

HSGA QUARTERLY

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Joliet Honored Guest, Ed Punua (left), floorshow producer Duke Kaleolani Ching, and Ed's father Victor (right), who enjoyed our festival so much, he signed up as a member!

HSGA Bids Farewell to Joliet

By Don Weber

We could not have asked for a better festival to end our 27 years of meeting in Joliet. In addition to our Honored Guest, Ed Punua, we also enjoyed the music of Alan Akaka, Paul Kim, Duke Ching, Kamaka Tom, and "Lion" Kobayashi. Everything was perfect, and we spent each day listening not only to these outstanding players, but to all the HSGA members who took to the stage to entertain us. As chairperson of the Joliet festival, I want to thank everyone who ever played for us over the 27 years. I'm sure Frank and Donna Miller along with Wally and Peg Pfeifer would agree. We have always had a great time, and we will miss gathering here.

Our guests of honor over the years have been a who's who of steel players. We want to give a big *mahalo* to each of them. It was our great honor to get to know them. We think back to when we spent time here with Jerry Byrd, Barney Isaacs, Buddy Hew Len, John Auna, and Merle Kekuku. We miss them along with all the others who could no longer be a part of our special family. To say we had a great festival this year would not be a correct statement. It must be said that we had an outstanding quarter century and then some.

We had a great lū'au dinner and show. As usual, the Joliet Committee provided complimentary dinners to the Guest of Honor, the show entertainers

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Lorene Ruymar (1985)

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.

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and the sound people. Complimentary sleeping rooms for the sound people and a change room for the dancers were provided by the hotel as part of our agreement with them.

Attendance this year was 104, down 23 from last year. The workshops seemed to be well attended.

Mahalos this final year go to Wally & Peg Pfeifer and Frank & Donna Miller, who started the whole thing, and to Chris Kennison. Over the years Wally has done all the work on registration and programs and worked with me on obtaining guests artists. Donna Miller and Peg Pfeifer were irreplaceable at the registration desk. Frank Miller has helped with organization, and this year Chris Kennison again handled organization of the workshops. I organize the hotel, the sound, the dancers, do whatever else I can, and sweep up.

President Paul Kim acknowledged the efforts of key members of the HSGA team for their tireless work producing the Joliet get-togethers over the years. He presented beautiful framed photographs he took of Hawai'i beach

scenes—complete with steel guitar “Photoshopped” into the scenes—to Don and Donna Weber, Frank and Donna Miller, Wally and Peg Pfeifer, and Art and Lorene Ruymar (who sadly weren't able to attend Joliet this year). President Kim also acknowledged the efforts of HSGA's soundmen over the years, including Doug Smith, Barb Kuhns, Floyd Alexander, Dave Chapman and John Hatton.

Donations

The raffle for the Scholarship Fund raised \$244. Tickets were sold by Nancy and Charlie Buttner. A rare CD auction raised \$201 for the General Fund. The CDs were donated by Alan Akaka, including limited editions of his own CD on which he plays all instruments, and four unreleased CDs of a beach jam at a private residence with many top entertainers present. Other donations to the General Fund included \$25 from John Hatton, \$15 from Maurie Junod, \$60 from Kay Das, and \$35 from Alan Akaka. Kay donated a portion of his CD sales, and Alan donated a portion of the sales of his Maui Steel Guitar Festival T-shirts.

For years of service producing the Joliet get-togethers, framed photographs of island scenes created by Paul Kim were presented to Donna & Frank Miller (left), Peg & Wally Pfeifer, Don & Donna Weber, and Lorene & Art Ruymar (not present). Also recognized were soundmen Dave Chapman and John Hatton, and photographer Paul Weaver (right).





Joliet 2013 Guest Artist Ed Punua conducting his steel guitar workshop while attendees follow along with their steel guitars.

The 2013 Festival Workshops and Jams

The workshops, scaled down from the year before, were nonetheless well attended and well received this year. This from Kay Das: “Chris Kennison gave an excellent introduction to right hand blocking and other basic steel guitar techniques. Guest Artist Ed Punua’s ‘capstone workshop’ provided a native Hawaiian touch and his ‘Talk Story’ segment included recollections of his studies with Uncle Barney Isaacs. We got to appreciate and gain insight into Barney’s unique style. The attendance on all three workshops was good, including some 15 to 20 people.” Jackie and Ray Luongo had nothing but good things to say about Kay’s steel guitar workshop: “We were very appreciative of [Kay’s] workshop and the time and effort [he] put into making a fantastic hour-long presentation. I can only imagine how much more informative it would have been had the hotel set [him] up with a PowerPoint projector. We both agreed that [he] skillfully took beginning-to-intermediate students and imparted theory and chord information in a way that didn’t have people scratching their heads in confusion, but understood easily. That is quite an accomplishment in a limited timeframe and especially given the challenges of the fretboard. Additionally, [he] gave us valuable tips on harmonizing and accompanying with the steel.”

Kay Das further commented, “The steel jam sessions were great. There were sometimes two going on in parallel. I sat in on one of them on Friday and Saturday. Alan Akaka, Gerald Ross, and ‘Lion’ Kobayashi were some of the other steel guitarists. There were some excellent rhythm guitarists, too, and that made it a lot of fun. As usual, the Saturday night jam went on ‘til the early hours of the morning and some of us (myself included) went directly to the airport as the limo service picked me up at 4 AM for my 8 AM flight out of O’Hare. No chance to get any shuteye. Did that on the plane!”

From Guest Artist Ed Punua

As this year’s guest artist, I was honored to be in Joliet for this special occasion. Our members and guests in attendance really have a genuine love for the Hawaiian steel guitar. I was able to see people from diverse backgrounds and interests unite in agreement that the Hawaiian steel guitar has touched their lives in a very unique way. Whether it was the musicians who just love to play it, the music lovers who love to listen to it, or those reliving a fond memory of a great steel guitar artist no longer with us, this was truly a special gathering. It allowed me to share songs that are special and dear to me, and to honor my teacher, Uncle Barney Isaacs. Meeting up with friends such as the Pfeifers, Webers, Millers, Duke Ching and others who I have not seen for over 17 years (when I was there last) was also very special. And finally, this year my mom, Ku’ulei Punua, sadly passed away in June, and my dad Victor was able to join me at Joliet. Having him there playing in the band, sharing his beautiful voice for all to enjoy, and making new friends was icing on the cake. He immediately joined HSGA and is looking forward to the next gathering! Thank you, members, for all that you do at HSGA!

From New Member Jim Rossen

I am pretty new to steel guitar and had never attended an HSGA event. With just Saturday free, I pointed the Mazda east at 6 AM for the three-hour trip from Iowa City.

While the venue was unassuming, the vibes were stupendous! My high school classmate Gerald Ross introduced me to a number of affable chaps with personality overflow that would be suitable for graphic novels. Enlightening clinics! Legends from the islands! Three steels on stage! Two separate dance troupes! Abundant individual playing tips! Who could have imagined?

Sadly, I had to return home soon after the evening show ended. Where do I sign up for next year?

From Kiyoshi “Lion” Kobayashi

This was my third trip to Joliet, and I decided to bring my 10-string lap steel, this time due to arthritis pain and the baggage limits imposed by my airline. The steel was specially made for me by Mr. Jan van der Donck who I met in The Netherlands last year. It’s a short scale steel guitar (only 21.5 inches) and fits perfectly in my suitcase. I took a chance using a brand new tuning CBbCEGACEGD (low to high) instead of the tuning I usually use on my Excel D-10 lock-lever steel guitar (CGBbCEGACEG). The new tuning gives a nice sound for “E Ku’u Morning Dew,” “Kanaka Waiwai,” and “The Nearness of You.” Alan [Akaka] was interested in the setup but without enough practice it was easy for me to pick the wrong strings!

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From Hawai'i, Board member Addison Ching (left) on upright bass and steel ace Alan Akaka delighting the Joliet 2013 audience.



Secretary-Treasurer and Honolulu office manager, Kamaka Tom, who ably participates in most areas of HSGA's operation.

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Initially I was scheduled to play only on Saturday, but thanks to Don Weber I was able to play also on Thursday and Friday. I played a duet with Alan on Thursday, but then after my set on Friday I decided I'd better change back to my usual tuning!

A good thing was that the audience surprisingly enjoyed my first singing since the 1983 Joliet Convention, when I announced, "Lion is rare to roar, but not this time!"

I was very happy to hear Ed [Punua] play in person, as Barney has been gone now for more than 10 years.

