

HSGA QUARTERLY

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A mainstay at our Fort Collins festivals and active in all things Hawaiian in the Denver area, Keoni Lagunero singing and playing great, pictured here with one of his daughters.

Fort Collins 2019 Festival Review

By Mark Kahalekulu

My wife Dawn and I were up early in the morning on the first day of the Sixth Annual Fort Collins Hawaiian Music Festival, HSGA's big mainland event, which was held this past September 19-21. The weather was predicted to be a bit cooler than the late summer days we had gotten accustomed to, so the air had a crisp feel as we loaded up our vehicle for the drive up from Denver. The morning rush hour was over, so we set a leisurely pace, taking in the gorgeous mountain scenery of Colorado's Front Range. We saw just a few puffs of clouds

hanging over the entire length of the Rocky Mountains, the azure sky brightly outlining the crenulated peaks. It was an outstanding day even by Colorado standards.

We arrived at the Fort Collins Hilton earlier than we had planned, owing probably to the lack of construction along the highway. We quickly unloaded our baggage and checked into our hotel room, which we found to be quite clean and comfortable.

Making our way to the HSGA festival venue, we soon realized that we were not the only folks who were full of anticipation and excitement. We felt

Continued on Page 2

HSGA QUARTERLY

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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

MEMBERSHIP

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

SUBMIT ARTICLES & COMMENTS TO:

HSGA Quarterly, 3442 Greystone Ct, Fort Collins, CO 80525 USA. Our e-mail address is hsga@hsga.org. Submitted items should also be e-mailed directly to the editor at johnely@hawaiiansteel.com. Letters to the president can be sent to: Frank Della-Penna, P.O. Box 18323, Washington, DC 20036.

FORT COLLINS Continued from Page 1

a definite buzz in the room, with everyone who greeted us visibly anxious to hear the music that would soon emanate from the performers' stage.

We warmly greeted old friends who we have grown close to over the years at this festival, as well as newer acquaintances—some who we had only just met at last year's event. But as soon as the first strains of the steel guitar could be heard, we all quietly took our seats to enjoy the music that so many of us travelled so far to see and hear.

We were not disappointed!

Over the course of the next three days, we were serenaded by some of our best "homestate" Hawaiian steel guitarists—Coloradans like Chris Kenison, Joe Stewart, Garry Vanderlind and Tony Fourcroy.

We also had a plethora of visiting musicians such as Captain Ivan Reddington, Roberto Alaniz, Gerald Ross, Margie Mays (the Queen of the Steel Guitar), and the incomparable Chris Ruppenthal, who all tore it up!

Making sure that there was a definite Hawaiian presence at this year's event were quite a few Colorado-based expatriots: Keoni Lagunero and his musical 'ohana, up-and-coming slack-key guitar aficionado Alan Fasick, and veteran entertainer and vocalist John "Keoni" Coelho. Providing hula were Kumu Hula Susie Park-Kelly of the Keaka O Kalani halau and dancers from Kumu Hula Janna Yoshimoto's Hula School of Northern Colorado.

And we were especially honored to have, flying in for this event from the island of Kaua'i, the Punua 'Ohana: steel guitar master and festival Honored Guest Ed Punua, his beautiful wife Vanessa, his father Victor and his daughter Leimomi.

And if this spectacular lineup wasn't enough, who else but the one and only Alan Akaka, fresh off a tour of Japan, who dropped by on his own accord to add his own spin at this year's festival, cranking up the excitement meter.

As if the music on the performance stage was not enough, the chefs for the big lū'au held on the final night of the festival just knocked the ball out of the

Fort Collins Honored Guest, Ed Punua, giving new member Teri Gorman some technical pointers as part of his steel guitar seminar on the final day of the festival. Good stuff!



Mark's Haw'n Fishing Seminar

By Chris Kennison

What a wonderful festival we had this year. We had beautiful fall Colorado weather, the performances were wonderful, and the workshops were truly inspirational. One of the highlights for me was the Traditional Hawaiian Fishing seminar presented by Mark Kahalekulu on Thursday afternoon. Mark had given this seminar earlier in the year at the Aurora History Museum in Denver, and I asked him if he would reprise it for us at the festival.

