

HSGA QUARTERLY

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by the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association

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Mark Roeder, with his "patented" Deluxe34 lap steel stand, playing a fine set on his Clinesmith steel at Ft. Collins last year with Mark Schulz on rhythm guitar.

Fort Collins "Late Breaking" News

By Tony Fourcroy

Aloha Kakou. Our thirtieth annual mainland steel guitar festival is quickly approaching. The festival runs from Thursday, September 22 through Saturday, September 24. Here are some late-breaking details on the festival that have finalized around press time. [ED: Due to this year's earlier-than-usual festival date and other factors, some of you may not get this issue before the festival starts. Please accept our apologies.]

This year we will be back in the main ballroom for all three days so there should be plenty of room for all the attendees and vendors. As we mentioned in the last issue, our special

guest is Owana Ka'ohelani Salazar from the island of O'ahu. The last time Owana appeared at our convention was in 1991, so she is long overdue to make an appearance. Owana has a wealth of experience and knowledge of Hawaiian history and culture so our Thursday evening "Talk Story" should be fascinating and enlightening.

Workshops

Workshops on steel guitar, 'ukulele, slack-key guitar, Hawaiian language, and Hawaiian music recordings will be held this year in Salon 4 of the Hilton Hotel, 9 AM-12:30 PM and 1:30-4:00 PM. Here's the rundown on this year's workshops:

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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.

FT. COLLINS *Continued from Page 1*

Slack-Key Intro (9:00-10:00)

Join Mark Kahalekulu for an introduction to the history and art of slack-key guitar. If you enjoy playing acoustic guitar and have never tried open tunings, slack key is a great place to start! Mark is a master.

C6th Steel Techniques (10:30-11:30)

Learn steel techniques with established Denver steel guitar pro, Chuck Lettes. Chuck will focus on methods for arranging songs using the C6th tuning. The study song for the workshop will be "Blue Hawaii." Bring your steel guitar and/or amplified headphones if you wish, or just enjoy listening. Go to our website (www.hsga.org) to download the tablature for "Blue Hawaii."

Hawaiian Language (11:30-12:30)

By popular demand, Philip Swain of the Pi'ilani Hawaiian Civic Club of Colorado will be back this year to present a session on Hawaiian language. If you ever wanted to know the meaning of a word, song lyric, or title, or just learn more about Hawai'i, this seminar

is for you. Philip is from Hawai'i and is an excellent entertainer.

'Ukulele Roots (1:30-2:30)

Discover the music and history of the 'ukulele in traditional songs and in the Hawaiian language with Stuart Yoshida. Beginners are welcome! Bring your 'ukulele or just come and listen in. Stuart holds down the "'ukulele chair" in Book 'em Danno, a Colorado-based Hawaiian band, and he produced the famous Ooktown Podcasts (website: ooktown.com).

Vintage Recordings (3:00-4:00)

Step back into Hawaiian Music's Golden Age of for some antique Aloha! Join HSGA member and avid 78 rpm record collector Chris Ruppenthal for a vintage record listening session. Chris will add historical context and information to original, early 78 rpm issues played on a historic 1910 Victor Monarch IV horned phonograph. Then he will move on to spin some rarities by the greats of the second generation (Sol Ho'opi'i, "King" Bennie Nawahi, Sam Ku West, etc.) that have never been reissued on CD.

At Fort Collins last year, Duke Ching on steel with his daughter Kapua Hollands (left) and granddaughter Kehaulani providing hula, and Kamaka Tom on uke and vocals.





Chris Kennison checking out John Hatton's well-stocked store of steel accessories.



A nice promo shot of this year's Ft. Collins Guest Artist, Owana Salazar.

Vendors

We should have a nice array of offerings in our vendor area. John Hatton will be there with his "store on wheels." Mark Roeder will have his steel guitar stands on hand. Luthier Bob Moore of Criterion Instruments will display some of his wares: ukes, Weissenborns and guitars. A new vendor this year

Princeville, Hawai'i member EP Davis performing at last year's Ft. Collins festival.



will be John Troutman, who is an associate professor of history at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. He has just published a book titled *Kika Kila: How the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Changed the Sound of Modern Music*. John will be at the convention and you can buy a copy of his book and talk to him about his unique insights into the steel guitar.

I also want to mention that Maryann Cord has graciously donated a box of CDs from Cord International's Hana Ola Records catalog. The CDs will be on sale at the festival with all proceeds going directly to HSGA. There is quite a variety, so you should be able to find something that you don't already have.

Final Thoughts

Lastly, to all you steel players out there, we had a couple of open playing slots last year so if you've ever thought about playing in front of an audience, this is a great opportunity. We have great backup musicians, and the audience is always very receptive and appreciative. If you need any help with logistics or getting backup players, let me know and I'll take care of you. We love to see first-time players!

Fort Collins Schedule

Wednesday, September 21

Check into the hotel, set up, talk story, have dinner, jam!

Thursday, September 22

9:00-12:00 Steel Guitars in Concert
12:00-1:00 Lunch (on your own)
1:00-4:00 Steel Guitars in Concert
4:00-8:30 Dinner (on your own)
8:30-9:30 Talk Story with Owana Salazar. Then jam!

Friday, September 23

9:00-12:00 Steel Guitars in Concert
12:00-1:00 Lunch (on your own)
1:00-4:00 Steel Guitars in Concert
4:00-8:30 Dinner (on your own)

Saturday, September 24

Main Room

9:00-12:00 Steel Guitars in Concert
12:00-1:00 Lunch (on your own)
1:00-4:30 Steel Guitars in Concert

Workshops (Salon 4)

9:00-10:00 Slack-Key Intro
10:30-11:30 C6th Steel Techniques
11:30-12:30 Hawaiian Language
1:30-2:30 'Ukulele Roots
3:00-4:00 Vintage Recordings

Saturday Night Lū'au

6:00 Cash bar and social time.
7:00 Dinner is served.
8:00 Lū'au show featuring Owana Salazar and Duke Ching.

All festival details including a full bio for Owana Salazar and any late-breaking information are posted on the HSGA website at www.hsga.org. See you all there! ■

Changed Email?

We have quite a few bad email addresses in our database. Please send changes in your email to both our office (hsga@hsga.org) AND to John Ely (johnely@hawaiiansteel.com). Mahalo!

Maui 2016 Festival Report

By Addison Ching

Beautiful Maui weather embraced this year's Eighth Annual Maui Steel Guitar Festival, which was held on April 15-17, 2016, at Lahaina's Kā'anapali Beach Hotel. Thirteen steel guitar masters from Hawai'i, California and Japan graced the Friday and Saturday evening programs, hosted this year by celebrity emcees Kimo Kahoano and Kathy Collins. Kimo's weekly *Aloha Friday Morning* radio show on Hawai'i's AM-940 was done live Friday morning from the festival grounds. The broadcast featured interviews with Alan Akaka, Greg Sardinha, Troy Brenningmeyer and myself. (To play or download a podcast of the show, go to <https://alohafridaymorningshow.wordpress.com>, scroll to the archives at the bottom of the page, click on 'April 2016' and then click on the 'Kā'anapali Special' link.)

Teaching Hawaiian steel guitar is an important cornerstone of the festival. Festival education components include both the tuition-based Hawaiian Steel Guitar Camp and free school presentations. Eighteen steel guitar students enrolled in this year's camp and enjoyed group instruction at various levels offered by Alan Akaka and Greg Sardinha. Some Maui students applied for and were awarded scholarships to attend the camp by the Arts Education and Children Group, one of the camp's sponsors and producers.

Presentation teams that included Alan Akaka and Bobby Ingano, along with "Next Generation" steel guitarists Mālie



Tadashi Arakawa (right) and his Yokohama Hawaiian Music Band with steel guitarist Yoshiko Seo at this year's Maui festival.

Lyman and Alexis Tolentino, visited several Maui schools, providing information about the Hawaiian steel guitar and presenting musical programs to inspire and evoke interest in the instrument.

