

HSGA QUARTERLY

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by the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association

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Outgoing “Prez” Paul Kim playing steel at the June 2017 Windward Mall Spring Concert with (l. to r.) Adam and Kaipō Asing, and Bobby Ingano. (Photo courtesy of Don Touchi)

Fort Collins Late-Breaking News

By Festival Coordinator, Tony Fourcroy

Aloha Kakou. All systems are “go” for our fourth mainland steel guitar festival in Fort Collins, Colorado to be held on Thursday, September 21 through September 23 at the Fort Collins Hilton Hotel.

As we mentioned in the last issue, our special guest is Alan Akaka from Kailua, Hawai‘i, one of Hawai‘i’s premier players and promoters of Hawaiian music in Hawai‘i. His Thursday evening “Talk Story” will give members a chance to query a top performer and teacher on important steel guitar topics.

Workshops

Our ever popular workshops will cover steel guitar, ‘ukulele, slack-key guitar, and ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i (Hawaiian language) and will be held once again in

Salon 4 of the Hilton, 9:00-12:30 PM and 1:30-4:00 PM. Here’s the rundown on this year’s workshops:

Beginning Steel Guitar (9:00-10:00)

Learn the C6th tuning and basic steel techniques with HSGA steel guitarist Chris Kennison. He will focus on steel guitar basics, with a look at slanting the bar. Bring your guitar, picks and bar. You’ll learn a classic Hawaiian tune that will allow you to practice bar slants.

Slack-Key Guitar (10:30-11:30)

Join popular festival performer Mark Kahalekulu and explore different tunings, fingerpicking styles and ornaments as he shares two classic Hawaiian melodies, “‘Imi Au Ia ‘Oe,” written by Charles E. King, and the “Moloka‘i Waltz,” written by Matthew Kane.

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HSGA QUARTERLY

Volume 32, Issue 126



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Lorene Ruymar (1985)

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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

MEMBERSHIP

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

SUBMIT LETTERS & EDITORIALS TO:

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

FT. COLLINS *Continued from Page 1*

Support videos will be available online. Attendees are required to bring their own acoustic guitar to the workshop.

Singing in Hawaiian (11:30-12:30)

'*Ōlelo Hawai'i* expert Philip Joseph Kahaunaele Swain will present a workshop on singing in Hawaiian language. You'll learn how to pronounce basic Hawaiian and understand commonly used phrases in Hawaiian poetry and song lyrics.

Steel Guitar Pā'ani/Fills (1:30-2:30)

Fort Collins Guest Artist, Alan Akaka, will discuss approaches to creating steel solos and playing backup behind a singer. You'll learn basic chord positions on the C6th tuning and apply that knowledge to create fills on the popular five-chord Hawaiian song "Henehene Kou Aka." Topics will include general theory and improvisation through the use of rhythmic variations and chord substitutions.

'Ukulele Roots (3:00-4:00)

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).

Vendors

Vendors at this year's festival should include Henriksen Amplifiers and Criterion Instruments. We've checked out some of the Henriksen amps and they're gig-worthy and unbelievably portable. Criterion makes a variety of quality stringed instruments including guitars, ukes as well as resonator and Weissenborn-style steel guitars. We expect that Keoni Lagunero will be there with his hand painted wood items and we'll have CDs for sale as usual. Gil O'Gawa is coming up and he usually sells ukes and stands.

Hawaiian language expert Philip Swain conducting his popular workshop at Fort Collins 2016. His workshop this year will focus on singing in the Hawaiian language.



Fort Collins Festival Schedule

Wednesday, September 20

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

Thursday, September 21

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), free time

8:30-9:30 Talk Story with Alan Akaka. Then jam!

Friday, 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), free time

Saturday, September 23

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 Beginning Steel Guitar w/ Chris Kennison

10:30-11:30 Slack-Key Guitar w/ Mark Kahalekulu

11:30-12:30 Singing in Hawaiian w/ Philip Swain

1:30-2:30 Steel Guitar Pā'ani and Fills w/ Alan Akaka

3:00-4:00 'Ukulele Roots w/ Stuart Yoshida

Saturday Night Lū'au

6:00 Cash bar and social time.

7:00 Dinner is served.

8:00 Lū'au floorshow featuring Guest Artist Alan Akaka.

Final Thoughts

We believe our new festival venue in Fort Collins is “taking hold” across our membership—at one point we weren’t sure if we had enough rooms in our allotted hotel block! This year’s festival should be special with another appearance of Alan Akaka as our Honored Guest and our usual lineup of “heavy hitter” steel guitar and Hawaiian music pros. And it’s a great place to “put your best foot forward” and sign up for a playing slot in a congenial, supportive atmosphere. Any questions, feel free to email me at: tony.fourcroy@gmail.com or call (970) 217-4058. See you all there!

Note: If you haven't completed your festival registration or your hotel registration yet, the details are laid out in the last newsletter and on our website at www.hsga.org. ■

COCO WIRE

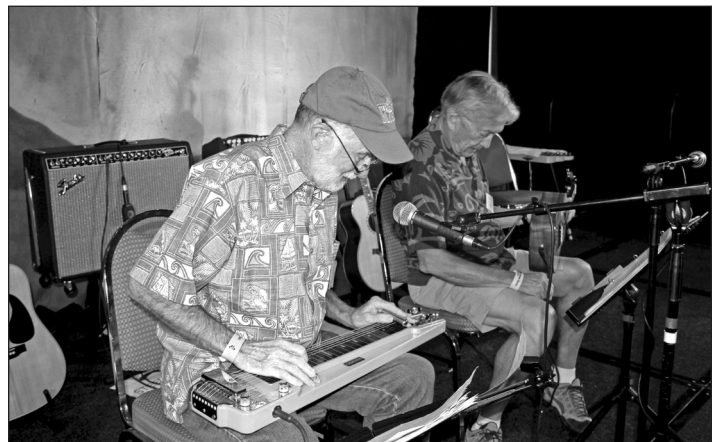


A super photo of the Hiram Olsen trio with new HSGA member Martin Vazquez, taken at the Halekūlani Hotel just before press time. (l. to r.) Hiram Olsen, Martin Vazquez, steel ace Casey Olsen and Dennis “Bla” Keohokalole. They’re back!

This from new Massachusetts member **Martin Vazquez**: **The Hiram Olsen Trio**, featuring **Casey Olsen** on steel guitar, **Hiram Olsen** on guitar and **Dennis “Bla” Keohokalole** on bass, are back “in the rotation” at the Halekūlani Hotel every Friday and Saturday at the “House Without a Key” seaside patio, 5:30-8:30 PM. Martin also confirmed that **Kanoe Miller** is the dancer at their show. Oh, for the days when the hotel featured top steel guitarists seven days a week!

Maryland resident **Steve Luscinski** recently contacted our board about donating a custom-built steel guitar from the late ‘60s that was gathering dust in his closet for these past 45 years. Though the details haven’t been ironed out yet, we’re planning on bringing the guitar to Fort Collins and holding a silent auction as a fundraiser for our Scholarship Fund. ■

At Fort Collins 2016, Colorado member Joe Stewart playing his Fender Deluxe steel guitar with Jeff Scott on 'ukulele.



A Message From Our New HSGA President

By Frank Della-Penna

I am honored to take the helm as President of the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association. My vision for HSGA is to see it grow internationally, form stronger ties with other steel guitar organizations and *halau* in the United States, Europe, the Pacific Islands, South Korea, China and, of course, Japan. The Hawaiian steel guitar along with the beautiful Hawaiian language, percussion instruments and hula is even more appealing to a worldwide audience. Adding the sound of the ipu, pu'ili, chant and hula to the Hawaiian steel guitar experience remains a unique attraction. Other cultures have found ways to adapt the sound of the steel guitar to their own unique song forms: In India the steel guitar is used to perform ragas; in Japan's Enka or popular music of the 1960s, the steel guitar was used to delever single-string melodies of romantic songs in minor keys; in the Southern United States, the steel guitar was used by African-Americans in the blues; in Appalachia, the steel guitar morphed into dobro for use in bluegrass music; and in Texas, western swing music often featured the steel guitar. The point being, HSGA can refresh these musical connections to add diversity to our association and increase our membership.

I see greater opportunities for HSGA's association with *halau* in Hawai'i, on the mainland and elsewhere. I also think it would be wise to provide a repository for our newsletters at the University of Hawai'i, the Smithsonian Institution and other archives to ensure that they are available to musicians and researchers in the future. We can also

On stage at Fort Collins last year, Mark Kahalekulu (right) and on steel, the man covering all the bases at HSGA, Kamaka Tom.



