

HSGA QUARTERLY

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Chicago steel guitar star and innovator, Letritia Kandle, pictured here in late 1930 with one of her many “brain-children,” the small Letar built by the National Guitar Company.

The National Grand Letar Story

By Paul Warnik

I was very pleased to see in the last newsletter the photo of Kay Koster playing the National Letar steel guitar at Joliet. I am the proud owner of this one-of-a-kind steel guitar that I purchased from its original owner, Letritia Kandle-Lay. Letritia is still alive at 93 years of age, although she is no longer able to play, having given up a very promising career around 1954 to raise a family.

I would not have had the opportunity to meet this wonderful lady and purchase a number of her instruments if it had not been for longtime HSGA member, Kay Koster. From informa-

tion she gave me at Joliet 2007, I was able to contact Letritia personally and learn more about her musical career. Her story is very important to all steel guitarists as she was a true pioneer in the evolution of the instrument and in my opinion should be the first female inducted into the Steel Guitar Hall of Fame. I would like to share some of her story with all of HSGA.

Letritia was born on November 7, 1915 and from the age of 15 had yearned to play guitar. She went to a local teaching studio and was persuaded to take up the then popular Hawaiian steel guitar instead of Spanish guitar. Her first steel guitars were a National

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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 LETTERS & EDITORIALS TO:

HSGA Quarterly, 2434 Waioma'o Rd, Honolulu, HI 96816-3424 USA. Our e-mail address is hsga@hsga.org. Articles and photos should be e-mailed directly to the editor at johnely@hawaiiansteel.com. Photos are welcome and will be returned on request. Quality original prints or high resolution digital camera output, please. Mahalo!

GRAND LETAR Continued from Page 1

Tri-Cone style 2, a harp-style acoustic with a 6-string and 12-string neck—possibly an Almcrautz—that was modified by her father for lap style, and a Weissenborn style 1.

While still in her teens, she began her playing career with an all-girl Hawaiian troupe called “The Kohala Girls,” who did a Sunday morning radio broadcast from Joliet. She joined the musicians union and found work playing with both the CBS and NBC radio orchestras in Chicago.

Then, in late 1937, she had a brainstorm of an idea to create an instrument like no other steel guitar that had ever been built. That instrument was the “National Grand Letar,” built by Letritia’s father in cooperation with the famous National Guitar Company, then based in Chicago. Her father was an engineer who made his fortune in the design and production of earth-boring machines. The name ‘Letar’ comes from a contraction of the words ‘Letritia’ and ‘guitar’.

From my research, the Grand Letar is the first console electric steel ever made. Completed in early 1938, it predates anything made by Gibson, Epiphone,

Rickenbacher, or anyone else for that matter. The Grand Letar featured 4 necks, again a first, and a built-in amplification system with a special design National amp and two 12-inch Lansing speakers. Even more amazing is the “light show” that illuminates the Grand Letar with no less than 120 colored lights that have their own dimmer panel controls and a motor that allows the light bulbs to alternate color changes. This amazing instrument weighs in at 275 pounds without its case!

Around this time, Letritia began playing with the orchestras of Merrick Webber and the famous Paul Whiteman, and she began teaching steel guitar at the studio operated by her mentor, Jack Lundin. The studio, known as Modern Guitar Studios, was located at the Kimball Piano and Organ Company headquarters in downtown Chicago at 300 South Wabash, a mecca for local musicians. In June of 1941, Mr. Lundin conducted the first annual concert of the Chicago Plectrophonic Orchestra at the historic Goodman Theatre, and Letritia was the featured soloist on the Grand Letar.

At about this time, Letritia’s father—again with National—built another Letar, but this one was more portable than the

Letritia Kandle leading the Chicago Plectrophonic Orchestra at Orchestra Hall in 1946.





Letritia Kandle and Paul Whiteman with the National Grand Letar in 1938. Letritia played in Whiteman's band and he was the one who commissioned George Gershwin to write "Rhapsody in Blue."

Grand Letar as it did not have the built-in amplification system and light show. This is the instrument Kay Koster played at the Joliet convention this past fall.

By 1945, Mr. Lundin had passed away and Letritia then took over as conductor of the Plectrophonic Orchestra and became owner and head instructor of the Modern Guitar Studios. Shortly thereafter several of her most esteemed students, including HSGA members Kay Koster and Evelyn Brue-Roeder, came under her tutelage. Kay recalls commuting by train from her home in Rockford, Illinois all the way to downtown Chicago to take her weekly lesson with Letritia. Says Kay, "She was a musical genius who did wonders for me." During one lesson Kay said that none other than legendary bandleader and drummer Gene Krupa came by to seek help from "Lettie" to find and fix errors in some of his orchestral scores!

Letritia continued her association with National and sold her students many of their Chicago-made instruments as well as the new Harlin Brothers Multi-Kord pedal steel, which she first played publicly in 1948. Around 1954, she laid aside her musical career to concentrate on family matters, right at the time when pedal steel was starting to take off.

Fast-forward to 1982, the year I started collecting vintage steel guitars and resophonics, specializing in Nationals and Dobros. I purchased a book by Tom Wheeler called "American Guitars" that had just come out. In the section on instruments built by National, there was a picture of 'Teacher Letritia Kandle and the National Grand Letar'! I had never been able to find anything like it in any National catalog archive, and for years after I wondered about it. Then about ten years ago I purchased a used National New Yorker model lap steel; inside the case was the original sales receipt from the Modern Guitar Studios and it was signed by none other than Letritia Kandle.

It was then I realized she was a teacher here near my birthplace, but still I could find nothing further about her. Then, at the Joliet 2007 Convention I met up with Kay, who filled me in about Letritia. I located her phone number and called to introduce myself. Letritia was totally shocked to hear that anyone like myself had interest in her and what she had done. She had no idea that she was pictured in the American Guitars book, which had become one of the earliest reference texts on the subject of guitar collecting. Imagine my shock when Letritia told me that she still had *the* Grand Letar! It had been tucked away in its huge case and had not seen the light of day in over 50 years.

I have since visited Letritia at her home several times and was able to purchase her other instruments, but she said the Grand Letar was not accessible in her basement. But she did something wonderful. She declared that she was going to leave the instrument to me in her last will and testament. I decided that I needed to act before her passing and hired a piano moving company to crate the instrument out and deliver it to me with Letritia's blessing. I took possession of

Continued on Page 20

A vintage convention shot from the days of the International Guitar League and Oahu Publishing: at the Crystal Ballroom, Kay Koster standing next to Oahu Publishing founder, Harry Stanley (far right).



Honolulu 2009 Update

The HSGA Honolulu 2009 Convention is on! Tuesday, April 28 through Thursday, April 30 from 9 AM to 3 PM daily in the Ākala Room on the second floor of the Queen Kapi'olani Hotel in Waikīkī. If you've never attended, it's the experience of a lifetime with plenty of time to catch the best steel playing in the world, see the sights around O'ahu, and visit with and meet new club members. And, we usually have an informal neighbor island excursion following the convention. This year's trip will be to Maui.

