	3	4	6
A	7	6	7	10	9	8	7	9	7	6
B	7	6	7	10	9	8	7	9	7	6

29

A_m D₇ C_m D₇ F# G 1. A_m D₇ 2. B_m B^bdim

T	7	6	8	7	6	7	2	4	4	6
A		5		8	7					
B				8	7					

Tag

A_m D₇ C_m D₇ C Tacet G

T	7	6	8	7	5	2	3	6	7	19
A		5		8	7			6	7	19
B				8	7			6	7	19

let ring-----

Jerry Byrd's RCA Victor Recordings With Ernie Lee, Part IV

By Anthony Lis

In this series, we are detailing 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. This segment completes a discussion of the eight RCA sides on which Byrd backed Lee on February 2, 1949, recorded at Atlanta's Fox Theater.

Part One (in the Fall 2012 issue) mentioned Byrd and Lee's *first* recordings, made under the name The Happy Valley Boys, for Bluebird Records in Atlanta in fall 1940. The segment also detailed Byrd and Lee's years working for radio entrepreneur John Lair in Renfro Valley, Kentucky, their months on Detroit's WJR radio, Lee's move to

Jerry Byrd during his short stint with Ernest Tubb's Texas Troubadours around the time of his RCA sessions with Ernie Lee. (From the author's personal collection)



Cincinnati's WLW (where he appeared on his own weekday show and the Saturday night "Midwestern Hayride"), and Lee's first RCA recording session in Chicago. The article also related Byrd's early activities as a Nashville session musician, backing Ernest Tubb, Red Foley and young Hank Williams.

Part Two (in the Winter 2012-13 issue) detailed Lee's second, late-1947 RCA recording session where Byrd, as a member of Lee's Midwesterners, backed him on eight sides. By the time of these recordings, Byrd was a member of the quintet accompanying Red Foley on his weekly "Grand Ole Opry" appearance in Nashville. In October 1948, Byrd joined Lee in Cincinnati when Foley's backing band was hired away by WLW to perform on a new, *televised* incarnation of the "Midwestern Hayride." Rechristened the Pleasant Valley Boys, Byrd and his busy band mates also played on a daily television program and appeared on WLW's daily "good morning" show and the station's noontime "Everybody's Farm Hour" segment.

In addition to Jerry Byrd, the backing quintet for Ernie Lee's February 2, 1949 sessions in Atlanta included young Chet Atkins on electric guitar, Charles R. Grean on bass, and Henry D. ("Homer") Haynes and Kenneth C. ("Jethro") Burns on acoustic guitar and mandolin, respectively. Lee's recordings took place during a modern-day "field recording" expedition, as RCA's New York executives scurried down to Atlanta to record country music performers following the settlement of a musicians' union recording strike.

As related in Part Three (in the Spring 2013 issue), the February 2 recordings of Ernie Lee and his Southerners were split across mid-morning and late-evening sessions. Lee's morn-



Ernie Lee as he looked around the time of the RCA sessions with Jerry Byrd. (From the Special Collections and Archives, Georgia State University Library)

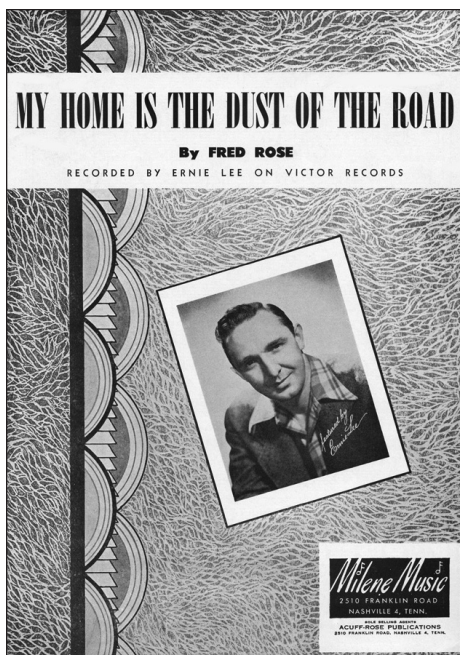
ing session began with a cover of the 1925 British dance hall tune "I Never See Maggie Alone" (enhanced by a Byrd steel guitar break). Next followed Bill and Ruth Mackintosh's "The Gods Were Angry With Me," punctuated by several "wah-wah" effects from Byrd. Richard Alexander's gospel-flavored "Keep Walking,"—featuring Byrd's chimes and high-register countermelodies—came next, with the morning session concluding with Felice and Boudleaux Bryant's novelty number "One, Two, Three, Four, Five Foot Six," featuring Byrd's prominent high-register fills.