Players from Hawai'i, Washington, New Jersey, Colorado, Illinois, New Zealand, and Japan performed during the daytime open stage performances. Japanese steel guitar masters Kiyoshi "Lion" Kobayashi, Tadashi Arakawa, and Tetsuya Ishiyama brought members of their respective Hawaiian music and steel guitar schools to the festival. Each school gave performances to the delight of audience members. In total, five steel guitar schools were represented on this year's open stage, including the three schools from Japan, students of Joel Katz's University of Hawai'i-Maui College steel guitar course, and students from Alan Akaka's Ke Kula Mele Hawai'i School of Hawaiian Music.

The Sunday brunch entertainment featured Alan, Greg, and Bobby in individual programs. The finale was a jam session including all three of the Sunday performers and the Next Generation steel guitarists.

Next year's festival has been scheduled for April 28-30, 2017, at the Kā'anapali Beach Hotel, pending approval by the hotel. ■

Mahalo, Members!

Keep those great letters and photos coming! YOU are the heart of our association. If possible, send original photographs or output from a digital camera. We cannot use grainy or washed out photos. As always, photos will be returned on request. Please send news, comments, or photos to: HSGA Quarterly, 2434 Waiomao Rd, Honolulu, HI 96816-3424. Email us at hsga@hsga.org AND at johnely@hawaiiansteel.com. Mahalo!

Wanted to Buy!

1920s-1930s Hawaiian Steel Guitar Material

- Steel guitar instruction books or lesson books
- Photos and autographs of early artists
- Anything related to Sol Ho'opi'i, "King" Bennie Nawahi or early artists
- Related memorabilia



Contact HSGA Member
Dennis McBride
dennismcb@gmail.com
(971) 271-7920

Waikīkī 2016 Festival Report

By Addison Ching

Beautiful weather embraced the Seventh Annual Waikīkī Steel Guitar Festival, held this year on July 16 at the Royal Hawaiian Center's Royal Grove performance venue. The festival's standing-room-only audience, some staying for the entire program, were treated to performances by top Honolulu steel guitar players along with a handful of the Next Generation steel players from 10 years of age up through college age.

This year's festival was produced by the Hawaii Institute for Music Enrichment and Learning Experiences (HIMELE) and presented by the Royal Hawaiian Center, which has a rich connection with Hawaiian culture. The center sits on land owned and managed by Kamehameha Schools. Helumoa, where the festival was held, was once a retreat of Hawaiian nobility.

Festival attendees used to sitting on the lawn at the venue were pleasantly surprised to see chairs provided by the center. The venue was packed with festival goers from the opening performances of Ke Kula Mele's "Next Gen" steel guitarists through the final *hana hou* of the Abrigo 'Ohana.

Surprise guest, Next Gen steel guitarist Heu'i Bandmann, kicked off the festival and was followed in quick succession by 10-year-old Pono Fernandez making his festival debut. Veteran Next Gen players Mālie Lyman and Alexis Tolentino completed the extended Ke Kula Mele segment and were followed by their Kumu Alan Akaka and The Islanders.

Celebrity emcee Mele Apana presided over the day's first performances which included Ke Kula Mele, Alan Akaka, Dr. Isaac Akuna and his group, the Greg Sardinha Trio, and Paul Kim. Royal Hawaiian Center Cultural Director Monte McComber filled in as emcee for Kimo Kahoano, whose arrival was delayed due to his involvement with the Prince Lot Hula Festival held the same day. The program continued with performances by Jeff Au Hoy, the Bobby Ingano Trio, Eddie Palama and his group, and Timi Abrigo and the Abrigo 'Ohana.

Festival guests were also treated to a display of vintage and contemporary steel guitars from Alan Akaka's collection, which was presented in the center's Helumoa Hale room. HIMELE staff members were on hand to answer questions, and John Troutman was available all day to discuss and autograph his book, *Kīkā Kila: How the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Changed the Sound of Modern Music*. Dr. Troutman was also on hand Friday to present a pre-festival talk on the history of the Hawaiian steel guitar. His talk was followed by a reception and book-signing event.

The Waikīkī Steel Guitar Festival is one of a series of steel guitar festivals produced by HIMELE to promote and



"Next Gen" steeler Pono Fernandez, age 10, making his debut at the 2016 Waikīkī Festival (Photo courtesy of Don Touchi)

perpetuate Hawaiian music, culture, and the Hawaiian steel guitar. In collaboration with HIMELE's partners, the Hawai'i festivals are made available free and open to the public. ■

It's Dues Time Again!

Remember, HSGA's membership year began on July 1, 2016. Dues are \$30 and all issues go out 'Air Mail'. Mahalo!

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New Hawaiian Steel Guitar Festival Launches

By Addison Ching

The first annual Hawaiian Steel Guitar Festival was held at the Windward Mall in Kāneʻohe on June 11, 2016, Kamehameha Day in Hawaiʻi. The mall was selected for its community-centric location, free parking, and air-conditioned environment. As with other steel guitar festivals organized by the nonprofit HIMELE, this festival, held at the mall's center stage, is free and open to the public.

The festival was hosted by celebrity emcee Kimo Kahoano who recently co-hosted the Maui Steel Guitar Festival in April. The festival, which ran from 11 AM to 5 PM, featured some of Hawaiʻi's great steel guitar masters and some Next Generation steel guitarists from age 11 and up. Backup for the steel guitar artists was ably provided by Kaipo Asing and son Adam Asing.

The festival kicked off with performances by Next Generation steel students from Alan Akaka's Ke Kula Mele school. 11-year old Joey Misailidis made her festival debut with a flawless performance, accompanied on U-bass by her 9-year-old sister Tai [U-bass is a newly developed, ultra-portable bass guitar based on the design of the baritone 'ukulele]. 12-year-old Mālie Lyman followed and was accompanied on U-bass by her 10-year old brother Iosepa. Capping off the Next Gen performances was veteran Alexis Tolentino, age 17. Alexis was recently featured on several Mele Mei concerts. Mele Mei is a series of Hawaiian music, hula and Hawaiian culture presentations, held from April through June at various venues and surrounding the annual Nā Hōkū Hanohano awards ceremony.

At the new festival, Jeff Au Hoy (left), Bobby Ingano, Eddie Palama, Steve Cheney and Alan Akaka. (Photo courtesy of Don Touchi)



Led by Alan Akaka at the inaugural Hawaiian Steel Fest, 11-year old Joey Misailidis on steel (left) with Alexis Tolentino, Mālie Lyman, and sister Tai Misailidis. (Photo courtesy of Don Touchi)

The festival continued with performances by steel guitar masters Alan Akaka, Eddie Palama, Jeff Au Hoy, Bobby Ingano, and Greg Sardinha, each performing their own program. Bobby Ingano surprised the audience by sitting in on Jeff Au Hoy's segment and treating festival guests to "dual-ing" steel guitars. All performances were greeted by an enthusiastic and appreciative audience. While many guests stayed for one or more performances, several guests stayed for the entire program. A surprise festival guest was Steve Cheney, steel guitarist at the Polynesian Cultural Center, who enjoyed "catching up" with the other steel guitarists.

The 2016 Hawaiian Steel Guitar Festival concluded with emcee Kimo Kahoano singing his signature song, "Aloha Friday, No Work Till Monday."

Where They Are Playing

Alan Akaka—Alan appears with the Islanders Thursday evenings, 6:30-9:30 PM at the Waikīkī Beach Marriott Resort and Spa located at 2552 Kalākaua Avenue in Honolulu. The performance is held at the Moana Terrace Bar and Grill located on the third floor beachside part of the hotel. Validated parking is available.

Bobby Ingano Trio—Bobby performs every Monday with Kaipo and Adam Asing as part of Dots Restaurant's "Nostalgia Night," 6-9 PM. Dots is on O'ahu's North shore at 130 Mango St., Wahiawa, Hawaii 96786-1926.