Registering for the convention is a two-step process: registering with the hotel and registering with HSGA for the convention. Please complete and mail out the hotel form and the convention form included with your newsletter along with proper payment as soon as possible. Note that members are responsible for booking their own rooms and that the Queen Kapi'olani Hotel does not handle convention registration. *Tip: It is very convenient to secure your hotel reservation with a credit card by calling the hotel directly.*

Hotel Reservations

The Queen Kapi'olani Hotel is offering rooms at a special rate for HSGAers from April 24 through May 3. The hotel must have your reservation by March 27 after which the hotel will release any rooms not booked by HSGA members. A security deposit of \$100 is required. To make your reservation, complete and send in the hotel form with your deposit or call the reservations agent at 800-367-2317 (toll-free) or 808-922-4671.

When calling for your reservation be sure to give the agent our group booking number '00080' to get the group rate!

Joanne Plas (left), Elaine Barlo, and Mrs. Ron Wenger at the Joliet 2008 raffle. Joanne had the winning ticket for the soft baby blanket Elaine made, which went to Mrs. Wenger's new granddaughter.



A Honolulu 2007 shot at the House Without A Key: (l. to r.) Art Ruymar, Frank and Donna Miller, Lorene Ruymar, and Tim Mech.

Room Rates

The following rates are for a single or double room for up to four persons: City view rooms are available at \$76; Diamond Head view rooms, \$81; and Ocean view rooms, \$89. Add 12 percent in local taxes to these prices. Your requests for a specific room or bedding type is based on availability. The front desk staff will try their best to meet these requests. Should you have questions, please contact hotel representative Merl Bautista at the numbers listed above or send an e-mail to res@queenkapiolani.com.

Convention Registration

In addition to securing your hotel reservation, you need to complete the Convention Registration Form provided in the newsletter insert and mail it to the Honolulu address given on the form. Please get this form to us by March 16. The convention fee is \$120 per person, which includes coffee service and a buffet lunch each day of the convention and covers some of our convention costs. This fee does NOT cover the cost of your hotel room and the fee applies even if you decide to take your lunches elsewhere—this is part of our agreement with the hotel and why we're getting the discounted rates.

If you decide to attend at the last minute or you are coming from overseas and don't want to deal with currency exchange until you arrive, you will be able to pay your convention fee in Hawai'i.

Performer Time Slots

If you're planning on performing, complete the bottom part of the convention form and mail it to the address shown on the form ASAP—playing slots are filled on a first come, first served basis. Plan to perform 25 minutes on stage, and please bring two sets of chord charts for your backup players.

Maui Post-Convention Trip

Late-breaking news from Lorene Ruymar: It has been the custom to make a short visit to a second island once all the HSGA festivities are completed in O'ahu. This year it would be the island of Maui.

Members can make their own plans, but I suggest that after the convention, we stay on O'ahu to attend the Steel Guitar Sunday luncheon at the Outrigger Reef Hotel on May 10. It's a super nice event organized by Alan Akaka, and you'll hear the best island players. Then, we can hop over to Maui the following day, Monday, May 11.

We can tell you there is a new ferry service between O'ahu and Maui (hawaiisuperferry.com), which is about half the price of a flight. I must warn you though that people say it's awfully rough out there in the open ocean and the trip is almost 4 hours long. So, it depends on how much you crave excitement and adventure. Whether you take ferry or plane, it's a good idea to join with other members to rent a car. More fun. Save cash.

I'm sure you remember that we always stay at the Maui Seaside at 100 W. Ka'ahumanu Avenue, Kahului, HI 96732; Tel: 800-560-5552 (toll-free), 808-877-3311; E-mail: info@mauisidehotel.com. I like that hotel because it's not far from the airport. So you rent a car on arrival and drop it off right there at the airport. If you think the map of Maui looks like the island has a head and neck, our hotel is on the neck. Last time we were there Stephen Kreider invited us to a party at his house on top a mountain. How beautiful! What fun! I think it will happen again.

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Convention Schedule

Monday, April 27

10:00-Noon – Pre-registration at the Ākala Room entrance on the second floor of the Queen Kapi'olani Hotel. Recommended! Check in early and avoid the Tuesday registration lines.

Tuesday, April 28 – Thursday, April 30

8:15-2:00 – On site registration

9:00-9:25 – Opening program

9:30-11:35 – Morning member stage performances

11:45-12:45 – Buffet luncheon service in the Ākala Ballroom for registered convention guests (traditional Hawaiian buffet served as Thursday's lunch).

1:00-3:00 – Afternoon member stage performances

Friday, May 1

Annual Lei Day Celebration in Kapi'olani Park. Live music will be provided by HSGA members and friends from 1–3 PM at the tent and stage area near the winners' display for the Lei-Making Competition. Admission: free.

Saturday, May 2

Annual steel guitar concert at the Waikīkī-Kapahulu Public Library, 1:00-2:30 PM. The library is three blocks north of the Queen Kapi'olani Hotel. Admission: free. Check the status of this event on our website (www.hsga.org).

Sunday, May 3

The Annual Jerry Byrd Steel Guitar Ho'olaule'a Concert, 1:00-5:00 PM at the Ala Wai Golf Course Clubhouse, featuring some of the world's best Hawaiian steel guitarists. Admission is free with a suggested donation of \$10 to help defray concert costs. The clubhouse is six blocks north of the Queen Kapi'olani Hotel.

Mish Awong at the Maui Seaside is giving us a nice group rate of \$78 per night plus tax (\$86.91 total) based on single or double occupancy. Parking is a flat rate of \$5 per day. Be sure to say "HSGA" when you make your reservation. To see the hotel go to www.seasidehotelshawaii.com and click on Maui Seaside. To book a room, contact them using the information given above and tell 'em you're with HSGA, very good looking, you tip generously, and you don't snore.

After you book your room, *please* tell us Ruymars (Art and Lorene) that you're going so we can tell you who else is going, too, and make plans for that mountaintop party (I hope). You can reach us at 2090 West 44th Ave., Vancouver, BC, Canada V6M 2E9; E-mail: ruymar@shaw.ca. ■

Introducing New Board Member, Don Keene

Well, here it is, the last of our 'Meet the New Board' series, featuring California member, Don Keene. Here's Don:

Heritage: half Irish, one sixteenth Cherokee, and the rest, unknown British-Scotch "mutt."

Higher Education: I received a bachelor's degree in forest management from Oregon State University; retooled the education following fire suppression activity with the California Division of Forestry and the U.S Forest Service; and got a master's degree in civil engineering from the University of Southern California.

Bio (omitting relationship to the Dalton Gang!): Not much to say for 78 years. I was born in 1930 in Chino, California, raised and schooled in Burbank, California near the Mickey Mouse factory (AKA Disney).

I worked 37 years with the Los Angeles County Flood Control District and Department of Public Works, specializing in flood control public advisory positions and flood plain analysis. I retired in 1989 to consulting structural and hydraulic civil engineering, boundary and topographic surveys, and various related disciplines. I retired from private practice in August 2008.

My interest in steel guitar began in 1943 with the sounds of Lani McIntire and his Royal Hawaiians. After some instruction with three teachers over two or three years, I played with a western and Hawaiian group formed by "Smokey" Gogue, the "Samoa Cowboy." We'd play western music at the Hitching Post in Burbank one night, Hawaiian music the next night at the Pago Pago Club, and so on. You can't mix western and Hawaiian steel guitar playing techniques. The alternate always comes through, doubting the authenticity of the other.