After an eight-hour break, Lee, Byrd, and the Southerners resumed recording at 7:30 PM with a waxing of Fred Rose's "My Home is the Dust of

the Road” (in the author’s opinion, the highlight of the February 2 sessions). Rose, an Indiana-born singer-pianist-songwriter, had co-founded Nashville’s first music publishing house, Acuff-Rose Publications, roughly six-and-a-half years earlier. His previous creations included a smattering of Island-themed tunes, such as “Hawaiian Star of Love” (recorded four times by Frank Ferera and Anthony Franchini in 1925), “Paradise in the Moonlight” (waxed twice by Gene Autry in 1939 with Sam Koki on steel guitar), and “My Heaven is a Shack in Old Kalua” (recorded by Ann Tell with Lani McIntire’s Hawaiians in 1940).

In a 1976 interview with Douglas B. Green, Ernie Lee reported that that “Fred Rose ... [was] one of the best friends I had in Nashville. ... He wrote ... a song or two [es]pecial[ly] [for me], and there’s not too many people [that] can say that. He wrote me one called ‘My Home is the [Dust of the] ... Road’ ... I do it quite often in my shows. I’m just so proud of it because Fred had written it especially for me.”

Sheet music cover to Fred Rose’s contemporary song “My Home is the Dust of the Road.” (Center for Popular Music, Middle Tennessee State University)



The 78 rpm labels for RCA 21-0151, which coupled Fred Rose’s “My Home is the Dust of the Road” (left) with “You’re Next Door to Heaven (When You’re in Tennessee)” written by William Grishaw (aka Zeb Turner). (From the author’s personal collection)

In “Dust of the Road,” Rose provided Lee with a gospel-tinged meditation on the biblical theme “for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” As on “The Gods Were Angry With Me,” Byrd employs several “wah-wah” effects (more consistently here than on the earlier recording, in an attempt to perhaps evoke a striking image of the sometimes lonely “highway of life”). Byrd opens the recording with a four-bar introduction and then supplies various “bluesy” fills in the first verse and chorus. The second verse is given over to an eight-bar blues-tinged solo from Byrd followed by an eight-bar electric guitar solo from Chet Atkins. Byrd then supplies more “bluesy” fills in the second chorus.

“My Home is the Dust of the Road” was released in early 1950 coupled with “You’re Next Door to Heaven (When You’re in Tennessee),” waxed later in the session. Besides releasing the record in the usual 78 rpm format, RCA also issued the coupling in the then brand new 45 rpm configuration developed at RCA in early 1949. RCA issued the recording on turquoise-colored vinyl, used for early releases in their “folk and hillbilly” series.

Billboard spoke approvingly of “My Home is the Dust of the Road” in their January 14, 1950 “Record Reviews,” opining that “Lee warbles an effecting

ditty with a warm spiritual quality,” adding that “[the] backing strikes a rare nostalgic mood.”

Lee, Byrd, and the Southerners’ next recording was “You Can’t Pick a Rose in December,” a rather bland tune by Texas-born singer-songwriter Leon Payne. Payne, who was blind from childhood, is best remembered as the composer of Hank Williams’s “Lost Highway,” as well as the song “I Love You Because.” (Ernest Tubbs, Clyde Moody, Johnny Cash, Carl Smith, and Payne himself all charted with recordings of the latter tune in the 1950s and ‘60s.)

“You Can’t Pick a Rose” features rather prominent mandolin tremolos from Jethro Burns. Byrd plays the introduction, then supplies some prominent fills of his own during the first half of the first verse. The first eight bars of the second verse are given over to a Byrd steel solo. Unfortunately, the recording is pitched too high for Lee (perhaps a concession to the more “mandolin-friendly” key of G?); one wonders why the song wasn’t recorded down a whole-step to better accommodate Lee’s vocal range.

“You Can’t Pick a Rose” was released in fall 1949 as the “B” side to “One, Two, Three, Four, Five Foot Six,” from the morning session (in both

Continued on Page 14

78 rpm and 45 rpm format). *Billboard* found Lee and the Southerners' rendition a bit tepid, complaining in their record reviews of September 17 that "[the] ballad has something, but this cool [i.e., 'lukewarm'] rendition doesn't capitalize [on] it."

In early 1960, Acuff-Rose songwriter-turned-vocalist Ernie Ashworth recorded a shuffle-rhythm version of "You Can't Pick a Rose" with Byrd on steel guitar. The recording—enhanced by Byrd's four-bar introduction and eight-bar mid-song break—reached #8 on the country charts that fall.

Lee and the Southerners next recorded "You're Next Door to Heaven (When You're in Tennessee)," a catchy tune composed by Virginia-born electric guitarist William Edward Grishaw (aka Zeb Turner). (Back on Christmas Eve 1947, Turner had joined Byrd and the three other musicians backing Red Foley on covers of two Black gospel tunes, as related in the Spring 2013 issue.) *Billboard*—in their record reviews of January 14, 1950—praised "You're Next Door to Heaven" as a "light, bouncy ditty in the great-to-be-in-Dixie manner." (Turner's song tapped into a long tradition of musical homages to the South such as Jimmie Rodgers and Walter Ryan's "Some-

where Down Below the Dixon Line" [1933] and Andy Razaf's "That's What I Like About the South" [1944].) Byrd plays a four-bar introduction as well as a sixteen-bar, mid-song break, split between the middle and the high registers of his steel guitar. Elsewhere, Burns shines with yet more of his clean, high-register mandolin runs.