Finally I would like to thank everybody including Kamaka Tom and Alan Akaka who made a special effort to smooth over language difficulties that came up, as I do not speak fluent English. ■

Buy & Sell

Instruments Wanted

Wanted continuously by Michael Cord for his awesome collection: All models of vintage lap steels (like Hilos, Konas, Weissenborns, Rickenbackers), vintage amps and basses. Contact Michael Cord toll free at (877) 648-7881.

HSGA Donations

Thanks, HSGAers for your donations to the General Fund and Scholarship Fund this past quarter.

Special thanks to **Alan Akaka** who donated \$236 to the General Fund at Joliet, including proceeds from a special auction featuring limited edition copies of his latest release and other interesting CDs, and a portion of the proceeds from the sale of Maui Steel Guitar Festival T-shirts. Mahalo nui loa, Alan!

The following members donated at least \$10:

- Pete Burke, Shell Beach, CA
- Kay Das, Irvine, CA
- John Hatton, Pleasant Lake, MI
- Barbara L. Hudman, Honolulu, HI
- Maurie Junod, Oak Forest, IL
- Paul Kim, Kaneohe, HI

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HSGA 2014 Festival Preview

By Chris Kennison

We know the big question many of our members have is, will there be a festival in 2014 and where? Yes, we'll have a festival! The HSGA Board asked me to help organize the event. We're pleased to announce that our next mainland HSGA festival will be held in Fort Collins, Colorado on October 23-25, 2014. Negotiations are underway to hold the festival at the Hilton Hotel on Prospect Road near Colorado State University. (You can check out the hotel by doing a Google search on 'Hilton Ft. Collins'.)

Why Fort Collins? In looking for a new venue the Board considered many options. To grow our organization and make our event viable we think that finding a community that supports the arts, and has a large population of musicians and younger audiences is extremely important. Along with that we wanted a place that families would enjoy because there would be other things to do close by such as shopping, exploring, and dining. In addition, we also know that "roots" music is getting very popular across the country. Blues, swing, and 'ukulele festivals are thriving in communities that support music and the arts. Hawaiian music is "roots" music. Lots of musicians these days are exploring and looking for new sounds and textures. HSGA may just be the thing they need!

Home to Colorado State University (CSU), high tech and U.S. Agriculture industries, and famous micro-breweries (like New Belgium), Fort Collins or 'The Fort' as locals call it, has the type of arts-based focus we are seeking. The city's population is about 120,000 but it feels like a small town. This area has been labeled many times as the number one retirement city in the country by *Money* magazine and *Fortune* magazine. It was also just nominated as one of the "Top Ten Most Creative Mid-Sized Cities in America." There are more restaurants per capita than any other city in Colorado, lots of great shopping areas, and an "Old Town" shopping and dining district for fun out on the town. The music community in Ft. Collins and the front range of Colorado from Ft. Collins to Denver is booming. In addition, the city is quite diverse, which is one reason we have so many great restaurants in such a small town. Because of CSU, Hewlett-Packard, Intel, OtterBox and other great companies, the city has a younger, highly educated population concentrated in a small area. These folks support the arts and live music. Clearly we'd like to have a local Hawaiian community support us. Denver has a very large and active Hawaiian civic club. The three universities within one hour of Ft. Collins each have active Hawaiian clubs for their students—CSU, the University of Colorado Boulder and the University of North Colorado in Greeley. And, the



Steelman and Board member Chris Kennison from Fort Collins, who will help organize our upcoming 2014 festival in Colorado.

city is next to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. If you like to explore or hike, there are numerous rivers and trails close by, and within a short drive you are in the mountains or on the Great Plains.

The airport is Denver International Airport (DIA), a major airport about an hour and fifteen minutes from Ft. Collins by car or shuttle. Airport shuttles are numerous and reasonable. The drive from the airport is all interstate and very easy. Once in Ft. Collins, many things are within walking distance. Light rail and bus service with stops next to the hotel provide easy downtown access in about 10 minutes. Or you can drive—most of the popular destinations in town are a mile or two from the hotel.

The Hilton hotel is a large vacation destination/conference hotel with a lovely atrium, restaurant, bar, pool and health club—all indoors. Many rooms face the mountains. Negotiations are in progress and we'll post details in the winter issue. We'll try and keep costs for producing the event in line with what we were used to at Joliet.

Just as Joliet had the benefit of local members with "feet on the ground" managing the details of our long weekend, it makes sense to look for that again. I live in Ft. Collins and so does member Tony Fourcroy, so we'll both have "hands on" access and local networks we can leverage. I'm also hoping to get some community arts grants to help offset costs for entertainment and sound.

What about Las Vegas? We considered that, but the hotels there charge substantially more for conference rooms. And in a casino hotel you are in an environment that is quite noisy and smoky. Typically those hotels want you to gamble and eat, so there are rarely any lobbies or areas for sitting and jamming. There are indeed many things to do there. However,

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Kay Koster Honored with ‘Jerry Byrd Lifetime Achievement Award’

By John Ely

Professional and amateur musicians across the fruited plain—if they’re old enough—will recall not only the golden age of American music, but the accompanying era of the friendly small-town, independently owned music store. Your typical music store had everything for the professional and aspiring guitarist: guitars of every kind including steel guitars, amplifiers, strings, picks, expert instruction, and more. But Koster Guitar Center of Rockford, Illinois was not your typical music store. The following appears on the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) website as part of Kay’s inclusion in NAMM’s “Library of 1000 Interviews” of influential music merchants: “Kay Koster was a pioneering women retail owner, who not only successfully ran a business on her own beginning in [1945], but also personally repaired guitars and amps of all makes and models for decades—even after she closed her retail store. Koster Guitar Center ... was primarily a guitar store, perhaps the first such

store in the country. As the Fender line developed, Kay was one of the first dealers in the state and soon became an expert [in] electric guitar repairs.”

Beyond that, as the NAMM website goes on to say, Kay was a premier player and instructor, having taught countless students, many of them going on to successful careers in music. At one point, she and her staff gave lessons to 350 students a week!

This year—and it comes as no surprise to HSGAers and countless others who are familiar with Kay’s work—the Steel Guitar Hall of Fame has honored Kay with the Jerry Byrd Lifetime Achievement Award. The award reads as follows: “For your dedication, excellent playing and instruction of the steel guitar for over 70 years, you have gained the admiration and respect of the steel guitar community.” I know I speak for every HSGA member in congratulating Kay for this unique award. Unfortunately, plans to celebrate Kay’s award at Joliet were cut short as health problems kept her from attending this year. But happily, she was in much better health and in good spirits when the



A gorgeous photo of Kay Koster demonstrating National Hawaiian Steel Guitars for Valco Mfg. Co. in the early 1950s.

author interviewed her by phone a few weeks prior to press time. The following material comes from that interview along with details from Paul Warnik’s great article “HSGA Spotlight – Kay Koster,” which appeared in the Fall 2009 newsletter.

Kay Koster, née Catherine Kosztrzewski, was born in 1918 and grew up in the small town of Peshtigo, Wisconsin about an hour’s drive north of Green Bay and a stone’s throw from Lake Michigan. Her mother was an English teacher who could read, write, and speak five languages. Kay relates that she corresponded with her mother over the last 25 years of her mother’s life. Says Kay, “If I made a grammatical error she would circle it in red and send it back to me.”

Kay was an excellent student, president of her senior class, and attended DePaul University in Chicago. But, her course in life had been set years before. When she was ten years old there was a medicine show in the cornfield behind her grandmother’s house with a

Kay Koster (far left) with students at the 1948 IGL convention in Buffalo, New York.



Hawaiian troupe performing. After the show Kay said, “Grandma, there’s only one thing I want to do with my life—make music like those two guys did.” The duo had a rhythm guitarist and a steel guitarist. Says Kay, “They had a white [suit] with a red cummerbund and a red lei. And I just thought that sound was so heavenly I wanted to make that sound.” That was 1928 and over a 70-plus-year career Kay would realize that dream and more.

That was the day of the traveling Hawaiian troupes throughout small-town America and the advent of Harry Stanley’s Oahu Publishing Company with its unique door-to-door marketing system. Typically, performers would play and then solicit students. When they got 25 or so, a teacher would go to that town every week for 52 weeks. Says Kay, “Harry Stanley really started something!”

At age ten, Kay began eight years of piano lessons from Ms. Anna Papon from the Leipzig Conservatory in Germany. Says Kay, “I knew theory and how to read music. But I had this yen to sound like a steel guitar and I drove my teacher wacky so she finally got me a book. But it was octave notation up in the ‘birdcall region’ and I didn’t really like to do that.” [ED: Guitar music is usually written an octave higher than it sounds to avoid excessive use of ledger lines below the staff.]