Newly installed HSGA President Frank Della-Penna with longtime friend Momo Onno, who is a master of Okinawa and Ryukyu dance—both members of the Okinawa club of Washington, D.C.

increase interest in HSGA by using the newsletter as a recruiting tool: we could provide excerpts of select articles on our website to encourage people to join in order to gain access to the complete newsletter. Sending newsletter copies to relevant organizations could also “up” our visibility and “filter down” to potential new members. We can increase member participation in HSGA's scholarship program by expanded marketing and publicity through our website, Facebook page and our newsletter.

Though a haole, I started studying Hawaiian music in fourth grade at the Harlin Brothers Guitar and Hula Studio in Indianapolis, Indiana. My first instrument was a Multi-Kord Hawaiian guitar using the low bass tunings of A major, A6th, D9th, E major and C#minor7th. The Multi-Kord, invented by the Harlin Brothers around 1938-1940, had six or eight strings and was marketed as the “World's Newest Hawaiian Guitar.” The good thing about learning from the Harlin Brothers was understanding the relationship between the different Hawaiian tunings, of which there were 22 listed on their brochure.

From 1960 to 1966 I was in the Marine Corps and gave up the guitar for the Okinawa sanshin when I wasn't on a military maneuvers in an aircraft or troop ship. The sanshin is an Okinawan lute whose resonator is covered with snake skin. I was greatly surprised to hear Japanese musicians playing the steel guitar in their single-string style. After returning to the U.S., I renewed my interest in the steel guitar and generally played along with 78 rpm and 33¹/₃ rpm

recordings and played in local bands with friends in Indianapolis.

In 1978, I moved to New York City where I had the good fortune to meet Roy Smeck, take lessons from him, and listen to tales of his experiences in the vaudeville circuit. I played with musical groups in Cheryl Bell's halau in the 1990s at which time I first met Kumu Hula Keith Awai of the Polynesian Cultural Center. After landing a job in Washington, D.C., I became the Hawaiian steel guitarist for the Halau O 'Aulani and played with the Aloha Boys band for several years.

One of my most interesting experiences occurred while traveling to Hawai'i with my wife Stephanie. She was a presenter at the Pacific Rim Conference on Disabilities. A few days before the program, I called up a few friends in Honolulu (Ramon Camarillo, Kamaka Tom, and Wayne Shishido) and asked them to come to the conference center to put on a show for the convention. Basically we all got together and did this without a rehearsal and entertained during lunch hour one day of the conference. Stephanie and I were seated at a table with Akiko Ito, an official at the United Nations. After the performance, Akiko blurted out, "Why Frank, I didn't know that you were a professional musician!" That pretty well sums it up. Today, in professional appearances, I use a four-neck Fender and a Rickenbacher Fry Pan Hawaiian guitar.

I look forward to an exciting year with HSGA and encourage all of you to join with me in growing club membership, promoting and donating to our exciting Scholarship Program and joining me at our conventions in Fort Collins and Honolulu.

Aloha South Korea

(1/2) 하와이언 음악, 전통춤 하시는 한국분 환영합니다.

하와이 호놀룰루 그리고 콜로라도 포트 콜린스 컨벤션에서 저희들과

(2/2) 함께해요.

[Korean-English translation: Welcome all dancers, musicians and steel guitarists. Please come join our Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association gathering in Fort Collins, Colorado. We also convene in Honolulu, Hawai'i.] ■

Fender Stringmaster For Sale

1957 triple-neck Fender Stringmaster, blond finish, short scale, excellent condition with no modifications, original case in great shape, \$1,500 + shipping. Photos available. Phone Oregon member Gene McGowan at (503) 984-8026 or send him an email at <geno707@comcast.net>.

EVENTS CALENDAR

September 21-23, 2017—HSGA Fort Collins Festival

Our 2017 annual mainland festival will be held at our usual spot at the Hilton Hotel in scenic Fort Collins, Colorado. Our featured guest is veteran steel guitarist Alan Akaka and we'll have a full schedule of member performances and workshops in steel guitar, slack-key guitar and 'ukulele.

November 10-12, 2017—Big Island Steel Festival

The First Annual Hawai'i Steel Guitar Festival at Mauna Lani will be held on Friday through Sunday, November 10-12, 2017 at the Mauna Lani Bay Hotel and Bungalows on the Kohala Coast of the Island of Hawai'i. Featured are performances by Hawai'i steel guitar masters, workshops, and jam sessions where festival guests can play along with the masters. For more information call (808) 375-9379 or visit the event website at www.konasteelguitarfestival.com.

December 16, 2017—Winter Concert in Kāne'ohe

Enjoy the music of Ke Kula Mele School of Hawaiian music under the direction of Kumu Alan Akaka at this year's Winter Concert held on Saturday, December 16, 2017, 11 AM at Windward Mall in Kāne'ohe, Hawai'i. Students will perform songs with the theme of Kā Manu (birds), as well as Christmas songs on steel guitar, 'ukulele, guitar and Hawaiian style bass. Free to the public. For more information call (808) 375-9379 or visit kekulamele.com.

February 2-3, 2018—Kaua'i Steel Guitar Festival

Location: Courtyard by Marriott at Coconut Beach, Kapa'a, Kaua'i. Details TBA.

March 17, 2018—Steel Fest' at Ka Makana Ali'i

Location: Kapolei, O'ahu (tentative). Details TBA. ■

New HSGA Officers Installed

Our new officers as of the July 29 board meeting are:

President: Frank Della-Penna

Vice-President: (vacant currently)

Secretary/Treasurer: Tony Fourcroy

Recording Secretary: Jacquelyn Luongo

It's Dues Time Again!

If your newsletter mail label shows "X 6/17" next to your address, it's time to renew your HSGA membership. Dues are \$30, which includes First Class delivery (Air Mail overseas). Renew today! Don't miss out on the latest info on Hawaiian Steel Guitar, including news, instruction, and lots of photos.

A Message from Outgoing President Paul Kim

Dear HSGA members,

My time is coming to a close as your acting HSGA president. It has been an honor to represent this amazing organization that has been in existence since 1985. I had to look back and download the HSGA board of directors history to see when I actually took office. I cannot believe it's been nine years already. I have tried my best to perpetuate this beautiful instrument and do what's right for the organization.

It is difficult managing a board of directors when members are scattered all over the globe and in multiple time zones. However, this is nothing new with our association and it is still going strong. This is due to the commitment and love of the instrument by its members. But being employed in the military full-time as well as a professional musician has not allowed me the total commitment I should have had as acting president. I really owe the success of the association as well as the major feat of transitioning from Joliet to Colorado to the rest of the HSGA board. The members that served under me carried the torch and ensured that the association was properly taken care of. I owe my deepest gratitude to all of them. I could not attend a lot of the teleconferences that were held due to scheduling conflicts. The military really hampered my personal life and continues to do so. However, in my absence, I was fortunate enough to have such wonderful board members.

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A nice shot of Paul Kim on steel with Duke Kaleolani Ching on 'ukulele taken at our Joliet 2005 Convention.

Big Island Festival Update

By Addison Ching

As mentioned in the Winter 2017 *Quarterly*, the First Annual Hawai'i Steel Guitar Festival at Mauna Lani will be held on Friday through Sunday, November 10-12, 2017 at the Mauna Lani Bay Hotel and Bungalows on the Kohala Coast of the Island of Hawai'i. In addition to the usual steel guitar performances, a special pre-festival workshop will be offered on steel guitar construction. Eight participants have signed up to build their own 6-string steel guitar under the direction of luthier Robert Gleason of Pegasus Guitars. Bob has taught many 'ukulele and guitar building classes in Hawai'i and on the mainland, and has conducted the steel guitar building class for Keola Beamer's annual Aloha Music Camp for the past few years.

Bob doesn't offer choices in the wood material used but tries to supply nice wood so everyone likes what they get. Steel guitar bodies are constructed with Spanish cedar back (for lightness) with a koa face laminated on top. As an option, Bob is offering a mango face for people who prefer a lighter-colored instrument. Bob is currently in the process of gathering materials and working on the parts kits.

The workshop tuition includes all materials and supplies and a nice gig bag. Workshop participants will be required to work quickly but Bob promises that the class attendees will all have fun. He will furnish all the tools and parts necessary for the guitar construction.

