

HSGA QUARTERLY

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All smiles at the Fort Collins festival playing sessions: Honored Guest from Hawai'i, Jeff Au Hoy, flanked by Denver area members Joe Stewart (left) and John Mumford.

HSGA in the Rockies!

By Festival Co-host Chris Kennison

If you did not attend our annual HSGA Steel Guitar Festival in Fort Collins, Colorado this past October 23-25, you missed one of the best conventions I've been to. My time in HSGA only goes back about 15 years so I know I missed a lot of the Joliet experience. There were many magic moments in Joliet and I was a bit worried we might lose some of that in moving to a new city, but I think we succeeded in bringing some of that magic to Colorado this year.

Our Guest of Honor from Hawai'i was Jeff Au Hoy. It had been almost ten years since he visited us in Joliet. Jeff performed each day at the festival and

also at a concert on Saturday night. It was a treat for all of us that don't get to Hawai'i that often to be able to hear and meet Jeff, and get to know him a bit more. For those that missed our event, we obtained permission from Jeff to post some of his performance on October 24—just go to YouTube and search on 'Jeff Au Hoy 2014 Fort Collins'.

Our event was held at the Hilton Hotel in Fort Collins, and most everyone I talked to said they enjoyed great service, clean rooms and good food. The hotel restaurant was reasonably priced for breakfast, and there is a Starbucks in the lobby. The large concert space we used worked really well for the music. There was enough room

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HSGA QUARTERLY

Volume 30, Issue 116



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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association's 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. Submitted items should also be e-mailed directly to the editor at johnely@hawaiiansteel.com.

IN THE ROCKIES *Cont. from Page 1*

for seating, vendors and milling about in the back without interrupting the performances. And the weather was stunning! Normally October is sunny with minimal rain or snow, but this year the daily average temperature was above 70 degrees. The fall colors were an added bonus. The Hilton loved having our group there, and we're negotiating for a weekend in October 2015.

This year we did miss seeing some of our Joliet regulars from the Midwest who found the cross-country trip difficult. However, we picked up quite a few new attendees from the surrounding area and also from Wyoming and Nebraska and the West Coast states. Those that I spoke to said they will be back!

The one big change we made in our schedule of events this year was replacing the Saturday Night Lū'au with a concert. We all commuted 12 miles to the historic, restored Rialto Theatre in Loveland, Colorado. This lovely little theatre from the 1920s is a wonderful venue for acoustic music. This special concert featured two world-class musi-

cians, Jeff Au Hoy and Sally Van Meter. Sally is a Grammy award winner and a local Colorado musician who specializes in resophonic guitar. She also plays electric lap steel. Jeff took the stage first and was backed by Gerald Ross, who was the music director for the event. Joining Gerald were two Fort Collins musicians who play with my band Book 'em Danno: Stuart Yoshida on uke and Wes Melander on bass. Ed Punua rounded out the band adding 'ukulele and his wonderful vocal harmonies. The audience was wowed for sure.

One of the highlights for me and the audience was when Jeff called Donna Miller to the stage to sing "Moon of Manakoora"! To say the audience was surprised is an understatement. Donna did an amazing rendition of that classic. It was a special night.

After a short intermission, Sally got on stage with her back up musicians and expertly weaved in and out of stories about steel guitar and playing songs that showed how the resophonic steel (dobro) fit in the history of steel guitar. She spanned themes from Hawaiian to bluegrass, and at one point in her set,

A nice view of the restored Rialto Theatre in Loveland, Colorado, site of the Saturday night concert. In the distance, Donna Miller is sound checking with the backup band.





Chris Kennison (left) covering all the “bases” at Ft. Collins. with John Hatton in the background managing his booth.

played a haunting instrumental on her original Weissenborn steel guitar. Lovely.

The concert drew 213 people! Of those, 92 were HSGA festival goers, which means the remainder were new listeners! This was our hope—to expose the Hawaiian steel guitar to a new audience. Everyone I talked to said they had a great time. And the Rialto Theatre staff loved the event. If we can do it again we will, but the theatre is so popular they are already booked a year in advance. Even calling the Monday after our event to book next year didn’t work. So, next year we’ll do something different. Perhaps the lū’au will return. All in all, the concert was a successful event.

I was so busy running around checking on details all weekend I know I missed some of the music, but what I heard was excellent. We had many new players from the area and I hope they will return next year.

I want to thank some folks for all their help in making this first event outside of Joliet a success. First, Tony Fourcroy was and is our “feet on the ground” in Fort Collins. He took over duties that Don Weber did as emcee and helped organize the playing schedule and many other aspects of the festival. Gerald Ross worked all year giving advice and brainstorming ideas, as well as confirming Jeff Au Hoy as our Honored Guest and managing the concert as official music director. Gerald also did a great job with the name tags and marketing. I donated the sound system, but my hat goes off to Clarke Wright and Paul Honeycutt for running the system all weekend. It sounded great. John Hatton joined us again with his well stocked “music mercantile booth,” and we had a few additional vendors showing art, guitars, ukes and accessories. Also, special thanks to Bob Gobeille for the excellent videos of all the performers, including the one of Jeff Au Hoy mentioned above. This year, for the first

Fort Collins Festival Video

By Chris Kennison

As mentioned, videographer Bob Gobeille captured all the daily sets of each performer in hi-definition digital video and made those files available to each performer via YouTube “private” links. He did this work gratis as a friend and as a budding video guy; he enjoyed the opportunity to hone his craft.

Video in the music business is a different animal than CD recordings or other audio recordings because there are substantial royalties required to legally create and share a song with video. If you post a YouTube video of a song, and you don’t have permission from the composer to use that song, it will be blocked or you may get a nasty letter. Because video can be so easily shared these days, many performers are cautious about posting their video online. If you have a professional career in music, it’s critical that you have as much control as possible over marketing your catalog of music and video. We all have a bad night once in a while, and nobody wants a poor performance posted worldwide. *For those in attendance who take videos at HSGA performances, it is very important that you get the performer’s permission for any use beyond your personal enjoyment.*

We did get Jeff Au Hoy to approve the posting of video on one of his sets from Friday, October 24 and that is on YouTube. At this time HSGA does not have permission to share this video publicly.

If you performed at our Fort Collins festival and would like to share your video with HSGA, please send us an email at board@hsga.org with a link to the video. If you were a performer and want a personal DVD for your archive, and don’t know how to download your YouTube links and burn a DVD, please contact me at seldomfed@gmail.com and I’ll share your email with our videographer. You can then work with him directly to create a DVD of your set (price to be determined).

Video notwithstanding, it goes without saying that the best way to see the great performances at HSGA is to attend! See you there next year!!

time, we were able to share video of each performance with the performer before they got home. These YouTube links are private and each performer can post their videos as they choose. And finally to my good friends E.P. Davis and his wife Amy, thanks for staffing the main check-in table all weekend! It took a lot of work, but everything seemed to work and almost everyone had really big fun. I’m looking forward to next year. ■

Joseph Kekuku Statue Unveiling

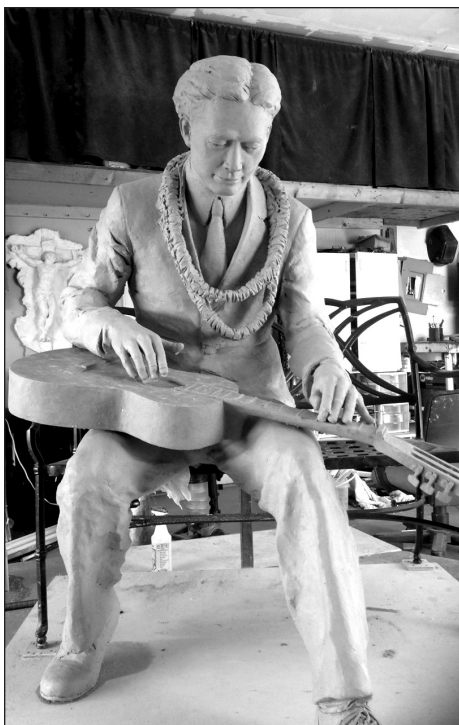
By John Ely

Here's one of those stories that "come out of the ether" in the form of dozens of emails over a period of several months, so I'll do my best to bring order out of the chaos.