Kay continues, “When I wanted to play steel guitar there were no teachers around, so I would put a piano roll on a player piano and thump it slowly to see what keys went down, and find that sound on my guitar. After I’d copied a few piano rolls, anything I would hear I could find on my guitar. So I had an all-girl dance band and a radio show before I took any steel guitar lessons.

“When I graduated from high school a couple of my friends had a car and we’d go to the next town and make a novena [ED: A novena is a form of worship in the Catholic Church consisting of special prayers on nine successive days]. For nine Wednesdays we prayed. They prayed for a husband and kids, and I prayed to get out of Peshtigo! And we all got our wish; they got their husbands and their raft of kids, and I got out of Peshtigo. Some people never know what they want to do with their lives. I knew what I wanted to do.”

After graduation Kay moved to nearby Merinette, Wisconsin and was taking lessons from Mr. Ralph Schultz at his Honolulu Conservatory in 1940 just before the onset of World War II. Once the war was on, Mr. Schultz had to get into defense work or be drafted, so he took a defense job in Detroit, and Kay purchased the Honolulu Conservatory and began teaching students of her own.

Taking over the business proved to be a “sticky wicket” as Kay termed it. She explains, “Contracts for the students specified that they would get a free guitar at the end of 52 weeks. I could only get six guitars every six months, and I



A 1951 photo of Kay Koster playing guitar with her group the “Astronotes” for a local dance at a Swedish club in Rockford, Ill.

had bought out the business about three or four weeks before the contracts came due. They were going to throw me in jail because I couldn’t get them their guitars! Well, my salesman used to also call on Voigt Music in Beloit, Wisconsin, and he told me that Mr. Voigt needed a teacher down there. So we got together with him, and he offered to buy all those guitars if I’d come down and work for him. I’d just have to pay him so much a week until the amount was paid. Clinton Voigt was a very welcome thing in my life.”

In 1945 Kay moved to her current hometown of Rockford, Illinois to work in Voigt’s Rockford store. (Voigt also operated a studio in Elgin, Illinois.) By 1946 she was teaching around 90 students a week at the Voigt studios. That same year during a guitar competition at the Illinois State Fair, Kay met another teacher who would go on to become not only a dear friend but fierce competitor, HSGA member Evelyn Brue from Ottawa, Illinois.

In 1948, Kay Koster officially established her own music store and studio, Koster Guitar Center. That same year, while at a guitar competition sponsored by the American Guild of Banjoists, Mandolinists, and Guitarists in Buffalo, New York, Kay first met legendary performer and teacher Letritia Kandle of Chicago who was judging the contestants. Even though Kay was already teaching, Evelyn Brue urged her to take advanced lessons in Hawaiian guitar and music composition from Letritia at her Modern Guitar Studios in downtown Chicago as she had done.

For the next four years Kay would make the two-hour trip from Rockford to Chicago for her weekly lesson with Letritia. During one of the lessons with Letritia she saw one of the most famous musicians of the day come into the studio for some assistance, none other than legendary drummer

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and band leader Gene Krupa. Kay observed Letritia sight reading through Krupa's score. After a few pages she found a problem section and penciled in the needed corrections. Kay also recalls Letritia correcting choral parts for a Chicago performance of the Oberammergau Passion Play in the 1950s. Of Kay's five teachers, Letritia Kandle was the most influential. "Before she died, 50 some years later, she sent me her bracelets and her earrings and a book of Hawaiians recipes, and I treasure them."

Kay speaks highly of Paul Warnik, respected guitar collector and author of that great piece on Letritia Kandle and her National Grand Letar, which appeared in the Winter 2008-09 newsletter. Kay recalls, "It was in Joliet. I saw this man sitting there with a beautiful New Yorker model [National] lap steel. The chair next to him was empty so I went and sat in it, and, of course, I had to ask him if I could hold it. He said I could, so I was holding this beautiful, mint condition New Yorker—I use to sell quite a few of those at my store and it drew me like a magnet." Kay told Paul about Letritia Kandle and about her unusual instruments including the Grand Letar. Says Kay, "Paul looked her up and they became very good friends. He was like a son to her, and she was like a mother to him. She gave him her Grand Letar and he bought another instrument from her collection." Kay recalls Paul saying, "No matter what happens in my life that will be the best thing that ever happened to me, to get that guitar."

Of the many things Kay picked up from Letritia, one thing she learned was how to play a multi-neck steel guitar by switching necks in mid-phrase to get optimum harmony. Like most players at the time, Kay started out on the basic A tuning, but she didn't care for the sound and having to play up at the higher frets for keys like G major. Says



Kay Koster (back row left) with students at the 1956 IML Festival in Cedar Point, Ohio.

Kay, "A Hawaiian band came through town and I asked the steel player what he tuned his guitar to. He tuned it to E7th, so I changed it and I liked it a lot better. On my triple-neck Fender, I use an E7th tuning, C# minor and C6th. 'Sand' and other songs are so beautiful, but you have to be on a B11th tuning. I love Fender amps but when it comes to steel guitars, I like the tone of Nationals more than Fender." Despite the sound preference she usually plays her Fender because it is lighter to carry. Kay further noted, "When I visited the Hawaiian Islands almost all the players used Nationals, especially the gray pearloid Chicagoan model."

That tour of Hawai'i in 1962 proved to be one of the highlights of Kay's playing career—by a fluke she ended up sitting in with Hawaiian groups in each of the four principal Hawaiian islands. She was attending a Hawaiian show at the Maui Palms when her tour guide got her to "confess" that she was a musician. The word got out and before long she was sitting in on three numbers, playing the steel guitarist's cream-colored National double-neck steel guitar. After hearing her play, the steel player ask her to finish out the evening

with the band—apparently he had a hot date waiting in the wings! Throughout her island tour, the word got out that Kay was the haole lady who played great steel guitar, and she ended up sitting in with local Hawaiian bands at the Kona Inn and Kamehameha Hotel on the Big Island, the Coco Palms on Kaua'i, and the Tapa Room of the Hawaiian Village Hotel in Waikiki.

One of Kay's big achievements as an instructor was forming the Illinois Guitar League in 1971. Kay explains, "The schools all had competitions for singing, piano, and all the horns; and the fairs had competitions for cows, horses and chickens; but there was nothing for guitar people. So I started the Illinois Guitar League. I wrote to Evelyn [Brue] in Ottawa and had 16 music stores, 450 contestants and five judges from five different states. And we continued on from there. Thousands and thousands of students went through it. We had competitions for solos, duets, trios and orchestra and band combos. Students took a theory test covering five levels from beginning to advanced and then they were issued a certificate. It was mandatory that students take a theory test so they would

know what they were doing.” The Illinois Guitar League competitions were held for forty consecutive years. “As rock ‘n’ roll came in,” Kay explains, “things slowly deteriorated until our final competition in 2011.”

During the course of the interview, I learned quickly that Kay is a genuine wit and storyteller. Here are a couple of gems I just couldn’t leave out.

“I got to play right before Jerry [Byrd] at every Winchester convention. One time we were standing down below the stage and he kissed me on the cheek and he said, ‘You sounded good.’ Mr. and Mrs. Goodrich [ED: makers of the best-selling Goodrich volume pedal] and their son came walking past us. The son had a volume pedal in each hand and said to Jerry, ‘Mr. Byrd, I’d like to present you with this volume pedal. We manufacture them and we think they’re pretty good.’ Jerry said, ‘Oh, thank you!’ and he added, ‘Do you have one for the lady, too?’ And the son said, ‘Well, er... ah... yeah. Here’s one for you, too.’ So I got a free Goodrich pedal that I still use!

“Jerry and I use to send jokes back and forth. When my picture appeared in the [Rockford] paper about my award, some old gentleman called to congratulate me. I didn’t know who he was, but he said, ‘I saw your picture in the paper and I see you like jokes, so I have a joke for you. There was this man who had been really prominent and he was used having everybody call him by name. After he landed in a nursing home, nobody called him by his name. One day he saw a lady in a wheel chair and he went up to her and said, ‘Do you know who I am?’ She looked at him, up and down, and said, ‘No, I don’t know who you are, but if you go to the front desk, I’m sure they can tell you.’”

Through her 70 years in the music business Kay has played Italian, Polish, and Swedish ethnic clubs, country clubs, private parties and lū’aus with a troupe of hula girls

Kay playing her triple-neck Fender Stringmaster at Joliet 1996.