For more information, call (808) 375-9379 or visit the event website at: www.konasteelguitarfestival.com.

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HSGA Regains Nonprofit Status!

By Frank Della-Penna

When Kamaka Tom asked me to take on the task of restoring our non-profit status, I never thought it would amount to a two-year endeavor! Our team members include myself, Michael J. O'Malley, attorney for the law firm of Goodsill Anderson Quinn & Stifel in Honolulu, and Arsine (aka "Si") Kailian, Director of Finance for Women Enabled International (WEI) in Washington, D.C.

On May 23, 2015, I prepared a letter to send to law firms requesting pro bono assistance to get HSGA reinstated as a not-for-profit organization. On July 16, 2015, I placed my first conference call to Attorney Michael J. O'Malley with a brief introductory discussion of the factors that resulted

in HSGA's loss of nonprofit status. Michael agreed to provide us pro bono legal assistance and described the parameters of his assistance and further stated he would require numerous HSGA bank records and other documentation.

By August 3, 2015, I had supplied several HSGA board minutes, HSGA bylaws and the HSGA mission statement. Michael asked us for the bank statements for the last three years and stated that we would need an accountant. After another long search for accountants on the mainland and in Hawai'i and after estimating the costs involved, it was evident that HSGA did not have the financial resources to hire an accountant. However, my wife Stephanie Ortoleva said she thought that our WEI Director of Finance had the skills to do the financial analysis and thus, we could prepare HSGA's tax filings and make a request to the IRS for reinstatement. Furthermore, Michael agreed that filing the required tax returns using the simplified Form EZ 1023 was appropriate given HSGA's income level. So, in late 2016, I asked Si to come aboard the HSGA team. She accepted and gave us a cost estimate, which the HSGA board approved. On February 22, 2016, Kamaka sent some bank ledgers and statements to Michael O'Malley. By October 2016, Kamaka had sent the requested financial information to Michael O'Malley and all of these documents were forwarded to Si for analysis.

On March 3, 2017, Si completed an analysis of HSGA's financial spreadsheets and resolved apparent inconsistencies. Si and I filed the EZ form tax returns for the missing years. On June 5, 2017, we received word from the IRS informing us that HSGA's non-profit status had been reinstated. The text of the letter included the following: "We're pleased to tell you we determined you're exempt from federal

income tax under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 501 (c) (3)."

Whew!! Hana Hou! Now HSGA can request donations that are tax deductible for the donor. ■

New Email Address?

Please notify us of changes to your email address. Send an email to both our office (hsga@hsga.org) and John Ely (johnely@hawaiiansteel.com).

HSGA Donations

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

Member **Rick Collins** of Claremont, California donated \$100 to our General Fund as did **EP Davis** of Princeville, Hawai'i. **Gloria Umbarger** of Rancho Palos Verdes, California gave \$50 to both our General Fund and Scholarship Fund. Mahalo nui loa for these generous donations so vital to implementing our vision and mission statement.

The following members donated at least \$10:

Clifford Adams, Huntington Station, NY
Bo Bahret, Cordova, TN
Terry Cass, Ashkum, IL
Tony & Kathy Fourcroy, Ft. Collins, CO
Doug Hazelberg, Kenosha, WI
James Kingham, Lake Charles, LA
Janet A. King, Watsonville, CA
Margo L. Klundt, Sherrard, IL
Delano D. Kruzan, Macomb, IL
Anthony S. Lis, Brookings, SD
John D. Marsden, Sheffield, England
Robert & Mary Moore, Wellington, CO
Mary Neudorffer, Koloa, HI
Russell and Kathleen Pollock, Zanesville, OH
Eric Rindal, San Francisco, CA
L. Bogue Sandberg, Chassell, MI
Greg and Sandra Sardinha, Kailua, HI
Lindon O. Stoddart, Miami, FL
Roger Ward, Sheffield, U.K.
Don and Donna Weber, New Lenox, IL
David S. Wier, Okeechobee, FL
Richard Wilson, Seattle, WA



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Alan Akaka Interview

In anticipation of Alan Akaka's upcoming appearance as our Fort Collins 2017 Guest Artist, we reprint here an excerpt from an interview Alan did for the Japanese publication "Hawaiian Wave" back in March 2009.

HW: How were you introduced to music?

Alan: As I was growing up I was surrounded by music. My father was the minister of music at the Kawaiaha'o Church. My uncles, aunts, and cousins would play and sing at our family parties. There was music at the Hawaiian lū'aus my family went to. Because I grew up in a musical environment, music came naturally to me. When I was eight I would practice on my father's 'ukulele by myself in the bedroom learning to play Hawaiian songs. I also taught myself to play the wood bass, guitar and steel guitar. Since I was in band, I also learned to read music and learned music theory, which helped me in my career as a musician.

HW: How did the steel guitar attract you?

Alan: At lū'aus and parties that had Hawaiian bands entertaining the audience, I didn't particularly listen to the steel guitar, although I remember noticing that it looked and sounded different from the other instruments. But when I was 14, my older brother started learning to play the slack-key guitar and at that moment I wanted to play a Hawaiian instrument as well, so I grabbed the barrel of my clarinet and started sliding it across the strings. I guess hearing the steel guitar for many years did impact my thoughts and actions. My father asked me if I knew what I was playing, which I didn't, so he told me what it was and then encouraged me to continue. That was the beginning of my career with the steel guitar.

HW: What is the beauty of the steel guitar?

Alan: The sound of the steel guitar is unique. When I listen to recordings, I cannot help but notice the lilting sounds of the steel. In fact, many of the visitors at my gigs in Waikīkī told me that they identify the steel guitar with Hawaiian music and feel that Hawaiian music is not as "Hawaiian" without it. An artist can do things on the steel that most other instruments cannot such as glissandos (slides) from note to note and chord to chord. And with the vibrato an artist can add intensity or calmness to the music.

HW: What memories do you have of the Halekūlani Hotel?

Alan: I played at the Halekūlani for 23 years starting back in 1983. I had many good years there and wonderful memories. I met and made friends from all over the world. What I hold closest to my heart are the moments I could affect the audience with the stories and music of Hawai'i. Many approached me to say thank you for sharing the story of a



Ft. Collins Guest Artist Alan Akaka with his Asher steel. Cool!

song. My greatest memories are of the artists I played with such as Sonny Kamahale and Benny Kalama, two veterans of the "Hawaii Calls" radio show that aired for 40 years. I learned a lot from both of them and they groomed me to be a musician and entertainer.

HW: Can you tell us about your stint with Auntie Genoa at the Marriott?

Alan: Auntie Genoa was such a kind and gentle woman who was respected by many, many people in and out of the music industry. She wore a smile when singing and could bring tears to the audience. She possessed a great deal of *mana* or spiritual energy. She knew many songs and even in her twilight years she would do a song that I had not heard for many years. She was an amazing woman.

A story I like to share with the audience from time to time is about the time our group went to Washington, D.C. when she was honored by the National Endowment for the Arts. At the airport I didn't have my reading glasses so I had trouble reading a magazine. So Auntie Genoa took the magazine from me and without using eyeglasses began reading the article to me. I was stunned and amazed that her eyesight was so good.

HW: What about your experiences with other music legends?

Alan: I met so many legends in my early career and had a chance to perform with them. Many years ago I used to ride to Waikīkī with famed "Hawaii Calls" bandleader and arranger Benny Kalama. Going to Waikīkī Benny shared many interesting stories of musicians, singers, and composers. I learned about Hawaiian music and music arranging while traveling in the car.

From the stage Sonny Kamahale liked to romance women who were sitting by themselves. He would sing love

songs while staring at them. If he forgot the words to a song he would continue anyway adding his own lyrics. Benny and I would always joke about that.

I remember that musician-songwriter Mel Peterson (composer of “Show Me How To Do the Hula,” “Rainbows Over Paradise” and “E Naughty Naughty Mai Nei”) could find the key to any song we played without anyone telling him what it was. And he had a fantastic memory for hapa haole songs.

Auntie Irmgard Farden Aluli (composer of “Pua Mana,” “Boy From Laupahoehoe” and “E Maliu Mai”) was the sweetest person you could ever meet. She was always filled with laughter and happiness.

Because I was proficient in playing the bass, ‘ukulele and a little bit of guitar, I was able to play with and learn by watching so many steel guitarists including Billy Hew Len, Buddy Hew Len, Mel Masao Abe, Harold Hakuole and Merle Kekuku.