The last song Lee, Byrd, and the Southerners recorded was a Lee original, the gospel-flavored "Pray Pray Pray." (Lee may have borrowed his title from an older gospel tune.) Byrd plays a four-bar introduction, then contributes fills during the first verse and chorus. The first of two mid-song breaks is split between eight bars of Byrd's steel and eight bars of Burns's tremolo-laden mandolin. During the second verse, Byrd plays a striking high-register "descant" line (as he did on "Keep Walkin'" during the morning session, referencing a device sometimes employed during congregational hymn singing). After dropping out during the second chorus (allowing us to more clearly hear Burns's mandolin tremolos), Byrd plays an eight-bar, mid-register break before returning to his descant line during the third chorus. At the very end of the recording, Byrd appropriately effects the sound of a plagal cadence (the "Amen" ending).

"Pray Pray Pray" was released in the early summer of 1949 as the "B" side of the similarly religious-themed "Keep Walkin'" from the morning session. RCA issued the record in both 78 rpm and 45 rpm format.

Byrd participated in one other field recording while in Atlanta, backing young Slim Whitman on eight sides during two afternoon sessions the day after his Ernie Lee recordings of February 3, 1949. Whitman, who died of heart failure this past June 19, earned his living first as a shipyard employee, then as a minor league baseball pitcher in the Tampa area in the years following World War II. Aban-



A youthful shot of Slim Whitman taken around the time of his February 1949 field recordings for RCA with Jerry Byrd, Chet Atkins, Homer Haynes and Jethro Burns.

doning baseball to attempt a singing career, Whitman's early gigs included appearances at Tampa-area supermarkets, radio stations, nightclubs, and even an area "fish camp." Whitman obtained his Atlanta recording date, his first on a major label, through the influence of "Colonel" Tom Parker, who was then managing Eddy Arnold and by early 1955 would be overseeing Elvis Presley's career. Joining Byrd in backing Whitman were Chet Atkins playing violin as well as electric guitar, Homer Haynes, Jethro Burns, and Charles Grean from the Ernie Lee sessions the day before.

Concerning his talented backing quintet, Whitman recalled to Kenneth L. Gobble in *Mr. Songman: The Slim Whitman Story* that "I had never heard of them at [the] time [of my Atlanta sessions], of course, but it's amazing how many [of them] went on to make it big."

RCA chose Whitman's energetic rendition of Lee Roy White and Jimmy Wakely's upbeat "I'm Casting My Lasso Towards the Sky" as his first release. The side ended up being a minor hit, and by 1953 Whitman had appropriated the tune as his theme song. The side spotlights Whitman's extreme high-register yodeling (his trademark, from his

The 45 rpm label for Lee and Byrd's last Atlanta side, Lee's "Pray Pray Pray."

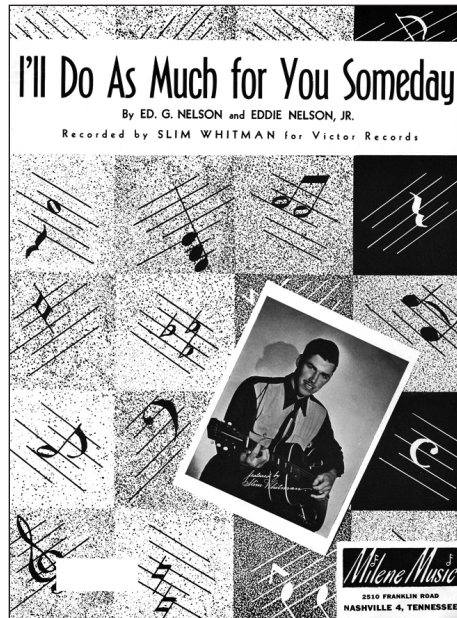


earliest recordings), as well as a few audible steel fills and chime renderings from Byrd, when not being crowded out by Burns's all-pervasive mandolin runs. RCA coupled "I'm Casting My Lasso" with the wonderfully tuneful "I'll Do as Much for You Someday" (penned by Edward G. Nelson, who also composed "Peter Cottontail" in 1949), which included Byrd playing a four-bar introduction and splitting a sixteen-bar break with Burns.

Byrd would go on to back Slim Whitman on at least forty-nine other sides in Nashville through mid-1961, including Whitman's summer 1961 #30 weeper "The Bells That Broke My Heart." Both "Bells" and the flip side, "I'd Climb the Highest Mountain," feature Byrd's extreme high-register steel playing.