Many of you know HSGA member and steel guitarist Steve Cheney, who has performed regularly over the years at the Polynesian Cultural Center (PCC) in La'ie on O'ahu's north shore. La'ie is also the birthplace of steel guitar inventor Joseph Kekuku. Much of our story comes from email exchanges between Steve and club founder Lorene Ruymar, who always seems to have her finger on the pulse of official "goings on" in Hawai'i pertaining to steel guitar.

In late July we got an email from Steve informing us that, as part of a major upgrade and extension of the PCC's facilities, the decision was made to commission a bronze statue of Joseph Kekuku to be placed near the renovated entrance of the PCC. According to PCC

The Joseph Kekuku statue in its "clay phase" from sculptor Leroy Transfield.



Executive Vice President Eric Workman, the vision is to create a life-size statue where people can sit on a bench next to Kekuku and take pictures. PCC has been working feverishly to complete the expansion by the end of 2014 and have a grand opening in January 2015 or thereabouts.

Near the end of October we got the following update from Steve Cheney: "After a recent presentation by Alfred Grace, CEO of the Polynesian Cultural Center (who I know reasonably well), I talked to him about the Kekuku statue, the PCC grand opening and [possible HSGA participation in the event]. Mr. Grace told me that the actual date for a grand opening is not yet set and that the PCC board of directors, many of whom are on the mainland, will have the final say on when the grand opening will happen. Mr. Grace told me that it is looking like the grand opening will happen sometime in the spring of 2015."

Lorene Ruymar has been trying to help coordinate some kind of presence for HSGA at the statue's unveiling. As Lorene has pointed out, in a perfect world the unveiling would occur when HSGA meets for its biennial convention in late April 2015, but such a scenario remains doubtful. Regarding the timing of the unveiling, Steve Cheney commented, "I suspect that it is not reasonable to expect that a life-size statue can be done in time for a January opening. I know because I was friends with BYU Hawai'i art professor Jan Fisher who did the Duke Kahanamoku statue in Waikiki and many other such statues. According to Jan it takes a great deal of time to set the design, make the clay figure and the bronze mold, do the bronze casting, and finish and deliver the statue. A statue like this cannot be rushed—one mistake at any point in the process and it's back to square one. In a recent email, Eric Workman wrote that he is guessing the

unveiling will occur sometime in early February.

In a November 18 email, Lorene wrote, "I just received the pictures from the sculptor, Leroy Transfield, and it looks to me like he's done a great job. The understanding is that it will be shipped to Hawai'i in early January.

Both Lorene and Steve are expecting that local steel guitarists will participate in the statue's unveiling, presumably at the PCC grand opening ceremony. Writes Lorene, "Although Art and I have stopped travelling long distances due to questionable health and old age, we do hope to be there for the unveiling. And since we hold our HSGA Honolulu Convention in late April/early May 2015, [our members] could spend a day at the PCC playing their steel guitars for Joseph Kekuku and all his visitors." ■

HSGA Donations

Thanks, HSGAers for your nice donations this past quarter.

Special thanks to **Bill Rhyme** of Sebastopol, California who donated \$170 to the Scholarship Fund, the cornerstone of our mission ensure the Hawaiian steel guitar's future. Mahalo nui loa! To boot, **Rusty Strange** of N. Falmouth, Massachusetts donated \$100 to the General Fund, a great help in our day-to-day operations. Mahalo nui loa for these generous donations!

The following members donated at least \$10:

Frank D. Brandenburg, Largo, FL
Rick Collins, Claremont, CA
Raymond Franson, Lee's Summit, MO
Jim Hambelton, Coarsegold, CA
John Hatton, Pleasant Lake, MI
Beat Iseli, Winterthur, Switzerland
James Kingham, Lake Charles, LA
Janet King, Watsonville, CA
Margo L. Klundt, Sherrard, IL
Delano D. Kruzan, Macomb, IL
Mark Roeder, Madison, WI

HSGA 2014 Japan Convention

By Tom Tohma

The Second HSGA Japan Convention was held on Sunday, September 28 at the BRB club, a special membership club for Keio University graduates in Ginza, Tokyo. It was a great success with 80 members and non-members in attendance. Twenty steel guitar players played Hawaiian *hapa haole* music, including special guest Alan Akaka from Hawai'i. Also in attendance were Mr. Santo and Mr. Ujiie, who are both good steel guitar players, and HSGA member from the Bay Area, Kris Oka. Alan's expenses were mainly covered by convention participants and partially from my own donation.

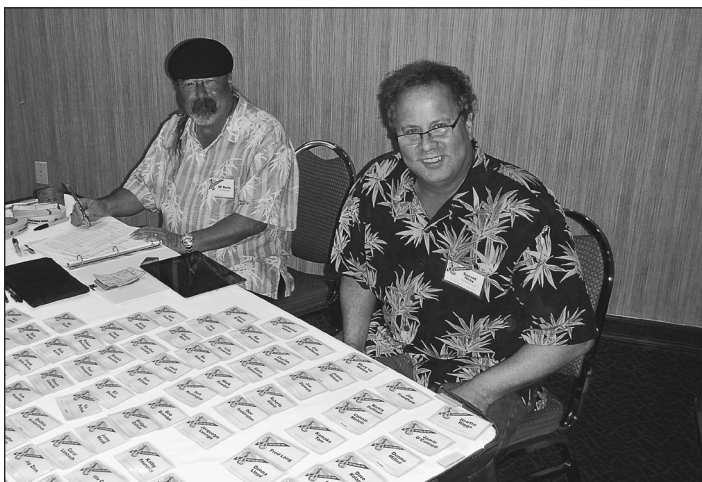
The BRB club proved to be a better convention venue than last year's B-flat club in Akasaka, Tokyo—the food and service were much better. I think a smaller audience of 100 or less provides the best atmosphere for our HSGA concerts in Japan. No hula dancers joined us this time and no official video was shot.

I am happy to report that we signed up seven new members, Noriko Tomita and six of Lion's steel guitar students, which brings the total number of Japan members to 54.

Steel guitarists performing at the convention included, in order: Shinichi Kakiuchi, Chise Yamagishi, Naohito Ohkubo, Kunichika Kadoi, Masakatsu Suzuki, Yoshiyuki Endo, Hideko Kobayashi, K. Yamamoto, Katsutoshi Ogata, Hideki Ida, Toshimitsu Shiihna, Yoshinori Nihachi, Moto Suzuki, Mitsuo Fujii, Lion Kobayashi, Yukio Katagiri, Hidekazu Kinugawa and Alan Akaka.

Unlike our recent HSGA festivals on the U.S. mainland, the focus at our Japan conventions is strictly on the steel guitar and *hapa haole* music. This music and the steel guitar itself will never die in Japan! ■

Manning the HSGA registration desk at the Fort Collins Hilton, E.P. Davis (left), pictured here with Gerald Ross.



At the HSGA Japan Hawaiian Convention in September, Hidekazu Kinugawa and band entertaining at the BRB club in Ginza, Tokyo.

Aloha Joe – 20 Years and Counting!

Internet radio pioneer, Aloha Joe, just celebrated his twentieth year on air, making AlohaJoe.com one of the longest running radio entities on the web. *Movieline Magazine* called it “one of the most influential Hawaiian websites on the Internet.” Aloha Joe now has 9 stations running 24/7/365, including Steel Guitar Island, Slack Key Island, Ukulele Island, Relaxation Island, Aloha Joe Christmas, Tiki Radio, Pacific Jaz, and Aloha Joe Radio #1 and #2, Everything starts at www.alohajoe.com—just click the On-Air button. The show is also aired on several ground-based stations around the country. Congratulations, Aloha Joe! ■

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'Fort Collins' Spells Success!