HW: What about Japanese musicians you have played with?

Alan: I can remember many of the great Hawaiian artists from Japan who I knew and played with, including Bucky

Shirakata, George Matsushita, Wada Isao, Sasakan, Minami Kaoru, Etoh Kaori, Agnes Kimura, Takagi Boo, Nagashima san, Uchida san, Shiraishi Makoto, “Lion” Kobayashi, the Mahina Stars, the Coney Islanders, the Aloha Hawaiians, Nā Leo Hawaiians, and many more.

HW: Is it true that, like Japan, fewer are taking up the steel guitar Hawai‘i?

Alan: Yes, it is true that fewer people play the steel guitar. You don’t hear it often in new recordings. This is too bad since the steel guitar is the only modern-day stringed instrument invented in Hawai‘i. The steel is still popular in country music, and my friend, who is an artist and teacher of the steel guitar done in the cultural music of India, has popularized the steel guitar there. There are more steel guitarists there than in Japan and Hawai‘i. But they play Indian music, not Hawaiian.

HW: How popular is the steel guitar in Hawai‘i now?

Alan: The steel guitar lost its popularity in Hawai‘i and Hawaiian music back in the 1970s when a new style of

Continued on Page 20



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phone 262.728.2686

The Moon of Manakoora

(Loesser – Newman)

Arrangement by Jeff Kearns

Slow Waltz

Vs

Chords: D, A7, D, G

Techniques: hula, slide, strum

Steel Gtr. (C6th)

5 Chords: D, A7, D, A7

Techniques: slide, strum, hula

9 Chords: D, A7, D, G

Techniques: slide, strum

13 Chords: D, A7, D, D7

Techniques: slide, strum

strum strings 4-5
with thumb pick
(to simplify, omit string 5)

Rev: 8/29/17

Cho

G Gm D D7

14 13 12 11 10 10 9 14 12 7 7

21 G Gm D

14 13 12 11 10 10 8 9 8 8 8

let ring-----

25 A7 Bb7 Em7 A7

9 8 7 9 8 10 7 9 7 8 8 8 7 9 7 8

29 D D7

9 8 7 9 8 strum 2 1 2 1 0 0 2 7 7

strum strings 4-5 with thumb pick (to simplify, omit string 5)

Cho

G Gm D D7

T 14 13 12 11 10 10 9 14 13 12 7

A 14 13 12 11 10 10 9 14 13 12 7

B 14 13 12 12 7

37

G Gm D

T 14 13 12 11 10 10 8 9 8

A 14 13 12 11 10 10 8 9 8

B 8 8 8

let ring-----

41

A7 Bb7 Em7 A7

T 9 8 7 10 7 9 8 8

A 9 8 7 9 8 7 8 8

B 9 8 7 9 8 7 9 8 7 8

45

Bb7 A7 D

rit.

T 9 8 7 8 7 2 2 2 13 14

A 9 8 7 9 8 7 2 2 2 13 14

B 9 8 7 9 8 7 2 2 2 13 14

let ring-----

CLOSING NOTES

We are sorry to report that we lost longtime Florida member Phil Bender this past July. The following is an excerpt taken from the newspaper notice:

“Philip E. Bender, 78, of Palmetto, Florida died July 17, 2017. Mr. Bender was born in Indianapolis, Indiana on December 4, 1938 and moved to Columbus, Indiana in 1944. He was a 1956 graduate of Columbus High School. Mr. Bender was a Veteran of the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force, receiving the Air Force Air Medal with cluster while serving in Vietnam in 1969. He moved to Florida in 2004 and has lived at Leisure Lake Co-op since that time. Mr. Bender was a member of Holy Cross Parrish Church in Palmetto where he was an active member of the Knights of Columbus and a Fourth Degree knight. Mr. Bender was a member of the Aloha International Steel Guitar Club and the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association, having played the steel guitar since 1950. He was part of several local musical groups in Indiana, including gospel music. He was also a designer and builder of custom steel guitars.

Mr. Bender is survived by a brother Gary Bender of Englewood, Florida; his wife Mary Brockman Bender; a daughter Christi Maples of Frankfort, Indiana; son Todd Bender of Brownsburg, Indiana; and son David Bender of Bastrop, Texas; three step daughters, Debra Hansen of Dodgeville, Wisconsin, Mary Cooper of Grand Rapids, Michigan and Judy Hezik of Campbellsville, Kentucky. Also surviving are 10 grandchildren and 17 great grandchildren.”

We'll share a few tributes to Phil, who was well-known at HSGA, especially among the “core” members who founded the club:

Writes steel guitar “forumite” Blake Hawkins, “Phil will be missed here in Florida. He was a member of the Manasota Steel Guitar Club and was a regular player at the jams. Phil was very talented and one of the finest steel guitar



Phil Bender at Joliet 2003 playing his double-neck Excel steel guitar with a special non-pedal neck add-on he designed.

musicians anywhere. He was also a good friend.”

Florida steel guitarist Jack Stoner writes, “Sad news. I met him several times at the Manasota jams and he even came to a couple of the old Florida Steel Guitar Club jams.”

Arrangement Notes

Kudos to Jeff Kearns for his terrific arrangement of “Moon of Manakoora” (opposite). Jeff tabs out the seldom (if ever) heard verse that really sets up the familiar chorus part nicely.

The tricky D7th chords in bars 16 and 32 are made easier if you do the following: place the bar flat on the strings covering only strings 4-6 so that the tip of your left hand middle finger mutes string 3. Then you can pick the open strings with your metal picks and catch strings 4 and 5 easily with your thumb pick. Or, you can simply strum the upper five strings with your thumb; your middle finger will mute the unwanted third string.

Well-known steel guitar builder George Piburn writes, “Phil was a friend; we often exchanged emails and Skypes regarding his attempted development of a multi-tuning cam devise he invented for lap steels. I knew his health was in question for a long time now and will miss him and his playing.”

Writes Michigan steel guitarist Willis Vanderberg, “A very talented picker and a nice guy. He built a third neck for his Excel double-neck and it was a superb build. I played many jams in Palmetto with Phil. The quality of his playing was top notch. We will miss him. Prayers to his family.” ■

Weekly Steel Spots

Bobby Ingano Trio—Bobby performs every Monday with Kaipo and Adam Asing at Dots Restaurant’s “Nostalgia Night,” 6-9 PM. Dots is on O’ahu’s North Shore at 130 Mango Street, Wahiawa, Hawai‘i 96786-1926.

Alan Akaka and the Islanders are playing select Thursdays and possibly some Fridays at the International Marketplace on Kalākaua Avenue, 7-10 PM. Be on the lookout! We understand that Alan also plays at Duke’s Waikīkī on a weekly basis. Call Duke’s for details.

The Hiram Olsen Trio performs weekly at the Halekūlani Hotel’s House without a Key seaside patio on Friday and Saturday evenings, 5:30-8:30 PM. Of course, Casey Olsen is the steel guitarist with dad Hiram on guitar and Dennis “Bla” Keohokalole on bass.

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

The Harlin Brothers of Indianapolis and the Birth of the Pedal Steel Guitar

Part Four: Alvino Rey and the King Sisters' MacGregor recordings, the King Sisters' first RCA recordings, and the Harlin Brothers' activities in 1938 and 1939.

By Anthony Lis

This series (which debuted in the Summer 2016 issue) is examining the development of the pedal steel guitar, from initial experiments with adding pedals, buttons or levers to guitars (or guitar-like apparatuses) in the late 1880s through Paul Bigsby's custom-built, multi-neck pedal steel guitars of the late 1940s and early 1950s. Particular attention is being paid to the contributions of the Harlin Brothers, a teaching, publishing, and pedal steel guitar-building enterprise active in Indianapolis from the mid-1930s through the early 1980s, which also maintained a chain of Midwestern teaching studios. Jay D. Harlin (1911-

A promo shot of Alvino Rey playing standard guitar and signed by Alvino to none other than longtime HSGA member and noted musician/instructor George "Keoki" Lake of Edmonton, Canada.



1996), the steel guitar playing, third-oldest Harlin brother, is known to have developed the Kalina Multi-Kord—an early, commercially successful pedal steel guitar—by August 1947. There is evidence he may have constructed working prototypes some six to eight years before that.