Byrd would also record again with Homer and Jethro, backing them on forty-three recordings in Nashville and New York between May 1952 and May 1957. Their collaborations included the October 1952 hillbilly send-up of Frank Loesser's "Moon of Manakoora," with the song's locale changed from the South Seas to rural Tennessee. The recording features Byrd supplying appropriately Hawaiian-sounding fills and "whistling" harmonics.

Record label for the Australian release of Slim Whitman's "The Bells That Broke My Heart," which included a healthy dose of "chime bells" (harmonics) from Byrd.



Sheet music cover to the melodious "I'll Do As Much for You Someday," the "B" side of Slim Whitman's first RCA release. (Center for Popular Music, Middle Tennessee St. Univ.)

Turning back to Byrd's Atlanta recordings with Ernie Lee, one regretably notes that—despite warm, sincere singing from Lee and fine playing by Byrd, Atkins, Grean, Haynes, and Burns—none of Lee's "A" sides from his February 2, 1949 Atlanta RCA sessions made the country Top 40 (as had also been the case with the "A" sides from Lee's December 1947 RCA session, also including Byrd).

Again, not to offer excuses for Lee's chart failure, but it must be reiterated that Lee faced stiff competition for chart placement between early spring 1949 and early 1950 when his February 1949 recordings were released. The radio waves were occupied with such commercially successful sides as George Morgan's "Candy Kisses" and Tennessee Ernie Ford's "Mule Train" (Ford's first number one hit). Popular, too, were Red Foley's "Tennessee Saturday Night" (which rode to #1 on the strength of Jerry Byrd's steel guitar) and Hank Williams's revival of the 1920s song "Lovesick Blues" (#1 for sixteen weeks in the spring and summer of 1949, likewise enhanced by

Byrd's steel). As related at the end of Part Two, Byrd's radio ubiquity may have, ironically, helped to limit Lee's opportunities for chart placement.

Information on Lee and Byrd's recordings of February 2, 1949 was again gleaned from RCA session sheet 024-1187, held by the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. Details on Byrd's February 3 recordings with Slim Whitman were gleaned from session sheet 044-1797. Information on the couplings of Lee and Byrd's Atlanta sides was again drawn from Wayne Daniel's Ernie Lee discography (posted at Dave Sichak's informative hillbilly-music.com website). Lee's February 25, 1976 interview with Douglas B. Green in Tampa was conducted as part of the Country Music Foundation's Oral History Project (interview OH90-LC). The author again thanks Amy Pace for her graphics assistance.

The final segments in this series will cover the first side recorded at Lee's final RCA session held in Chicago in January 1950, to which Byrd apparently later added an overdubbed steel guitar part. The segments will also detail Byrd's extremely busy eleven months of recording between February 1949 and January 1950, when he backed at least fourteen different performers on five different record labels, mainly in Cincinnati, but also in Nashville (and perhaps Chicago). ■

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My Tau Moe Story

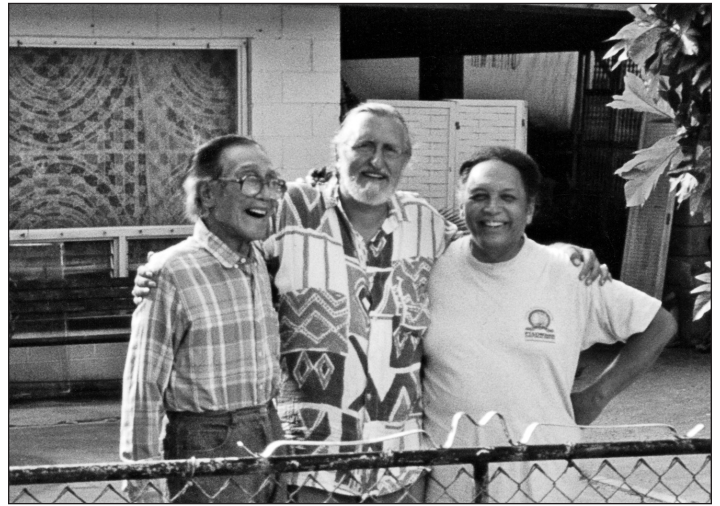
The following story comes from German steel guitarist par excellence, Frank “Palani” Baum, known to many HSGA members. Frank continues to be active, performing regularly with his Hawaiian group, the Kelemanian Duo with Hecy Junold, with a country version of the same band called Frank & Hecy, and with his friend Carlo Körber on select dates in Austria. Here he pays tribute to the legendary Tau Moe and family and chronicles his various trips to the islands to visit the Moes. Take it away, Frank!

I must go back to the early ‘50s, when Hawaiian music became very popular here in Germany. The old fashioned jukebox in the *gasthaus* (German-style inn or tavern) ‘round the corner had some recordings from the Tau Moe Trio, the Kilima Hawaiians, Hal Aloma, Rudy Wairata and others.