Between 1948 and 1950 I met Ernie Tavares of Maui. He taught me how to play his early frypan pedal steel guitar and his second improved model. There are advantages with pedal steel and in turn with fixed tunings. I have combined both with the tuning I developed (another topic).

I discontinued playing steel from 1955 to 1978 for domestic reasons and joined HSGA in 1991. And you know, after all these years, I find I still know nothing. There is something to be learned from every steel guitar player—a technique, a style, a trick, an emotional transition, and on and on. This attests to the endless talent and variety that the steel guitar lends itself to, epitomized by the beautiful melodies coming out of Hawai'i and other island cultures.

My advice: Stay active in your playing and with HSGA. You never know but that "gem" of talent you've been searching for, or felt lacking in, may be just around the corner. ■



At the Waikiki-Kapahulu Library during our 2007 Honolulu convention, Don Keene on steel guitar with Lorene Ruymar, Bobby Ingano, Art Ruymar, and Isaac Akuna on backup.

Buy & Sell

Instruments Wanted

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

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HSGA Donations

Thanks to HSGA members for your donations to our General Fund and Scholarship Fund this past fall.

A big mahalo to **Terry Miller** for again donating the proceeds from the sale of his "Coconut Candy" CD for a total of \$70. Mahalos to those who purchased the CD at \$10 a pop, including Garry Vanderlinde, Maurie Junod, John Marsden, Clifford Adams, Russ Pollock, and Ray Gaitsch who purchased 2 CDs. Big mahalos to everyone who contributed. The following members donated at least \$10:

Lane and Cheryl Vifinkle, Colorado Springs, CO
Peter Casey, Lucan, Dublin, Ireland

Attention, HSGA Performers!

As many of you know, HSGA photographer Paul Weaver takes both still photos and video footage of HSGA member performances at conventions and other HSGA events. We will now need performers to sign a Talent Release Agreement regarding the usage of these images and videos. Traditionally, copies of the videos are available for sale to HSGA members only and are not for sale to the general public. Proceeds are directed to the HSGA Scholarship Fund. In addition, subject to approval by the HSGA Board, videos can be used for rebroadcast on public access TV and other non-commercial, promotional uses.

Using the release included with your newsletter, you can agree to or limit these uses of video/images of your performances. Please checkmark the options that you agree to, sign the form, and mail to our office at the earliest convenience or bring the form with you prior to performing. Forms will also be made available at HSGA events. To prevent all uses, just leave the form blank and sign. Mahalo!



Letritia Kandle on the cover of Fretted Instrument News Magazine, 1948.

It's Dues Time Again!

Remember, HSGA's membership year begins on July 1, 2009. Dues are \$30 and all issues go out 'Air Mail' (see insert).

Changed E-mail?

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

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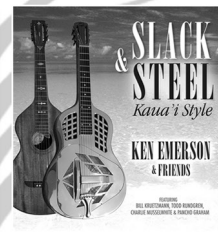
Shinsei Band
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Beamer Brothers



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Aloha Kaimu



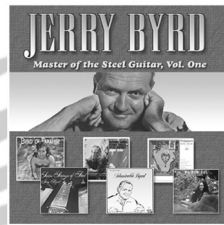
Slack & Steel Kauai Style
Ken Emerson & Friends



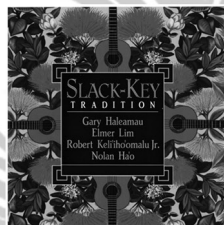
Legends of the Ukulele 2



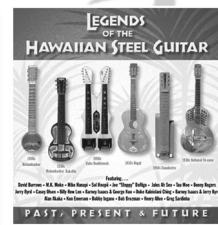
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Steel on the Big Stage

By Chris Kennison

Recently Lorene Ruymar forwarded an e-mail she received from Mike Perlowin with a link to a YouTube video of the Dire Straits, a British rock band formed in 1977 by Mark Knopfler. The video is a live version of the song “The Walk of Life” from their “On the Night” tour with Paul Franklin featured on pedal steel. Mike said, “Be sure to watch all the way through, as it ends with a great steel guitar solo.” It’s an older recording and the band members are all quite a bit younger than today.

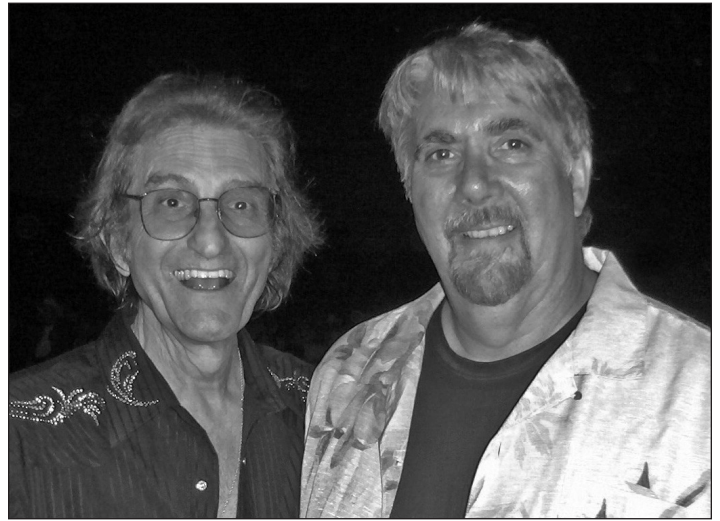
Knowing Mike Perlowin is great player, I took his advice and watched the whole video. [ED: To listen to the song, go to www.youtube.com and search under ‘Dire Straits’ and ‘Paul Franklin’.] He’s right. It’s a great solo. Lorene e-mailed me because she knows I play pedal steel guitar along with Hawaiian steel. Her question to me was, “Is this the future we’re looking at?” A good question!

I replied that the future is already here, and I like it! The crowd at the concert in this video is huge, the band is hot, and the steel guitar is getting heard in a popular song.

I have to say that Paul Franklin is one of my favorite steel players. He’s amazing on pedal steel and also on lap steel. If you’ve not heard him play the 8- or 10-string C6th lap steel on a good swing or jazz tune, you’re in for a treat. He’s an inspiring ‘A’ list player on most Nashville sessions for just about any kind of music that needs steel. I could listen to him play Hawaiian, country, rock, jazz, or anything he wants. I’ve met him and he’s a super nice guy, too. Because of his talent he was able to tour with Dire Straits, play steel and have it heard by tens of thousands of people.

To me, getting visibility like this for the steel guitar in any of its forms is a wonderful thing. There are many people, as you know, that still don’t know what a steel guitar is. I personally think that part of the future of steel guitar is indeed in the hands of great players like Paul Franklin because they can share it broadly. If people see it played well in a world-class rock band, they may be impressed enough to want to find out more about it or even learn to play.

The reason I think broad visibility is important is because it’s easier to sell something to someone who’s mind is already open. Expose someone to a new instrument inside music they already like and they remember it. I believe also that people learn “forwards and backwards.” I mean that at whatever point you begin to learn a subject, you will naturally be learning new things immediately and working to gather more knowledge (learning forward), and you might wonder or hopefully be taught what came before (learning backward). I think that if young folks gravitate towards the steel guitar in any form for any reason, they’ll eventually



Doug Kershaw and Chris at a show in Windsor, Colorado in 2006.

ask that question “What came before?” When they do, guess what? They’ll find out that the pedal steel is a descendant of console steels that trace their lineage to Hawaiian steel, lap steels, resonator guitars all the way back to the roots of the instrument in Hawai‘i.