The previous installment began with an overview of steel guitarist Alvino Rey's seventy-eight recordings with bandleader Horace Heidt, which often included the King Sisters vocal quartet. (Rey married Luise King in May 1937.) The segment also discussed Rey's *Modern Guitar Method, Hawaiian Style*, from likely late 1937. (The author recently learned that the method was actually ghostwritten by Gibson staff "musicologist" Julius Bellson. The publication was essentially a sales vehicle for Gibson's EH-150 hollow-body lap-steel, which Rey had helped design in mid-1935.)

Modern Guitar Method includes a "candid" photo taken at a Heidt gig of Rey playing what appears to be a double-neck lap-steel of "hybrid construction." Rey devoted the last eleven pages of his method to the E7th tuning, which he dubbed "[the] best for modern professional playing".

The prior installment, borrowing from Louise King's *Those Swinging Years: An Autobiography*, also spoke of Rey and the Kings' "graduation" from "Mr. Heidt's college of life" and their early days on their own as independent yet intertwined acts (dubbed the King Sisters and the Alvino Rey Orchestra). The installment covered their residency as the "house ensemble" on Los Angeles's KHJ radio—then recently aligned with the Mutual network—followed by their November 1939 live debut in front of "screaming, shouting teenagers" at Pasadena's Civic Auditorium. The segment ended with men-



The four Harlin Brothers actively involved in the family music business: (l. to r.) Jay D. (1911-1996) playing a 1930s frypan, bassist Jimmie I. (1913-1953), Winiford B. (1915-1994) on uke and guitarist Herbert A. (1902-1992). (From Beth Harlin)

tion of a special pedal-operated Console Grande Electric Hawaiian Guitar Rey received from Gibson in March 1939, custom-built with a longer, 25-inch scale and special electronics.

The online "RadioGOLDIndex Database" at radioindex.com relates that on August 16, 1939, Alvino Rey debuted a new, roughly fifteen-minute radio program on the Mutual network, apparently titled "Alvino Rey and His Music," heard perhaps only on the West Coast. The database notes that on the program, "Alvino feature[d] his 'singing guitar.' From the en.wikipedia.org online encyclopedia entries for Alvino Rey and the Sonovox (a "talk-box" that produced voice effects similar to Rey's "singing guitar"), one learns that Rey began exploiting his novelty voice modification effect in earnest in 1939, using a carbon throat microphone to electrically modulate the tone of his electric steel guitar. As the author of the Rey entry explains, "the [carbon throat] mike, developed

for military pilots, was worn by Rey's wife Luise, who stood behind a curtain and sang along with the guitar lines."

The author wonders if he has perhaps detected a very early example of Rey experimenting with voice modulation in the introduction to Horace Heidt's "I'll Love You in My Dreams" (Brunswick 7981), on which Rey played steel guitar back in late July 1937, as related in the previous installment. The author hears what is perhaps an altered female voice "mimicking" the sound of a muted trumpet in several (or, all?) of the opening phrases. Curiously—via searching at online newspaper archives—the author found a reference to Rey playing a "singing guitar" as early as January 24, 1936 in the *Edinburg [Indiana] Daily Courier*.

A detailed narrative of Rey's use of his "singing guitar" effect is beyond the scope of this series; in listening to Rey's recordings over previous months, the author *has* noted that Rey employed the effect during his decidedly strange March 1942 rendition of Walter Donaldson and Gus Kahn's "My Buddy" (Bluebird B11517), (which includes side remarks referencing wrong notes played!), as well as his 1947 rendition of "The Wabash Blues" (Capitol 10205). In the first half of his second pass through the latter tune, Rey offers several modulated words, including a clear-sounding "what?". He then, in a nod to old vaudeville steel players, supplies a few chicken "bawks" before playing the last sixteen bars fairly "straight." Rey's singing guitar experiments predate Pete Drake's famous "talking steel guitar" recordings by a good quarter-century. The Drake "talk box" was featured prominently on his *Talking Steel Guitar* (1964) and *Talking Steel and Singing Strings* (1965) recordings on the Smash Records label.

The OTRRpedia.net website ("Database of Old Time Radio Programs and People") provides additional information on Rey's Mutual program, relating that it was a fifteen-minute show broadcast every weekday. RadioGOLDIndex reports that on December 6, 1939, Rey's program was retitled "Maxine Gray Entertains" (Gray was the vocalist who performed with Rey from the inception of the program). After the February 28, 1940 broadcast, fidgety Mutual changed the title again, at which time Rey evidently left the program.

Sometime during the second half of 1939, Rey and all four King Sisters made 78 rpm and 33¹/₃ rpm (12-inch) transcription recordings for Los Angeles's MacGregor company. MacGregor was owned by Ontario-born Charles Pearson ("C.P.") MacGregor (1897-1968). From perusing various databases at the Ancestry.com genealogical website, we learn that MacGregor emigrated to San Francisco from Victoria, British Columbia in January 1919. (MacGregor had been living in nearby Vancouver prior to his immigration.) By the time of MacGregor's June 1927 petition for naturalization as an American citizen, he was living in Burlingame, California (seventeen miles southeast of San Francisco), working as



A current Google Maps photo of the building at 729 Western Avenue in Los Angeles, in 1939, the home of the MacGregor electrical transcriptions recording company.

district manager of the Brunswick-Collender Company, which produced a wide variety of products, including phonograph records, phonographs and radios.

MacGregor eventually moved to Los Angeles. The Los Angeles Directory Company's *Los Angeles City Directory 1940* shows MacGregor running an "elec[trical] transcriptions" recording company at 729 Western Avenue northwest of downtown. Transcription recording companies placed radio programs on disc for later broadcast. Jose Fritz notes in his "C. P. MacGregor & Sollie & Ingram" post at the Arcane Radio Trivia blog at Tenwatts.blogspot.com that MacGregor eventually became "a prolific producer and distributor [of] syndicated transcription discs," including the celebrated Mutual network radio program "The Shadow."

Sheffield, UK-based Hawaiian music historian, chronologist, and record collector John D. Marsden has amassed thirty-eight of the transcription recordings Rey and the King Sisters made for MacGregor. Marsden kindly attached a list of the recordings in a letter to the author on March 21, 2017, so that an overview of the transcriptions could be provided. Swing era-oriented authors Charles Garrod and Bill Korst, who between 1986 and 1997 assembled two editions of an Alvino Rey/King Sisters discography (*Alvino Rey and his Orchestra Plus the King Sisters*), were evidently unaware of the MacGregor transcriptions; neither edition of their discography includes them. In an April 20, 2017 letter to the author, Marsden remarked, "It's curious these MacGregor tracks don't appear in [Garrod and Korst's] ... discography ... but perhaps the compilers didn't know about them at the time."

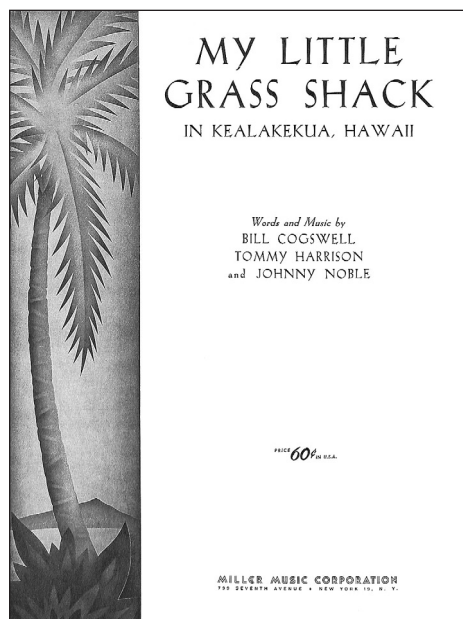
Marsden also related, "It's difficult to explain the various formats used by MacGregor—why both 78 [rpm] and [12-inch, 33¹/₃ rpm] transcriptions were used for radio stations? I guess both were required? ... I don't know." Marsden also noted, "I get the impression that MacGregor recorded pri-

Continued on Page 16

marily for radio but also did sell some tracks to the public,” adding that MacGregor 78s sold for home use were so-designated by a rim inscription, and that in those instances, the label was “an eye-catching silver on bright red.” By contrast, their Musical Library issues, which include the Rey and Kings’ transcriptions, had a label comprised of “a far more muted brown-on-white.” In a May 14, 2017 follow-up letter, Marsden added that “there are also *silver-on-black MacGregor 78s* which appear to be for public sale [emphasis added], and possibly other colours/designs, too,” noting that “it was a prolific company and it released in various formats.”