Mark provided music on his guitar along with videos of his grandkids swimming among the reefs, all as background to the engaging stories he told about growing up as a kid in Hawai'i and fishing with his family. One of his stories was about how they would go out in the evening to set their nets in a secret spot in the reef, and then go out the next morning before dawn to haul in the lobsters they had caught. Lobster and Portuguese sausage for breakfast—ono!

There were other stories as well, and the way Mark told them made you feel as though you could feel the chill of the water, taste the salty spray of the ocean, and hear the lobsters squeal. Those of you who know Mark know that he is truly a Hawaiian treasure when it comes to Hawaiian culture, history and music.

Mark is a master storyteller with bookshelves full of stories in his head about growing up in the Islands. The next time you see Mark, just ask him a question about growing up in Hawai'i, and then sit back and enjoy the show. ■

Changed Email?

Please send email changes to both our office (hsga@hsga.org) AND to John Ely (johnely@hawaiiansteel.com). Mahalo!

Alan Akaka showing how it's done at the Fort Collins Friday session with Bob Alaniz on bass and Ed Punua on rhythm guitar.



Performing for the Ft. Collins audience on Thursday, Joe Stewart on steel guitar, Mark Kahalekulu on bass, Capt. Ivan Reddington on rhythm guitar and new member Jeanne Skybrook on 'ukulele.

park. The kaukau was so ono! The menu included teriyaki chicken, fried rice, kalua pork and braised short ribs. And as guests, dressed in their finest Hawaiian wear, enjoyed their delicious dinner and cocktails, we were all treated to a spectacular lū'au show featuring Alan Akaka and Ed Punua on vocals and steel guitars, Keoni Coelho on vocals and rhythm guitar, Victor Punua on vocals, myself on bass, featured hula dancer Vanessa Punua and the hula dancers of the Hula School of Northern Colorado. The traditional Hawaiian melodies, intertwined with the ritualized body motions of the hula, transported the enthralled audience to a faraway, tropical idyll, lacking only a warm breeze rustling the coconut palms and the soft sound of the ocean lapping a sandy shore.

My sincere *mahalo nui loa* goes out to Doug and Cindy Braden of Fort Collins, who unselfishly opened their home on Friday night for an open air barbecue for the entire HSGA 'Ohana. Their generosity and aloha were much appreciated by all!

And a fond aloha to longtime sound man Paul Honeycutt, now departed, for his years of support and kokua at the Fort Collins festivals. You are greatly missed by everyone you touched, with your gentle spirit and aloha. ■

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, 3442 Greystone Ct, Fort Collins, CO 80525. Email us at hsga@hsga.org AND johnely@hawaiiansteel.com. Mahalo!

Constitution Hall Haw'n Extravaganza

By Frank Della-Penna

On October 16, 2019 the Washington, DC community was fortunate to view a presentation of the play *My Name is 'Ōpūkaha'ia* at the Daughters of the American Revolution Constitution Hall. The play, commissioned by the Hawaiian Mission Houses Historic Site and Archives and supported by the Massachusetts Humanities Council, commemorates Henry 'Ōpūkaha'ia's death in 1888, telling the story of a Native Hawaiian man who travelled to New England and inspired the formation of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission (ABCFM) and the sending of the first missionaries to the Hawaiian Kingdom. 'Ōpūkaha'ia was born in 1792 and lived several years on the U.S. Mainland before returning to his beloved Hawai'i later in life.

The play was written by and featured Moses Goods, one of the premier actors, writers, and storytellers in Hawai'i. It has been extensively performed throughout Hawai'i and has garnered rave reviews.

The play also featured Pō'ai Lincoln, a prominent local singer and musician, who accompanied the program with Hawaiian chants and songs of Queen Lili'uokalani. Her performance was beautiful and everyone enjoyed her clear and powerful, un-amplified voice in the grand hall. In addition to her singing career, Pō'ai Lincoln is the Assistant Curator of Programs at Hawaiian Mission Houses.

Henry 'Ōpūkaha'ia was a strong advocate of preserving the Hawaiian language and culture at a time when punishment was the norm for speaking the then forbidden Hawaiian language. His life and memoirs inspired others to carry forward the task of promoting the culture and language of Hawai'i. ■



President Frank Della-Penna in a nice shot with singer Pō'ai Lincoln in Washington.