Every other Friday evening there is a public concert at the Royal Hawaiian Shopping Center, 6:00-7:30 PM, on the lawn stage area next to Kalākaua Avenue. Contact the Royal Hawaiian Shopping Center for scheduled dates.



At the Kaua'i festival last spring in Kapa'a: (l. to r.) Victor Punua, Alexis Tolentino, Mālie Lyman, Kilipaki Vaughan (behind Mālie), Bobby Ingano, Jeff Au Hoy, Alan Akaka, Addison Ching, emcee Mele Apana, Greg Sardinha, Kawai'ikii Punua and dad Ed Punua.



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This 88-year-old Edmonton senior has spent a lifetime playing Hawaiian music

The following article appeared in the April 4 issue of the *Edmonton Examiner*, and serves as a nice tribute to long-time Canadian member, musician and music teacher, George “Keoki” Lake. Though no stranger to our pages, we haven’t heard from Keoki in a while—here’s *Examiner* reporter Madeleine Cummings to fill you in along with additional comments from Keoki.

Nearly 5,000 kilometres lie between Edmonton and Hawai‘i, but if you’re looking for a taste of the tropical state, pay George Lake’s basement a visit.

Every inch of a basement room in his Edmonton bungalow is covered in souvenirs from the place that has captivated him since childhood. Coconuts, leis, toy monkeys, fake butterflies, baskets and colourful lights hang from bamboo rods interlaced on the ceiling. There are ancient guitars, banjos, drums, shakers and ‘ukuleles, which he says “seem to inbreed themselves.”

Among the scores of souvenirs are framed photographs of his late wife, Mary, who shared his love of music and who accompanied George on 27 of his 28 trips to Hawai‘i.

The only trip without his wife occurred in the mid-1980s when Lake was hired to play for a week in a band on the Royal Caribbean’s *Vision of the Sea* cruise ship.



Keoki Lake in his “basement paradise,” the photo that appeared in Madeleine Cummings’ *Edmonton Examiner* article.

The experience was “a dream come true” for him, though his San Francisco-based native Hawaiian bandmates didn’t know he had practically spent his entire life preparing for the opportunity. At first they were skeptical of his skills, he recalled. They were real Hawaiians, after all, and he was a white man from a cold Canadian city. But Lake quickly proved he was a capable steel guitar player who had thousands of Hawaiian songs committed to memory.

On his hiring, Lake explained, “I received a call from San Francisco one morning very early. The chap asked if I was ‘Keoki’ the steel guitarist. I thought it was a joke so I took down his phone number and called him back. It was not a joke. He asked if I could do a cruise gig to replace his steel guitarist who was ill, but I would have to catch a flight to Vancouver in two days time and get to the Ballantyne dock to catch the Hawai‘i-bound ship. I asked if I could bring Mary and was informed I couldn’t. Anyway, I accepted the gig, found the band members and boarded ship.

“We played three gigs each day on our one-week hop from Vancouver to Hilo. I knew every song they played, which seemed to impress them. When we arrived at Hilo there was so much commotion leaving the ship that I never saw my friends again, as I was booked to catch a flight home that same day! I have managed to keep in touch with one of them. However, I recently learned that another has passed away. It was a great adventure—I always wanted to play on a cruise ship.”

Lake earned his Hawaiian nickname, “Keoki” (which means George), by proving to locals his intense affection for Hawaiian culture.

His interest in Hawaiian music started early. When he was a child and his friends were playing outside, he stayed inside his house listening to Hawaiian music on 78 rpm

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- 6 My Little Grass Shack (1933)
- 7 That’s the Hawaiian in Me (1936)
- 8 On the Beach at Waikiki/
My Own Iona (1915/16)
- 9 I’ve Gone Native Now (1936)
- 10 My Honolulu Tomboy (1905)
- 11 Moloka’i Slide (1988)

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records. He didn't have a clue where Hawai'i was but he was drawn to the sounds and began replicating them on the [steel] guitar when he was in his early teens.

Keoki soon outplayed his music teacher, joined the musicians' union at age 17 and left Strathcona High School during his junior year in order to pursue music full time. Though he was a smart kid who had won second prize in a provincial drafting competition, his heart wasn't in school anymore.

During those years he played in countless bands and gave lessons (first for groups, then privately), but never lost his love of Hawaiian music.

From 1949 to 1952 he ran a radio show called "Hawaiian Sunset" on Edmonton station CKUA. He studied Hawai'i by reading books and eventually made his first trip there in 1970. While there he would sometimes play at weddings or other celebrations.

After working for Heintzman & Co. (the piano company where his father worked), he moved on to The Bay and Woodward's (the department store), retiring at age 55. "I had the rest of my life ahead of me," he said. "So I went back to music."

In 1991 he founded the Trocadero Alumni Orchestra, a big band that pays tribute to Edmonton's historic Trocadero Ballroom. (George is the oldest player and the group has dropped the "alumni" from its name.)

He also leads the Hawaiian Treasures, a group of Keoki's students who study Hawaiian steel guitar and 'ukulele with him at the Central Lions Seniors Centre. The Hawaiian Treasures perform often in Edmonton, usually alongside a group of dancers named "the Hula Honeys." Says Lake, "I have four senior 'ukulele ladies who have learned hula from a local *kumu* who studied in Hawai'i for a number of years. The ladies do a very creditable performance whenever my class puts on a show. This year we have done nine shows to date featuring four steel

guitars and eighteen 'ukuleles. I play rhythm guitar and do all the emcee work. I also have a great bass player with the group. Of course, to do the hula properly we have five wonderful vocalists amongst the 'ukulele gang!"

Lake was reluctant to return to teaching when asked by the Central Lions Senior Association many years ago. He recalls having to tune each guitar individually, which took forever in a group class, and didn't much care for teaching students who didn't want to learn guitar in the first place.

But he seems to have found joy in sharing his skills with seniors.

"Adults want to learn," he said.

On his current activities and musings, Keoki wrote the following: "If it were not for about five of us around here who get together and jam quite frequently, I'm sure I would eventually lose my ability to play the steel! I feel fortunate in that respect as my best friend is the retired program director of CKUA-FM who loves Hawaiian music and enjoys playing rhythm guitar to my playing. We get together a few times a month and have a hoot!

"Without bragging, I do feel I play better at 88 than I have ever played. Crazy! But the years have taught me a few things that I wish I knew when I did not depend upon a cane.

"Around 1972 I was asked to organize the first HSGA steel guitar event in Kapi'olani Park. I spent three full days on our rented Banyan condo phone and called many, many steel players asking them to partake in the function. Among them, Barney Isaacs, Jerry Byrd, Alan Akaka, Sol K. Bright, Mel Abe, Merle Kekuku, and the list goes on—over 40 actively playing and retired players! A heck of a task but many said they would be there, and many did show up for a great day of awesome steel guitar.

"Jerry's Ho'olaule'a took place on the Thursday prior at the Ala Wai golf course clubhouse. I was determined to

be first in line and arrived accordingly. I had heard of Bobby Ingano, but had never heard or met him. As the line-up formed at the clubhouse entrance, I heard laughter from the folks behind Mary and me—seems the fun was coming from a guy with a big smile named Bobby! I boldly turned to them asking if 'Bobby' was Bobby Ingano and I hit the jackpot! I immediately asked him to participate in the Saturday show but he said he had never played for a large crowd. I assured him of a strong backup (which included myself on rhythm guitar) and to *please* come and play whatever songs he desired.

"It took a lot of persuasion but he finally relented, saying he would be there. Bobby showed up almost at the end of the show and blew everyone away, including me! Wow!! Bobby, if asked, still gives me credit for his debut playing to a large crowd.