In his May 14 letter, Marsden also noted that sometimes transcriptions were of complete programs, but per-

The folio cover of Cogswell, Harrison, and Noble’s hit song “My Little Grass Shack in Kealakekua, Hawaii,” which was copyrighted in October 1933 on Friday the Thirteenth, a lucky date indeed for the collaborators! Alvino Rey and Buddy Cole covered the tune in the mid-1930s for MacGregor. (From the Sheet Music Collection, The Center for Popular Music, Middle Tennessee State University)



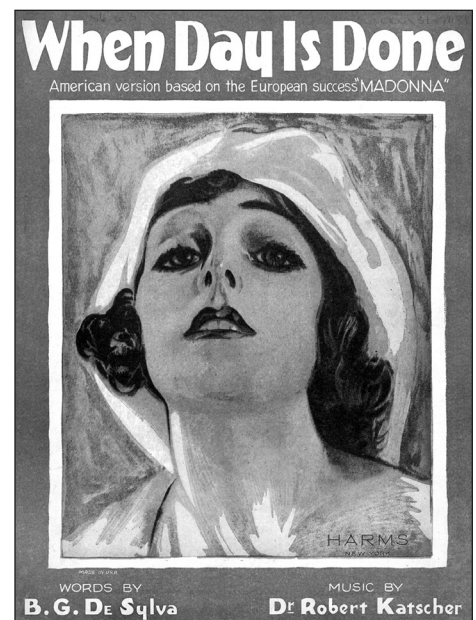
haps more commonly, they consisted of “individual tracks recorded specially for radio and not re-released to the public, and stations would compile programmes from this material.”

Marsden’s Alvino Rey MacGregor transcription disc holdings begin with MacGregor 1873 through 1878, six sides recorded by the King Sisters, accompanied by Alvino Rey and Buddy Cole. (Illinois-born pianist/organist Edwin “Buddy” Cole [1916-1964] would become Rey’s brother-in-law on August 17, 1940, with his marriage to Yvonne King, the youngest of the King Sisters.)

Marsden also holds MacGregor 1897 and 1898, which he lists as sides by Alyce King (third-born of the King sisters), as well as MacGregor 1899 through 1908, which include ten sides Rey recorded accompanied by Buddy Cole, perhaps waxed the same day as the sides with King to judge from the continuing catalog number sequence. Marsden also holds MacGregor 1923 through 1928 and MacGregor 1961 through 1968, twelve sides credited to Alvino Rey and his Orchestra.

In addition, Marsden holds three 12-inch MacGregor transcription sides containing recordings credited to Rey. MacGregor 1979/1980, credited to Alvino Rey and His Orchestra, include five selections total with vocals either by Alyce, Yvonne, or all four King Sisters. MacGregor 2005, credited to Alvino Rey’s Specialty Group, includes three selections with vocals likewise split between Alyce, Yvonne and the other sisters.

T. Malcolm Rockwell—in his Hawaiian-centered 2007 CD-ROM discography *Hawaiian & Hawaiian Guitar Records 1891-1960*—listed only *three* of the recordings on Marsden’s list: the King Sisters, Rey, and Cole’s “Blue Hawaii” (MacG 1877), which Rockwell dated from around 1932; and Rey and Cole’s “Farewell Blues” and “My Little Grass Shack” (MacG 1899 and 1900), which



The folio cover of the song “When Day is Done,” which began life as “Madonna, du bist schöner als der Sonnenschein,” written for a 1924 musical revue by Robert Katscher, an Austrian songwriter, lyricist, and film composer. (From the Sheet Music Collection of the Center for Popular Music, Middle Tennessee State University)

Rockwell dated from roughly the mid-1930s. Marsden notes on his list that MacGregor 1877/1878 have mistitled labels: MacGregor 1877, “Song of the Volga Boatmen” is labeled “Blue Hawaii” and MacGregor 1878, “Blue Hawaii” is erroneously labeled “I’ll See You in my Dreams.”

In an October 13, 2016 e-mail to the author, Rockwell corrected the recording year for MacGregor 1877, 1899, and 1900 to 1939. One notes from Rockwell’s CD-ROM that two Sam Koki MacGregor recordings from roughly June 1939 were assigned catalog numbers 1807 and 1808, so it seems reasonable to suppose the Rey, King, and Cole recordings—with catalog numbers spanning 1873-2005—followed some weeks afterwards. The latter series presumably predates Rey, the Kings, and Cole’s major label debut in mid-November 1939 on RCA-affiliated Bluebird in Hollywood (to be detailed below).

To comment further on the recordings on Marsden's list, the King Sisters' first transcription recording session for MacGregor concluded with covers of "Song of the Volga Boatmen" and "Blue Hawaii" (MacG 1877/1878) with accompaniment by Alvino Rey and Buddy Cole. Rockwell's *Hawaiian & Hawaiian Guitar Records, 1891-1960* shows three Hawaiian-related recordings of "Song of the Volga Boatmen" made before the King Sisters rendition: a rendering by Portuguese-Hawaiian steel guitarist Frank Ferera for the Grey Gull label around mid-February 1924 (with perhaps Anthony Franchini on guitar and several other unidentified musicians); a circa 1925 version recorded by Hawaii-born steel guitarist Charles Kaimana (aka Charles Diamond), with perhaps an unidentified guitarist, for Hollywood Records in Los Angeles; and a spring 1933 rendition recorded in Berlin by American-born steel guitarist Mike Danzi with his Hawaiians.

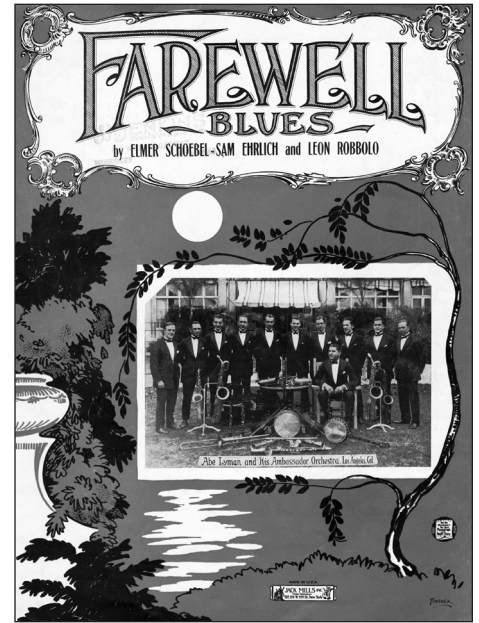
In his March 21, 2017 letter, Marsden relayed that the "Blue Hawaii" recorded by the Kings, Rey, and Cole was the one composed by Leo Robin and Ralph Rainger, waxed notably by Bing Crosby with Lani McIntire's Hawaiians for Decca in early February 1937 and popularized in the film *Waikiki Wedding*, released roughly seven weeks later. The Kings, Rey, and Cole's other four sides included Robin and Ranger's "Love in Bloom," from five years earlier (MacG 1874).

The two recordings with Alyce King on vocals included her cover of "When Day is Done" (MacG 1897), Buddy DeSylva's 1926 reworking of a 1924 song by German dentist and composer Robert Katscher. Andy Sannella—whose radio performances inspired Rey to switch from banjo to steel guitar in the early 1930s as related in the second installment—had recorded the DeSylva's number back in August 1927 for the Cameo label with a handful of unidentified musicians.

Marsden related in his April 20, 2017 letter that, although the label didn't credit the sidemen, to his ear they sound like Rey and Cole.

The ten recordings Marsden holds on which Rey is accompanied by Buddy Cole (likely waxed the same day as Alyce King's recordings, as explained above) included a coupling of "Farewell Blues" b/w "My Little Grass Shack" (MacG 1899/1900). "Farewell Blues," a Dixieland standard by the songwriting team of Schoebel, Ehrlich, and Robbolo, was roughly sixteen years old by the time Rey and Cole recorded their rendition. Hawaiian-oriented covers of the tune preceding Rey and Cole's, include versions by Sol Ho'opi'i (in 1926 and 1938), Sam Ku West (who recorded the tune three times in 1927), and Roy Smeck (1937). According to James Sallis, in *The Guitar Players: One Instrument and its Masters in American Music*, Smeck taught Rey steel guitar around 1927 as Rey was transitioning from banjo to steel guitar. He also bought Rey his first steel.