A Joliet standing ovation for Kay’s benefit when her award was announced. Sweet, as she was not feeling well enough to attend.

available at a moment’s notice. Forty-four of her students finished their seven-year course of study complete with theory training, and then went on to careers in the music world. One of her students, Peggy Nelson, went to New York and played on Arthur Godfrey’s show and played the *Sabre Dance* backwards like Dick Patino. Says Kay, “She was my first student in Beloit in 1945. She wanted to follow in my footsteps and she sure did, turning out many fine students.” [From the author: In 1972, I saw my first steel guitar in a display window of Voigt Music Store while attending Beloit College. It was a Fender Champ with legs and I was drooling over it, having just discovered steel guitar a short time prior. The salesman told me that steel lessons were being offered by Peggy Nelson. Well, being a broke student up to my ears in classes, I couldn’t afford the steel guitar, and regrettably I missed the chance to study with Peggy or even Kay for that matter—Rockford was just a short drive south of Beloit.]

“I had a lot of students,” continues Kay, “who bought out music stores and were successful in music. And at Christmas especially, I get so many calls and visits from my old students who carried on in the music world and are having a happy life.”

Kay Koster has done so much over a 70-year career, it’s easy to lose sight of the big picture. A woman in a predominately man’s world, she found a way to make it in a very competitive business, and distinguished herself by riding that big wave of American popular music as dispensed by the hometown music store, bringing Hawaiian music and other styles to thousands of kids, many of them making their own mark in the music field. But beyond the expertise and business sense required to succeed, Kay, a self-described “recycled teenager,” did it with a smile and has never lost the sense of having fun as Joliet regulars will attest to. Congratulations, Kay, from all of us at HSGA for an award richly deserved! ■

Flamingo

(Grouya - Anderson)

Moderato

Arrangement* by John Ely

Intro

Chords: B^b7, D^{maj}7, F7, B^bmaj7, E^b7(b5), V^s, D^{maj}7

Fla - min - go, —

Steel Gtr. (C6th)

E	8	9	8	5	9	2
C	8	9		5		2
A	(7)	9	8	5		2
G		9		5		2
E					5	
C						2

*For audio and playing pointers, email johnely@hawaiiansteel.com

6

Chords: E^m7, A7, D^m7, G7, B^b7, E^m7, A7

— like a flame in the sky, — Fly-ing ov - er the is - land — To my lov - er near -

T	7-9	9-7-5	5	4-5	5-7-5				
A	7-9		5			5-5		7-7	7-7
B						5-5		7-7	7-7-7

11

Chords: D^{maj}7, A^{7sus}, E^b7(b5), D^{maj}7, E^m7, A7, D^m7

by — Fla - min - go, — with your trop - i - cal hue, —

P.H. P.H.

T		9	9	2	7-9	9-7-5	5
A				2	7-9		5
B		9	9	2			

16

Chords: G7, B^b7, E^m7, A7, D^{maj}7

— For it's you I re - ly on, — And the love that is true, — The

T	4-5	5-7-5	5-5	7-7	7-7	2	2-1-2
A			5-5	7-7	7-7	2	
B			5-5	7-7	7-7	2	2-1-2

Br

G_{m7} C₇ F_{maj7} F[°] G_{m7}

wind _____ sings a song to you as _____³ you go _____ The song that I hear be - low _____

T	10	10 10 10	12 10	12 11 12	13	12 12 10 9	10 10 12
A	10		12 10	12		12 12 10 9	10
B	10						

26 C₇ E_{m7} A₇ D_{maj7} E_{m7} A₇

_____ The mur - mur - ing heart, _____ Fla - min - go, _____ when the sun meets the

T	10 10 9	9		9	2	7 9	9 7 5
A	10 10	9	7	9	2	7 9	9 7 5
B	10 10	7	7	9	2		

31 D_{m7} G₇ B_{b7} E_{m7} A₇ D_{maj7}

sea, _____ Say fare-well to my lov - er _____ And has - ten to me!

T	5	4 5 5	7 5	5 5	7 7 7 7	7 10 14	14
A	5	5 4	5	5	7 7 7 7	7 10 14	14
B		5 4		5	7 7 7 7	7 10 14	

Outro B_{b7} D_{maj7} F₇ B_{b7} E_{b7}(b5) D_{maj7}

ad lib (Note: harmonics optional)
let ring-----

T	13	9	9	8	5	9	9 9 9
A	13	9		8	5	9	9 9 9
B		9		8	5	9	

F.H.----- F.H.(2)----
(2nd order finger harm.)

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

Including Byrd's Other Studio Work from February to July 1949

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. (The final installments will also detail the substantial Cincinnati studio work Byrd plied from early 1949 through the beginning of 1950.)

Part One (in the Fall 2012 issue) mentioned the first recordings Byrd and Lee made together as 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 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 (minus Byrd). The article also related Byrd's early activities as a Nashville session musician, backing Ernest Tubbs, Red Foley, and young Hank Williams.

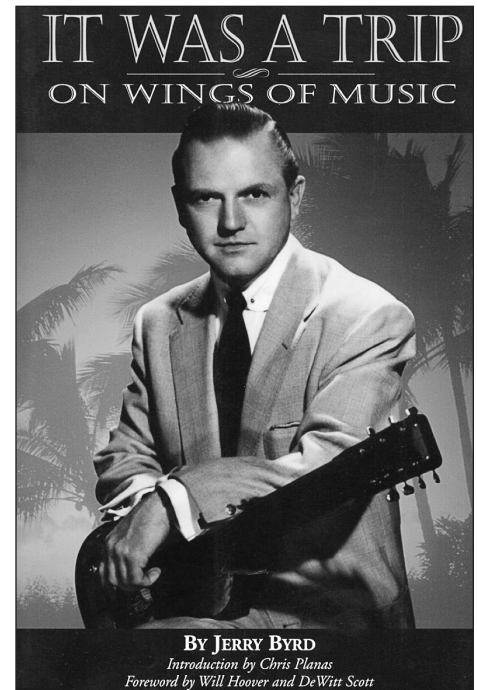
Part Two (in the Winter 2012-13 issue) detailed Lee's second, December 1947 RCA recording session (where Byrd joined a quartet backing Lee on eight sides). By this time, Byrd was a member of the quintet accompanying Red Foley on his weekly "Grand Ole Opry" appearances in Nashville. In October 1948, Byrd 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."

On February 2, 1949, Byrd helped back Lee on eight more RCA sides in Atlanta during an RCA field recording

expedition to the city. (These recordings, which included "My Home is the Dust of the Road" by Nashville music publishing pioneer Fred Rose, were discussed in the Spring and Summer 2013 issues.) While in Atlanta, Byrd also backed RCA newcomer Slim Whitman on eight yodel-infused sides, his first major label recordings.

After backing Lee and Whitman, Byrd returned to his west Cincinnati apartment residence (and his wife, Thelma, then roughly three months pregnant). In the eleven months that elapsed before Lee's next RCA recording session, Byrd became a fixture on Cincinnati's "hillbilly" music recording scene. With Nashville's major label recording industry not quite firmly set in 1949, Cincinnati was, "for one brief shining moment," one of three key centers for post-World War II country music recording, along with Chicago and Los Angeles. Such major acts as Hank Williams, Patti Page, Rex Allen, and Grandpa Jones all recorded in Cincinnati in 1949 with Byrd in their backing bands. In the last nine months of 1949, Byrd also traveled to Nashville (and perhaps Chicago) for two recording sessions.

Unfortunately, early record keeping at Mercury Records, for which Byrd did the majority of his 1949 backing work and his first recordings as featured soloist, was frustratingly incomplete. However, through a close reading of Michel Ruppli and Ed Novitsky's *The Mercury Labels* discography (as well as Ruppli's *The Decca Labels*, Ruppli and Novitsky's *The MGM Labels*, and Ruppli and William R. Daniels's *The King Labels*), a perusal of "Praguefrank's" Czech Republic-based 'countrydiscography.blogspot.



Jerry Byrd's 2003 autobiography, which was edited by Chris Planas, a guitarist originally from Hawai'i.

com' website, Byrd's autobiography *It Was a Trip: On Wings of Music*, and *Billboard* issues from 1949-50, one can begin to assemble a rough picture of Byrd's studio work during this time period, which the author offers below (stressing that this in no way purports to be a definitive Byrd discography for the months in question).

A couple of weeks or so after returning from Atlanta, Byrd backed soon-to-be "singing cowboy" star Rex Allen and his Arizona Wranglers on four sides for the Mercury label. The recordings were done at the E. T. Herzog Recording Company studio on the second floor of downtown Cincinnati's Oskamp Building on Race Street. Earl Herzog—a WLW engineer who dabbled in freelance recording—started the company with his brother in 1945, choosing a location just around the corner from WLW in hope of recording country artists performing at the station; in doing so, Herzog's facility became one of the first independent studio complexes to record country

music. (Herzog's facility consisted of a large and a small studio, each overlooked by its own control room.)