In my small Hawaiian music collection I had a few 78 records by Tau on the Austroton label and also his EP recording *Blumenkette Aus Hawaii No. 1* (Decca DX-1826), which included “Kohala March,” “Hawaiian Waltz Medley,” “Hilo March” and “Twelfth Street Rag.” Over and over I played the waltz medley and I tried to play along on my first electric Hawaiian steel guitar, a Framus Electra, which I acquired in the fall of 1953. In March 1954 I founded my first group, The Mauna Loa Hawaiians. (A bit later another group used Mauna Loa in their name, the Mauna Loa Hawaiian Boys, but we had nothing to do with them.)

Many years later, when Carlo Körber from Vienna and I became close friends, Carlo told me that for a period in the 1950s, he used to see Tau Moe, Rose and Lani almost every day at the well-known Vienna cabaret Moulin Rouge. [ED: This would have been around the halfway point of the family’s legendary 60-year world tour that started when the family left Hawai‘i in 1928.] Carlo was a teenager at the time and had no money to go to there regularly, but they would allow him to see the shows.

[ED: We got an amusing anecdote from Carlo about these Moulin Rouge shows. Writes Carlo, “I could sit at a table and watch the show, and they gave me free drinks (the non-alcoholic variety, of course), but I had to be available to dance with single ladies. Tough! I was able to talk at some length with Tau and with his beautiful wife Rose who played ‘ukulele, sang and danced. Sometimes they brought five-year-old Dorian on stage, and she would dance with a big flower in her dark hair. Lani played guitar and sang most of the lead parts with his mellow tenor voice. Tau always had a big smile on his face, and his Hawaiian guitar sound made me almost dizzy! During the evening I had time to talk to him about his steel guitar and about his Hawaiian homeland. Soon I knew songs like “Hano Hano Hanalei,” “King Kamehameha,” “Makalapua,” “Now is the Hour” and many



Hawaiian music legend Tau Moe (left), German steel guitarist Frank Baum and Lani Moe at Tau’s home in La‘ie in May 1999.

others. I was very sad to see Tau and his family leave Vienna. I believe Hamburg was the next step on their “never-ending tour.”]

Anyway, Tau was one of the musicians responsible for my becoming a professional steel guitar player.

Between 1954 and 1958 we played for Special Service Heidelberg and other American army clubs throughout Europe. And we played many floorshows all over Germany during this period.

Starting in 1959, work for my Hawaiian band began to drop off. Rock ‘n’ roll became stronger and stronger in the late ‘50s, and many music styles simply could not survive. Hawaiian music became more the preoccupation of hobbyists and fan clubs. So I changed to country music and soon had a Fender 1000 pedal steel guitar.

In 1963 Willy Ullrich and I founded the Kalua Hawaiians, mainly in order to do radio shows and recordings for Radio Munich (Bayerischer Rundfunk) and a few other German radio stations.

Now fast forward 30 years or so. I knew that the Tau Moe family had returned to La‘ie following their touring days in Europe.

First Visit – Fall of 1996

It was in the fall of 1996, when Ruth and I made our first trip to Hawai‘i. On October 5 we rented a car and made our way up O‘ahu’s North Shore to La‘ie. Tau’s Daughter Dorian was unable to meet us at the Polynesian Culture Center (PCC), so Lani came and brought us to the Moe home on Kulanui Street.

Tau was like an old friend from the minute we arrived. He was 88 in 1996 but he looked like a man in his sixties. Rose began talking about the time the Moe family had in Germany and about mutual acquaintances.

Tau talked a lot about the 1954 film *Blume von Hawaii* (“The Flower of Hawai‘i”), in which they all had jobs—the trio and little Dorian as well as Lani and Rose providing beautiful dances. The whole afternoon we talked—Tau, Rose, Lani and later Dorian, when she came from work at the PCC.

Tau showed us some of his Hawaiian steel guitars and we played and talked about tunings and styles. What I can remember is that Tau played a 6-string Gibson and I think he had it tuned to C# minor. He had another steel guitar tuned to either C6th or A6th. Not sure. Tau said that he tried many different tunings, but C# minor was one of his favorites and he played it on many of his recordings.

Tau no longer possessed some of the 78 Austroton and Decca/Telefunken recordings he had made, and he was delighted that I brought him copies, which included “Indian Love Call,” “Good Night Sweetheart,” “Ein Paradies am Meeresstrand,” and “My Golden Baby” from Austroton 9515V and 9549V; *Tau Moe’s Original Hawaiians* (Elite Special/Austroton EPA 1310); and the aforementioned Decca DX1826 release of *Blumenkette Aus Hawaii No. 1*.

We had a rental car and drove back to Honolulu early that evening. On the way back an idea for a song came to me, inspired by the experience of seeing Tau and family again. I wrote the refrain down on a paper napkin and soon it became an entire song, which I called “A Sunday in La‘ie.” Our visit was actually on a Saturday, but somehow “A Saturday in La‘ie” didn’t seem poetic enough! The song became the title song of my album “A Sunday in La‘ie,” which was released on the Rosewood Records label.