On "Farewell Blues," Rey and Cole play through the tune six times with Rey beginning in the lower register of his steel. In the second chorus, Rey moves to the upper register and subsequently offers "wah-wah" effects, mellow-sounding slides and—following a somewhat unusual modulation up a minor third—some harmonics and a prominent high-register tremolo (the latter providing Cole with some "space" to play a bit of the melody). It is apparently not possible to determine exactly what instrument Rey was playing at this point, but by the second half of 1939, Rey would have conducted steel guitar-related experiments at Lyon & Healy's factory in Chicago, received a "one-off" double-neck steel from Gibson and the company's first eight-string electric steel (both in 1936), assembled the "hybrid double-neck" photographed for *Modern Guitar Method, Hawaiian Style*, and received



The folio cover of Schoebel, Ehrlich, and Robbolo's 1923 song "Farewell Blues," which was covered by Alvino Rey and Buddy Cole in 1939 (From the Sheet Music Collection of the Center for Popular Music, Middle Tennessee State University)

a special pedal-operated Console Grande Electric Hawaiian Guitar, also from Gibson.

Rey and Cole recorded a second Hawaiian number, Harrison, Cogswell and Noble's oft-covered "My Little Grass Shack in Kealakekua, Hawaii" which had been copyrighted back in 1933. Following Cole's four-bar introduction, Rey and Cole offer a moderately paced, rather mellow initial rendition of the entire thirty-two-bar theme. Then, following a shift to a faster rhythmic feel, Rey improvises over the chords of the first sixteen bars (rather spastically, to your author's ears, with too-frequent slides). The final section returns to the calm mood of the opening and a clear restatement of the melody, with Cole apparently switching over to organ for a final flourish, while Rey supplies yet more slides.

Rey and Cole's remaining eight sides included such turn-of-the-century "chestnuts" as Ethelbert Nevin and Robert Cameron Rogers's "The Ros-

Continued on Page 18

ary” (MacG 1904), Franz Lehár’s “Merry Widow Waltz” (MacG 1902), Dave Ringle and Fred Meinken’s “The Wabash Blues” (MacG 1903) and William H. Gardner and Caro Roma’s “Can’t You Hear Me Calling, Caroline” (MacG 1907). *Hawaiian & Hawaiian Guitar Records 1891-1960* lists ten recordings of “The Rosary” issued between December 1914 and October 1934, beginning with Pale K. Lua’s December 1914 Victor recording and ending with South Africa-born, London-based steel guitarist Len Fillis’s October 1934 rendition for Columbia, as part of a “Songs of Home” medley. Other steel guitarists recording the tune include Andy Sannella in 1925 for Brunswick, and Sam Ku West in 1928 for the Victor label.

Rockwell lists two “Merry Widow Waltz” recordings on steel guitar prior to Rey and Cole’s: a 1917 recording by Frank Ferera and Helen Louise on the Pathé label and a 1928 rendition by Andy Sannella, recorded with banjoist John Cali and six other musicians on Grey Gull. Sannella’s 1925 cover of “Can’t You Hear Me Calling, Caroline” was released as the flip side of “The Wabash Blues.” In 1947, Rey would re-record the latter tune in the voice-modulated version referenced above for his Capitol 78 rpm album *Tropical Isle* (CC-141).

The twelve Marsden recordings attributed to Rey and his Orchestra apparently included sides recorded at two different recording dates, judging from the gap in release numbers between MacGregor 1928 and 1961. MacGregor 1923/24 and 1927/28 consisted of covers of songs from the 1939 Universal musical-comedy *East Side of Heaven* starring Bing Crosby, released in April with Alicye King on vocals on the first two sides. (In his April 20, 2017 letter, Marsden reported he was missing MacGregor 1925/1926.)

MacGregor 1961 through 1968 included one side with Yvonne King on vocals, three sides with Alyce King on vocals including “Strange Enchantment” (MacG 1965) and “Beer Barrel Polka” (MacG 1966) where Alyce was joined by Dick (“Icky”) Morgan. Morgan played rhythm guitar and performed in comic bits during Rey’s appearances. The ballad “Strange Enchantment”—copyrighted on January 24, 1939 by Frederick Hollander and Frank Loesser—was featured in the summer 1939 Paramount film *Man About Town*, starring Jack Benny and Dorothy Lamour. On November 8, 1939, sixty-six days into World War II, British bandleader Felix Mendelssohn and his Hawaiian Serenaders recorded the tune in London for Parlophone with Roland Peachy on electric steel guitar. Rey’s remaining three sides were instrumental renditions of tunes from 1938-39.

Marsden’s 12-inch MacGregor transcription discs (1979 and 1980), credited to Alvino Rey and his Orchestra, con-

tained vocal renditions of five contemporary songs composed between 1935 and 1939, with Alyce and Yvonne King each singing two selections and all four King Sisters rendering the remaining number.

On the MacGregor 2005 transcription, side one contained Rey’s orchestra—re-christened “Alvino Rey’s Specialty Group”—performing two 1939 songs: “South American Way” with vocals by all four King Sisters and “Moon Love” with vocals by Alyce King. “Moon Love” was co-written by thirty-seven-year-old Andre Kostelanetz and two other songwriters, who appropriated the melody from the second movement of Tchaikovsky’s Fifth Symphony. Roy Smeck and his Serenaders had recorded the piece for Decca around mid-June 1939 with Smeck on electric steel guitar. John Marsden in his May 14 letter reported hearing Rey’s steel guitar on “Moon Love,” the only track on which he performs. Closing out side one was a third track, Yvonne King offering—in comic style, according to Marsden—“Ain’t Cha Comin’ Out,” apparently a tune co-written by Glenn Miller. (Side two contained the Thomas Peluso Orchestra’s swing renditions of songs from Gilbert & Sullivan’s operetta *The Mikado*, according to a September 2014 eBay posting made by Will Sulzer for RootsVinylGuide.com.)

Towards the end of his April 20 letter, Marsden related, “I would guess a few [other Alvino Rey and/or King Sisters transcriptions] ... may exist,” adding that “a few years ago, I failed to win a couple of transcriptions in one of the [rare record] auctions... . So I still have to keep my eyes open!” (While assembling his May 14 letter, Marsden looked up the information from the 2010 New Jersey-based auction offering the 12-inch MacGregor discs 1981/1982 and 2003/2004, which he failed to win. Both were described as including “one instrumental and various vocals by the King Sisters and individual Kings.” The author was able to glean information on ten of the twelve songs recorded therein; all appeared to be from 1939 and none appeared to have been given any previous Hawaiian-related [or steel guitar-centric] treatment.)

In mid-November 1939, the Four King Sisters, backed by an eight-piece ensemble directed by Alvino Rey including Buddy Cole again on piano, made their major label recording debut. Garrod and Korst’s *Alvino Rey and His Orchestra Plus the King Sisters* discography (which begins with these recordings) relates that on November 13, 1939, the musicians waxed five sides for Bluebird, RCA’s budget label in Hollywood, presumably at the city’s RCA’s studios.

In *Those Swingin’ Years: An Autobiography*, Luise King recalled that “one afternoon [in fall 1939] while [my sisters and I] ... were diligently practicing in our little bungalow in the Hollywood hills, [comedic bandleader] Spike Jones dropped in on us. He headed recordings for RCA on the coast

[i.e., West Coast] at the time. He was so impressed that he arranged an audition for us with Leonard Joy, the record producer for RCA in New York. That audition resulted in our first recording contract with Bluebird ...”

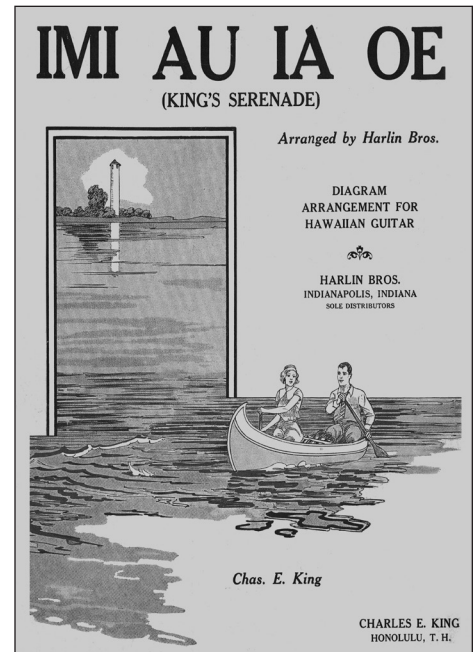
The Kings’ Bluebird recordings included such novelty numbers as the Yiddish-inflected “A Bee Gezindt” (“Live and Be Well”) and the “little girl” song “My Wubba Dolly,” both composed in 1939, as well as a snappy cover of Glenn Miller’s “In the Mood” (B 10545) with vocals. A coupling of “A Bee Gezindt” b/w “My Wubba Dolly” (B10512) was issued in late 1939 as the sisters’ first Bluebird release. Don Woodrum, referring to the pairing in his “Reviewing the Records” column in the December 30, 1939 edition of the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, opined that “the Four King Sisters, who used to sing with Horace Heidt, sound a lot better [now] without the handicap of that particular outfit,” while Harry Sheer—in his column “Recorded Music,” in the Christmas Eve 1939 edi-

tion of the Madison, Wisconsin *Capital Times*—recommended that readers “mark ... [the coupling] down as a ‘must!’”, adding that the “debut for the King quartet is a real corker [i.e., an excellent/astonishing recording] and bodes good for future [pop chart] listings.” Rave reviews notwithstanding, the Kings would have to wait until late summer of 1941 for their “Hut-Sut Song [A Swedish Serenade]” to pierce the Top 40 and become their first charting hit.