That’s how it happened for me. I always loved pedal steel. I grew up in the ‘60s in Colorado and heard it in the Dire Straits, Crosby Stills and Nash, the Flying Burrito Brothers, New Riders of the Purple Sage, the Byrds and many others. When I started to learn pedal steel, I listened to great players and tried to emulate them. And I read and studied about who their influences were! Tracing back through the years and great steel players of Hawaiian music, I found a wealth of music to learn that I didn’t grow up with and had never heard, and also a huge new challenge—learning to play a simple 6-string steel guitar and make it sound good without the advantage of pedals.

And now here I am in HSGA helping to keep it alive and expand Hawaiian steel playing as much possible. I still love pedal steel and I know that playing Hawaiian steel has made me a better pedal player. I think the steel guitar can add so much to any kind of music we wish to apply it to. We should share it as broadly as possible. And if we can “hook” someone with its sound, that’s part of passing it on because I know those folks will also look for what came before. So yes, “the future is here” for steel. HSGA is important because you all have great skill to share, to stretch out musically, to try new things and make it visible, to embrace all kinds of steel music. I hope to see it played more in rock bands, alt-country bands, jazz bands, and of course in Hawaiian bands played by young players. If it’s good, I’ll listen.

Chris Kennison is on the HSGA Board of Directors and plays pedal steel with Doug Kershaw and Hawaiian steel with Book ‘em Danno. ■

Hawaiian Sunshine, Flowers and Music at the Inaugural!

By Frank Della-Penna

Wow!! HSGA is part of inaugural history! At the Hawai'i State Society Inaugural Ball, the Hawaiian steel guitar takes center stage with Paul Kim and Alan Akaka at the Hawai'i Inaugural Ball on January 20, 2009 here in Washington, D.C. The impressive array of entertainment at the exquisite Mandarin Oriental Hotel includes Eddie Kamae and the Sons of Hawai'i, Keale, Raiatea Helm, Kohala, the Aloha Boys, and Katie Tamashiro. As I'm writing this, it is only 8 degrees above zero. We certainly will need the island sounds to warm up the crowd at what the Washingtonian magazine calls the "hottest ticket in town." And the master of ceremonies is none other than our own Alan Akaka. Each group will be on stage for 45 minutes, ending with a jam session for all. There will be two VIP rooms and the best of Pan Asian food and décor.

A large Hawaiian contingent from both the mainland and the islands, as well as the general public and the greater Washington, D.C. political community, will be attending this historic event of the first president raised in Hawai'i. After much deliberation by our Board, HSGA decided to purchase an ad in the Hawai'i Inaugural Ball program as a means of publicizing its mission to this huge, largely untargeted, new audience for our club. Check out the strikingly beautiful Inaugural Ball program ad created by our website graphic designer, Amy Pace. The ad features a photo of Joseph Kekuku playing acoustic steel guitar and an interesting treatment of a photo of Jeff Au Hoy playing a bakelite Rickenbacher electric steel guitar.

The streets are more crowded now as tourists, family and friends descend upon the nation's capital for all of the many

Paul Kim at Joliet 2008 with Virginia Grzadzinski and Ian Ufton.



E ho'omaika'i 'ana (Congratulations) President Obama from the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association

We welcome the dawn of a new day for our Nation!

THE HAWAIIAN STEEL GUITAR

Inventor and Cultural Ambassador of the Hawaiian Steel Guitar, O'ahu's Joseph Kekuku c.1910

Hawaii's musical gift to the world for over 100 years! It is the mission of the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association to preserve and proudly promote this Signature Sound of the Islands. Join us in our passion! Visit our website today.

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HSGA's ad from the Hawai'i Inaugural Ball program, which was designed by HSGA website graphic artist, Amy Pace.

festive inaugural balls and other events to celebrate the inauguration. Events are sponsored by embassies, and social and political clubs and organizations. You can feel the energy surge as Washington anticipates the great change that only happens in a generation. Do you remember the excitement of John F. Kennedy's presidency, followed decades later by Ronald Reagan and now the era of change promised by Barack Obama?

As the party goes on we are all hoping that President Obama will make an appearance at the Hawai'i Inaugural Ball. If he does, Bryce Mendez will perform an *oli* (traditional Hawaiian chant) especially for the occasion, and special flower leis for the Obamas and Bidens will be presented. What a terrific night it will be! Look for some photos and follow-up in the next newsletter, as my wife, Stephanie Ortoleva, and I will be part of this spectacular evening. ■

Going to Honolulu?

Don't forget to send in the Convention Form (due by March 16, 2009) and the Hotel Form (due by March 27, 2009). Tip: You can complete your hotel reservation over the phone.

Listen to audio version, if available, at: www.hsga.org/Lessons/QuarterlyAudio.html

D_{m7} G₇ C

Ev-ry where I find your beau-ty and your charms,

TAB

strum (thumbpick from bottom to top) *let ring*

B₇ E_m A₇ D_{m7} G₇

Al-ways in my mind but nev-er in my arms, my dear. Oh,

TAB

C C₇ F

give your love to me so all the world can plain-ly see Mo-a-na's

TAB

C A₇ D_{m7} G₇ G_{13(b9)} C

won-der-ful, so won-der-ful to me.

TAB

Young and Upcoming!

By Lorene Ruymar

I am so happy to report to you that there are now *four* new steel guitarists on the way! Ages 18, 7, and (??). I will tell you about the eldest first. His name is Haijing Huang. He lives in China. Learning the English language is one of his big challenges, and I find his e-mails truly delightful for that reason. Here's a little taste of Haijing's e-mails:

"It's my pleasure to received praise from you. To tell the truth, I have to looking up in a dictionary very often when I was writing to you. Except the homework, which my English teacher gave us, I didn't use English before. But now I know how improtant it is! I am pool in English. Maybe it will bring you some trouble to read my letter. I'm sorry about that!" Well, English and Chinese must be the two hardest languages to learn. Hats off to Haijing!

When Haijing was 4 years old, a Sichuan University chemistry professor taught him to play steel guitar. The lessons lasted about four years on and off. Shortly thereafter, his teacher passed away, but the lessons "took" and at the age of 18, steel guitar has become a part of his life. Here's Haijing with a little help from our editor:

"I regret that I did not learn more from my teacher while he was alive. I remember once he said, "You are the youngest student I have and maybe you are the last. I hope you inherit

Haijing in Shanghai with Mr. Hong, China's first-chair steelman.



Our latest "Phenom" from China, 18-year-old Haijing Huang.

skill in steel guitar!" When I heard these words, I treated it as a joke. Unfortunately, it came true after several months. My teacher dropped down when he was teaching his chemistry lesson and he did not stand up again. I cried when I heard the news. My teacher left three things to me: one is how to play steel guitar, the other is a 'ukulele, and the last is how to make a simple 6-string electric steel guitar.

"In China, there are few people who can play steel guitar, so after my teacher passed away, I could only play with my feeling. It is also hard to find sheet music that suits steel guitar. So it was hard to develop technique.