Continued on Page 20



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Indian Love Call

(Rudolf Friml)

Ballad

Arrangement by John Ely

Intro

Chords: Gm7, F#° (F#m7), Fm7, Bb7

Steel Gtr. (C6th)

A

Chords: Fm7, Bb7, Eb, Fm7

Chords: Bb7, Eb, G7

Chords: Cm, F7

19 $A^b m6$ $B^b 7$ $F m7$ $B^b 7$

slide slide

let ring-----

23 E^b $B^b m7$ $E^b 7$ A^b

P.H. slide slide slide slide all

28 $F m7$ $A^b m6$ $D^b 9$ E^b

hula slide

let ring-----

33 $F m7$ $B^b 7$ E^b $F 9$ $E 9$ $E^b maj7$

slide rit.

The National Music Museum's Rickenbacher A-22 Frypan

By Anthony Lis

A shortened, somewhat different form of this article originally appeared in the January 2016 issue of the *British Steelies Society Newsletter*, a bi-monthly publication of the Bristol, UK-based British Steelies Society (BSS). BSS is an organization catering to the needs of British pedal steel players and the newsletter is sent to paid-up members. The society also maintains an online steel guitar forum. (For details on the newsletter and website, visit thebritishsteeliesociety.co.uk.)

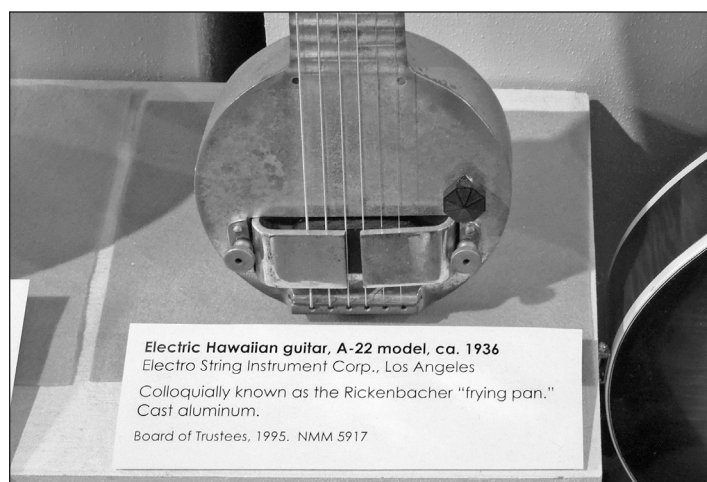
The focus of this article is the Rickenbacher frypan currently on exhibit in the Everist Gallery of South Dakota's National Music Museum (NMM), located on the south edge of the University of South Dakota campus in Vermillion (near the South Dakota-Nebraska border, roughly 116 miles south of my home base of Brookings, South Dakota).

Founded in 1973 by Brookings high school band director Arnie B. Larson, the National Music Museum holds over 15,000 American, European, and non-Western instruments, including a Stradivari mandolin (1680), violin (1693), and guitar (1700), and ten saxophones assembled by saxophone inventor Adolphe Sax between 1858 and 1877.

In recent years, the National Music Museum has been making a conscious effort to acquire instruments related to popular music figures, including a Gibson electric guitar autographed by B. B. King, as well as guitars owned by Muddy Waters, Chet Atkins, Johnny Cash, and Neil Diamond. The NMM has also recently acquired a 'ukulele played by Arthur Godfrey and a harmonica owned by Bob Dylan.

The museum has also been amassing a collection of steel guitars. The museum currently owns nine electric steels: the

Close-up of the "pan" portion of the Rickenbacher A-22 frypan with the accompanying museum label and description.



The National Music Museum, University of South Dakota campus, Vermillion, South Dakota, looking northeast (June 19, 2016).

mid-to-late 1930s Rickenbacher A-22 frypan discussed in this article, a "Hawaiian" National-Dobro from circa 1935, four National-Dobro models spanning roughly 1936-1940, a 1941 Gibson Electraharp pedal steel, a Gibson BR-9 model from around 1949, and a student model Fender produced circa 1950.

As of August 2016, the frypan discussed in this article—as well as a 1936 National-Dobro Electro Hawaiian lap steel and a 1936 National-Dobro Electric lap steel—are exhibited in the "central island" of the Everist Gallery on the NMM's second floor. The gallery is named for the late philanthropist Margaret Ann Everist, from nearby Sioux City, Iowa. As the NMM's "Explore the Everist Gallery" website relates, the central island displays a wide variety of early electric and electronic instruments; these include—besides the National-Dobro instruments listed above—four Vivi-Tone stringed instruments assembled in the 1930s by Gibson sound engineer and luthier Lloyd Loar and a crutch-shaped electric lap steel fashioned by Semie Moseley for Barbara Mandrell in 1984.

The National Music Museum acquired the Rickenbacher A-22 Frying Pan discussed here in 1995. The A-22—formally named the Electro Hawaiian Guitar—was also referred to as the frypan, panhandle, or pancake. The instrument was the first electrified guitar to make a significant impact in the consumer market. George Gruhn and Walter Carter relate in *Electric Guitars and Basses: A Photographic History* that the Chicago-based Stromberg-Voisinet company (renamed Kay Musical Instruments in 1931) had marketed the first electric guitars back in 1928. Alan Greenwood, in the *Official Vintage Guitar Magazine Price Guide 2010*, speculated that perhaps only 200 or so Stromberg-Voisinet guitars, which were sold with a concomitant amplifier, were produced. Susan VanHecke relates in *Raggin' Jazzin' Rockin': A*

History of American Musical Instrument Makers that “the electrical current created by [the Stromberg-Voisenet pickup-magnet setup] ... was weak, so the sound it created, even when amplified, was quiet. Not many people were interested in a quiet guitar, so the Stromber-Voisenet instrument was pulled from production.”

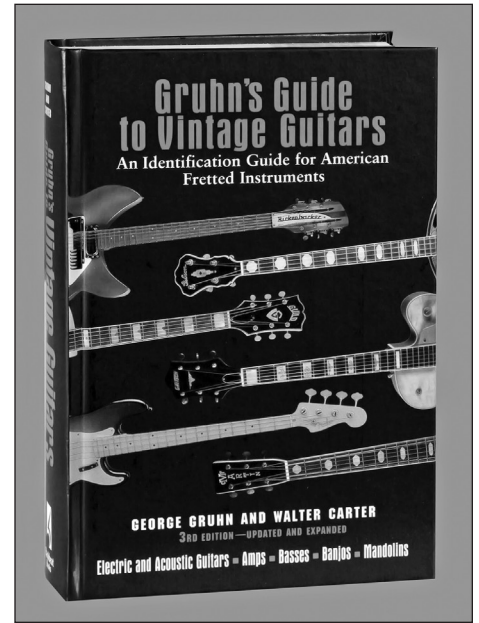
Chicago-area steel guitar collector Paul Warnik related in the fall 2010 installment of his informative *Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association Quarterly* “Vintage Axes” series that Rickenbacher’s “A-22” model ... became available in 1931, according to [George D.] Beauchamp, but [it was] not generally available in the [Rickenbacher] catalog until 1932.” Beauchamp was a Texas-born inventor and steel guitarist who had left the National guitar company by 1930 to join the Rickenbacher firm, where—as the partner of Swiss-born engineer and machinist Adolph Rickenbacker—he worked on the initial frypan designs.

Hawai‘i-based steel guitar collector Victor R. Becker—in his 2014 Kindle

“e-book” *The Hawaiian Lap Steel Guitar*, which discusses forty-one lap steels from the 1930s to the present—relates that “the [Rickenbacher A-22] was nicknamed the Frying Pan due to its small round body. The body, neck and peghead were made from cast aluminum [from] circa 1932-58. The A-25 with its 25-inch scale, and the A-22 with its 22.5-inch scale are icons of the early lap steel years. Scale refers to the length of a string from the bridge saddle to the nut. In his fall 2010 “Vintage Axes” installment, Paul Warnik included three photos of member Dave Kolars’s 25-inch, post-World War II A-25 model.