Fighting to Save the Haw'n Language

By Frank Della-Penna

If you haven't heard the recent episode of the NPR Code Switch podcast on the movement to revitalize the Hawaiian language, be sure to check it out. [ED: to access the podcast, do a google search on 'Code Switch: Saving the Endangered Hawaiian Language'.]

The eight-minute podcast focuses on long-standing efforts to teach the Hawaiian language to both children and adults. The Hilo-based school Ke Kula 'O Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u Iki teaches Hawaiian language from the elementary school level all the way up to university level. The program also

HSGA Donations

Thanks to the following members for their donations this past quarter:
Clifford J. Adams, Huntington Sta., NY
Doug Hazelberg, Kenosha, WI
Terry Miller, Vancouver, WA
Jeffrey Scott, Greenwood Village, CO
Rusty Strange, Falmouth, MA

includes adults who are starting to learn or improve their literacy in Hawaiian language. The school principal, Kaua-noe Kamana, is proud of the fact that only Hawaiian language is spoken at the facility during school hours, and this applies to students, staff, teachers and all support personnel such as janitors and maintenance staff!

The challenge of teaching Hawaiian language in the modern era includes creating new words for terms in common usage today such as 'granola' and 'computer'. According to a United Nations researcher, there are 2,600 indigenous languages that are in danger of dying out. Apparently, the Hawaiian language will not be one of them thanks to the Hilo language school and similar efforts throughout the Islands. And, of course, the music and chant of Hawai'i help to keep the language alive as people listen to the radio and attend concerts! ■

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Bobby Ingano—Legend of the Lap Steel

Special thanks to Vintage Guitar magazine and writers Barney Roach and Ward Meeker for permission to excerpt from their story on Bobby Ingano, which appeared in that publication's August 2019 issue. And big kudos to Bobby—a terrific achievement earning “print space” in a mainstream magazine that overwhelmingly caters to standard guitar.

Odds are good that unless you're a fan of contemporary Hawaiian lap-steel guitar, you don't know the name of the form's greatest living master, Bobby Ingano.

If you attended the Amigos Guitar Shows SoCal event in January of '07, you may have witnessed his skill; seated in a nondescript booth along an outside aisle, he mesmerized show-goers with his 1935 Rickenbacher A25 “frying pan” running through a Roland Micro Cube, copies of his *Steel Reflections* CD perched on the table.

Ingano was born in 1952 on Hawai'i's Lana'i Island and his family moved to Honolulu when he was seven. He spent eight years being treated for polio in the Shriner's Hospital, where he started playing 'ukulele “... like every kid on the Islands.” After seeing The Beatles on Ed Sullivan, he started on guitar; his first was an old Stella found in a dumpster. In '78, he started playing lap-steel, at first learning by watching others.

“When they'd hit open strings, I'd listen for the tuning and watch how and where they move their hands,” he said. “That's how I learned everything. Old-timers would tell me, ‘Open your eyes – observe! Open your ears and listen!’”

A few years later, Ingano met the man who would become his primary instructor—David “Feet” Rogers, co-founder and steel player in The Sons of Hawai'i.

Ingano's first lap-steel was a Gibson BR-9 and he has owned many others, but his favorites are early Rick aluminums like his A25, which he converted to seven-string. He also has a seven-string A22.

Very friendly and humble, when pressed for playing advice he suggests keeping it simple.

“On slow songs, especially, I try to say more with less,” he said. “I sometimes see videos of my performances and say, ‘Man, I was *overplaying!*’ But then a friend will say, ‘What? You were *underplaying!*’ But I say, ‘Not according to me!’ (laughs). My job is to *color*, not overplay. I used to overplay all the time because I thought I was *it*, but Feet shot me down! The old guys taught me lots of lessons, like when you're onstage, you're there not for yourself, but for the audience.”

That love of the basics goes for tunings, as well. “Stick with one and learn it *completely*,” he said. “That way, you



Encore photo of Bobby Ingano at the HSGA Lei Day tent show in Kapi'olani Park, run as part of our 2008 Honolulu Convention.

won't have to re-learn songs.” He stresses the importance of C6 because, “You can play any style of music with it,” and his preferred version for seven-strings is Bb-E-G-A-C-E-G, while his strings are semi-flats measuring .036, .030, .026, and unwounds of .020, .017, .015, and .013.