From Kay Das and other HSGA members

The HSGA inaugural festival at Fort Collins, Colorado was an unqualified success. Much hard work resulted in flawless execution. Every little detail had been looked into from the sound system to the stage lighting, and every performer was recorded with a DVD to be made available at some point in the future. The hotel was excellent and Fort Collins with its university atmosphere provided a sense of "olde worlde" charm.

Jeff Au Hoy from Hawai'i, Mr. Nahenahe himself, proved to be a wonderful guest artist inspiring a new generation of players with his modest, unassuming style. What a player! That he was self-taught brought out another dimension in the man. To boot, a wonderful singing voice augmented his excellent steel guitar playing in the old Hawaiian style. Hawai'i and the Hawaiian steel guitar needs no better ambassador.

For me, the other highlight was the breaking of the cocoon with more variety on stage, from surf to country to standards to bluegrass, in addition to the great Hawaiian tunes. I remember Jerry Byrd once saying at an HSGA convention in Waikiki, "I've only been here twenty minutes and have heard 'Beautiful Kahana' three times." Other highlights for me included: the duet by Jeff Au Hoy and Sally Van Meter at the Rialto Theatre on Saturday evening; the wonderful, haunting voice of Donna Miller at the Rialto; the lilting voice of Ed Punua, his infectious sense of humor and his great playing in the Barney Isaacs tradition; meeting and jamming with Liz Masterson and Dave Dale; and meeting old friends like Chuck Lettes, Kamaka Tom, Frank and Donna Miller, Ivan and Dee Reddington and many others.

Guest Artist, Jeff Au Hoy, at his "Talk Story" session on Thursday evening, assisted by Gerald Ross (left) and Kamaka Tom.



At the HSGA festival auditorium in Fort Collins, Ed Punua (left), Chuck Lettes, Kay Das, and Ed's father Victor Punua.

Kudos to Chris Kennison and Tony Fourcroy for a job well done organizing the event. I was well looked after and I look forward to next time. Kind regards, Kay Das.

From Bob Alaniz (Manteca, California)

The festival was great! I was unfortunately never able to attend the Joliet Convention, but I really wanted to attend the inaugural event at Fort Collins. I was glad to see several friends and make some new ones. Many thanks to the members from Fort Collins who organized the event.

I flew in on Thursday morning, leaving Sacramento, California at 5:50 AM, an easy two and a half hour flight to Denver International Airport. I got to the hotel in time for lunch and played my set at 1:30 PM. Whew!

Thursday night several of us went out to dinner at one of the more popular steak houses in Fort Collins. A couple of folks from our dinner party ordered salads, and we were surprised when we saw that the salads were topped with Rice Chex cereal. I was glad that I ordered the soup!

Jeff Au Hoy invited me to play bass guitar as one of his back up guys; that was great fun, too. Jeff is a very fine young steel player. I shared with him that I saw him play in Waikiki when he was first beginning to play. I look forward to hearing more of Jeff's playing, as well as attending future HSGA gatherings in Fort Collins and Waikiki.

From Rick Aiello (Berryville, Virginia)

What a great convention!! It's tough to pick out individual stories or events that were the highlights of the festival, but I'll try.

Jeff Au Hoy's performances were jaw dropping. If anyone wants to know what it would be like to sit before Dick McIntire in his prime, they should seek out a performance

by Jeff. He simply is the best steel guitar player I've ever seen. Not much more can be said.

The single greatest individual song performance on any HSGA stage did occur this year in Ft. Collins when Garry Vanderlinde and his band played an amazing rendition of the surf classic "Pipeline" complete with a whammy bar equipped steel guitar. Just too cool!!

Ed Punua, last year's guest artist, came with his dad and treated the crowd to several performances featuring his great steel playing, vocals and abundance of Aloha Spirit. Such a pleasant guy to hang around, too.

The "Stand Man" Mark Roeder put on a "clinic" on western swing playing in his set. All that was missing was Bob Wills yelling "Ahhh Haaa" in the background.

The concert on Saturday night in nearby Loveland, Colorado was a fun addition to the convention. Sally Van Meter did a great job entertaining the crowd with her acoustic steel playing, although I think she learned that following Jeff Au Hoy might be the toughest gig in town. Ha, ha! They did meet at the end of the evening for a rousing finale. What fun.

I did miss seeing Peg and Wally Pfeifer and Don Weber; it felt a bit strange without them. Hopefully they can make it next year. They would have been very proud of Chris



Rialto Theatre headliner, Sally Van Meter (left) with Donna Miller relaxing backstage getting ready for the Saturday night concert.

Kennison, Tony Fourcroy and Gerald Ross for putting on one heck of a convention!!

But most of all, I enjoyed just hanging out with my ol' buddies and some new ones. For me, the annual HSGA convention is always the highlight of my year.

Continued on Page 8



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From Ed and Victor Punua (Līhu'e, Hawai'i)

My dad, Victor and I had a great time in Colorado. We missed Duke Ching and the Pfeifers among others but nonetheless had a wonderful time of steel guitar fun and making friends. I look forward to being retired like the majority of convention goers but thanks to my dad paying my way, this was better than retirement. It's a wonderful feeling to be Hawaiian and be able to play our music far away.

Everyone's appreciation of Hawai'i's music there in Fort Collins is truly uplifting. Big Mahalo to Chris, Tony and all the helping hands that made the new venue a success. I hope more people attend next year.

From Jackie Luongo (Lee's Summit, Missouri)

Driving the long, open roads of Kansas to Fort Collins inspired many questions regarding the upcoming HSGA 2014 festival. How would attendees in Fort Collins compare to previous attendees in Joliet? Would there be any interest among the locals for Hawaiian steel guitar? In fact, would people even attend at all?

The answers to these and more questions were affirmed during the course of the festival. The music was great, the workshops were informative, the hosts were congenial, yes; but best of all were those small moments of human interaction that HSGA is known for.

Four years ago, I didn't know the difference between a pick and a p'tah, yet here I was fielding questions as to why I hadn't signed up for a set, and at the same time receiving needed encouragement. Consider Ed and Vic Punua who, unaccustomed to the altitude and exhausted by the long trip, never once lost their good humor and spirit of aloha. Similarly, Kamaka Tom's willingness to talk story long after

A familiar sight at Joliet get-togethers, the tradition continues at Fort Collins with plenty of vintage steel guitars to drool over.



No rest for the weary! Jeff Au Hoy (left) teams up with Ed and Victor Punua for an "all-island" segment at Fort Collins.

the conversation had stopped at the lunch table and concurrently the sounds of the Hilton's lobby waterfall fountains, almost gave me the sense of being in the Islands.

In summary, if you didn't attend this year, please consider attending in 2015. Many mahalos and much credit are due to Chris and Tony and the board members for all their efforts in making Fort Collins 2014 a success. ■

Email Address Reminder

Please keep us informed if your email address changes. Update us at johnely@hawaiiansteel.com and hsga@hsga.org. Mahalo!

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MEMBERS CORNER

Ray Aubrey, Kane‘ohe, Hawai‘i

HSGAers, check out the Hawaii International Conference on Arts and Humanities (HUIC) in January at the Ala Moana Hotel in Honolulu. This year’s we’re having an open mike segment on Sunday, January 4 from 3-7 PM where local musicians can showcase their talent. Come over if you can and tell everyone who might be in the area to come on down for some great times and music. For details, check the website at www.huichawaii.org. A trio of local HSGA members will perform on Sunday morning.

Frank Della-Penna, Washington, DC

I just viewed the video of [scholarship student] Alexis Tolentino. It looks like Alexis is doing a superb job in performing on her Rickenbacher Hawaiian steel guitar, thanks to her focused study and practice under the instruction of Alan Akaka. “Maui Chimes” is no easy song, but I think Alexis does have good intonation, excellent ability to do harmonics and great bar technique. With continued studies she will become more versatile and accomplished. In Alexis, we are looking at the future of Hawaiian steel guitar.