Rex Allen began his Herzog session with a waxing of Fred Rose's soaring "Afraid," which became Allen's first charting country hit that fall, enhanced by Byrd's sixteen-bar break. Allen next recorded Ernie Lee's "Tennessee Tears" (co-written with Pee Wee King), a fine tune enhanced by Byrd's "boowah" effects at each appearance of the words in the title. Allen's session closed with two waltzes, his own "The Arizona Waltz" and Fred Rose's tuneful "Song of the Hills." Byrd supplies a series of "chimes" (harmonics) at the words "the church bell was tolling" and shares a break with Allen's violinist on the latter side.

To infer from *It Was a Trip* and *The Mercury Labels*, on the same day Byrd backed Allen, he recorded his first four sides as a featured soloist, backed by Louie Innis's String Dusters. The String Dusters were a studio band led by Indiana-born rhythm guitarist/bassist Innis, a band mate of Byrd's on the "Midwestern Hayride." As of February 1949, the group also included "Hayride" members Zeke Turner on electric guitar and Tommy Jackson on fiddle, as well as Red Turner on bass.

Byrd's session with the String Dusters opened with his own composi-

tion, "Steelin' the Blues," originally conceived as an instrumental, with last-minute vocals penned by Fred Rose and rendered by Rex Allen. As Jimmy Guterman relates in the liner notes to the CD boxed set *Fifty Years of Country Music From Mercury*, "[Byrd] arrived unprepared for his first session as the feature artist, so he composed ... 'Steelin' the Blues' in the studio. Fred Rose [whose Acuff/Rose company published Byrd's tune] insisted on a vocal [which Rose wrote in the adjoining hallway] and recruited ... Allen [to sing it]."

Byrd, in an October 1988 interview with John Rumble, expressed his dislike of the lyrics insertion, although the April 9, 1949 issue of *Billboard* praised the Byrd/Rose/Allen collaboration, suggesting—with a bit of "folksiness"—that "Country jocks [deejays] should cotton to this easy-rhythm instrumental with ... fine [playing by] Byrd," adding that the side was "imaginative and unusual," with, in *Billboard's* view, "an effective short vocal by Rex Allen."

Byrd next waxed a cover of the old Hawaiian waltz "Wailana" ("Drowsy Waters"), apparently first recorded in April 1913 by the Hawaiian Quintette, and subsequently covered by performers such as Pale K. Lua & David Kaili, Frank Ferera and his wife, Helen



A 1948 photo of String Dusters Louie Innis (left), guitarist Zeke Turner, and fiddle ace Tommy Jackson. (From Brian Powers's "A King Records Scrapbook")

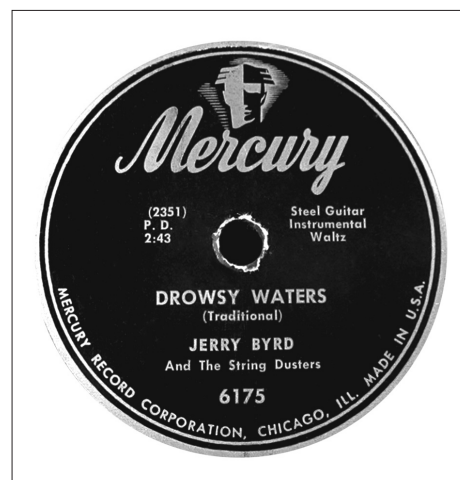
Louise, Toots Paka's Hawaiians, Kanui & Lula, and Lani McIntire. The April 9, 1949 *Billboard* effusively praised Byrd's rendition, deeming it a "top-notch string instrumental ... [that] should get plenty of action [airplay] all the way," adding that "Byrd's steel guitar work is masterly."

Byrd concluded his session with an island-themed song composed with Louie Innis ("Moonland") and a twelve-bar-blues-based instrumental ("Byrd's Boogie"). Three of the String Dusters apparently provided the vocals on the cleverly rhyming "Moonland," while "Byrd's Boogie" featured fine bluesy soloing from Byrd, Zeke Turner, and Tommy Jackson. The July 2, 1949 issue of *Billboard* described "Byrd's Boogie" as "an instrumental boogie with a solid hill beat," noting that "Byrd's steel guitar is featured to good effect."

According to Praguefrank's discography, Byrd was probably the steel player for honky-tonk singer Hawkshaw Hawkins's February 17 recording session for Syd Nathan's Cincinnati-based King record label. Having heard two of Hawkins's mid-February sides,

Continued on Page 14

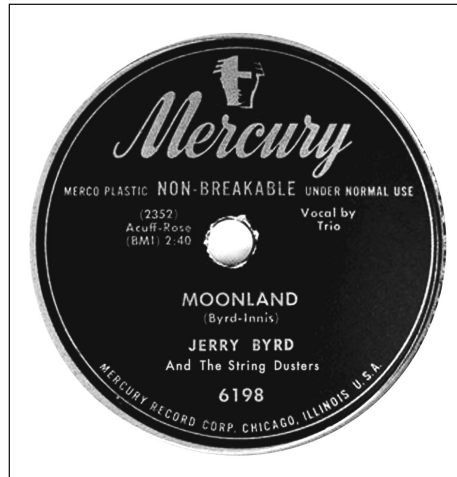
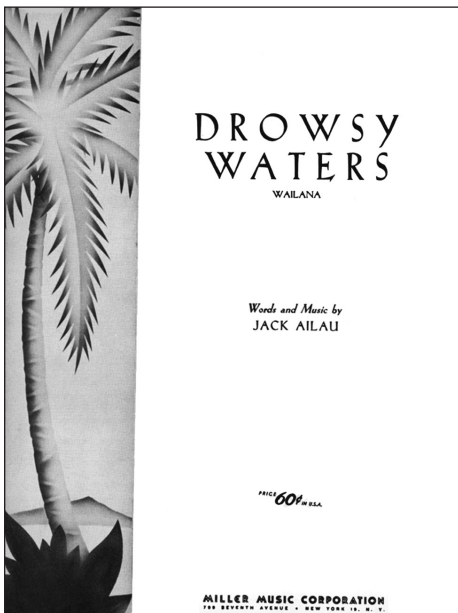
The 78 rpm labels for the Mercury coupling of "Steelin' the Blues" and "Drowsy Waters," the first two sides Byrd recorded with the String Dusters, released in spring 1949.



the author must relate that the steel guitarist does not sound like Byrd. One wonders if the steel player was instead Herman G. “Jiggs” Lemley (1927-2009), Hawkins’s original steel guitarist, who Praguefrank lists as participating in Hawkins’s previous King session in December 1947.

Before the end of February 1949, Byrd and several other musicians accompanied the Tampa-based duo Daisy Mae Arnett and “Old Brother Charlie” (Daisy’s second husband, Charles E. Arnett), at a Cincinnati Mercury session (held assumedly at the Herzog studios). Daisy and Charlie’s sides—which likely stretched Byrd as far beyond his “Hawaiian ideal” of music making as any other act—included a Swiss yodeling-infused number (a cover of the 1937 song “Sparkling Brown Eyes,” on which Byrd contributed a four-bar break and high obligato lines). Their other recordings included Charlie’s recitation of a 1918 James W.

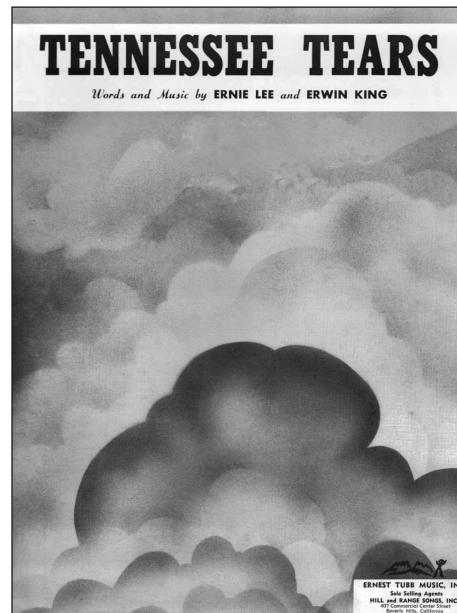
The front cover for Miller Music’s spring 1944 re-printing of “Drowsy Waters,” which the New York firm originally published in 1916. (From the sheet music collection of the Center for Popular Music, Middle Tennessee State University)



The record label for “Moonland,” the third side Byrd recorded with the String Dusters, released in summer 1949 as the “B” side to “Byrd’s Boogie.”