Other players have criticized Ingano for disclosing lap-steel “secrets,” but he believes in enlightening.

“If another player needs help, I give them all the information they need. There's no such thing as secrets. Learn to share! I tell students, ‘Don't pick close to the bridge. The sweet sound is in the middle, *between* your bar and the bridge. Wherever you are, pick from the middle, that's the *voice*.”

Harmonics (or “chimes”) are a vital element in Hawaiian lap-steel, and Ingano cites Benny Rogers (Feet's uncle) and David Keli'i as great examples. To be good at them, he suggests playing with the lightest possible touch — and a lot of practice.

Watching a player like Ingano can spark inspiration, and even kindle a fellow musician's desire to take up the instrument. He loves to talk with would-be steelers, and offers a bit of friendly advice.

“When I first picked up the steel, it was like learning to crawl again,” he said. “The lap-steel demands intense practice. An old-timer once told me, ‘You have to stop playing whatever other instrument you're playing. Eat, drink, and sleep steel guitar.’ I did that for three years.” ■

Did You Pay Your 2019-2020 Dues?

This is your FINAL issue if your newsletter included a renewal form. Dues are \$35 for a hard copy newsletter and \$30 for the electronic version. You can renew via our website. Convenient!

In the Garden

(C. Austin Miles)

Arrangement by Troy Brenningmeyer

♩ = 90

Vs

G

Steel Gtr. (C6th)

5

C G

9

D7 G Em

13

A7 D7

hula

Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SkE7GLXd5jk&feature=youtu.be>

Cho G D7

TAB: 7 7 7 6 4 2 2 2 7 7

21 G

TAB: 8 8 8 7 7 5 6 7 7 7 7 7 7 7

let ring - - - - - |

25 G G7 C Cm G

TAB: 7 7 5 5 7 7 3 3 3 4 3 2 3

30 D7 1. G 2. C Cm G

TAB: 6 9 7 7 7 7 15 15 14 14 14

“Mystery” Steelman Revealed!

We have a consensus as to the identity of the “mystery” steel guitarist pictured last issue in a photo of the El Rancho Vegas resort in 1942. Fort Collins attendees along with Alan Akaka put their heads together and identified the steel guitarist as none other than Eddie Bush. Nice work, folks!

John Marsden, in a letter to your editor, weighed in and in characteristic fashion provided some illuminating details. John writes:

“I thoroughly enjoyed the Spring 2019 *Quarterly*, and hope club members will support Les Cook’s wonderful Tau Moe CD.

“Looking at the photos on page 14, I wonder if the mystery steel guitarist might be Eddie Bush? It does look rather like him. I don’t think it’s Hal Aloma.

“In 1998, Dirk Vogel’s Aloha International Steel Guitar Club (AISGC) published a well-researched and illustrated biography of Eddie, written by Jay C. Munns. This tells us that the owner of the Seven Seas in Hollywood, where Eddie was playing in early 1942, opened a hotel called the Nevada Biltmore in Las Vegas. Eddie formed a quartet to play for its opening on May 15. It seems quite feasible that he moved on from there to El Rancho Vegas, where Ivan Dmitri’s photos were taken in July. Later that summer, Eddie took up a singing role in Sonja Henie’s “Iceland” feature for Twentieth Century Fox, so the schedule seems a good fit.

“Others may be able to identify the guitar, which looks very similar to the instrument Eddie has in one of the AISGC newsletter photos. This same picture was published more clearly in the July-August-September 2006 issue, page 39.

“I can’t name the other musicians. The dancer (exceedingly tentatively) could perhaps be Lei Aloha?”



The “Mystery Steel Guitarist” shown above and in the previous issue has been identified as none other than the great Eddie Bush!

“Much appreciation for your hard work producing an excellent magazine! Aloha no, John Marsden.” ■

Weekly Steel Guitar Hotspots

Bobby Ingano Trio—Bobby performs every Sunday with Kaipo and Adam Asing at Dots Restaurant’s “Nostalgia Night,” 3-6 PM. Dots is on O’ahu’s North shore at 130 Mango Street, Wahiawa, Hawai’i 96786-1926. Bobby also appears every Tuesday, 6-9 PM at the La Mariana Tiki Bar and Restaurant located near Sand Island opposite the Honolulu airport.