Second Trip – Fall 1997

We made another trip to the Islands in late October 1997. We had a layover in Vancouver on our way over and had arranged to meet Lorene and Art Ruymar at the airport! We had an hour to make plans for a more lengthy stay with them on our way back to Germany a month later.

We made it up to La‘ie on Friday, November 14. We took the #55 bus to the PCC, walked over to McDonald’s for a cold coke and waited for Lani to pick us up and give us a ride to Tau’s house.

Tau gave Ruth and me a kukui lei as a welcome, and we brought them some little things from Germany. We continued our conversation, picking up where we left off the year before. (I have worn that kukui lei on every Hawaiian music show I have played since.)

Tau brought out his three instruments, his Fender double-neck, his metal body acoustic, and his old six-string Gibson. Rose did not know us at first but a little bit later she said, “Oh, yes, Frank and Ruth.” Sadly, this was the last time she would recognize us. We talked and played all afternoon and when Lani brought Ruth and me to the PCC around 5 PM,



Tau Moe in 1997 at his home in La‘ie on O‘ahu’s North Shore.

Dorian was already waiting at the gate, and we went together to the New Zealand House and watched the Maori show and also some Samoan and Tahitian entertainment. We bought seats on a Swiss tour bus to get back to our hotel on Lewers Street in Honolulu.

Third Visit – Fall 1998

We made our third trip to the Islands in 1998 and made it up to La‘ie on Sunday, November 22. Our longtime friend Rudi Pold, who has lived in Honolulu since the early 1950s, picked us up at our Hotel, the Queen Kapi‘olani, and we visited the Pu‘u o Mahuka Heiau, the largest *heiau* (religious site or temple) on O‘ahu. Then on to Ehukai Beach Park famous for its beauty and pounding surf and then over to beautiful La‘ie Point, the site of five small island outcroppings, which according to legend are the remains of “Laniloa, the Mo‘o,” a mythical dragon who stood upright ready to kill intruders.

We finally made it to Tau’s house on Kulanui Street, and Tau and Lani showed us old photos they had from their time in Germany and Austria. Sad to say, Rose Moe could not share our nice afternoon talk and was sleeping in another room. We didn’t play music. We just talked and I learned that Tau wanted to see the film *Blume von Hawaii* one last time if possible. I had it in mind to surprise Tau and find a way to get him a copy!

Rudi Polt was born in Moedling near Vienna and Tau and Lani talked a long time about their time in Austria, and the band’s long stint at the Moulin Rouge in Vienna.

We also made it to Moloka‘i one day to see Kaunakakai and Kalaupapa, site of the former leper colony where Father Damien lived. “Post-contact” Hawaiian history is another thing besides music that I am very interested in.

Continued on Page 18

I spent most of my time on this trip with musician friends, and almost every night we went down to the “House without a Key” to meet friends and listen to bands like the Hiram Olsen Trio with Casey Olsen on steel guitar and the Islanders with Alan Akaka on steel. On Thursdays we always went to the Hawaiian Regent Hotel (now the Marriott) to hear Aunty Genoa Keawe and her son Gary Aiko with Alan on steel.

Almost every night we got together with Vic and Nancy Rittenband, and many times with “Hanalei” and Lilli DeWilligan, often with Bobby Ingano, Greg Sardinha, and other well-known steel guitar players. And last but not least with one of the finest musicians and friends I have in Hawai‘i, Gordon Freitas. Also Moe Keale became a friend of ours, and we would often catch his poolside shows at the Sheridan. Greg Sardinha was at the Moana and sometimes at Duke’s Canoe Club.

One highlight of the trip was on Thursday, October 29, when Aunty Genoa Keawe celebrated her 80th birthday at the Regent, which was so full of people that it took an hour just to get through the crowd to shake her hand and say happy birthday.

Shortly following our return to Germany, we were saddened to learn of the passing of Rose Moe, Tau’s wife of 61 years, just before Christmas.

Fall 1999 Trip

We made our way back to the Islands on September 11, 1999 for a quick three-day stopover. We met many of our aforementioned friends as well as Alan Akaka, Marjorie Scott, Sonny Kamahale, and B.B. Shawn.

After that we spent two nice weeks on the south shore of the Samoan island of Upolu at the Coconut Resort. We were back in Honolulu on September 27, and as it happened Jerry Byrd was playing steel with Hiram Olsen all week at the Halekulani Hotel (Casey had gone on a trip to the Mainland).

The following Friday we made it to Pearl City to hear Gordon Freitas playing songs from his CD *Local Folk*.

Monday was a really sad day, the funeral of Uncle Benny Kalama. We spent almost the whole day at church and at the cemetery. Performers at the church service included Gary Aiko, Alan Akaka, Jerry Byrd, Hiram Olsen, Nina Keali‘iwahamana, Eddie Bush and many others.