Foley poem honoring friendship (“Two Old Pals,” where Byrd’s carefully placed chordal lines contribute to the reflective mood) and the rather cornball “Ya Got Stuck.” On the latter number, recorded over the fiddle tune “Sally Goodin,” Daisy and Charlie pose each other a series of riddles, with each answer

The sheet music cover to Ernie Lee and Pee Wee King’s “Tennessee Tears,” which Rex Allen recorded at the Herzog Studios in February 1949, backed by Byrd. (From the Music Library at Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio)



The record label for the Kenny Roberts 1949 release, “Wedding Bells,” featuring choruses suffused with Byrd’s harmonics. (From the author’s personal collection)

greeted by rather forced belly laughs from the “boys in the band.” Byrd blithely offers pentatonic scale-based harmonics during the proceedings.

In circa early March, Byrd backed another Mercury act, radio performer Pete Cassell (“The Blind Minstrel”) in Cincinnati, assumedly at the Herzog facility. At the time, Cassell was likely appearing on WRAL’s “Radio Ranch” in Arlington, Virginia. In an April 30, 1949 review of “It’s Too Late to Say (That You’re Sorry),” Cassell’s third side, *Billboard* opined that “Cassell’s heartfelt warbling and Jerry Byrd’s expressive steel guitar add considerable weight to a fairly routine country tune.” Byrd contributed an introduction and eight-bar solo on the recording; on the flip side, “Memories That Haunt Me (Memories That Live),” Byrd played underneath Cassell’s mid-song recitation-tribute to a departed spouse. Cassell’s Cincinnati recordings turned out to be his last; he died in Florida some five-and-a-half years later at age thirty-six.

On April 15, Byrd and the String Dusters backed banjoist-comedian Grandpa Jones (then a youthful thirty-five) at a King session in Cincinnati. The session was held at Syd Nathan’s

King Recording Studio, which had opened a little over three-and-a-half years earlier on Brewster Avenue in the Evanston section of northeast Cincinnati, sharing space with the Royal Plastics Corporation. Nathan was another Cincinnati country music recording “pioneer,” waxing Grandpa Jones, Merle Travis, and the Delmore Brothers within the first two years of King’s existence.

On Grandpa Jones’s recordings, Byrd can be heard plying steel on the Jones creations “Light in His Soul” (regarding a young man on death row) and the twelve-bar blues “Grandpa’s Boogie” (on which Byrd supplies a “wah-wah”-laden chorus). The sides were credited to “Grandpa Jones and His Grandchildren.” Jones recalled in his 1984 book *Everybody’s Grandpa: Fifty Years Behind the Mike* (assembled with Charles K. Wolfe) that “for a while I got into the boogie-woogie craze that was going around and recorded ‘Grandpa’s Boogie’ and [several other boogie-based tunes] ... but they didn’t exactly bring down the house.”

On April 29, honky-tonk singer Jimmy Work recorded two Decca sides at the Castle Studio in the Tulane Hotel in Nashville, located in the hotel’s former second-floor dining room. Praguefrank lists Work’s steel guitarist as Tommy Paige, but aural evidence points to Byrd playing steel. Work was active in the Detroit area beginning around 1945; one wonders if Byrd crossed paths with him during his 1944-46 Motor City stint. Work’s engaging first side, “Bluegrass Tickling My Feet,” was described by the June 25, 1949 issue

Then-and-now photos of Cincinnati’s King Records complex, taken in 1966 and circa 2008, where Byrd backed several hillbilly acts in 1949. A historical marker placed at the site in 2008 by the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame reads “from 1943-1971 ... [eclectic] owner Syd Nathan gave the world bluegrass R & B, rock & roll, doo-wop, country, soul, and funk. ...” (From Brian Powers’s “A King Records Scrapbook” and Google Maps)



A circa fall 1951 photo of “Little Lani Jo,” Jerry and Thelma Byrd’s first child, born in Cincinnati in early July 1949. (Reprinted with the kind permission of the Steel Guitar Down Under Project—The Benny Joyner [dec. of Melbourne, Australia] Photo Collection.)

of *Billboard* as a “catchy, bouncy and entertaining hill-ditty,” with the reviewer adding that “[Byrd’s] steel guitar ... help[s] make this a sparkling platter.” The last of the side’s three sixteen-bar breaks is devoted to a Byrd glissando-laden solo. Byrd remains in the background during “Please Don’t Let me Love You,” allowing Work’s tremolo-rendering mandolinist and electric guitarist a chance to shine.

Countrydiscography.blogspot.com lists Byrd backing vocalist Art Gibson on one Mercury side (“Everybody’s Sweetheart”) cut in April at Chicago’s Universal Recording Service. The author agrees that Byrd may be the steel player. More research is needed to determine whether Byrd backed Gibson on any more sides at the session.

On May 3rd, Byrd—and apparently the String Dusters—backed their yodeling “Midwestern Hayride” colleague Kenny Roberts at a session for Coral Records, a newly-formed Decca subsidiary, at the Herzog studios. Roberts’s four sides included “Wedding Bells,” a doleful tale of unrequited love, which climbed to #15 on the country charts in fall 1949. As might be expected from the title, Byrd supplies a plethora of “chimes” on the recording.

On June 1st, Byrd (and apparently the String Dusters) backed Missouri-based radio musician Johnny Rion at a King session back in Cincinnati (assumedly at the King Studio).

On Independence Day 1949, an important milestone was reached in the Byrd household when Jerry’s wife Thelma gave birth to the couple’s first child, Lani Jo. (Lani means “heaven” or “sky” in Hawaiian.) The above photo—obtained from Jim Priebe, webmaster of the Australia-based Steel Guitar Down Under (SGDU) website (www.steelguitardownunder.com)—shows the proud parents with young

Continued on Page 20

COCO WIRE

From HSGA Recording Secretary **Frank Della Penna**: “At the Joliet general membership meeting on October 4, 2013, the HSGA Board announced that the term of existing board members will be extended an additional two years in order to maintain continuity of leadership during this critical time of transition and relocation of our annual festival from Joliet, Illinois to Fort Collins, Colorado.” (See board member **Chris Kennison**’s article on page 5 for a preview of next year’s HSGA Hawaiian Music Festival.)

From member **Ray Aubrey**: “The Hawaii University International Conference on Arts and Humanities (HUIC) will again host its annual academic conference bringing together professors from all over America, Canada and Asia. The January 2014 conference will be held at the Ala Moana Hotel Garden Lanai Ballroom with HSGA performing at the breakfast session on Sunday, January 5 at 7:30 AM. The hotel charges \$30 for the breakfast if any members would like to join us. We’re trying to promote HSGA and hopefully find some new members among our conference attendees. We’re also working on organizing a steel guitar seminar for our June 2014 conference. Come if you can! [ED: check the website at www.huichawaii.org.]

From Secretary-Treasurer **Kamaka Tom**: “Please check out over 400 Hawaiian music recordings from the collection of the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Sinclair Library. These are part of the collection acquired from Dirk Vogel in 2002. Dirk is a former president of the Aloha International Steel Guitar Club and has collected thousands of Hawaiian music recordings during his lifetime.” You can listen to 30 seconds



A vintage pose of club founder Lorene Ruymar playing steel at Joliet with hubby Art on rhythm guitar and Donna Miller on uke.

of each track that has been digitized. [ED: Some of us are wondering why this restriction has been placed on the collection.] Go to digicoll.manoa.hawaii.edu and click on ‘Hawaiian Music Collection’ under the Hawaii heading at the top of the page. Then click ‘Browse’ to search the collection.

Member **Ron Kempke** of Urbana, Illinois, one of our “resident” exponents of the Eddie Alkire system of playing, performed on September 12 at Strawberry Fields, a health food store in Urbana. Says Ron, “I had a good time and received some compliments but [the music was] only background for the shoppers. It’s a novelty in this area despite the [presence of the] Alkire collection here at the University of Illinois. I’m not sure residents even know about it. A few people asked what kind of instrument it is and I gave them a little background. I’ve been asked to play there again on December 7 and I’m looking forward to it. I’m attempting to expand my Christmas repertoire, too. I’m toying with taking some theory at the local junior college next semester. I love to add color with expanded chords and I’d like to know more about that.” Thanks for sharing, Ron. You’ve got the right tuning for expanded chords, that’s for sure!

And last but not least, this from club founder **Lorene Ruymar** of Vancouver, British Columbia: “Art and I send our apologies and our statements of sadness that we could not be there to attend the final HSGA festival in Joliet. That was such a good place! And we owe great amounts of thanks to those living in the area who made each event such a success. We hope the Hawaiian festivals will continue. We look at old pictures and enjoy old DVDs of days gone by, beautiful music, and great people of HSGA. We do that every day in the hour before bedtime.” Mahalos, Lorene and Art, for *your* service and devotion to the club that helped make our club such a success over the years! ■

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DISC 'N' DATA

“Stainless,” – Greg Sardinha (Keala Records SKCD-1228)

Review by John Berger

Although Greg Sardinha is one of the few Hawaii musicians of the “baby boom” generation who has helped perpetuate the Hawaiian tradition of steel guitar, this is by no means a traditional Hawaiian steel guitar album.