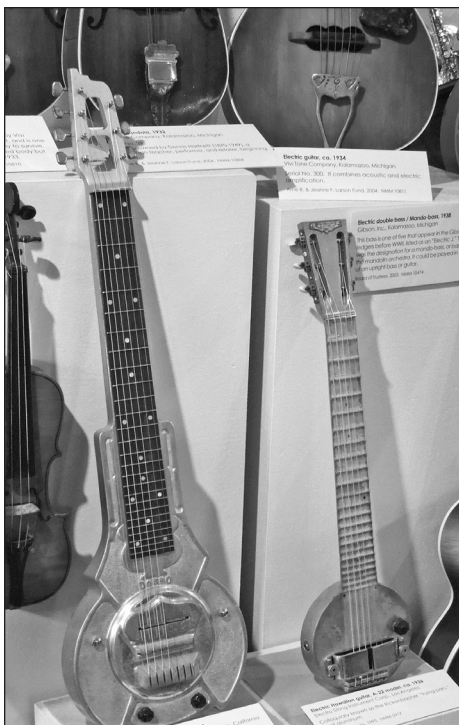
According to VanHecke, the sound of the [frypan] ... wasn’t simply louder [than earlier experimental electrified string instruments]... It [had] ... a singing, soaring tone all its own that could cut through any band’s horn section or any audience’s chatter.”

Becker relates that “[the A-22 and A-25, with their cast aluminum construction] have a problem staying in tune when subjected to temperature

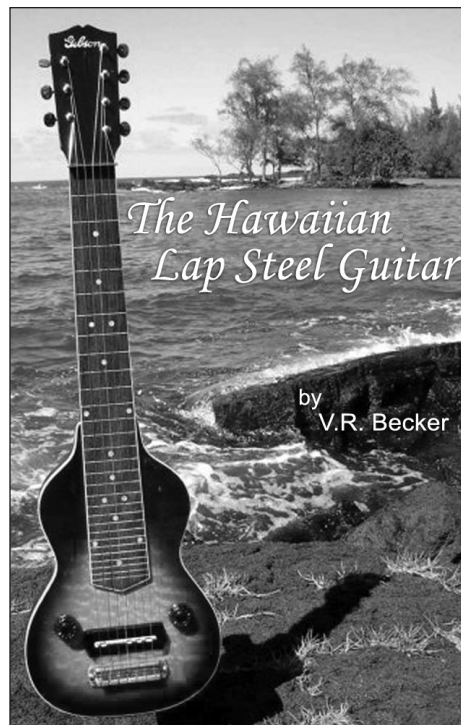


The cover of the third edition of Gruhn’s Guide to Vintage Guitars (2010).

The Rickenbacher A-22 (right) alongside a c. 1935 National-Dobro electric Hawaiian.



The cover of Victor R. Becker’s “e-book” The Hawaiian Lap Steel Guitar (2014).



changes, but are still cherished by players and are very collectable.”

The National Music Museum maintains a webpage devoted to their A-22 (to access the page, search on ‘Everist Gallery NMM 5917’). The page, which states the instrument was assembled between 1935 and 1939, includes thirteen photos of the frypan, including front, back, and side views, as well as close-up photos illuminating such items as the nameplate, the front and back of the peghead, and the rear string attachment. The museum’s webpage further relates that “the [A-22’s] body, made ... by the Aluminum Alloy Casting Company [in Los Angeles], is covered with a “lacquer wash,” remnants of which can be seen on the fingerboard and back. The Electro String Instrument Company, founded by Adolph Rickenbacker ... was responsible for the electric pickup consisting of a pair of horseshoe-shaped magnets surrounding a coil of wire, which itself surrounds six individual magnets, one at each string. This pickup was designed by George Beauchamp ... who filed a patent application for his invention on June 2, 1934. The patent was awarded [a little over] three

Continued on Page 14

years later, on August 10, 1937 (patent no. 2,089,171).

Regarding variations on the spelling of “Rickenbacher,” the NMM’s A-22 webpage explains that “Adolph Rickenbacher changed the spelling of his name to Rickenbacker, in honor of ... W[orld] W[ar] I flying ace [and distant cousin], Eddie Rickenbacker [1890-1973]. Although company literature and advertising spelled [Adolph’s] ... [sur]name with a ‘k’, the headstock nameplates used the original spelling (with an ‘h’) until the 1950s.

George Beauchamp prefaced his 1934 patent application for the A-22 with three pages of drawings containing ten “figures,” with figures 2, 7, and 9 appearing to carefully detail the horseshoe-magnet setup. Beauchamp’s drawings, which have been circulated on the Internet, are perhaps familiar to *Quarterly* readers. The author found the first seventy-eight lines of Beauchamp’s application proper to be particularly interesting; here, Beauchamp outlined the major aims of his invention, which

included “provid[ing] a simple, practical, and improved electrical stringed musical instrument” that:

“includ[es] a single electro-magnetic pickup-unit ... not subject to the variations necessarily inherent in devices using a plurality of electro-magnetic units. ...

does not depend on a sound-board, resonance-box, or the like in the production or propagation of ... sound ...

[can] be played manually in any typical or desired manner and electrically reproduce the sound ... at a remote point. ...

may be easily and conveniently adjusted by the ... player to vary the volume of the ... sound produced. ...

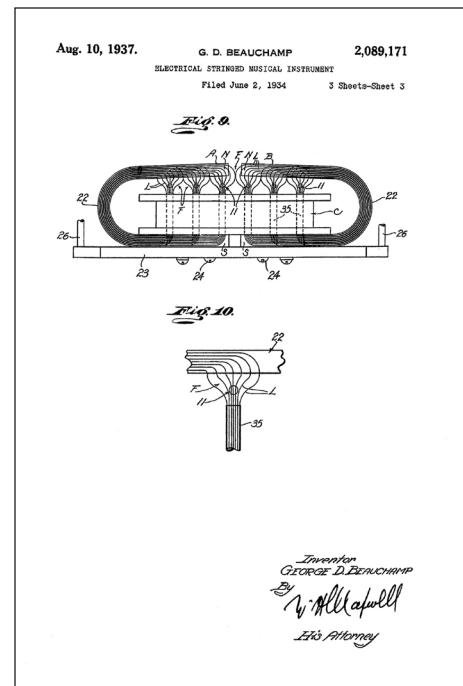
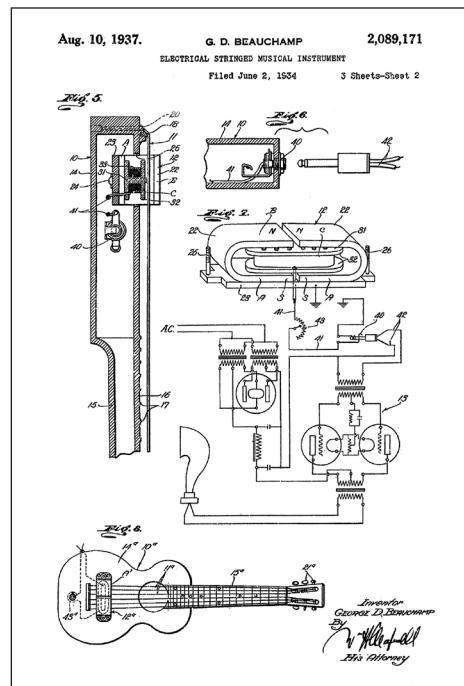
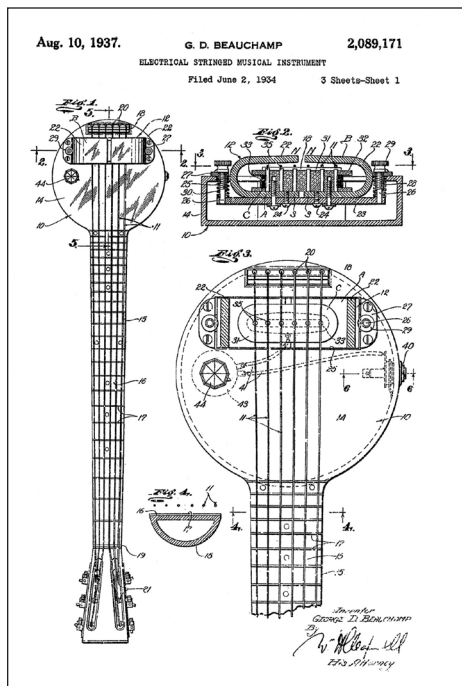
provide[s] an improved electro-magnetic pickup-unit capable of embodiment in stringed musical instruments of various characters with little or no modification. ...