Alan Akaka and the Bee Sisters perform every Friday at Duke’s Waikīkī, 7:00-9:30 PM. We’re glad there’s still steel guitar at Duke’s!

Isaac “Doc” Akuna performs every Wednesday along with Ku’uipo Kumukahi at a free weekly show in the Atrium of the Hyatt Regency Waikīkī on Kalākaua Avenue, 5:30-7:00 PM.

Jess Montgomery plays steel guitar Thursday evenings, 6:00-9:00 PM in the lounge of the Hukilau Lanai Restaurant in Kapa’u, Kaua’i. He performs with slack-key specialist Dennis Chun. The restaurant offers a full menu in the lounge and the food is excellent.

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 Royal Hawaiian Shopping Center for the schedule.

Treasurer’s Report

(Balances as of September 30, 2019)

Beginning Balance	\$34,425.98
General Fund	\$20,314.00
Scholarship Fund	\$11,764.85
Japan Account	\$1,825.11
End Balance	\$33,903.96
Major Expenses	
Fort Collins Festival	\$2,154.54
Newsletter/Postage	\$2,291.69
Webmaster	\$39.00
Major Income	
Fort Collins Festival	\$1,530.00
Dues	\$3,377.28
Donations	\$135.00

In Memoriam

By Chris Kennison

This year we lost two dear friends, who were musicians, HSGA members, and volunteers, which made the Fort Collins festival a bit melancholy for me. But I know how much they both enjoyed being a part of our annual event and that makes me smile.

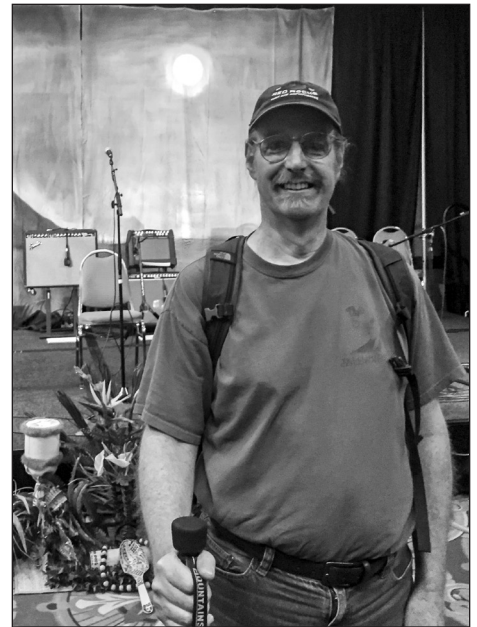
Our friend Paul Michael Honeycutt passed the Wednesday before the convention. He was our sound technician for all the previous years in Fort Collins. Paul was a sweet man and a creative musician. He performed locally and also did sound for the local radio station's "Live at Lunch" show. He always did a most excellent job running the sound system for us. He was going to play a set this year on steel. Rock on Paul.

And our good pal E.P. Davis lost his battle with cancer recently. EP helped in our first years in Fort Collins by running the ticket sales at the door. He was a top-notch 'ukulele player as well, and



A familiar shot of E.P. Davis playing expert 'ukulele at a recent Fort Collins festival.

usually did a set or joined me on stage. EP and his wife spent winters at their home on Kaua'i and summers in Fort Collins. He loved Hawai'i, and often had his uke albums in the running for the Nā Hōkū awards. He and I were co-deejays on a show we had on local



Ft. Collins sound man Paul Honeycutt, who made our festival artists sound so good.

public radio for seven years called "The Steel Guitar Jam." We did a drive-time show every Thursday and played steel guitar instrumental music from all genres. We'd even take our instruments in and play live sometimes. Aloha my friends. ■

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Kaua'i Festival a Go!