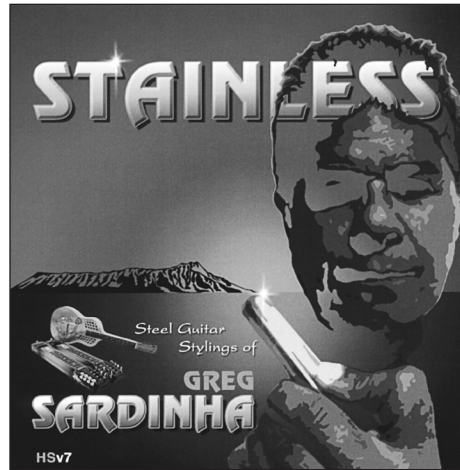
Yes, the original acoustic steel guitar and the solid-body electric steel guitar developed in the 1930s are both considered “traditional” these days, but Sardinha is taking them well beyond anything that might be considered “Hawaiian” in terms of style or arrangement. Songs that have ties to the islands are played in distinctly nontraditional style.

For starters, there’s a radical reworking of “Can’t Help Falling in Love” that Sardinha plays in an arrangement that’s closer to Jimi Hendrix than David “Feet” Rogers or Santo & Johnny. Elvis’s original hit from 1961 will always be the definitive vocal version, but give Sardinha credit for an imaginative instrumental that owes nothing to Elvis.

Sardinha puts a similarly fresh spin on other hits from the ‘60s. Steel guitar replaces Herb Alpert’s double-tracked trumpet playing in “The Lonely Bull (El Solo Toro),” and it gives Sardinha’s surf-rock-meets-jazz-meets-reggae arrangement of “Hawaii Five-0” a tighter link to ‘60s surf rock than the Ventures’ original. A three-song medley of tunes recorded by the Ventures and the Chantays is also solid surf rock. Shred it, Greg!

On other songs he takes a conventional approach. An admitted Beatles fan, he presents “Something” and “I Will” as straightforward pop instrumentals, albeit with interesting digressions from the familiar melodies.

“Little Rock Getaway,” written and recorded by jazz pianist Joe Sullivan in 1935, will be much less familiar here in



Hawaii; it also is played as melodic, straightforward pop, but with a hint or two of the hapa haole classic “Sophisticated Hula” percolating through it.

The Sullivan composition is one of several that reveal Sardinha’s broader musical horizons. Another is “Jessica,” written by Allman Brothers guitarist Richard Betts more than 40 years ago and played with a verve reminiscent of ‘70s-era Southern rock. A third is “Wahine,” composed by English guitarist Hank Marvin of the Shadows, one of England’s biggest rock groups of the past century.

Sardinha looks to Hawaii for two other selections. He writes that he included “Kauholo” as a memento of the time he played it with the composer, John Keawe, at the 2011 Nā Hōkū Hanohano Awards. He plays it this time as something closer to acoustic blues than Hawaiian, and with the Kailua Bay Buddies—Clayton Apilando (guitar), Darrell Aquino (bass) and Mark Caldeira (percussion)—backing him.

Sardinha closes the album with a traditional rendition of a vintage Andy Iona hit, “How’d Ya Do,” recorded on an iPhone while he and Zanuck Lindsey (guitar) and Kimo Artis (bass) were playing for visitors at an airport. The phone picked up audience noise and flight announcements as well.

Lindsey, an A-list journeyman musician, also sat in on “Can’t Help Falling in Love.” Other topflight guests include Chino Montero playing ‘ukulele on

“Jessica,” and Ben Vegas playing guitar on “Something” and ‘ukulele on “Jessica.” Gordon Freitas is the guitarist on the “Endless Summer”/“Lonely Bull” medley, Aquino plays bass on “Little Rock Getaway,” and Randy Aloya is the bassist on three other tracks.

Sardinha mentions in his liner notes that surf rock and instrumental groups like the Ventures were among his early inspirations. All going well, his imaginative work here will inspire young island guitarists to rethink the capabilities of the steel guitar and go for it.

Special thanks to John Berger, a mainstay in the local Hawai‘i entertainment scene for more than 40 years, and to the Honolulu Star-Advertiser for permission to reprint the above review, which appeared in the Sunday, November 17, 2013 edition.

To order Greg’s CD, go to the website at kealarecords.com. The price, including shipping, is \$15 (U.S.), \$20 (outside the U.S.). Members can also mail a check or money order to: Keala Records, 1605 Ulupii Place, Kailua, HI 96734. Please include the name of the CD (Stainless) with your order. Keala Records is making available a Digi-Card for download purchase of the album for only \$10 (U.S.) or \$12 (outside the U.S.) Greg is working on making the Digi-Card available via the website, so check there first. Otherwise, just mail a check to the above address, and Keala Records will mail the Digi-Card out to you. ■

Mahalo, Members!

Keep those great letters and photos coming! YOU are the heart of our association. Send news, comments, or photos to: HSGA Quarterly, 2434 Waiomao Rd, Honolulu, HI 96816-3424. Email us at hsga@hsga.org. In addition, please keep us informed of any changes to your email address or physical address. Send updates to both johnely@hawaiiansteel.com and hsga@hsga.org. Mahalo!

Maui Steel Festival Preview

The Sixth Annual Maui Hawaiian Steel Guitar Festival will be held April 11-13, 2014 at the Ka'anapali Beach Hotel. Presented by the nonprofit organization Arts Education for Children Group and produced by Ke Kula Mele Hawaiian School of Music, this three-day event brings together master steel guitar players and aficionados from around the world for a celebration of the music created on the Hawaiian steel guitar.

The festival is free and open to the public. It features performances, presentations, workshops and *kani ka pila* (jam sessions) focused on the steel guitar and its importance in the Hawaiian music genre. In addition, an ongoing series of cultural activities such as hula, lei making, 'ukulele, and story telling will take place throughout the weekend.

This year's festival features professional and master steel guitarists Alan Akaka, Bobby Ingano, Joel Katz, Owana Salazar, Ed Punua, Geronimo Valdriz, Sam Ako, Jeff Au Hoy, Ross Ka'a'a, Next Generation [a select group of Alan Akaka's young students], and Greg Sardinha. The list of entertainers also includes amateur and professional steel guitarists from Hawai'i, Washington, Illinois, and Massachusetts [including HSGA members].

On Friday and Saturday nights, a different lineup of players will perform on stage. These evening performances will be followed by a *kani ka pila* hosted by the master players that provides opportunities for guest musicians, students and aspiring young Maui artists to share their talents and learn from the best.

Daytime workshops will be conducted by a team of Hawaiian music educators, headed by Ke Kula Mele Hawaiian School of Music master player Alan Akaka. Open to all

Three of Alan Akaka's "Next Generation" steel guitarists: Mikaela Nishida (left), Raven Young and Alexis Tolentino (2011).



Behind the scenes at the 2013 Maui Steel Guitar Festival: Brandon Hirata (left), Alan Akaka, Ross Ka'a'a, Bobby Ingano, Addison Ching, and Shane Akoni Dellomes. Don't miss out on the 2014 event! (Photo courtesy of Colleen Ricci)

interested students and musicians, workshop topics include playing techniques and styles, instruction on how to record music, jam session protocols, and an introduction to the basics of the business of Hawaiian music.

Ka'anapali Beach Hotel's award-winning Sunday Brunch will feature performances by Alan Akaka and the Islanders, Greg Sardinha, and Mele Fong. This is the only event during the festival that is not free.

Also on Sunday, beginning at 9 AM and running through 2 PM, a variety of arts and craft booths, cultural demonstrations and exhibits will be presented such as a display of vintage Hawaiian steel guitars, a booth featuring historical artwork associated with the instrument, CDs by the participating artists, and promotional information for musical instruments.

Supporters for the Sixth Annual Maui Hawaiian Steel Guitar Festival include the Maui County Office of Economic Development, Hawai'i Tourism Authority, Ka'anapali Beach Hotel, Hawaiian Airlines and Dollar Rent-A-Car.

For more information and a complete schedule, visit the event's website at www.mauisteelguitarfestival.com, find it on Facebook (www.facebook.com/mauisteelguitarfestival) or call (808) 283-3576. ■

A Word on Photos...