Jess Montgomery, Kapa‘a, Hawai‘i

All’s well here. I’m fortunate to be playing a good bit of steel, including lū‘au shows with Larry Rivera, private events with Troy Waialeale (of Mt. Waialeale fame—his ancestor was on the first canoe to make it to Kaua‘i, and he became the keeper of the *heiau* atop the mountain—hence the name), and Thursday nights at the Hukilau Restaurant in Kapa‘a with a great slack key player Dennis Chun. Our line is, “Sorry, we can’t do ‘Goin’ to the Hukilau’. We’re already here.”

Playing lū‘aus around Kaua‘i, the Kahili Boys featuring our own Jess Montgomery on steel, Larry Rivera and Richard Beach.



Performing at last year’s HUIC international arts conference, member Derrick Mau on steel with Kamaka Tom (left) on guitar.

Pete Kahele, Cerritos, California

Just wanted to share with everyone out there—I saw a steel guitar player that I haven’t heard in quite a while. I play mainly in hula competitions here in northern and southern California. This time, it was at Sam’s Town Hotel in Las Vegas for the Second Annual Kumukahi ‘Ukulele and Hula Festival held this past August. As we were being positioned behind the stage for our first hula soloist, the group ahead of us started with their competition song, and when I heard that steel guitar singing, there was no doubt who was behind it—none other than Herbert Hanawahine. He weaved his way in and out of that song, tearing it up as he strolled along. How sweet the sound! ■

Allen Melbert

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White Christmas

(Irving Berlin)

Arrangement by Alan Akaka

Ballad ♩ = 80

Intro

C C#dim Dm G7 C Em Ebm Dm G7

Steel Gtr. (C6th)

A

C Dm F#7 G7 F

10 G7 C Cmaj7 C6 Dm/G C C7 F

16 Bb7 C D7 G7

For audio and backing tracks, e-mail alanakaka@me.com

B C D_m F[#]7 G₇ F G₇

T	4	5 4 3 4	5	6 7	9 11 12	14 12 11 9
A	3	5 3 2 3	5	6 7	8 10 12	14 12 10 8
B				6 7		

27 C C^{maj}7 C₆ D_m/G C C₇ F

T	7				9 7	12 12 11 10 9
A	7		5 5	7 7	7 9	12 12 11 10 9
B						

32 B^b7 C C^{#dim} D_m G₇ C E_m E^b_m D_m G₇ C

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

38 D_m/G **Tag** C C^{#dim} D_m G₇ C E^b_{maj}7 D^b_{maj}7 C^{maj}7

T	0 2	4 4	5 5	7	7 7 7 7	12 12 12 12
A	0 2	3 4	5 5	7	7 7 7 7	12 12 12 12
B			5 5	7	7 7 7 7	12 12 12 12

DISC 'N' DATA

“Eddie Bush and The Biltmore Trio,” – Eddie Bush (Stylo Magic SM-2002)

Review by John Ely

Eddie Bush is one of those great steel guitar players who I'd heard of much more than actually heard. A sad state of affairs set aright with this release, a compilation of twenty representative recordings from various points in his career. From what we understand this is a limited release with only 100 copies available for purchase.

First, to place historically the recordings included on this CD, a rundown of Eddie's career and recording history taken from Les Cook's informative liner notes, which are based largely on a series of articles written by the late Dirk Vogel for his Aloha International club newsletter.

Eddie Bush was born in Milwaukee in 1911 to Hawaiian parents who were entertainers in a Hawaiian show on the mainland, and young Eddie began his own career performing with them. After the family moved to Los Angeles in 1924, two local boys, Bill Seckler and Paul Gibbons, saw Eddie playing, invited him to join them, and a trio was born. By 1927 they were sufficiently confident to seek an audition with Earl Burnett, who was impressed, and they were hired, joining the Burnett band's regular gig at the Biltmore Hotel. With Eddie on steel guitar and falsetto vocal, Paul on lead vocals and guitar, and Bill on vocal and ukulele, they quickly became a major attraction in Los Angeles.

In April 1928, Bush, Seckler and Gibbons made their first recordings. Four sides were issued from that first Okeh

Earl Burnett's Biltmore Trio circa 1929, the photo used for the CD cover. (l. to r.) Bill Seckler, Eddie Bush and Paul Gibbons.



Actress Colleen Moore with Paul Gibbons, Eddie Bush and Bill Seckler on the set of the 1929 movie "Footlights and Fools."

session under the name The Los Angeles Biltmore Hotel Trio (plus a further one issued only in Australia) including the two instrumentals “Clowin’ the Frets” and “Hard to Get Gertie,” which are included in this release. While both these classics have been reissued elsewhere on more than one occasion, Les Cook notes that an Eddie Bush retrospective would hardly be complete without them.

As members of the Earl Burnett Orchestra, Bush, Seckler and Gibbons would be featured regularly on Burnett's Brunswick Records as a vocal trio. But many times, too, they would be featured as instrumentalists as well as vocalists on discs issued under the name of Earl Burnett's Biltmore Trio. Several of these recordings are included in this compilation.

In 1930 after some highly successful years with Burnett at the Biltmore Hotel, Eddie decided to leave the band, and he then spent a year at Los Angeles's Ambassador Hotel followed by nationwide tours with Henry Busse and Buddy Rogers' bands.

In 1934 he was back in the recording studio where he revived the Biltmore Trio name for the Victor label, albeit now they were Eddie Bush's Biltmore Trio. The compilation includes “My Little Grass Shack” from that session. Later that year he settled in Southern California and used the same

Continued on Page 20

Order Information

Copies of “Eddie Bush and The Biltmore Trio” can be purchased online at redlick.com—go to ‘New Releases’ or search on “Eddie Bush”. You can also order by sending a check for \$15 USD to Robert Armstrong at 213 Grant Ave, Winters, CA 95694.

BOOK REVIEW

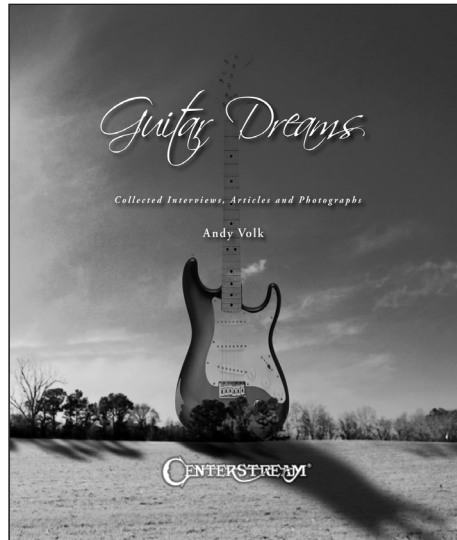
“Guitar Dreams” – Andy Volk (Centerstream Publications, ISDN-13: 978-1574242645)

Andy Volk, the author of the books *Lap Steel Guitar* and *Slide Rules*, has written a new book called *Guitar Dreams*.