The Fifth Annual Kaua'i Steel Guitar Festival will be held on Friday and Saturday, February 28-29, 2020 at the Sheraton Kaua'i Coconut Beach Resort. This festival will be presented in the days preceding the annual Aloha Music Camp as an extension of the Hawaiian steel guitar experience that is offered at the camp. In addition to steel guitar performances by Hawai'i steel guitar masters, the festival will include workshops, kanikapila jam sessions where festival guests play along with the steel guitar masters, and open stage sessions where amateur Hawaiian steel guitarists present their own programs.

A kanikapila jam session to kick off the festival will be held on Thursday evening, February 27, 6:00-9:00 PM at a site to be determined. Festival musicians and NextGen steel guitarists and members of the Ke Kula Mele Hawai'i ensemble will be joined by guest performers for a fun evening. For late-breaking info on the festival check the event website at www.kauaisteelguitarfestival.com.

The festival is presented free to the public by Hawai'i Institute for Music Enrichment and Learning Experiences (HIMELE) in association with the Ke Kula Mele Hawai'i School of Hawaiian Music. Partial funding provided by Hawai'i Tourism through the Kūkulu Ola Program. ■

Big Island Festival Update

The Third Annual Hawai'i Island Steel Guitar Festival—originally set for December 13-15, 2019—has been rescheduled for February 7-9, 2020 at the Mauna Lani, Auberge Resorts Collection in Kamuela on the Big Island.

This special edition of the festival will help the hotel celebrate its grand re-opening and the completion of its \$100,000,000 renovation project that began in October, 2018. The rescheduling of the festival will not affect the date of the fourth annual festival, which is tentatively scheduled for December 11-13, 2020.

The festival will feature steel guitar performances by Hawai'i steel guitar masters, workshops, jam sessions where festival guests can play along with steel guitar masters, and open stage sessions where amateur and professional Hawaiian steel guitarists can present their own program to festival guests.

The festival is presented free to the public by the Mauna Lani, Auberge Resorts Collection and the Hawaii Institute for Music Enrichment and Learning Experiences (HIMELE) in association with the Ke Kula Mele Hawai'i School of Hawaiian Music, with grants and support from corporate partners and private donors. ■



At Maui 2012, (clockwise from the upper left) Greg Sardinha, Gordon Freitas, Ricardo (?), Duke Ching and Henry Allen.

Maui Festival Announced

The 2020 Maui Steel Guitar Festival will be held on May 15-16, 2020 at the Shops at Wailea in Wailea, Maui. The Shops at Wailea, a popular tourist shopping and dining destination in the Wailea resort area, presents regular evening entertainment including jazz concerts, Polynesian shows and Hawaiian music concerts by artists such as Kuana Torres Kahele, Del Beazley and Makana.

The 2020 festival will be the twelfth Maui steel guitar festival since its inception in 2009. Originally produced as the Henry Kaleialoha Allen Hawaiian Steel Guitar Festival by Maui's Arts Education and Children Group (AECG), the festival has evolved over the years into its present multi-day format. Alan Akaka and HIMELE have partnered with AECG since 2013 to produce the event. The 2020 festival will be the first to be solely produced by HIMELE.

The festival will follow the Maui festival format developed over the years with school visitations, open stage performances, workshops, evening programs and public kanikapila on Friday and Saturday. A steel guitar exhibit and hands-on opportunities will also be offered.

The 1500-acre Wailea Resort is located on the shoreline of southwestern Maui. Wailea is known for year-round sunny weather with temperatures averaging 82 degrees. The Shops at Wailea is a collection of more than 70 shops, restaurants and art galleries serving the community of Wailea. ■

Dues Alert

This is your FINAL issue if your newsletter included a renewal form. Dues are \$35 for a hard copy newsletter and \$30 for the electronic version. You can renew via our website. Convenient!