"My hometown is in Chengdu in Sichuan Province. You know the panda, right? That fat, lovely animal lives in Sichuan, too. Chengdu is the center of culture, economy and politics of Sichuan."

Here is an excerpt from another e-mail: "This evening I went to your website and saw your steel guitar course. When I heard the song in lesson 24, I felt as if I were on the beach in Hawai'i, seeing local dancing and bathing in the warm sea breeze! It is the kind of song I have been searching for! So thank you for showing me such a wonderful song.

"As I am a college student now, I have no chance to go to the U.S. So I have to learn more things about steel guitar inside China. But the Internet is such a convenient tool; maybe I can get your precious advice by sending examples of my playing."

Me again. Isn't he beautiful? Yes, I had introduced him to HSGA member Du Ying who lives in Shanghai. She passed his name along to the greatest steel guitar player in China, Mr. Hong, who helped Haijing get a new 8-string electric steel guitar.

Haijing included in his e-mail a sound file of himself playing "Theme From Love Story." To my surprise, he plays beautifully!! Great expression, perfect timing and pitch. I

wish I could forward it to all of you to hear. Here's more from Haijing:

"My brother gave me a CD of steel guitar this year (I do not know who played on it). It is a treasure for me. I listen to it over and over, trying to imitate the technique and using it in the songs I practice. So I have progressed a lot in recent months. The biggest achievement is finding out how to play artificial overtones [ED: harmonics]. But there comes a time that I need some help from native players so that I can do it as 'native' as they do!"

I could go on forever with this e-mail exchange. I bring it to a finish by telling you that I sent him my instruction course (no charge) and it cost me over \$60 to airmail. Now I hear from him just when he has quarterly holidays from his studies in Shanghai. The friendship goes on.

The second great steel guitarist on the way is 7-year-old Emmalina Varelas who lives near to us here in Vancouver (British Columbia). Her mum and I decided we shouldn't push her at this age, so note-reading will be put off for a year or so while she just strums and sings. We stuck the chord letters onto the fretboard of her 6-string acoustic steel guitar at the open position (A), the fifth fret (D), and the seventh fret (E). Together, she and I sang and strummed "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" and "I Know An Old Lady, She Swallowed a Fly." Fun stuff. Only A and E7 in those songs. Her fingers couldn't handle plucking the top three strings, so she just plucked strings 5 and 6 with a wrap-around thumbpick, doing a bass, counter-bass pattern. One week later she had figured out "Silent Night" by herself!! We had a family and friends get-together in a restaurant for the purpose of singing Christmas carols and doing a talent show. That young genius kid brought her steel guitar along, sat down before the crowd, and singly sang and strummed "Row Your Boat"!! And she'd had only one lesson five days before!!

Marshall Mech with the "prototype" Mech Lap Steel Skateboard!



Seven-year-old Emmalina Varelas from the Vancouver, BC area.

Her ear tells her when to change the chords. Is this a genius kid on her way to fame and fortune?

And now, about the two youngest new steel guitar players. We have an announcement from member Tim Mech and his wife Amy, who came to our 2007 Hawaiian convention. As I remember it, they walked down Kalākaua Avenue and turned up at the 'House Without A Key', Tim with a new tattoo and a new steel guitar, both bought along the way. A week ago, Tim and Amy introduced us to their son Marshall, born November 11, 2008 and already considering a career in steel guitar playing. At the moment he has difficulty holding it, so his dad put it on wheels! Tim explains, "It's hard to know exactly what will catch his ear when it comes to music, but there are more than enough Hawaiian guitars and plenty of great Hawaiian music around our house to keep Marshall tuned to the sound of the Islands!"

By the way, Tim Mech has serious musical exploits of his own. Says Tim, "I have been on tour as a guitar tech with the Tragically Hip and Barenaked Ladies for around three years each. As a guitar tech, I maintain and set up all their guitars, amplifiers and other gear on the road. That is why I could easily help out during the 2007 Hawaiian Convention when there were technical difficulties." Tim has also appeared on stage with both bands as a player, and plays his Weissenborn-style steel guitars with his own recording and touring band Peep-Show.

Now, for the very youngest: At the HSGA convention in Joliet last October, our member Rick Aiello went on stage to do his 20 minutes of excellent steel guitar playing, with a mysterious kind of grin on his face. He told us he'd just phoned his wife and she had just informed him that the next steel guitar player was on his (or her!) way, expected to

Continued on Page 17

Planning a Trip?

By Lorene Ruymar

If you should just happen to pass by the town of Pt. Chevalier, a suburb of Auckland, New Zealand, be sure to drop in on an exceptionally keen group of steel guitar players. They are the New Zealand Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association, and they meet so often you'd be sure to catch them at play. When we hold our once-a-year convention in Joliet, Illinois we think we're doing something great because we also add the once every second year meet in Hawai'i. But here's what those keen beans in New Zealand do, and have done for many years:

They meet on the first and third Sunday of *each month* all year around at the Old Homestead Auditorium, 92 Pt. Chevalier Rd, Auckland NZ from 1:00-4:30 PM. There's a \$5 door charge but only \$3 if you're a member, and there will be tea, coffee, and home cooking. Can you imagine that? It sounds super great to me. What encouragement those steel guitarists get from this close relationship! Their president is Mr. N.K. McKenzie, better known as Mac. The club also hosts an annual convention.

When you're at a meeting, you'd be happy to see Doug Lomax and Jim Hassall, Bruce and Lynn Murray to name just a few. They've all attended our Hawaiian meets in past years and I know a few of our people have been "down there." Jack Andrew is New Zealand's top player and has appeared at Scotty's Convention.

The "NZHSGA" just celebrated their twentieth anniversary this past September at Marsden Bay, a 90-minute drive north of Auckland, and about 150 attended including 25 players. Not too shabby! Said Bruce Murray, "It was not only about going to play steel guitar but to meet and talk. This group has become one big family." Where have we heard that before? Bruce continued, "Everybody arrived on Friday night, and playing started before tea and continued after for a while. Saturday morning there were two workshops, one for pedal players and one for the lap players. It is always very well received by all members. You can always learn something from someone. The afternoon was great for music as we have our backing group. Many players are good on rhythm and 'ukulele. We have good cooks and all meals went down well. Sunday morning, a little music, then the long drive home—for me, seven hours."

Me again. If you want to join their club just to get their quarterly newsletter or want to let them know you're coming to one of their meets, here's the address:

HSGA New Zealand
87 Elstree Ave.,
Glen Innes, Auckland, 1072 NZ
Tel: 09-940-2655; E-mail: loumac1@clear.net.nz



The 20-year anniversary get-together of the New Zealand club. Front row, 3rd from left: Bruce Murray and next to him, Jack Andrew who has played at Scotty's. Front row right: Colleen and Mick (holding up the banner) Brennan who do all the cooking. Back row right: Doug Lomax and two down from him Jim Molberg.

HSGA Website Giveaway!

Big news from Gerald Ross. Says Gerald, "My CD, 24 Hawaiian Backup Tracks, is now out of print. As a holiday gift, I am offering the entire collection as free MP3 downloads to HSGA members who are registered users of the HSGA Forum." Very cool!