Andy Volk had this to say about the book, which was just published by Centerstream/Hal Leonard:

“Guitar Dreams collects photographs and articles featuring musicians and luthiers whose work fascinates, delights and inspires all of us who passionately care about the back stories behind the music and instruments we love. Many of these pieces first appeared in the pages of *The Fretboard Journal* and *Acoustic Guitar Magazine*, but others were written specifically for this book. There are many previously unpublished photos, most in full color featuring a spectrum of string musicians including standard guitarists, steel guitarists, banjo player Eric Weis-

Young Eddie Bush pictured with his acoustic Hawaiian steel guitar.



berg and ‘ukulele legend, Bill Tapia, as well as a group of dedicated, innovative luthiers. Here’s a partial table of contents:

- Nato Lima (famed nylon string guitarist)
- Jerry Byrd (steel guitar pioneer)
- Louie Shelton (studio guitar veteran)
- Cindy Cashdollar (master steel guitarist)
- Gabor Szabo (jazz/world music pioneer)
- Amos Garrett (Telecaster master)
- Muriel Anderson (fingerstyle virtuoso)
- George Barnes (seminal jazz guitarist)
- Bill Tapia (centenarian musician)
- Elliott Randall (famed studio guitarist)
- Bud Isaacs (pedal steel innovator)
- Ray Jackson (mandolin on “Maggie May”)
- Rick Aiello (pickup/frypan steel guru)
- Bill Asher (luthier to the stars)
- Estaban Bojourquez (creator of art guitars)
- Carroll Benoit (resophonic master luthier)
- Bill Hardin (Weissenborn luthier)
- Steve Spodaryk (re-imagining 19th century Martin guitars)

My goal was to create a colorful, artistic layout that really gave the people and instruments their due. There are many books that focus on the minutia of specific instruments: which year the knobs changed, what were all the available finishes, serial numbers, etc. I’m much more interested in people and their personal stories: How and why did someone start a career in music? How was a solo on a hit record

created? Why does a builder want to build a given type of guitar? Included in the book are profiles and interviews with steelers Cindy Cashdollar, Jerry Byrd, Gino Bordin, Bud Isaacs and Joaquin Murphey and instrument builders Bill Asher, Bill Hardin, Rick Aiello, Steve Spodaryk and Carroll Benoit. Two of my favorite stories in the book are Jerry Byrd’s, about how he created his diatonic tuning and Rick Aiello’s explanation of the science behind the sound of the classic Rickenbacher guitars and pickups.

Signed copies of the book are available from me (including shipping within the USA) for \$35 at www.volkmedia.com. Click on the ‘Guitar Dreams Book’ heading near the top of the page. There’s also a link for buyers outside the USA. The book is also available for purchase from retailers such as Amazon and Barnes & Noble. ■



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Beautiful is Hawaii: Jerry Byrd's *Nani Hawaii* Album of 1950, Part I

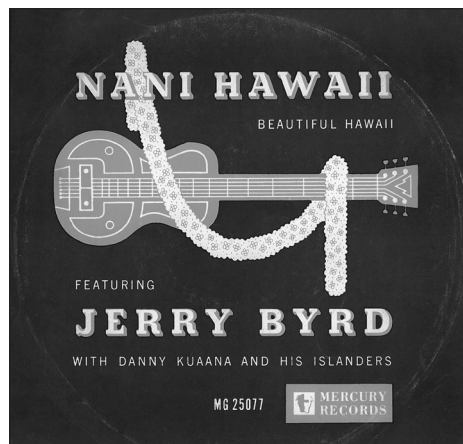
By Anthony Lis

This new series will discuss Jerry Byrd's first album, *Nani Hawaii*, recorded for Mercury Records in early 1950. Byrd's recordings were first issued as a literal "album," consisting of bound "pages" of record sleeves holding four 78 or 45 rpm discs (Mercury A-83 and A-83-45, respectively). Byrd's steel guitar playing was backed by a quartet of native Hawaiian musicians dubbed "the Islanders," led by Kalihi Uka-born ukulele player and falsetto vocalist Daniel Kuai Kuaana (1903-1970). Joining Kuaana were George Sam Ku (1899-?) on guitar and vocals, Melvin Ulualoha Peterson (1907-1982) on rhythm guitar and vocals, and Al McIntire (1906-1960) on upright string bass and vocals.

Danny Kuaana left Oahu as a young man, finding his way to Los Angeles by 1929. The Los Angeles Directory Company's city directory for that year shows Kuaana and his wife, Marie, living in east-central Los Angeles, just northwest of the modern-day Staples Center, with Kuaana holding a day job as a printer.

Byrd's friendship with Kuaana may have begun back in the mid-1940s.

Byrd's "Nani Hawaii" LP. (Music Library and Sound Archives, Bowling Green St. Univ.)

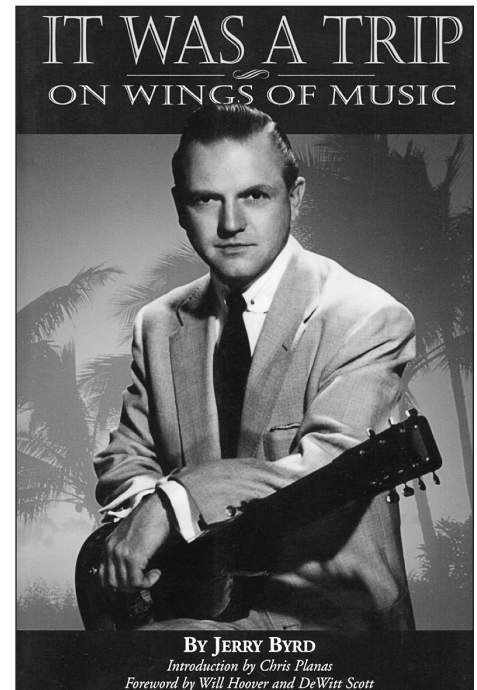
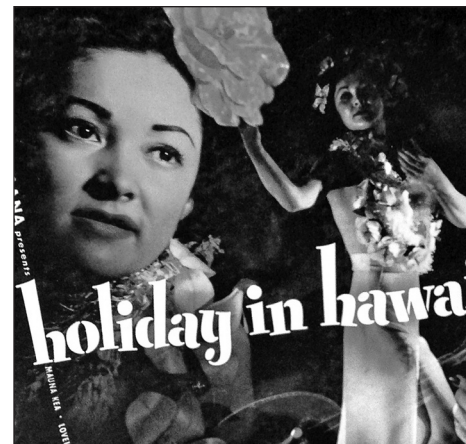


Page 31 of Byrd's 2003 autobiography *It Was a Trip: On Wings of Music* (assembled with Hawaiian-born guitarist Chris Planas) contains a Detroit living room photograph captioned "Danny Kuaana, Jerry Byrd, [and] Francis Brown, Detroit—1994[sic]-1945" (surely '1994' should read '1944'). If the assumed caption date is correct, that would mean that Byrd met Kuaana soon after arriving in Detroit in early autumn 1944 to work as a "hillbilly" musician on WJR radio.

In the years preceding the *Nani Hawaii* sessions, Kuaana and a backing group dubbed the Islanders recorded fifteen sides, which Capitol released in the 78 rpm format. Kuaana also appeared in four "Soundies," three-minute, 16mm precursors of music videos displayed on dime-operated "film jukeboxes" in bars, factory lounges, bus stations and other venues in the 1940s.

Mel Peterson was a Honolulu-born guitarist and ukulele player who moved to California in (apparently) late 1929. He subsequently appeared on radio and held down a steady gig at Hollywood's Seven Seas restaurant. In the mid-to-late 1940s, Peterson played on fourteen of Danny Kuaana's Capitol recordings,

Danny Kuaana's "Holiday in Hawaii" LP, originally released by Capitol in 1948.



Jerry Byrd's autobiography, "It Was a Trip: On Wings of Music" issued by Centerstream Publications in May 2003.

including the eight sides comprising the original release of Kuaana's *Holiday in Hawaii* album of 1948 (BD-85).

George Ku was a Honolulu-born guitarist, steel guitarist and vocalist who left Hawaii for Chicago in 1916. Before World War II, Ku gigged in Chicago, then in the Baltimore-Washington, DC area. Ku's only previous appearance on record had been the five late-1932 sides he recorded on Brunswick in New York City, leading a group dubbed the Paradise Islanders.

Al McIntire, a Honolulu-born string bass player, was the younger brother of Irish-Hawaiian musicians Dick and Lani McIntire. Like his older siblings, Al left Hawaii for California as a young man. McIntire's first appearance in a California city directory apparently occurred in the *Los Angeles City Directory 1930*, where he is listed sharing an apartment with Dick at 1637 1/2 Acacia, in (evidently) Glendale, north of central Los Angeles. By the time of the *Nani Hawaii* sessions, Al had appeared on recordings with Dick and Lani, including sides on which the

individual brothers backed Bing Crosby. He may also have been the bassist on all but one of Danny Kuaana's Capitol recordings.