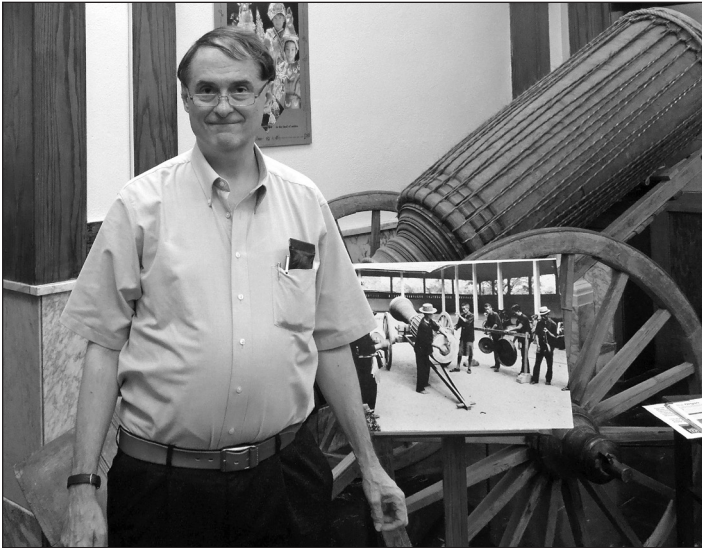
is small and compact and easy and convenient to play”

George Gruhn—detailing Beauchamp’s patent application in his article “Rickenbacker A 22 Frying Pan” in the March 2004 issue of *Vintage Guitar*—related that “with such a unique design and being the first commercially available electric guitar, one would think Beauchamp would have had little difficulty patenting the instrument. However, this was certainly not the case. He ... experienced great delay and difficulty getting the application processed. Richard Smith—in his 1987 book *The History of Rickenbacker Guitars*—notes the irony that after Beauchamp’s A-22 had been on the market for four years, the United States Patent Office was still concerned with the “inoperativeness” of his design!

Gruen continues that “the patent office first had to decide if [the A-22] ... was an electrical device or a musical instrument, since they were covered by separate office divisions. The first patent examiner questioned whether the instrument even worked, and was not persuaded until Beauchamp set up a Hawaiian music concert to back up the technical claims. A

The three pages of drawings accompanying George Beauchamp’s June 2, 1934 application for a patent for his “Frying Pan” lap steel with the United States Patent and Trademark Office (posted at pdfpiw.uspto.gov). The patent was awarded on August 10, 1937.





A photo of the author taken in the National Music Museum lobby.

second patent examiner also was unconvinced until Rickenbacker set up a performance at the patent office with Sol Ho‘opi‘i and other musicians in Washington, D.C.” Richard Smith relates that—apparently around the same time as Ho‘opi‘i’s performance—“letters from Beauchamp’s attorney indicate an electrical research firm conducted a detailed examination of the Frying Pan and submitted a report to the Patent Office.” In summation, Smith states that “fifteen minutes of Hawaiian music and the technical report proved to the [patent] examiner that the electric guitar worked.” Tony Bacon and Paul Day, in *The Rickenbacker Book*, quote Rickenbacker [in a discussion identified only as “a private 1960s interview”] that the musicians assisting Ho‘opi‘i at his demonstration were—as best Rickenbacker could recall—Danny Stewart and Dick McIntire.

Paul Warnik’s fall 2010 “Vintage Axes” installment included useful supplementary information on the A-22. Warnik relates that the first frypan prototype was constructed of maple wood by British-born mechanic and craftsman Harry Watson. Watson’s prototype—likely constructed in summer 1931—is currently exhibited on the second floor of the Rickenbacker factory in Santa Ana, California, southeast of Los Angeles. British rock music historian Michael Heatley included a photo of the prototype in his 2003 picture book *The Illustrated History of the Electric Guitar*. Warnik adds that the earliest frypan models had no volume or tone controls. A volume control (seen on the NMM A-22) was added by 1934, with some tone controls possibly added the following year.

Bacon and Day relate (page 12) that “despite their ground-breaking status, the early ... Rickenbacker ... aluminum lap steels did not sell in spectacular numbers,” adding that “probably little more than a dozen ... were sold in 1932, a poor record not helped by the depressed economic condi-

tions of the time and the relative scarcity of general [and reliable] electricity ...” To infer from Jerry Byrd in his 2003 autobiography *It Was a Trip: On Wings of Music*, David Keli‘i as well as Bobby Nichols (who performed and recorded with Lani McIntire’s Hawaiians) soon took up Rickenbacker frypan steels. Bill Creller, in a March 7, 2016 post to the Steel Guitar Forum, related that Andy Iona played a Rickenbacker frypan in the 1939 musical/comedy/romance film *Honolulu* (to view the post, search on ‘steel guitar forum 1939 movie honolulu’). In the soundtrack section of the film’s entry in the Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.com), Iona is credited with performing a Hawaiian medley that included Johnny Noble’s “Hola E Pae.”

Paul Warnik relates that “the frypan took a back seat to other Rickenbacker models after 1935 when more players took to the [company’s] Bakelite steels.” (The use of Bakelite—a plastic material invented in 1907, which was used in the construction of early radio sets—produced guitars that were somewhat more able to remain in tune when subjected to temperature changes. As Victor Becker noted above, aluminum tended to expand under hot stage lights. Bakelite was far from a perfect solution, however, as guitars made from the substance could shatter when dropped on a hard surface.)

Rickenbacker tinkered with the frypan design after World War II. As George Gruhn and Walter Carter relate in the third edition of *Gruhn’s Guide to Vintage Guitars: An Identification Guide for American Fretted Instruments*, beginning in 1946, the A-22 was fitted with a slightly smaller magnet (1.25 inches), along with a new chrome tailpiece (replacing the original string-through-the-body setup) and Phillips-head pickup adjustment screws. *Gruhn’s Guide* also reports that Rickenbacker discontinued the A-22 in 1950, but reintroduced the model four years later with a Bakelite back plate and a decal logo on the peghead. (Warnik explains that continuing consumer requests for frypans prompted Rickenbacker’s revival of the instrument. The model, however, was produced for only four more years, with Rickenbacker permanently discontinuing the frypan in 1958.)

Summing up the Rickenbacker A-22 in his *Vintage Guitar* article, Gruhn related that “while the Rickenbacker Frying Pan is an aesthetically unassuming instrument, it is one of the most important models in the history and development of the modern guitar.” ■

It’s Dues Time Again!

Remember, HSGA’s membership year began on July 1, 2016. Dues are \$30 and all issues go out ‘Air Mail’ (see the insert that was mailed with this issue). Don’t miss out on Hawaiian steel guitar news, history, recordings reviews and instruction.

COCO WIRE

Duke Kaleolani Ching and his 'ohana took part in the annual E Hula Mau Hula Competition this past Labor Day weekend in Long Beach, California. Duke conducted a steel guitar workshop covering basic C6th scales and diatonic chords and also held a workshop on 'ukulele. He also sang and played steel guitar at one of the festival stage performances. Duke's daughter, **Kapua Hollands**, who will be one of the featured dancers at Ft. Collins this year, was one of the judges for the hula competition. Duke also performed at the historic Clock Auditorium in Redlands, California this past July as part of the Hawaiian Classics Concert put on by the Nā Mamo Hawaiian Club.