We love to get photos from members! Avoid sending grainy or faded prints. Originals work best and we promise to send them back on request! Digital camera output works very well—make sure you use a high resolution setting (at least 250 dots per inch). Internet quality images (72 dots per inch) are not suitable for print media and cannot be used for the Quarterly.

CLOSING NOTES

Jim Jensen (December 24, 1921-September 13, 2013)

We received the following from Jim Jensen's son-in-law, Colin Hobson: "It is with great sadness that we advise the passing of Jim Jensen on September 13, 2013 at 91 years of age. Thanks to Colin for the following tribute to Jim:

Jim was one of the great players of Hawaiian-style steel guitar in Australia. He developed his musical skills over a period in excess of 60 years playing the instrument and devoting himself to Hawaiian music. Jim's musical abilities came out early in his life when he was a member of the Sale brass band, the town where he grew up in Victoria, Australia.

When he moved to Melbourne in his late teens, Hawaiian music was at its peak in popularity and Jim's interest and love for the genre quickly developed. He joined Buddy Waikara's Hawaiian Club in the 1940s where he had his initial lessons on the steel guitar. Apart from these initial lessons, however, Jim was mainly self-taught.

During the 1940s Jim put together a band, Jim Jensen's Hawaiians, with three other Melbourne musicians. The band remained together for over 50 years until age started to take its toll on the members. The core members of the band included Ivan O'Garey (bass), Jacky Reick (drums), Bob Hare (rhythm guitar) and, of course, Jim on steel guitar.

The band was highly successful on radio talent contents in the '40s and '50s. At one point they set a record of winning for 11 consecutive weeks on the radio show, "Do you think you are an artist?" The band also appeared on many local TV shows in the 1950s and played regularly in the most prestigious dance halls in Melbourne.

Over his career Jim also released many successful recordings. Three LPs were released in the 1970s under the W&G label. In later years, Jim also collaborated with his great friend and jazz guitarist, Bruce Clarke, in the recording of many CDs that were released on Bruce's Cumquat label and under the name of Jim Jensen and the Hawaiian Hotshots. The friendship between Bruce and Jim stretched back to the 1940s when they met at the Hawaiian club.

Jim was not only a talented musician but also a skilled craftsman, and he made three of his own steel guitars out of Australian hardwood. These included his principal 12-string steel guitar that he used for much of his professional work.

In 1987 Jim was honoured to be invited to perform at the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Convention in Hawai'i. He shared the stage with some of the great Hawaiian steel guitar players including many that he had idolized over decades devoted to the music. The program for the convention described Jim as "...widely acclaimed as the number one player of Hawaiian style steel guitar in Australia." Jim would put this down as the greatest achievement in his musical career. Not only was he performing in Hawaii, but he was sharing the stage with,



A beautiful shot of Jim Jensen playing his homemade steel guitar at the 1987 Honolulu Convention with that greatest of trios in the background—Jerry Byrd, Hiram Olsen, and Kalani Fernandes.

and being treated as an equal by, people he had admired over many years.

Jim is survived by May, his wife of 70 years, daughter Gail and grandchildren Georgia and Andrew.

This from Kamaka Tom: "It is with great sadness that I learn of Jim Jensen's passing. I met Jim at that Ho'olaule'a Concert mentioned above, and came to know Jim as not only a steel guitarist of high repute but also as a friend and fine gentleman. On behalf of all of those who have been blessed by his time with us, please extend our condolences to the family.

Leona Lena Murphy (March 9, 1927 – June 3, 2013)

We received the following sad news from Diane Murphy, daughter-in-law of HSGA member Leona Murphy: "I wanted to let you know that Leona passed away on June 3, 2013. Leona was a proud member of HSGA. She and her music will be greatly missed. She loved playing her steel guitars in Hawai'i, Japan, New Zealand and of course at the conventions in the Midwest." Leona lived on the Big Island for many years until 2003 and took lessons from John Auna during that time. The following is an excerpt from the newspaper notice.

"Leona was born to Emil and Lena Schoenegge on March 9, 1927, in St. Joseph, Michigan. She is preceded in death by her husband of 58 years, Jack Murphy. Leona and Jack met when they both were employed at the Indiana Bell Telephone Company. They lived in Indiana most of their lives. For

Continued on Page 20

E Komo Mai! Welcome, New Members

Is your address correct? Please notify us!

UNITED STATES

ANDREW J. CATANZARITI, 1415 Victoria St. # 801, Honolulu, HI 96822

TIM CLARK, 416 N. Maple, Mount Prospect, IL 60056

E.P. DAVIS, 1406 Kirkwood Drive, Fort Collins, CO 80525-1924

ROBERTA HUFF, 622 Memorial Drive, Macomb, IL 61455

DAVID MANISCALCO, 2590 S. Arlington Mill Dr, Apt A, Arlington, VA 22206

CONNIE MELVIN, 2826 Cedar Ave, Long Beach, CA 90806

ERIC RINDAL, 829 43rd Ave., San Francisco, CA 94121

JAY SZTUK, 528 Norton Lane, Arnold, MD 21012

OVERSEAS

DERRICK FRANK, 169 Blagdone Road, Reading, Berkshire RG2 7NE U.K.

DAVID GREENING, 19 Gloucester Rd, Dane Bank, Denton, Greater Manchester, M34 2HT U.K.

FESTIVAL PREVIEW Cont. from Page 5

our event is more about building community and sharing and learning. The Vegas experience could happen in the future, but we'd need to plan two or more years out to get in there. If we had selected Las Vegas, there would be no festival in 2014.

It's time to move boldly into the future with HSGA and see if we can become one of the premier steel guitar festivals in the mainland U.S. and attract as many new folks to Hawaiian steel guitar as possible. Keep an eye on our website and the winter newsletter for more details. We'll publish more as we get it. Start planning now!

Thanks to Chris Kennison for taking on the difficult task of filling some mighty big shoes planning our annual festival. For those who don't know, Chris has been a member since 1998, a current Board member, and longtime professional musician in Colorado. He is retired from Hewlett-Packard. His Hawaiian band, Book 'em Danno has been performing around the western states since 2001, and he is well connected with local hula halaus and local Hawaiian musicians. (Check out his band by doing a Google search on

'book em dannno hawaiian swing band', then select the first YouTube listing in the results.) Chris also plays steel guitar with Barleen's Arizona Opry (www.azopry.com). He hosted the "Steel Guitar Jam" on public radio station KRFC-FM (88.9) for seven years where he showcased all forms of steel guitar including lots of Hawaiian steel and member recordings. He also managed the station for four years. As a result of managing a nonprofit in Ft. Collins, Chris has many connections for publicity, grants, and networking with the local arts community. Tony Fourcroy will be helping Chris, Addison Ching and others on the Board to make the 2014 festival a good one for our organization. ■

CLOSING NOTES Cont. from Page 19

retirement they moved to the Big Island of Hawai'i and lived there for 18 years, where Leona was very active in learning Hawaiian language and hula. She had been playing the Hawaiian steel guitar since she was eight years old. In Hawai'i she joined a very active senior group that performed their music and dance nationwide as well as in Tokyo, Japan and New Zealand. Jack and Leona were very active in Hawai'i as

Lani Jo. Priebe explained in an April 4, 2013 e-mail to the author that "the picture comes from the Benny Joyner ... [photo] collection, which was handed off to the SGDU." Priebe speculated that Joyner—a prime mover in steel guitar promotion in Australia's southern states in the 1970s—"would have obtained it on one of his many sojourns with Jerry, I guess." Priebe added that "as Jerry was resident in Hawaii, at times he had quite a lot of contact with Aussies traveling back and forth to the USA and Benny was one of them. Jerry also visited Australia as a guest on several occasions back in the late '70s. At [that] time there was a good deal of steel guitar activity ..." (The author notes from a perusal of old *Steel Guitar Australia* newsletters at the SGDU website that Byrd contributed a series of newsletter articles around 1986.)

Jerry Byrd's October 24, 1988 interview with John Rumble in Nashville was conducted as part of the Country Music Foundation's Oral History Project (interview OHC48). Thanks to Karen F. Raizor for information on the layout of Herzog's studios. Thanks also to Wayne Daniel for providing biographical information on Pete Cassell, and to Amy Pace for her continued graphics expertise.

Next—more on Byrd's 1949 studio gigging, including his final session with Hank Williams, his next four "featured soloist" sides (including "Steel Guitar Rag" and "Panhandle Rag"), as well as his backing of Red Kirk on Buddy Reynolds's island-themed gem "Over an Ocean of Golden Dreams." ■

volunteers for the Coast Guard Auxiliary for Search and Rescue. Jack would pilot their 1957 Piper Tri-Pacer and Leona would navigate. In 2003 Jack and Leona moved to Washington State to be close to family." ■