In *It Was a Trip*, Byrd relates that he was playing steel in two different incarnations of a Hawaiian trio as a teenager while growing up in the industrial crossroads of Lima (then a city of some forty-three thousand) in northwestern Ohio. The trio eventually landed a regular spot on a Sunday morning Hawaiian music show on WBLY, a low-powered Lima radio station. When WBLY began broadcasting a Saturday afternoon country music "barn dance" show, the Hawaiian trio—a bit incongruously—appeared as regular guests.

Byrd's WBLY exposure led to a weekly appearance on John Lair's nationally known "Renfro Valley Barn Dance" (RVBD). In *It Was a Trip*, Byrd recalled auditioning for Lair with "Paradise Isle" and perhaps "My Little Grass Shack in Kealakekua, Hawaii." Transcription disc dubbings and RVBD scripts in the Berea College (Berea, Kentucky) Archives show Byrd subsequently performing "On the Beach at Waikiki," "Kohala March" and "Aloha Oe" on the program. Byrd, however, likely spent the majority of his on-air time backing RVBD country/folk artists such as Red Foley, the Coon Creek Girls, Ernie Lee, and young Homer & Jethro. One notes with interest Lair's introduction of Byrd on the March 17, 1941 program (rendered in Lair's "folksy" dialect according to an RVBD script): "Since we're givin' some of the *seldom-heard folks* a chance tonight, here's Jerry Byrd, who makes sich purty music on the Hawaiian guitar, *backin' up everybody else's numbers but seldom gettin' one of his own* [emphasis added]. Tonight he plays for us an old favorite ['Aloha Oe']."

Byrd made his first recordings in Atlanta in October 1940, backing Ernie Lee on steel guitar. The duo's song choices reflected Byrd's country/folk-Hawaiian dichotomy with Byrd backing Lee on three recent country/folk tunes, yet also supplying instrumental renditions of "My Little Grass Shack" and Sol K. Bright's recent *hapa haole* hit "Sophisticated Hula."

During a near fatal bout with pneumonia in 1941, Byrd left the Renfro Valley area to recover in Lima, playing two North Jackson Street "honky tonks" as a member of the Del Rio Cowboys quintet. One can assume the Cowboys' set list was suffused with early-1940s honky-tonk hits like Ernest Tubb's "Walking the Floor Over You" and Gene Autry's "It Makes No Difference Now." Yet Byrd retained a number of Hawaiian tunes in his repertoire; in *It Was a Trip*, he relates that he led the rather confused Cowboys through back-to-back performances of over thirty Hawaiian tunes, including "Palolo" and "Haleiwa [Hula]" in response to a challenge from a serviceman patron who had been stationed in Hawaii and loved Hawaiian music.



Jerry Byrd's fellow musicians at WJR. (l. to r.) Byrd, Kasey Clark, Ernie Lee, Brownie Reynolds, "Melba" (Red Maxedon in "drag") and a superimposed image of Maxedon (from Craig Maki).

By early fall 1944, Byrd had relocated to Detroit, where he, Ernie Lee, Kentucky fiddler Casey Clark, and several other musicians appeared on WJR's daily early morning "Goodwill-Billies" program and their Saturday night "Goodwill Frolic Barn Dance." With Byrd performing "old-time" and western music on the morning show and accompanying Clark on *rhythm* guitar on the "Frolic" (where he and Clark appeared as "Nat and Les" amidst two other male cast members in "hillbilly drag"), it would appear that WJR offered little opportunity for meaningful Hawaiian music making. (Perhaps it is no coincidence that this may have been the point at which Byrd sought out Kuaana's musical friendship.)

By August 1947, Byrd had moved to Nashville, where his steel guitar talent was quickly recognized by the developing local country music industry. Byrd—as a member of Red Foley's Cumberland Valley Boys—backed the star on the "Grand Ole Opry" and at Nashville's newly established Castle Studio. (Also at Castle, Byrd backed honky-tonk hit makers Ernest Tubb and Hank Williams on eight recordings which reached the top fourteen on the country charts.)

In October 1948, Byrd and Foley's other three Cumberland Valley Boys moved to Cincinnati to assume a more lucrative position with WLW radio and television, which rechristened them the Pleasant Valley Boys. (The group anchored the "Midwestern Hayride" country music program broadcast on both WLW radio and TV.) During his thirty-seven-odd months in Cincinnati, Byrd backed Hank Williams on eight sides, two of which reached the Top 5 on the country charts.

In mid-February 1949, Byrd was signed to Chicago-based Mercury Records, likely on the strength of his backing of Mercury hillbilly acts Art Gibson and Rex Allen. Around this

Continued on Page 16

same time, Byrd cut his first recordings as featured soloist for the label. Significantly, Byrd's second recording as featured soloist was a cover of the old Hawaiian waltz "Wailana" ("Drowsy Waters"), although Byrd's ensuing recordings (e.g., "Byrd's Boogie" and "Steel Guitar Rag") seemed directed at the mainstream country audience.

With all his country music recording activity, one can imagine that Byrd was desiring to wax Hawaiian melodies when, around late 1949, Mercury proposed that he record an album. As Byrd relates in *It Was a Trip*, "I was approached by Murray [Nash] [then head of Mercury Records' southern division] to do an album ... I [replied] ... 'Can I do a Hawaiian album?' He agreed. I then specified that it had to be done with Hawaiian musicians." Byrd continued, "I contacted [Danny Kuaana] ... immediately and we made tentative plans to meet in Chicago [where the sessions were] ... to be done at RCA's studio there [on Lake Shore Drive just southwest of Navy Pier, at the site of the company's branch offices]. In the meantime, we would work on the material, with Danny doing the vocal arrangements and I the instrumentals."

Byrd added that "[Kuaana] and the others [Mel Peterson, George Ku, and Al McIntire] were [about to start] touring

Photo from "It Was a Trip" of Danny Kuaana and Jerry Byrd, taken in a Detroit living room in 1944 (?). The bass player, identified as "Francis Brown," may actually be Gilford Brown, who played bass on nineteen recordings by Johnny Pineapple and Ray Kinney in 1940-42. Brown also apparently played bass with the 1948-49 incarnation of Sonja Henie's "Hollywood Ice Review."



Backing figure skater Sonja Henie during her 1949-50 "Hollywood Ice Review" tour, Andy Iona (left), Al McIntire, Danny Kuaana, Mel Peterson and George Ku. The photo's dedicatee, John Henry Wilson, was mayor of Honolulu from 1947-1955. (From the Hawaii State Archives; photo taken by the Elnicky Studios in Royal Oak, Michigan, a northern suburb of Detroit.)

the U. S. with Sonja Henie's spectacular ice show ..." Norwegian-born Henie [1912-1969] was an Olympic championship figure skater and film star who toured annually with her "Hollywood Ice Review" during the winter. According to Byrd, Henie's review "[was] to be in Chicago in January for two weeks." (Peterson and Kuaana had joined Henie's touring troupe in 1944 and 1946, respectively. The February 1, 1947 issue of *Billboard* contains the earliest reference the author has found for Ku touring with Henie; from that we can infer that he must also have begun touring with her in late 1946. McIntire appears to have been a "latecomer" to Henie's review, perhaps joining her for the first time during the 1949-50 season.)

The program booklet for Henie's 1949-50 "Hollywood Ice Review" lists Kuaana, Ku, Peterson, and McIntire, plus Waimea, Hawaii-born multi-instrumentalist Andy Iona comprising a "Hawaiian Quintet," which provided the music for "Paradise Islands: Fantasy of the Island," the fifth scene in Act II, which featured Henie skating amidst forty-eight other "islanders." Page five of the booklet provided further information on "Sonja and her rhythmic hula," adding that "Once again, by public demand ... Henie demonstrates her vivacious glamour and variegated talent in the ever-popular 'Hula.'" The program claimed that "The public never tires of watching [Henie] ... perform the most-difficult slides and glides," adding that "the same magnetism that characterizes [Henie's] ... skating is apparent in her effortless interpretation [of] ... native Hawaiian dancers." The program further gushed that

“the flowering trees of Hawaii never witnessed a more delightful shower of beauty in human hands ...”