From **Wally and Peg Pfeifer**: Our grandson, **Jason Wonnell**, just received his Master of Fine Arts degree in Graphic Design, Printmaking, etc. from Indiana University. He received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois. Out Joliet Convention programs were designed for several years by Jason. They were beautiful.

As many of you know **Tom Tohma** has recently backed off of his role as Japan Coordinator leaving some mighty big shoes to fill. Big mahalos go out to our new Japan team: **Shinishi Kakiuchi**, who provides Japanese translation of our newsletter and **Masakatsu Suzuki**, who maintains our database of more than 50 Japan members!

Thanks to **Chuck Lettes** for an arrangement sketch of "Indian Love Call" that was the inspiration for this issue's arrangement. Chuck tunes his C6th a little differently but the tune lays well on the standard C6th. Chuck has contributed several arrangements over the years. We welcome arrangement ideas from our more experienced members! ■

Margie Mays playing great on her Excel at a recent edition of the Texas Steel Guitar Jamboree's Rick Alexander non-pedal session.



The newly-restored Clock Auditorium in Redlands, California, where Duke Ching performed at the Nā Mamo Hawaiian Club-sponsored Hawaiian Classics Concert this past July, featuring traditional Hawaiian music. (Photo courtesy of Andrew Morang)

Events Calendar

December 17, 2016—Winter Concert

Enjoy the music of Ke Kula Mele School of Hawaiian music under the direction of Kumu Alan Akaka. Students will perform Christmas songs and songs with the theme of Aloha on steel guitar, 'ukulele, guitar and Hawaiian-style bass; 11 AM on Saturday, December 17, 2016 at Windward Mall in Kane'ohē, Hawai'i. Free to the public. For more information call (808) 375-9379 or visit kekulamele.com.

February 3-4, 2017—Kaua'i Steel Guitar Festival

After a very successful inaugural event on Kaua'i, the festival will return to the Courtyard by Marriott Kaua'i at Coconut Beach in Kapa'a on February 3-4, 2017 immediately preceding Keola Beamer's Aloha Music Camp. Event website: www.kauaisteelguitarfestival.com.

March 10-11, 2017—TSGA Non-Pedal Room

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

April 28-30, 2017—Maui Steel Guitar Festival

Next year's Maui festival at the Ka'anapali Beach Hotel is tentatively planned for April 28-10 pending approval by the hotel. Details to follow.

Mike Perlowin: "Classical" Steel Guitar News

It's been a while since we've done a report on the man who holds down "first chair" in classical music for the steel guitar (along with other unorthodox repertory). Mike Perlowin has pushed the envelope in this area with his "Firebird Suite," "West Side Story," and "Spanish Steel" CD releases, which we have covered in prior issues. Here's Mike to fill us in on his latest exploits.

I am now 70 and have entered a new phase of my musical life. After I finished *Spanish Steel*, I decided three CDs were enough. There comes a point of diminishing returns, and I felt that any more would be past that point. I also feel that *Spanish Steel* represents the peak of my creativity, and that any more recordings would not be as good.

It's better to leave people wanting more than to give them too much. I quit while I was still ahead. I also felt after years of being cooped up in my studio, playing in front of tape recorders, that it was time for me to play in front of people.

I sold all my recording equipment, and most of the instruments I used to make the CDs, and bought a laptop and Finale music-writing software. The engineers who created Finale did not use synth sounds for their playback feature. Instead, they hired all the members of an orchestra to record every note on their respective instruments, one at a time. So, for instance, if I write a clarinet playing a Bb, when I play it back, the software will play a recording of an actual clarinetist playing the note. The results are very realistic sounding, much better than Band-in-a-Box.

I've been writing arrangements for steel and whatever instruments I want. Then I mute the steel parts, and perform with the rest of the tracks. So far I've written 27 such arrangements. Sixty percent of these are of classical pieces, the rest are pop tunes.

I gave a concert on July 20 at a classical music venue. This will be the third time. The last time I played an almost all classical program, but I also played "Harlem Nocturne," and the tune got a huge round of applause. I included a medley of tunes from *The Sound of Music* this time.

Given my age, this is probably the last incarnation of my continuing musical evolution. I have an ongoing restaurant gig where I basically am getting paid (not enough!) to practice this stuff.

I should mention something. Whenever I played in bands, nobody ever let me play any of the songs I wanted to play. They would say things like "That song has too many chords" or "I can't follow all the changes." But now I'm playing exactly what I want. The computer will do what I

HSGA Donations

Thanks, HSGA members for your generous donations this past quarter!

Special thanks for a remarkable \$3,000 donation to our General Fund sent to us by **Sachi Watanabe** upon the passing of his wife **Alice Jean Folkart**, in accordance with her final will and testament. We are grateful to say the least, and will do our best to put it to the best possible use.

Ralph Czitrom of Ringwood, New Jersey made a very generous donation of \$200 to our General Fund. **EP Davis** of Princeville, Hawai'i, **Don and Lynn Keene** of Cambria, California, **Mark Roeder** of Madison, Wisconsin, **Bill Thomson** of Ocean City, Maryland, **Gloria Umbarger** of Rancho Palos Verdes, California, and **Sachi Watanabe** of Kailua, Hawai'i all donated a generous \$100 to our General Fund and Scholarship Fund. We see many of these names each year in our donations list. Mahalo, all!

The following members donated at least \$10:

Clifford J. Adams, Huntington Station, NY
Bob Alaniz and Mary Corroero, Manteca, CA
Bo Bahret, Cordova, TN
Tony and Kathy Fourcroy, Ft. Collins, CO
Wade H. Hargrove, Raleigh, NC
Doug Hazelberg, Kenosha, WI
James Kingham, Lake Charles, LA
Janet King, Watsonville, CA
Margo L. Klundt, Sherrard, IL
Delano D. Kruzan, Macomb, IL
John Limbach, Billings, MT
Anthony S. Lis, Brookings, SD
Terry Miller, Vancouver, WA
Dick Morris, Salisbury, MD
Russell and Kathleen Pollock, Zanesville, OH
Bill and Kay Rickles, Poway, CA
L. Bogue Sandberg, Chassell, MI
Rusty Strange, N. Falmouth, MA
Jerome Wagner, Santa Rosa, CA
Roger Ward, Sheffield, U.K.
Donald and Donna Weber, New Lenox, IL
Richard Wilson, Seattle, WA

tell it to, without complaining or arguing. It also doesn't get drunk, and I don't have to pay it!

Mike plays an MSA Millennium 12-string steel with a E9th/B6th universal tuning but doesn't use B6th mode. Says Mike, "Since country music and pre-Twentieth Century classical music are both based on major and minor scales and chords, the E9th is perfectly suited for playing classical music." ■

CLOSING NOTES

Remembering Bill Sevesi, King of Island Music

Thanks to New Zealand Sunday Star-Times music writer Grant Smithies for permission to reprint the following article on the passing of New Zealand steel guitar great, Bill Sevesi, this past April. The article was posted to the Star-Times website on May 8, 2016. A worthy tribute, it also gives readers a sense of how a Polynesian culture outside Hawai'i absorbed and reflected the Hawaiian music phenomenon through its own cultural lens.

“He was a grand character, and not nearly as well known as he should have been,” says Neil Finn [New Zealand singer-songwriter and founding member of the ‘80s band Crowded House]. “After rock ‘n’ roll swept in during the ‘60s, a lot of our pioneering early musicians weren’t really given their due, whereas in other countries, artists from that era are revered.”

He’s talking about Bill Sevesi, who died on April 23 at age 92, after a musical career spanning six decades. Listen to any of Sevesi’s recordings and you get a sense of the man himself—his steel guitar glistens, swells and swoops, gentle as a tropical sun shower.

“Bill loved Hawaiian music, and did more than anyone to popularize that style over here, back in the days when musicians often had to make their own instruments and build their own amps.”

Finn’s father used to go and see Sevesi play at the Orange Ballroom in Auckland’s Khyber Pass.