Members, you can get signed up to use the forum by e-mailing Rick Aiello at leilo@shentel.net.

Here's how to access Gerald's MP3 audio files: Go to the HSGA forum. There is a section on the forum called the Big Kahuna Club. There you will find the MP3 links. Again, you can only gain access to this area if you are an HSGA member *and* have been signed up by Rick Aiello as an HSGA Forum user. Mahalo, Gerald!

Financial Report

From Secretary-Treasurer Don Weber

As of December 31, 2008, the HSGA accounts show the following balances:

General Fund	\$28,917.82
Scholarship Fund	\$20,408.26
Joliet Fund	\$2,915.60
Japan Fund	\$314.04
Total:	\$52,555.72

CLOSING NOTES

Teruko Hino

Teruko Hino, the renowned Japanese Hawaiian singer, died in a Tokyo hospital September 9, 2008 at age 63.

Though she had been fighting lung cancer since 2003, she was able to perform periodically until her final concert on December 23, 2007.

Teruko Hino was born on July 13, 1945 in Matsuyama, Shikoku, Japan. In 1962 she was the winner of the All-Japan Hawaiian Contest held in Matsuyama, and she moved to Tokyo in 1963 under the tutelage of Buckie Shirakata and Ginji Yamaguchi.

Teruko made her recording debut in 1964 with the Nihon Gramophone Company and from 1965 through 1967 appeared on the famous NHK-TV New Year's Eve program called "Kohaku Uta Gassen."

In 1966 the singer visited Tahiti where she studied the island's traditional song and dance. The locals were entranced with her, saying she had the appearance of a princess! From Tahiti, she continued her tour of the Pacific traveling to both Samoa and Hawai'i.

In 1969 at the height of her career she married composer, Yoshitaka Ichinose, and subsequently left show business to raise a family. A decade later, she began performing again.

Teruko Hino recorded prolifically in various genres with some 35 singles, 3 EPs and 9 LPs released in Japan, though regrettably they are almost unknown outside her home country.

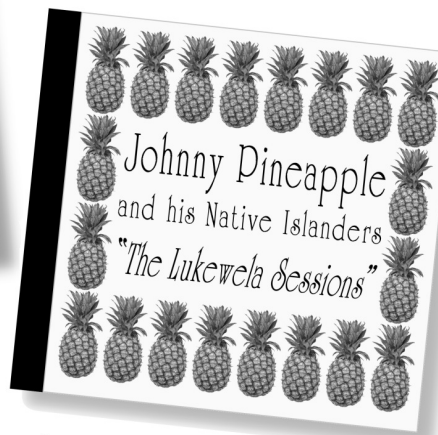
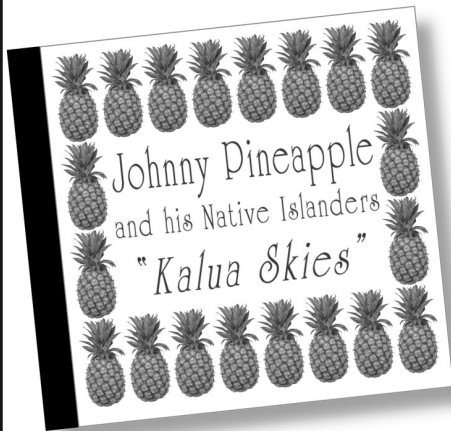
Her 1970 album "Holiday in Hawaii" (Polydor MR-3111) with music arranged by her husband was recorded in Honolulu together with Barney Isaacs, Pua Almeida, Ohta-San, Sonny Kamahale and others.



Protege of Bucky Shirakata and others, Japan singing star Teruko Hino.

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Happily, many of her recordings are presently held in the collections of Dirk Vogel (now, of course, with the University of Hawai'i), John Marsden and Arthur Layfield.

Her biggest million-seller hit was "Natsu no Hi no Omoide" written by songwriter Michiyaki Suzuki. Oddly, it was originally released as the 'B' side of "A Rainy Night in Tokyo." Other top-selling records included "Hamabe wa Yoru datta" and "Michi."

The funeral in Tokyo was a private family-only affair although a farewell party for her fans and admirers was later held in one of the city's hotels, some of the proceeds of which were donated to Japanese cancer charities.

In her heyday Teruko Hino was, as many of her LPs so clearly attest, not only a fine singer but, with her trademark hibiscus-adorned long hair, a strikingly pretty girl, and with her passing will be sadly missed. [ED: Thanks to member Keith Grant for passing this story along to us.] ■

Lorene's Lucky Day

Lorene Ruymar has had the snake-charmer photo shown here in her "handle-someday" bin for quite some time, waiting for a way to work it into a normal HSGA story. Well, that train was never going to leave the station, so here it is at long last. This isn't a normal story and Lorene Ruymar isn't your garden variety HSGA member. When I asked her what on earth (and elsewhere) she was doing at this "necktie party," she wasn't bashful about laying out this "pythie tail." Take it away, Lorene.

This was during the time I was writing my steel guitar instruction book. Our dear green iguana, Iggy Owana Iguana Maria Lopez, spent a lot of time watching me work and climbing up my back to cross over my shoulder and down onto my hands as I punched computer keys. The book came out in 1996, so that puts the Iggy days into the early 1990s and that's when we drove out to Richmond (outskirts of Vancouver) to see the reptile display. We were members of the reptile club, being keen "greeners" at the time. Hey, I grew up on a farm. I'm scared of nothing!

I'm pictured here with a 14-year-old girl, the owner of "Baby Eddie" who was two years old in this photo. The "well-behaved" green ones at the show were indoors on display. Except for Baby Eddie who lay fully stretched out on the lawn in front of the building, attracting a good-sized audience who respectfully kept their distance. There's an odd one in every crowd. Since our 'Iggy' had declined to come to the show, I felt only friendly toward young Eddie.

So I knelt down and stroked him under the chin. His lady friend asked if I'd like to hold him. Sure thing! But he was so heavy and so strung out, she had to help me lift him. When Eddie curled his tail over my nose and his face was pointing somewhat toward the camera, Art thought that was the moment to snap the memorable picture, and I began this little chat with Eddie's lady friend.

"What does Eddie eat?" "Baby rabbits," she said. "I really hate to do it, but that's nature's way. I'll never forget the time we put the bunny into the cage and Eddie was not hungry yet. So the bunny screamed for *four days nonstop* until Eddie swallowed him just to shut him up."

"And what about when he poops?" I ventured. "Oh, that's easy. We can watch the bunny-lump progress down the length of Eddy until, when the lump is near the "end of the line," we know it's time to put Eddy out on the grass. That's why he is out here now."

"Oh!! You mean, like, I'm holding him and he's about to...?"

That's why 14-year-olds should not be in charge of Burmese pythons. As for me, it was *my lucky day!* ■



It's Dues Time Again!

Remember, HSGA's membership year begins on July 1, 2009. Dues are \$30 and all issues go out 'Air Mail' (see insert).

Coco Wire

From **Wally Pfeifer**: "I just got this message from Vern Cornwall. Some of you may remember **Adelaide Cawein** that attended most of the Aloha International conventions. Anyway, she has fallen and broken her tail-bone and is now in a nursing home. If anyone wants to send her a card, the address is: Adelaide Cawein, Riverview Community, 5999 Bender Rd., Room 525, Cincinnati, OH 45233.