On the following day, Tuesday, October 5, we made it up to La‘ie to see Tau and Lani. Again Dorian had no time to see us, as she was working at the PCC. Tau gave us a few coconuts from his coconut trees in the garden. He and Lani brought the guitars and two of Tau’s steel guitars. Tau played his old 6-string Gibson while I played standard guitar, and Lani sang. What a great day!!



Tau Moe (left), Frank Baum’s wife Ruth and Lani Moe at Tau’s home in La‘ie during the Baum’s first trip to Hawai‘i in 1996.

As planned, I managed to get Tau a video copy of the film *Blume von Hawai‘i*, the one that featured the Moes in both song and dance. It was very hard to get and I had to make four months worth of phone calls to a company in Munich. Tau was so pleased and later Dorian told us that he watched the video once or twice a day over the next couple of weeks. One can imagine what this meant for Tau to see his beloved, departed wife Rose in their younger years.

Fall 2002 Trip

In October 2002, we once again found ourselves in the Islands and drove up to La‘ie once again to see the Moes. We were saddened to find Lani Moe in very bad condition. He had cancer and could not get up so we did not stay too long. Tau was not in the mood to play music either, so we just talked about the music situation in Hawai‘i and in Germany and what musicians and the musician’s unions around the world can do about it. Anyway, Lani had not lost his wonderful sense of humor, and he still could give our visit an atmosphere of gladness and joy, in spite of what was really in our hearts that day. Dorian, Ruth and I went downtown to a Chinese restaurant afterward, and she told us once again how bad Lani’s health situation was. Lani wanted to come to the Halekulani that year when I played for Steel Guitar Week—the hotel’s annual steel guitar event held during Aloha Week—but I could see there was no way he could manage it. By the way, I played that year with Po‘okela, Greg Sardinha’s band, and it was a rainy day so we played “under the roof” at the House without a Key seaside patio. Greg played ‘ukulele and Alan Akaka made all the announcements. Every Tuesday and Wednesday I played with Keith and Carmen Haugen at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. On

Continued on Page 20

HSGA Donations

Thanks, HSGAers for your generous donations the past two quarters.

Bill Rosen from Seattle, Washington donated \$300! California members **Don and Lynn Keene** gave \$200 to the Scholarship Fund. **Julie Haunani Waters** from the Big Island donated \$170. California member **Bill Rhyne** donated \$170 to the Scholarship Fund. Michigan members **Mae and Art Lang** gave \$120. **Tony Fourcroy** of Fort Collins, Colorado donated \$100 as did **Dee Reddington** of Escondido, California and **Bill Thomson** of Ocean City, Maryland. Mahalos to all of you for some very heavy lifting!

The following members donated at least \$10:

Bob Alaniz & Mary Corroero, Manteca, CA
 Bo Bahret, Cordova, TN
 Frank D. Brandenburg, Largo, FL
 Rick Collins, Claremont, CA
 Michael Cord, Cord Int'l, Ventura, CA
 Frank Della-Penna & Stephanie Ortoleva, Washington, DC
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Big Saturday evening jam at the 2013 Maui Hawaiian Steel Guitar Festival with (l. to r.) Ed Punua, Bobby Ingano, Gary Aiko, Greg Sardinha, Duane Padilla, Alan Akaka, Kaipo Asing, Ross Ka'a'a, Sonny Silva and Geri Valdriz. (Photo courtesy of Colleen Ricci)

The Maui Steel Guitar Festival Report

By Addison Ching

The Fifth Annual Maui Hawaiian Steel Guitar Festival, held during the weekend of April 19-21, 2013, was a resounding success. The Maui-based Arts Education for Children Group (AECG) collaborated with the Kā'anapali Beach Hotel and Alan Akaka's Ke Kula Mele School of Hawaiian Music to produce steel guitar performances, classroom educational enrichment presentations, and musical and cultural workshops.

Visits to area schools by the visiting steel guitar masters were met with interest and enthusiasm. The festival workshops were well attended and many were filled to capacity. From the live lobby music by Joel Katz and Ed Punua to the open stage entertainment sessions by amateur and professional steel guitarists, music filled the Kā'anapali Beach Hotel the entire weekend.

Featured steel guitarists at the Friday evening program and the Saturday evening Ho'olaule'a included Alan Akaka, Greg Sardinha, Bobby Ingano, Ed Punua, and Maui steel guitarists Geri Valdriz, Ross Ka'a'a and Joel Katz. Maui's top morning deejay Alaka'i was the emcee for the Saturday evening

Ho'olaule'a, which filled the outdoor stage area and the hotel's Tiki Terrace Restaurant to capacity. HSGA members Jack Aldrich, Dave Kolars and Jamie O'Connell shared their talents during Saturday's open stage sessions.

The late evening kanikapila sessions were also well received, with many of the featured performers jamming with festival attendees and open session players late into the night.