“It was the hottest place in the city back then, because Bill’s band could really swing. Dad said he had some great nights over there. It’s right across the road from my studio, actually, so I look at the place every day. It’s empty now, surrounded by apartments.”

Sevesi rose to fame in the ‘40s and ‘50s when Hawaiian music was sweeping the world, says Finn. “In some countries, it was just an exotic novelty thing, but that music made a different sort of sense here in the South Pacific. I knew Bill still had a really good band, so we asked him to play at my twentieth wedding anniversary under a full moon out on the lawn. He was a lovely gent as well as a beautiful steel guitar player. It was great to see him inducted into the New Zealand Music Hall of Fame last year, though they [were] a long time getting around to it.”

Indeed, but they got there just in time. Sevesi’s story started in 1923, when he was born Wilfred Jeffs in Nuku‘alofa, Tonga, the son of a Tongan mother and a Liverpoolian father.



A nice shot of Bill Sevesi and His Islanders taken in 1968 in Auckland, New Zealand: (l. to r.) Trevor Edmondson, Bobby Wynyard, Malu Natapu, Ricky Santos and Bill Sevesi.

At high school in Auckland in the 1930s, he became entranced by the sound of Hawaiian pop on the radio, later building his own guitar while working as an apprentice in a radio factory.

Sevesi taught himself to play by listening to 78s on a wind-up gramophone, and began his long residency at the Orange Ballroom in 1954. His band The Islanders played it all—Hawaiian classics, old waiata [Māori songs], waltzes, country favorites, early rock ‘n’ roll—with 1500 people sometimes squeezing into a building designed to hold 500.

“He was the Godfather of Polynesian music in Auckland,” reckons Chris Bourke, who writes extensively about Sevesi in *Blue Smoke*, his superb book on early New Zealand music. “Bill didn’t just perform for people and write songs and record albums; he also nurtured a lot of young Polynesian talent, people like the Yandall Sisters, Ronnie Sundin and Annie Crummer. And hundreds of couples ended up married after meeting on the dance floor at the Orange Ballroom.”

Sevesi was a great storyteller, says Bourke. “He was extremely funny and wily and smart, and very dedicated to getting kids into music, too. He was at the forefront of getting ‘ukuleles into schools to replace the recorder.”

Dave Dobbyn [a New Zealand musician, singer-songwriter and record producer] also remembers Sevesi fondly. “I was always pretty fascinated by the guy,” he said from Whangarei [New Zealand’s northernmost city], where he was just about to go on stage. “I heard all these wild tales of Bill’s band packing out the Orange Ballroom, and saw great photos of the studio he built at his house in Mt. Roskill, [a

Continued on Page 20



Waikīkī 2016 Festival Pix

(Clockwise from upper left) “Next Gen” steel guitarist Heu‘i Bandmann from Kaua‘i singing and playing with Alan Akaka and backup group; Ke Kula Mele Hawaii performers: (front row) Iosepa Lyman, Mālie Lyman, Alexis Tolentino, Pono Fernandez, (back row) Ronald Tolentino, Heu‘i Bandmann and Alan Akaka (above photos courtesy of Don Rostow); (photos below courtesy of Don Touchi) featured steel guitarist Eddie Palama with Herb Lee; featured steel guitarist Isaac “Doc” Akuna with Henry Makua; and featured steel guitarist, “da Prez,” Paul Kim with Adam Asing (left) and dad Kaipō Asing.



E Komo Mai! Welcome, New Members

Is your address correct? Please notify us!

UNITED STATES

DANIEL MAU, 2125 Skycrest Drive, Entry 17.#3, Walnut Creek, CA 94595

JEFF REPP & MAUREEN O'ROURKE, 19020 NW Dorena Street, Portland, OR 97229

CEDRIC BAETCHE, 192 Ryan Street, Apt. 2, Madison, WI 53704

JOHN VITERITO, 1504 Pheasant Run, Monmouth Junction, NJ 08852-1943

REBECCA WOO, 2607 46th Ave., San Francisco, CA 94116

SHARON EDMONSON, 2109 N. Old Bruceville Road, Vincennes, IN 47591

RICHARD HINSHAW, PO Box 1863, Townsend, WA 98368

CANADA & OVERSEAS

RICHARD NEWMAN, 294 Coxwell Ave., Toronto, ON M4L 3B6 Canada

AKIKO WATANABE, 3-9-5 Honcho, Funabashi-Shi, Chiba-Pref. 273-0005 Japan

BILL SEVESI Continued from Page 18

volcanic peak and suburb of Auckland]."

Dobbyn finally got to meet Sevesi in 2002, at a rehearsal for a show they were both about to play alongside Neil and Tim Finn, Bic Runga and others at the St. James [Theatre] in Auckland.

"Bill was already in his late seventies by then. He showed up at the rehearsal, grabbed my old Vox amp and plugged in this plank of wood made from swamp kauri [ancient wood buried at the end of the last Ice Age and preserved in New Zealand's North Island] he'd dragged out of some old puddle somewhere. Turned out he'd made that guitar himself, and wound all the pick-ups, too! It had these huge knobs on it, and was an amazingly primitive-looking thing."

Sevesi turned down the treble, wound up the bass and cranked the amp's volume knob up to ten. "And then, the most beautiful tone came out when he started to play! I'd never heard anything like it! He had a perfect sense of pitch and a masterfully tender touch with chords, and he got a far better sound out of that old amp than I ever could."

The next time Dobbyn saw him, Sevesi was in a wheelchair, giving a

speech during his induction into the New Zealand Music Hall of Fame in September last year.

"I choked up when he spoke, because he was so eloquent, and his love for music was so obvious. No matter what the problem is, the answer was always music, he said, and I wholeheartedly agree."

When Sevesi was wheeled outside afterwards, Dobbyn went out to pay his respects and give him a cuddle. It felt like it might be their last meeting, and it was.

"I knew then that he wasn't long for this world, but I'm not sad, because Bill lived his dream and he's in a better place now. He was a real talker, so I imagine he's chatting away right now with the big guy upstairs. There's obviously a bit of demand up in heaven for a decent band at the moment, because musicians are dropping like flies! I picture Bill up there right now, with that plank of wood of his turned up to 10, jamming with Prince." ■

Email Alert

We have quite a few invalid email addresses in our database. Please let us know if your email has changed. Email corrections to johnely@hawaiiansteel and hsga@hsga.org. Mahalo!

Remember, back in 1972 he was still a young guy working in a fish market who had enormous talent at that time, and is awesome today.

"Merle Kekuku and I became fast friends. Each year until the sad year of his passing, Merle phoned me twice a month to keep me posted on everything happening over there.

"Another thing happened when I met Keith Haugen for the first time. He invited me to sit in on his nightly shows at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, which to me was very exciting—an old prairie guy from Canada playing the famous 'Pink Palace'. He asked me to perform on his 'Ukulele Lady CD with George Kuo, Randy Oness and Helene Woodward. Keith and I are still friends.

"Randy seemed to like my steel and asked me, along with Merle, to do a concert in a park playing some of the old Harry Owens arrangements, asking first, 'Hey Keoki, can you read music?' So we played these charts featuring Randy on clarinet, Merle on bass and about six others whose names escape me. Randy discovered to his pleasure that I was able to read music!

"Great years, which are on my photos, cassette tapes, and in my fading memory. I'll never forget backing Alan Akaka as he played "Whispering Lullaby" or Billy Hew Len when we did some great jazzy tunes. I also received a phone call from Charles K. L. Davis inviting me to play at a night spot (the name has slipped my mind) near Schofield Barracks. We did many gigs together at the Queen Kapi'olani Hotel lounge. I could go on but I'm certain your readership will be sound asleep at this point!"

[ED: We're not asleep yet, Keoki. But we'd probably need a few cans of coffee to stay awake for a full report on everything you've done over the decades. These stories "rub off" taking on a life of their own. Mahalo for sharing!] ■