The “Seven-Lever” Steel Guitar Is Born

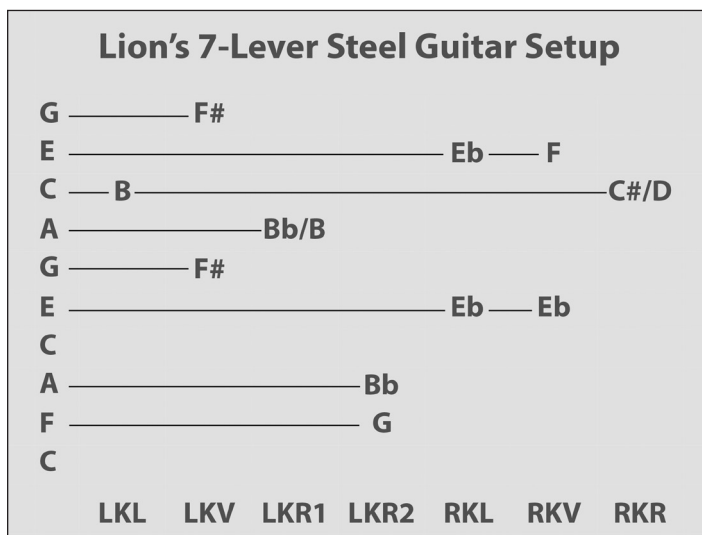
By Kiyoshi “Lion” Kobayashi

For better or worse, after the passing of Poss Miyazaki—the original pedal steel guitar player in Japan—I became the oldest pedal steel guitar player in the country. I had been practicing with my pedal steel guitar, thinking that this year would be my final year playing in Hawai‘i. Then I got the idea to remove the pedals and add them back as extra knee levers to my existing lever arrangement, which would greatly reduce the weight of the guitar without sacrificing its chord-creating capabilities. For example, my “Stars Fell On Alabama” solo can’t be played with only five knee levers. But by adding the standard C6th pedal 5 and pedal 6 as vertical knee levers and pedal 7 as both knees pulling right, I can get most of the standard C6th chord changes. Because both those “pedal 7” knee levers (LKR1 and RKR) include half-stops, I can get sounds that aren’t included in the standard C6th setup. [ED: Members who know how the standard C6th pedal steel guitar is set up will quickly see from the chart below how Lion has accomplished nearly the same thing using only knee levers.]

Mitsuo Fujii of Fuzzy Pedal Steel Products did the modifications, which also includes an extra LKR lever, one on the outside and one on the inside (shown as LKR1 and LKR2 in the diagram below). Because there are no pedals, my guitar looks like a standard four-leg console from the audience’s viewpoint. And in fact it’s much easier to set up and move around than my pedal steel guitar.

When I play Hawaiian or jazz, I never use a volume pedal, so I thought it would be much more effective to add the right knee vertical lever (RKV) to create the F9th

Continued on Page 12



Bobby Ingano Interview: Touring with Taj Mahal

We’ve had many requests for the “lowdown” on Bobby Ingano’s touring with noted bluesman and singer-songwriter Taj Mahal. So here we go with an ad hoc interview of Bobby that Shinichi Kakiuchi and your editor put together.

How many tours have you done with Taj?

We’ve done about five tours since November 2018. Each tour lasts about 18 days or less.

What styles of music does Taj cover these days?

Taj performs mainly the blues and also world music, Caribbean, African, jug band, and yes, I do get to play some steel guitar solos!

Are there challenges playing this type of material?

There are definitely challenges because we don’t rehearse. The band and road crew have been with Taj for the past 30 years, so they know all the songs. But Taj trusts my ears and says he’s not worried about me.

Does Taj give you a chance to stretch out musically?

Yes!! I’m learning so many different types of music, which for me means more musical knowledge and more cultural knowledge.

Have the shows had good crowd turnouts?

Almost every show has been sold out.

Any outstanding moments worth sharing?

Well, at one show, a guy in the audience had a heart attack during a song and recovered by the end of the song. As they were carrying him out on a stretcher, he waved and threw us a kiss!

Do you change your tunings with Taj compared to a normal island gig?

No, I use the same tuning I’ve always used, which is seven-string C6th with a high G. The only song I change tuning for is “Sleepwalk,” where I tune the low Bb to a C.

Is touring with Taj exhausting? Are the dates arranged logically?

Yes It’s exhausting but it beats working a day job! Whenever I receive the tour schedule, I get other friends to fill in for me on my local gigs. On long tours, there are about two to three days off and one day off on short tours. We change hotels every day unless there’s more than one gig in the area.

Continued on Page 12

E Komo Mai! Welcome, New Members

Is your address correct? Please notify us!