For more pictures and video of this year's festival, visit the festival website at www.mauisteelguitarfestival.com. Next year's festival will be held on April 11-13, 2014 at the Kā'anapali Beach Hotel. ■

Treasurer's Report

(as of July 31, 2013)

General Fund	\$15,361.63
Scholarship Fund	\$14,803.50
Credit Union CD*	\$25,000.00
Joliet Checking (est.)	\$3,007.82
Japan Acct. (as of 4/30)	\$1,015.57
Grand Total	\$59,188.52

**proceeds from the John L. Muir trust*

E Komo Mai! Welcome, New Members

Is your address correct? Please notify us!

UNITED STATES

Warren Barnes, 423 Windward Way, Sacramento, CA 95831-2421
Maureen and Frank Bianchi, P.O. Box 40600, Redford, MI 48240
Robert and Carol Brandel, 2844 Katrina Circle, Dubuque, IA 52001-1573
Marion Devitt, 1138 16th Street W., Billings, MT 59102
Nancy C. Harp, 730 N. Glenoak Dr., Macomb, IL 61455
Virginia Loku Hayes, 10660 Wilshire Blvd, Apt. 502, Los Angeles, CA 90024
Chuck Hughes, 2569 Stonewall Lane, Lafayette, CO 80026
Norma and David Kentner, 948 Pennyoaks Dr., Macomb, IL 61455-3422
Jim Newberry, 6718 1st Ave NW, Seattle, WA 98117
Mark Iseman and Matthew Nigro, 875 Waimanu St., Suite 304, Honolulu, HI 96813
Sheila Shearer, 921 S. Madison St., Macomb, IL 61455-3069
Gale Warshawsky, 1274 Kika Street, Kailua, HI 96734

CANADA AND OVERSEAS

Derrick Jarrad, Unit 14, 7 Whiting Rd, St. Agnes, South Australia 5097
Jean-Sébastien Gauthier, 359 Avenue Lafontaine, Chicoutimi, Québec G7H 4T9 Canada
Yoshitake Sakamoto, 2-9-1, Takao, Miyakonojo-shi, Miyazaki Pref. 885-0081 Japan
Shinichi Kakiuchi, 1-13-19 Kamekubo, Fujimino-shi, Saitama 356-0051 Japan
Pavel Mikhailov and Leonid Timokhin, Shelkovskoe shosse 25/15 apt.172, Moscow, 107241 Russia
Hans Gehrig, Oberbotsbergstrasse 73, Flawil, CH-9230 Switzerland
Peter Darling, 2 Latchmere Lodge, 12 Bulford Road, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 8DQ U.K.



Another obscure photo of George Ku and His Paradise Islanders signed by the artists. (l. to r.) Charles Opunui, Spencer Kulaniakea, George Ku and Dave Chang; the early radio stars often had little to show for their success over the airwaves.

TAU MOE Continued from Page 18

October 12 it was time to catch our flight back to Europe.

2004 Trip

In October 2004 Carlo Körber and his wife Brigitte came with us and on October 25 we made it up to La'ie to meet Dorian. Much had happened in the time since our last visit. We went to the Mormon cemetery and stood before the grave of Rose, Lani and Tau. Carlo was very sad that he was unable to see Tau again, some 50 years after the last time he saw Tau and Family at the Moulin Rouge in Vienna.

A final word from Carlo: "When I finally came up to La'ie in 2004, Dorian was the only member of the family left. Tau had departed one year before, Rose and Lani before Tau. Dorian and I had a long talk about the past, about the time in Vienna and

about the troupe's years in Europe between 1950 and 1962. Half a century later I came to La'ie, but to meet Tau Moe again, I came one year too late. Dorian said she couldn't remember much about Vienna—she was too young at that time. But other places in Germany she still knows very well and she speaks German like she was born in Munich or Hamburg! Thank you Dorian, thank you Tau and, who knows, maybe we can meet each other in another world one day."

Frank also sent us the following news about his current musical activities: "Nowadays we have good jobs for Hawaiian music here in Germany. Not long ago our band, the Kelemania Hawaiians, did an eight-day stint at Trader Vic's in Munich at Baierischer Hof where it has been located for the last 40 years. Hapa haole style is what sells the best over here! Also popular is

some of the more modern Hawaiian stuff such as the music of Sistah Robi (Kahakalau) and Amy Hanaiali'i Gilliom. I hope it will work out to come to 'Hawaii Nei' again this year! Between 1995 and 2005, I had a chance to visit Hawai'i no less than seven times, but sadly it did not work out. For now I say, "A hui hou." ■

BEACH WALK Continued from Page 9

Lauakea Foundation of Blaine Kia, and Ke Kula Mele Hawai'i School of Hawaiian Music under the direction of Kumu Alan Akaka.

The interest in Hawaiian steel guitar continues to increase, and its future looks brighter with the influx of the new generation players. The Fifth Annual Waikiki Beach Walk Hawaiian Steel Guitar Festival is set for Saturday, July 19, 2014. So make plans now and join us in Hawai'i. ■