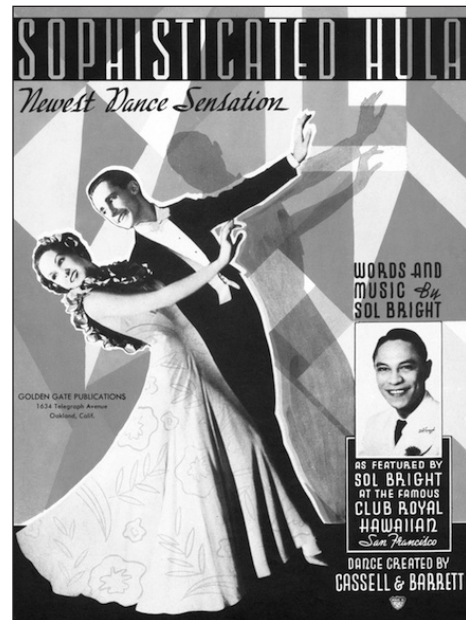
In *It Was a Trip*, Byrd described his jaunt from Cincinnati to Chicago for the *Nani Hawaii* recording sessions, remarking that “I flew to Chicago [295 miles northwest] for two days in the dead of winter. Hawaii never seemed any farther away! We sailed through each session, and I was truly in my element. ... At that time I had never seen Hawaii but I felt that I had been there before, in another time. I began to see a new direction in my life” (the latter remarks prefiguring Byrd’s thoughts on reincarnation in the “Pre-Destination” chapter roughly halfway through his autobiography).

From what the author can glean, *Nani Hawaii* was likely recorded sometime between January 5 and January 17, 1950. As the author related in “Jerry Byrd’s RCA Recordings With Ernie Lee, Part VIII” in the previous issue, following the New Year’s holiday, Byrd worked on January 4 backing singer Bob Eaton on four Decca sides in Cincinnati. A January 6, 1950 *Chicago Daily Herald* article titled

“Sonja Still Tops” relates that Sonja Henie’s tour had opened in Chicago back on Christmas Night 1949 and would be playing the indoor Chicago Stadium through January 17, 1950. Byrd appears to have been free to travel to Chicago on January 5; his remarks in *It Was a Trip* that he spent a couple of days in the city and that the musicians “sailed through each session” suggests multiple recording sessions spread out over adjoining days.

One wonders if the title, *Nani Hawaii*, was chosen late in the post-production process. Sippel, in his “Talent and Tunes” column in the February 18 *Billboard*, related that “Murray Nash, Mercury folk brass, was in New York setting the release and promotional schedule for the new Jerry Byrd-Danny Kuaana Hawaiian album”; with no mention of a title, perhaps the album was at that point unnamed. Similarly, a July 13, 1950 story about Byrd in his hometown *Lima News* (roughly two months ahead of the album’s release) referred to the recording only as “an album of Hawaiian music ... put out by Mercury.”

Concerning a translation of the chosen title, Hawaiian music scholar John



A 1939 folio of Sol Kekipi Bright’s “Sophisticated Hula,” which Jerry Byrd and Ernie Lee recorded at the end of their October 9, 1940 session in Atlanta. (Center for Popular Music, Middle Tennessee State University.)

D. Marsden related to the author in a May 25, 2014 letter that “I’m sure ‘Nani Hawaii’ was intended to mean ‘Beautiful Hawaii,’ but in Hawaiian, adjectives *follow* the noun as in many other languages. Hawaiian also lacks the verb ‘to be’, again as occurs in other languages, so I would translate ‘Nani Hawaii’ as ‘Beautiful (is) Hawaii.’ The construction is similar to such [Hawaiian] expressions as ‘Nui ka pilikia’ (great [is] the trouble) or ‘Loa ke ala’ (long [is] the road).”

On the recordings, Byrd *may* have played a six-string Rickenbacher Bakelite Electro steel guitar that he obtained with the help of Lima steel guitar teacher Ron Dearth in early summer 1937. (Bakelite was an early plastic popular in the first half of the Twentieth Century.) Conventional wisdom has it that Byrd used his Rickenbacher Electro consistently after obtaining it from Dearth, and according to 2002 and 2012 postings on the Steel Guitar Forum website, Byrd utilized the instrument at the *Nani Hawaii*

Continued on Page 20

The opening page (left) and inside page (right) of the program to Sonja Henie’s 1949-50 “Hollywood Ice Review” (From the author’s personal collection.)



The Life and Times of Steel Guitarist Billy Robinson

Some years ago Board member Ivan Reddington did a nice write-up on Steel Guitar Hall of Fame inductee Billy Robinson based on conversations they had at a Deep South Steel Guitar Club meeting in Gulfport, Mississippi. Sadly, the article never made it to print, but your editor spoke with Billy at some length at the recently held Texas Steel Guitar Jamboree, giving the story additional “legs” as they say. Billy provided me with a nice sketch he wrote about his life as a musician, which we reprint here in its entirety accompanied by some historically interesting photos he provided. Take it away, Billy.

In 1940, when I was 10 years old, I talked my mother into buying guitars for my brother Floyd and me. The initial results were not promising; we took one lesson and quit.

Yet just eight years later, I was playing with some of country music’s most famous artists—people like Hank Williams, Roy Acuff and Red Foley—at the Grand Ole Opry inside the hallowed Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, Tennessee, America’s country music capital. Who says dreams don’t come true?

My love of the steel guitar was inspired by the musicians I heard on the radio, greats like Jerry Byrd and Little Roy Wiggins. It also helped that we lived in Nashville.

Since our guitar lesson didn’t work out so well, Floyd and I learned to play by listening to 78 rpm records featuring masters like Byrd and Wiggins. I’d lift up the needle and practice the steel guitar sections over and over until they came naturally. Between Floyd, who played standard guitar, and me, we practically wore out the records.

My brother and I often played together. Our first public performance was at the Paramount Theatre, which hosted a

Billy Robinson (seated) in “seventh heaven” playing steel guitar behind Hank Williams, Sr. at the Grand Ole Opry.



The Opry cast touring Germany in 1949: Billy Robinson (front row, 2nd left), Minnie Pearl, Hank Williams and a host of other stars.

Saturday radio show where youngsters could perform. I still remember the song we played and sang: “When My Blue Moon Turns To Gold.” We were a little scared of the big stage, the large audience and the bright lights, but we got through it. And the experience made us want to do more.

From there, our music careers advanced slowly but surely. From the start, we were lucky to associate with some very talented musicians. I met bass player Bobby Moore during my days at Nashville’s East Junior High School, and for a time we’d practice together several afternoons a week. Bobby went on to become one of the biggest bass players in Nashville history, playing on more than 17,000 recording sessions. Jerry Rivers, our fiddle player, wound up playing with Hank Williams and the Drifting Cowboys.

In time, my mother started booking shows for the four of us. To haul our equipment, she built a wooden cargo carrier, held in place atop her 1937 Hudson Terraplane by four suction cups taken from bathroom plungers.

Our first big break came when bandleader Big Jeff Bess heard us on a radio station in Murfreesboro. When his band quit, Big Jeff hired us to replace them, and suddenly we were the Radio Playboys with a regular gig on WLAC in Nashville.

In 1948, along came my biggest break of all: Red Foley, the star of the Grand Ole Opry radio show, needed a band. I auditioned on steel guitar and, to my amazement, got the job! When Red said he hired me because I sounded so much like Byrd, I was elated. Here I was at 18, playing with my favorite country singer and taking the place of the guy I considered the greatest steel guitar player in the world.

Soon I was backing up a who’s who of superstars, including Tennessee Ernie Ford, Kay Starr, Margaret Whiting and Hank Williams.