From **Lorene Ruymar**: we just got an e-mail from the man behind the Hawaiian Concert Guide website, a deejay and promoter called **Piko**. The site promotes Hawaiian music shows on the mainland. He's just noticed his promotion covers everything but steel guitar, and he intends to do something about that this year. I believe Piko plans to interview me about the story of the steel guitar and my book. I don't know when it will be. Go to www.hawaiian-concertguide.com for a calendar of Hawaiian shows on the mainland. So far there is nothing listed on steel guitar performances. If you know of any shows, it sounds like Piko would be happy to list them.



Another star pupil of Letritia Kandle, our own Evelyn Brue-Roeder on her 90th birthday flanked by her musically gifted nieces.



Like clockwork, the Aiello kids: Ellie Jo (8), Emmie Jo (6), Dusty Joe (4), and Tucker Joe (2) and one steeler on the way?

YOUNG AND UPCOMING Continued from Page 13

enter this world in six months or so. Big cheers and applause! We expect to see that kid on our stage in 8 years!!

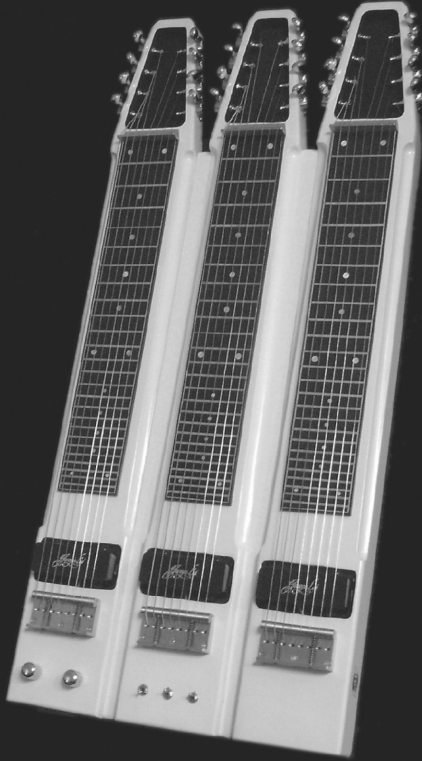
Stay tuned, folks, for more about these great stars of the future! Haijing, Emmalina, Marshall, and (?). ■



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DISC 'N' DATA

“Spanish Steel” – Mike Perlowin

Review by Lorene Ruymar

Steel guitar wizard, Mike Perlowin, has announced the release of another glorious classical music feast, “Spanish Steel.” He has worked more than seven years to produce this CD, and if you love the music of Spain, try to imagine it played totally by steel guitars and rhythm instruments. It’s never been done before, but Mike somehow did it.

Mike told me it’s not his aim to introduce classical music—in this case classical music from Spain—to steel guitar lovers, but instead to introduce the steel guitar to lovers of classical music.

Before I get into a detailed description of the music, I want to talk a bit about Mike. He has dedicated the majority of his life to producing this kind of CD, and has decided that life is passing him by. Too much time sitting at his computer. So this is the last CD he plans to produce. Can you imagine how detailed the work must be? He does all the technical work on the job, plus he plays all the many, many parts of the music on pedal and non-pedal steel guitars, various acoustic and electric 6- and 12-string guitars, 5- and 6-string banjos, 4-, 5-, and 6-string fretted and fretless basses, mandolin, mandocello, and sitar, and fits them together like a puzzle.

I had to laugh at Mike when he told me that as a kid he wanted to be a cowboy because he thought all they do is sing and play the guitar. He was never interested in anything but music to the detriment of his grades in school.

As a working guitarist, Mike has played folk, rock, blues, country, rhythm and blues, reggae, and even disco at different times. There’s an interesting video on YouTube of him playing pedal steel with a distortion unit in a blues-rock band. Just search YouTube under ‘Mike Perlowin’.

Mike’s primary interest, however, is classical music. He says that as a player he finds it far more interesting than country, rock, or any other kind of music he has played in the past. Says Mike, “The things some of these composers wrote is harmonically light years ahead of the traditional harmonies that comprise virtually every form of popular music.”

He told me, “While I can play other people’s music, I’ve never found musicians who could play mine. I had no choice but to play all the different parts on my CDs because nobody else could. Maybe that makes me arrogant. The fact is that I’m on a different wavelength from everybody else, including my fellow pedal steel guitarists.”

There is a saying that a dwarf sitting on the shoulders of a giant can see further than the giant. Mike says that he is that dwarf, not just sitting on the shoulders of the many



giants who came before him, but looking in a completely new and different direction. Here is Mike’s description of the music on the CD:

The CD contains five pieces. It starts off with Manuel de Falla’s “El Amor Brujo” ballet suite. This 22-minute suite consists of 11 short pieces, and while collectively they form one piece of music, some of them, including “Ritual Fire Dance,” are often performed by themselves.

The second piece, “Asturias,” also known as “Leyenda,” is a composition of Isaac Albéniz and has become a staple of the classical guitar repertoire. Rock and roll fans will recognize it as the opening theme from the song “Spanish Caravan” by the Doors.

Because the guitar is so important in Spanish music, the next piece gives the guitar and steel equal prominence. It is the third movement of Joaquin Rodrigo’s “Conceirto Andaluz” for four guitars. I played the guitar parts on guitars as written, and used the steel to cover the brass and woodwind parts. Every time the guitars play a theme, the steels repeat it. Rodrigo’s hauntingly beautiful Conceirto de Aranjuez is so popular that it has overshadowed his other compositions. This is one of his least known works. It is also in my opinion, one of his best.

The next piece is from Peru rather than Spain. It is called “Fantasia Inca” and it was written by J.M. Oyanguren. For some reason, all of Oyanguren’s music seems to have disappeared. Normally I use a combination of sheet music and my imagination to come up with an arrangement. This time I was unable to find not only the music to this piece, but of any of Oyanguren’s works. Moreover, I had some friends search college and university music libraries nationwide, and

nobody found even a single example of his music. This is the first time I ever recorded a piece of music with no written guide whatsoever, working only from an out-of-print recording by the great flamenco guitarist Sabicas. By the way, this track consists solely of multiple steel tracks and percussion.

The CD closes with the 15-minute “Capriccio Espagnol” by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. This was a mammoth production requiring 109 tracks at one point. This is the happiest, most joyful piece of music I have ever heard. It just makes me smile every time I hear it.

Everybody who has heard this CD says it’s the best thing I’ve ever done. I’m too close to it to know whether or not that’s true. I can say that it is the biggest production I’ve ever attempted, and that I’m pleased with the results. Making this album took a tremendous amount of work. I hope it is worth the effort.

To order, e-mail mperlowin@sbcglobal.net or write: Mike Perlowin, 4140 Somers Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90065-3819. The CD will soon be available at Amazon, CD Now, and CD Baby.

Leftover from last issue: a great vintage shot of the late, great Don Helms playing pedals!