UNITED STATES

Janice Morikawa, 6659 Swenson Way, Sacramento, CA 95831

Jeanne Skybrook, 16 Marin View Dr., Novato, CA 94949

OVERSEAS

Hiroshi Togawa, 2-5-27 Midorigaokacho-Nishi, Miki-shi,

Hyogo-Pref. 673-0531 Japan

Masaaki Osaki, 638 Koge Yamasaki-cho, Siso-shi, Hyogo-

Pref. 671-2565 Japan

LION'S SEVEN-LEVER STEEL Continued from Page 11

change. If I really want to use a volume pedal, it's okay—I just do without the RKV.

If you don't need complicated chords, you can get along fine with just five levers. In this case, the half-stops on the LKR1 and RKR come in very handy.

Regarding the tricky inside and outside LKR, with just a little training—learning to push the left leg forward or backward—there's no accidental “stepping on the accelerator instead of the brake!”

So, a wonderful seven-lever steel guitar with a cool, sleek appearance and capable of producing the sounds of a 5-pedal, 5-knee-lever single-neck S-10 was born. ■

TOURING WITH TAJ MAHAL Continued from Page 11

Are you playing any standard guitar with Taj?

Yes! I play blues guitar on my Stratocaster the first half of the show, and steel guitar on the second half. I learned how to play blues on C6th so I won't have to change the tuning to a E7th, which I used in the past to play blues.

Is there anything else you'd like to share with our readers about your experiences with Taj?

All I can say is that I can't believe I'm actually livin' the dream, man! One more thing: Check out a fairly new duo, Larkin Poe, [featuring two sisters from north Georgia], who are climbing to the top of the blues charts! They're one of my favorite new artists! They also do a beautiful cover of my all-time favorite song, “Sleepwalk.” ■

A Word on Photos...

We love to get photos from members! But preparing photos for print media can be tricky. Internet quality photos usually do not work well. Digital camera output usually does. If you send us prints, avoid grainy or faded ones. Originals work best and we promise to send them back on request. Mahalo!

Events Calendar

December 21, 2019—Ke Kula Mele Winter Concert

Enjoy the music of Kumu Alan Akaka's Ke Kula Mele School at Windward Mall, Kāne'ohe, Hawai'i, 11 AM. Students will perform on steel guitar, 'ukulele, guitar and Hawaiian-style bass. Free to the public.

February 7-9, 2020—Hawai'i Island Steel Festival

The Third Annual Hawai'i Island event will be held on February 7-9 at the Mauna Lani, Auberge Resorts Collection on the Big Island's Kohala Coast. For details go to www.hawaiiisteelguitarfestival.com.

February 28-29, 2020—Kaua'i Steel Guitar Festival

The Fifth Annual Kaua'i Steel Guitar Festival will be held on Friday and Saturday, February 28-29 at the Sheraton Kaua'i Coconut Beach Resort, featuring steel guitar masters, kanikapila jams and open stage performances. For details email info@himele.org or go to www.kauaisteelguitarfestival.com.

March 2020—Steel Festival at Ka Makana Ali'i

This festival is tentatively schedule for March 21 at Ka Makana Ali'i Shopping Center in Kapolei in West O'ahu. For confirmation and details check the event website at www.hawaiiansteelguitarfestival.com/kma/.

May 15-16, 2020—Maui Steel Guitar Festival

The 2020 Maui festival will be held on May 15-16 at the Shops at Wailea in Wailea, Maui. The festival will feature open stage performances, workshops, evening programs and public kanikapila on Friday and Saturday. Event website: www.mauisteelguitarfestival.com.

June 20, 2020—Steel Festival at Windward Mall

Details TBA. Check the event website for more information at www.hawaiiansteelguitarfestival.com/wm/.

July 13-18, 2020—Waikiki Steel Guitar Week

Waikiki Steel Guitar Week will be held on July 13-18, 2020 at Royal Hawaiian Center's Royal Grove Stage, featuring nightly performances all week, including special ho'olaule'a performances on Friday and Saturday. For details go to www.waikikisteelguitarweek.com.

July 17, 2020—Japan-Hawaiian Steel Festival

This one-day event is part of the 2020 Waikiki Steel Guitar Week and will include the Friday open stage and ho'olaule'a programs featuring visiting steel guitarists from Japan. Website: www.japansteelguitarfestival.com.