At first it was a little frightening, me being just 18 years old. I didn’t know how to read music, so rehearsals were

intimidating. But soon I found out that most of the people I was playing with didn't read music either.

Because I was so young, people liked pulling tricks on me. The worst thing they did was un-tune my guitar while it was in a dressing room. I wouldn't know it until I started playing.

The great Hank Williams was a real nice guy. When we went to Germany in 1949, becoming the first Opry group to play in Europe, we got Air Force orders explaining why we were going there. One was written in Russian. Hank looked at it and told me, "Billy, you know those Russians will never win a war because they can't spell."

Red Foley was really nice, too—a very emotional man. He wrote the sentimental favorite "Old Shep," and every time he sang it, he'd have tears in his eyes. I also liked Minnie Pearl, who was very down to earth.

My Opry days ended when I got drafted in 1952. When I got out of the army, I'd lost my place in the Nashville "pecking order." At that point, I realized that I could either study music and learn to read it well, or I could get into another field and learn everything about it.

I'd always liked art, so I attended art school on the GI Bill. That led to a graphic arts career of more than 30 years. But I kept playing at dance clubs and country clubs, and I still play every day. I also play periodically at steel guitar venues around the country. When you're 81 years old, you get to do what you enjoy.

I was incredibly blessed to play guitar at the Grand Old Opry for those four years, doing what I'd dreamed of. And Floyd? He wrote, published and sang the 1959 Top 20 hit "Makin' Love," played with the likes of Little Jimmy Dickens and George Morgan, and still works in the music business today.

In Ivan's article that never made it to print, he nicely laid out Billy's setup: "Billy uses a C6th similar to the 10-string pedal steel C6th—from bottom to top, FACEGACEGD. The strings are in order of ascending pitch as you would expect, from the low F on string 10 to the high G on string 2. The D on top, however, is tuned a fourth below the high G. He plays a lot like a pedal player by pulling strings behind the bar and uses lots of forward and reverse bar slants to make his sound." Billy playing can be heard online at billyrobinson.net. ■

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Events Calendar

January 4, 2015—HUIC Open Mike Jam

Open mike jam at the HUIC Arts and Humanities Conference at the Ala Moana Hotel in Honolulu, 3-7 PM. Check the website for details at www.huichawaii.org.

March 12-15, 2015—TSGA Non-Pedal Room

The Sixth Annual Rick Alexander Non-Pedal Session at the Texas Steel Guitar Association's annual jamboree in the Dallas area.

April 24-26, 2015—Maui Steel Guitar Festival

Concerts, workshops, kanikapila jam sessions, and more at the Kā'anapali Beach Hotel on Maui's Lahaina side. For event details and to sign up for an open stage performance time slot, go to the event website at www.mauisteelguitarfestival.com.

April 28-30, 2015—Honolulu Convention

Our biennial HSGA Honolulu Convention, held on odd years around May Day, is tentatively set for April 28-30 at the Queen Kapi'olani Hotel's Peacock Ballroom. Details to follow in the next issue.

May 1, 2015, Lei Day Concert in the Park

The annual May Day Hawaiian music gala at Kapi'olani Park. HSGA hosts a stage featuring member performances and local steel guitarists.

May 2, 2015 Waikiki-Kapahulu Library Concert

Performances by HSGA members and local steel guitarists, within walking distance of the Queen Kapi'olani Hotel. Free and open to the public, 1-3 PM.

May 9, 2015 Concert at Windward Mall

Enjoy the music of the Ke Kula Mele School of Hawaiian music under the direction of Kumu Alan Akaka at the Windward Mall Spring Concert on Saturday, May 9 at 11 AM in Kāne'ōhe on the island of O'ahu. Students will perform songs of Maui on steel guitar, 'ukulele, guitar and Hawaiian-style bass. Free to the public. Call (808) 375-9379 or visit kekulamele.com for details.

July 18, 2015—Waikiki Steel Guitar Festival

The 6th Annual Waikiki Steel Guitar Festival will be held at the Waikiki Beach Walk's Plaza Stage, featuring steel guitar masters and students of the Ke Kula Mele Hawaii School of Hawaiian Music. Free and open to the public. Check www.waikikisteelguitarfestival.com for details.

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REN ZHIYONG, Cuiweinanli bldg 18-10-09, Haidian District, Beijing, 100036 China

DISC 'N' DATA Continued from Page 12

band name on two sides cut for Decca. By now Eddie had switched to an electric steel guitar, but while the identities of the other two members are uncertain, those familiar sophisticated harmony vocals are featured on "Talkin' to Myself" and "The Object of My Affection."

After a gap of five years, Eddie was recording again in 1939, now for Bluebird with Mannie Klein. It is Eddie's falsetto we hear on "Maori Brown Eyes." Besides Klein on trumpet, the other band members were stalwarts of the Hawaiian music scene Danny Kuuana (uke, vocals), Mel Peterson (guitar, vocals) and Al McIntire (bass). Bush had recorded with Kuuana, Peterson and McIntire for Decca in 1934 accompanying Al's brother Lani.

Eddie Bush passed away on August 20, 1969 following a long and successful career in the music business.

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Although *Eddie Bush and The Biltmore Trio* isn't a steel guitar record in the usual sense, there is plenty of steel guitar playing from Eddie. In "Clowin' the Frets" and "Steppin' Along" Eddie rips off fast single-note lines with the best of them. He plays classic tremolo-style on the slower ballads like "Across the Sea," "Song of the Islands," and "Old Plantation." Other cuts with Eddie on acoustic steel include "Coquette," "May Day is Lei Day in Hawaii," "Indian Cradle Song," "With a Song in My Heart," "If I Can't Have You," "Where the Golden Daffodils Grow," "You Will Come Back to Me," and "Love Me or Leave Me," my personal favorite on the CD with a remarkable steel solo.

On electric steel, Eddie gets an interesting horn-like sound on "The Object of My Affection" and "Talkin' to Myself," and a bright, shimmering tone on "Rainbows over Paradise," "My Little Grass Shack," "Makalapua" and "Maori Brown Eyes."

The collection more than stands on its own in terms of the vocal performances and overall ensemble sound. And if you're not that familiar with Eddie Bush's playing, you're in for a treat. My advice regarding this limited release? Don't be the hundred and first to order the CD! ■

sessions, plugging it into a Volu-Tone amplifier he procured from Dearth the same day he secured the Electro. However, Byrd's brother Jack, in his unpublished 2005 compilation "Jerry Byrd and His Music," relates that Byrd obtained a white-paneled post-World War II Rickenbacher Bakelite in 1949, which he used before moving up to a seven-string Rickenbacher in the 1950s. More research is needed to precisely identify the steel guitar Byrd plied on *Nani Hawaii*.

Thanks to John Marsden for the substantial assistance he provided the author throughout all four installments of this series. In Part One, John provided the author with copies of articles from the 1940s-1970s from Music Studio News, Paradise of the Pacific, and Steel Guitar Echoes (drawn from his personal library), which proved helpful when compiling the biographical statements concerning Danny Kuaana, Mel Peterson, George Ku, and Al McIntire. John also thoughtfully supplied copies of his Danny Kuaana obituary (which appeared in the November 1970 issue of B.M.G.) and his Mel Peterson tribute (from the February 1983 edition of the Bristol Steeles Society newsletter).

Information on WJR's "Goodwill-Billies" and "Goodwill Frolic Barn Dance" programs was drawn from chapter seven of Craig Maki and Keith Cady's recently published Detroit Country Music: Mountaineers, Cowboys, and Rockabillys. T. Malcom Rockwell's Hawaiian and Hawaiian Guitar Records 1891-1960 CD-ROM provided information about the early recording careers of Kuaana, Peterson, Ku, and McIntire. The script to the March 17, 1941 "Renfro Valley Barn Dance" program is part of the John Lair Papers in the Southern Appalachian Archives at Berea College. ■