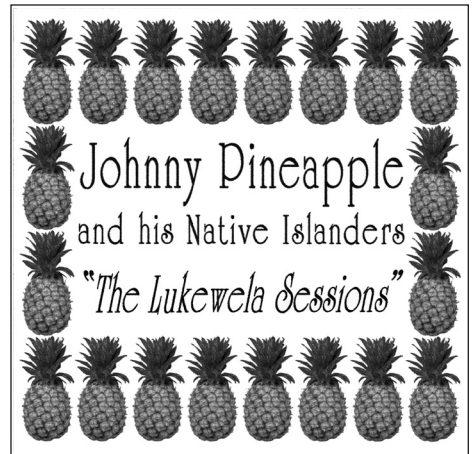
“The Lukewela Sessions” – Johnny Pineapple and his Native Islanders (Cumquat CQCD-2835)

Review by John Ely

This, the latest Johnny Pineapple release from Cumquat, is the companion to “Kalua Skies,” which we reviewed last year. This collection contains thirty-six previously unreleased radio transcription performances circa 1940 and features again the great steel work of Jack de Toro, who sadly died in Florida of tuberculosis just a few years later.

These recordings are the result of a long, high-profile engagement at New York’s posh Roosevelt Hotel on the corner of Madison and 45th. The usual Hawaiian repertoire wasn’t quite enough to satisfy the ‘show-biz’ demands of New York’s elite, so a full-on floor show was created with gypsy fiddlers, jugglers, tap-dancing seals, and you name it! Accordingly, Johnny Pineapple’s Native Islanders underwent a name change. The Hawaiian language approximation of Roosevelt was *Luke-wela* and since Abe Lang from the Islanders had negotiated the contract, he temporarily took over as leader and adopted the persona of “Duke Luke-wela.” So the original Islanders plus violinist Tony Atero became ‘Luke-wela’s Royal Hawaiians’ throughout their Roosevelt sojourn.

Of the CD’s 36 tracks, 26 are instrumentals with the steel guitar and violin trading solos throughout. As Bruce Clarke wrote in his liner notes, the violin does get in the way at times, but this release does feature some great steel playing and is a great example of how Hawaiian music has always adapted to any musical pressure applied to it. It’s entirely natural but a bit uncanny that when the steel guitar is soloing, you have the feeling that, yes, this is a Hawaiian band; but during the violin solos you can easily picture the group as an old-time western swing band.



Remarkable and a reminder that western swing and Hawaiian music during the swing era had lots of similarities. I’ve never heard a CD that illustrates this point so well.

Instrumental tracks on the CD include “Royal Hawaiian Hotel” with terrific steel solos, likewise for “Orange Grove In California,” “Moonlight and Shadows,” “Limehouse Blues,” “Moon of Manakoora,” “I’ll See You In My Dreams,” “Hawaiian Paradise,” “Blue Hawaii,” “Coquette,” “On the Beach at Waikiki,” “He Iniki,” “My Little Grass Shack,” “Ua Like No A Like,” “King Kamehameha,” “Ami Hula Sway,” “Na Lei O Hawaii,” “Na Moku Eha,” “For You A Lei,” “Kamehameha Rag,” “To You Sweetheart, Aloha,” “E Liliu E,” “Hawaiian Hospitality,” “Who’s Sorry Now” with some inspired steel work, “Ka Makani Ka’ili Aloha,” “Beautiful Kahana,” and “Koni Au Ika Wai.”

The CD features vocal versions of “Palolo” with superb steel guitar, “Malihini Mele,” “Kings Serenade,” “Hano Hano Hanalei,” “Tomi Tomi,” “Hame Pila,” “Wailana,” “Ninipo,” “Makalapua,” and “Akahi Hoi.”

The last word on the Johnny Pineapple “Lukewela Sessions” CD? Recommended! ■

Moving?

If you are moving, please contact us at hsga@hsga.org. HSGA Quarterly, 2434 Waiomao Rd, Honolulu, HI 96816-3424.

E Komo Mai! Welcome, New Members

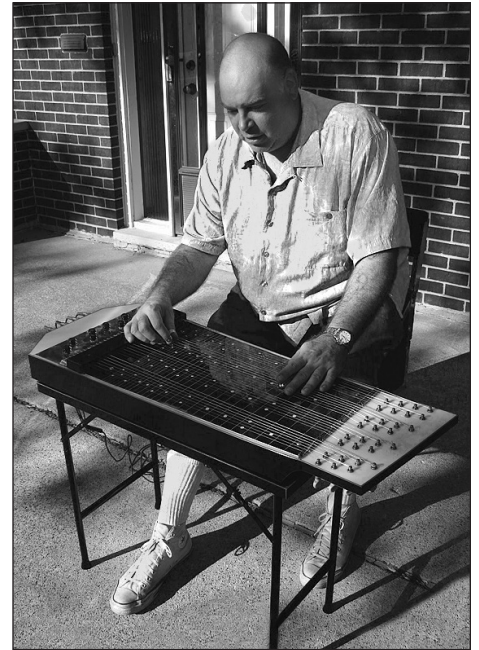
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GENE BIEHL, 1108 S.E. Rossi Drive, Lake City, FL 32025-7303
MILES M. MASON, 502 White Chapel Ave, San Jose, 95136 CA
ROBERT R. BARRY, 2242 Aamanu St., Pearl City, HI 96782-1232
PAUL SUPTON, 6501 Valley View Rd., Oakland, CA 94611

OVERSEAS

RON CHAPMAN, 9 Waldo Cres., Peakhurst, NSW 2210 Australia
SHAUN CRONIN, 1/20 Wells St, East Gosford, NSW 2250 Australia
YUMIKO TAKAHASHI, 6-30-1 Kamikotanaka, Nakahara-ku, Kawasaki-shi,
Kanagawa Pref. 211-0053 Japan
KEVIN BROWN, 10a Lycetts Orchard, Mill Lane, Box, Wiltshire SN138PJ U.K.
PAUL SCARGILL, 5 Norbiton Hall, London Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey
KT2 6RA U.K.



Paul Warnik, posing with the small Letar, which Paul recently purchased from Letritia Kandle-Lay. Wow!

GRAND LETAR Continued from Page 3

it early last July just before my fiftieth birthday, and next to my life, it is the greatest gift I have ever been given.

The instrument is now almost totally restored with much of the restoration work done by Peterson Electronics, builders of strobe tuners. You can see photos of the final work on the Peterson Strobe Tuners website and on the Steel Guitar Forum in the Steel Players section.

The Grand Letar made its first appearance in over 50 years, in all its grandeur, at Scotty's International Steel Guitar Show in St. Louis this past year, and it was well received by many who were awed by the light show and the story behind this historic instrument.

One sad postscript, which we just learned at press time: Letritia lost her husband Walter on December 15. They had met back when he was string bassist in the Chicago Plectrophonic Orchestra. They would have been married 53 years this past New Year's Day. Letritia has an in-home caretaker to help her out now. Bigtime kudos to Paul Warnik for unearthing this story and returning to Mrs. Kandle-Lay at least some of the recognition she so richly deserves. ■

Going to Honolulu?

Don't forget to send in the Convention Form (due by March 16, 2009) and the Hotel Form (due by March 27, 2009). Please send each form to the address shown on the form with your check or money order. Tip: You can complete your hotel reservation over the phone.

Changed E-mail?

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

Letritia Kandle (third from right) with the Kohala Girls group at the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) state convention in Joliet, Illinois circa 1935.