Rey, credited as conductor on the disc labels, played no steel on the sides. Perhaps Dick Morgan’s short standard guitar solo on “A Bee Gezindt” and occasional crisp fills on other sides (notably at the beginning of the Kings’ cover of Vincent Youmans and Irving Caesar’s 1927 collaboration “Sometimes I’m Happy” [B 10660]) replaced where Rey might have played.

Back in central Indianapolis between 1938 and 1939, the Harlin Brothers continued their musical instrument sales and teaching work. Determined searching at Google Books revealed that the Harlins brought forth five new Hawaiian guitar arrangements in 1938-39, including a reworking of Stover and Kailimai’s “On the Beach at Waikiki” as well as the Harlins’ own “New Hawaii.”

On October 5, 1939, the Harlins copyrighted an arrangement of “Imi Au Ia ‘Oe,” a 1916 composition by Hawaiian composer/publisher/bandleader Charles E. King known also as “King’s Serenade.” By happy coincidence, as the author was beginning an early draft of this installment, Jay Harlin’s youngest daughter Beth (currently based outside Indianapolis) related that while on a March 2017 trip to Southern Indiana in search of Harlin Brothers-related memorabilia, she obtained a copy of her uncles’ “Imi Au Ia ‘Oe” arrangement from Robert Houze, owner of Crawdaddy Music



The folio cover of the Harlin Brothers’ late-1939 arrangement of Charles E. King’s “Imi Au Ia ‘Oe,” aka “King’s Serenade.” (From Beth Harlin).

The first page of actual music in the folio for the Harlin Brothers’ original song “Nights in Hawaii,” likely inspired by oldest brother Herbert’s spring 1939 trip to O’ahu. (From Beth Harlin)



Shop, a vintage instrument store in Madison, Indiana on the Ohio River border with Kentucky. The Harlins’ “diagram arrangement for Hawaiian guitar” in the standard A major low-bass tuning, transposed King’s G major song to D major and included lyrics, chord symbols and tablature.

Also in October 1939, the Harlins published their collaboration “Nights in Hawaii” as a sheet music folio with the melody, lyrics, chords and a piano accompaniment. The song, written in F major at a moderate tempo, was likely inspired by oldest brother Herbert’s spring 1939 trip to Hawaii to shoot an educational film for use in the Harlins’ sales offices, and mentions “driving along Waikiki” and “danc[ing] at Lau Yee Chai,” a Chinese restaurant and Waikiki landmark at the time.

An article in the November 1, 1939 *Decatur [Illinois] Daily Review* announced the opening of the Harlins’ newest studio franchise in downtown Decatur, while a February 26, 1939 advertisement in the *Lima [Ohio] News*

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E Komo Mai! Welcome, New Members

Is your address correct? Please notify us!

UNITED STATES

LES THORNE, 216 30th Ave., Vero Beach, FL 32968

ANITA FREDERICK, 436 Evans Road, Potts Camp, MS 38659

ALBERT SCHAFER, Aloha Tradewinds, 636 Ainapo St., Honolulu, HI 96825

DANIEL TREMBLAY AND LINDA MENTZER, PO Box 265, Alton, NH 03809

AARON BENOLKIN, 11711 Spyglass Cir, Anchorage, AK 99515

STEPHAN TYLKA, 2944 Core Dr., Clarksville, TN 37040

MARTIN VAZQUEZ, 308 Central Ave., Needham, MA 02494-1740

ALAN AKAKA Continued from Page 9

Hawaiian music was emerging. The big names were the Sunday Manoa and Gabby Pahinui. The steel guitar was not featured much in their recordings. As the years went on new bands formed such as the Peter Moon Band, Olomana, and the Makaha Sons that did not use the steel guitar regularly or at all. Because of this the younger generation is not familiar with the steel.

The steel guitar has made a small comeback, but has not reached the level of popularity it once had years ago. It is hard to find in Waikīkī and part of the reason is economics. Hotels and restaurants hire one or two musicians only, so that most likely leaves out the steel guitar since it is not an accompaniment instrument like the guitar or 'ukulele.

HW: Talk about your Islanders group.

Alan: I did not perform regularly with my Islanders group following my departure from the Halekūlani in November 2005. During the interim I performed weekly with Auntie Genoa and the Keawe 'Ohana and gigged from time to time with other musicians.

Over the years the Islanders membership was comprised of Hawai'i's finest including Sonny Kamahale, Benny Kalama, Barney Isaacs, Harold Hakuole, Gary Aiko, Cy Aiu, Merle Kekuku, Jake Kaleikini, Kaipō Asing, Adam Asing, Walter Mookini, Helene Woodward and Scott Furushima. ■

PAUL KIM Continued from Page 6

In my nine-year tenure, these were the board members that did a lot of the hard work: Don Keene, Don Weber, Pete Kahele, Lorene Ruymar, Frank Della-Penna, Chris Kennison, Ivan Reddington, Terry Miller, Gerald Ross, Mike Scott, Ian Ufton, and Addison Ching. I am going off the list I downloaded so I apologize if I left anyone out. The final person is Kamaka Tom. He has been an integral part of the continuity of all the boards, doing a lot of the work in the background and keeping the Hawai'i conventions alive. He has been huge for the organization.

Other notables as of late: John Ely takes care of the wonderful newsletters. Amy Pace has been the webmaster for us for quite some time. Rick Aiello has maintained the cool steel guitar forum site. And a huge shout out goes to Bo Barrett, who painstakingly gives his time and Aloha to mailing out all the hard copy newsletters. And it's always a pleasure to receive a little post-it from him when I open my newsletter. It's people like you all that have made this organization a success. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart for holding me up and watching my back. You all were more of an acting president than I was. Again, *mahalo nui loa* to all of you and I hope to see you as you visit Hawai'i or at future conventions.

Aloha Pumehana (with warm Aloha),
Paul Kim ■

related that, up to that point, the Harlins had appeared on the radio in Lima and stations in Cleveland, Chicago, Detroit, and Indianapolis, as well as "over the Red and Blue coast-to-coast networks." The ad publicized a Harlins appearance on Lima's WLOK radio and at the city's Plezol Ballroom in west-central Lima, relating that the brothers, "besides being nationally famous for their fine renditions [of Hawaiian songs] are also well-known as composers, publishers, and copyrighters ..."

Acknowledgments

Thanks to John D. Marsden for his unflagging assistance to the author in assembling this series; it was via Marsden that the author was able to hear Alvino Rey and Buddy Cole's long-out-of-print recordings of "Farewell Blues" and "My Little Grass Shack in Kealakekua, Hawaii," as well as Rey's 1947 cover of "Wabash Blues."

Information on film release dates and song copyright and publication dates was found at the Internet Movie Database (imdb.com), Google Books (books.google.com), and the online catalog of the Center for Popular Music at Middle Tennessee State University (popmusic.mtsu.edu/collections/).

Information on Herbert Harlin's spring 1939 trip to Hawaii was drawn from the March 12, 1939 *Indianapolis Star* article "Harlin Executive Starts to Hawaii." Discographical information was once again taken from T. Malcolm Rockwell's *Hawaiian and Hawaiian Guitar Records 1891-1960*, as well as Charles Garrod and Bill Korst's discography *Alvino Rey and His Orchestra Plus the King Sisters, 1939-1958* (original and revised editions).

In the next installment: Alvino Rey's evaluation of Epiphone's Varichord, Jay D. Harlin's first pedal steel guitar prototype, and the Harlins' early-1940 activities. ■