

HSGA QUARTERLY

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A Joliet first, Casey Olsen (left) and his dad Hiram, Honored Guests at our upcoming Joliet Convention. Mark your calendars for this rare, not-to-be-missed appearance.

Casey and Hiram Olsen at Joliet 2010!

From Joliet Chairman, Don Weber

It's closer than you think. The 2010 HSGA Joliet Convention is right around the corner just like summer. Mark your calendar now before you forget. The convention will be held October 7-9, 2010. This year we have a double-barreled treat for you—not one, but two Honored Guests. Two of the greatest names in Hawaiian music will be on stage in Joliet, Casey and Hiram Olsen!! It doesn't get any better than that.

Casey was a student of Jerry Byrd, and is the last member of the "Byrd's Nest" to appear in Joliet. Casey's dad, Hiram, was a long, longtime friend of Jerry Byrd and fellow musician; you

just didn't see Jerry without Hiram backing him up, and that's how Jerry wanted it. There will be a lot to talk about when Casey and Hiram join us for the guests' annual "talk story."

Hotel Registration

This issue of the newsletter contains both the hotel reservation form and the convention registration form. Reserve early for both the convention and the hotel. Mail in your hotel registration form to the indicated address or better yet, make your hotel reservations directly with the hotel. Be sure to tell them you are with HSGA to get the good rate. The direct hotel number is 815-729-2000.

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HSGA QUARTERLY

Volume 25, Issue 98



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Lorene Ruymar (1985)

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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

MEMBERSHIP

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

SUBMIT LETTERS & EDITORIALS TO:

HSGA Quarterly, 2434 Waioma'o Rd, Honolulu, HI 96816-3424 USA. You can email us at newsletter@hsga.org. Articles and photos can also be emailed directly to the newsletter editor at johnely@hsga.com.

JOLIET PREVIEW Continued from Page 1

Convention Registration

It's important to mail your convention registration form to Wally Pfeifer as soon as you make your plans. He needs to know you are coming in order to make up the playing schedule. It's all explained on the form. Remember, you don't have to pay your convention registration fee until you arrive. All the convention details and a complete schedule will appear in the next issue.

We missed a lot of familiar faces at the convention last year. We hope you are all well, and we look forward to seeing you in October. We always welcome any first timers, and we promise that you will become a part of the family right away. ■

Please Contact Us!

*Send news, comments and photos to:
HSGA Quarterly, 2434 Waioma'o Rd,
Honolulu, HI 96816-3424. Email us at
newsletter@hsga.org.*

HSGA Board Election Results

From Kamaka Tom

We are pleased to announce the nine winners of the HSGA Board elections, which were held this past quarter. They are, in alphabetical order:

Pete Kahele
Chris Kennison
Paul Kim
Terry Miller
Ivan Reddington
Gerald Ross
Mike Scott
Kamaka Tom
Ian Ufton

The new Board will serve from July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2012. Big mahalos go out to all the candidates who generously offered themselves up for service.

Don Fullmer and Carol Hidy playing a steel guitar duet arrangement at Joliet 2009. Don also led one of the popular evening seminars, covering chord theory and other topics.



Larry Rivera Honored at the 14th Annual HMA Awards

On March 27, Larry Rivera received a 2010 Lifetime Achievement Award at the Hawai'i Music Awards ceremonies in Honolulu. He was recognized for his many compositions and recordings, and for being star of one of the longest continuous entertainment shows in Hawai'i and for his regular work at the now closed Coco Palms Resort in Wailua.

His "Love and Aloha" show in the main dining room, named for his 1965 debut album, and his late show, "A Nite Cap with Larry," in the cocktail terrace ran for decades at the hotel, which has been closed since Hurricane 'Iniki damaged it in 1992. "Nite Cap with Larry" has been reincarnated at Café Portofino, next to Duke's Canoe Club at the Kaua'i Marriott Resort and Beach Club on Kalapaki Bay each Wednesday from 7:30-9:30 PM.

As the award acknowledges, Rivera has distinguished himself as a composer. He wrote the song "Kamalani," which was made into a hit by the late Israel Kamakawiwo'ole and was also recorded by the Makaha Sons. Other compositions include "Wai'ale'ale" and "The Whole World Looks to Hawai'i", which Rivera sang at the Waikiki Shell for Arthur Godfrey and the "Hawai'i Calls" radio show. More than a dozen recording companies have recorded "Uncle" Larry Rivera's songs.

Elvis Presley and Patti Page sang background vocals for Rivera at his Coco Palms "Nite Cap" shows. Other people Rivera had on stage included Rory Calhoun, Anne Francis and Myron Floren of "The Lawrence Welk Show," to name just a few.

Rivera is also being acknowledged by the HMA for his commitment to the culture and heritage of Hawai'i. His song, "Aloha Begins with Me," encapsulates his life, as he continues to live a life of love and aloha.

Rivera said in a telephone interview that the congratulatory emails have been pouring in. "I can't keep up," he said of responding to the emails. "I'm very, very happy to receive the award." "Main thing is I helped somebody get the aloha spirit," he said.

The Annual Hawai'i Music Awards Celebration Banquet was held on Saturday, March 27 at the Empress Restaurant at the Chinese Cultural Center. His entire family flew to O'ahu to witness the event and he performed one of his songs as part of the awards ceremony.

The Hawai'i Music Awards started in 1995 as a concept to support Hawai'i's recording industry, and is an Internet-based awards program to take advantage of the international outreach capabilities for marketing and promotional support for newly released recordings by Hawai'i and Hawaiian recording artists anywhere in the world. It was the first inter-



Kaua'i steel "consortium," Larry Rivera veterans Ernie Palmeira (left) and Jess Montgomery (right) with pedal steeler Larry Allen.

active voting website on the Internet, and over the years has received over 90,000 votes from over 100 countries and hundreds of music production companies. Johnny Kai is executive producer of the show and website. ■

An HSGA Forum 'How To'

From Rick Aiello

Members with Internet, here's the low-down on signing up for our forum. The only way to get registered is to send me an email requesting registration. We used to have an auto registration feature but we were bombarded with spam and I couldn't keep up with deleting them five times a day. So we're now set up for manual registration.

All you need to do is email me at eedtm5@gmail.com. Please include the following in your email:

- Full name
- Mailing address
- Telephone number with area code
- Email address

If you are a paid-up HSGA member your status is set to "Big Kahuna," which allows you access to that board.

That's about it; there's no other way to do it without all the headaches of "bots" registering and spreading spam.

If you know of non-members who may want to participate in our forum, just have them send me an email with their full name, home address, phone number and email address. Upon verification I will hand register them. ■

The 2010 'Rick Alexander Non-Pedal Sessions'

By Jeff Strouse and John Ely

You might be wondering why we cover the Non-Pedal Sessions at the TSGA (Texas Steel Guitar Association) Jamboree each spring. Well, for starters, some of our core members past and present have been performers and organizers of this special event that just keeps getting bigger every year. But beyond that, this is an event that takes place in the larger setting of a big pedal steel convention, one of the biggest in the country. Given how the event has grown, you begin to wonder if this could be an opportunity for a club like ours to reach a much larger audience. And, of course, the styles played at the sessions are not just Hawaiian, but run the gamut with a heavy dose of western swing, being a Texas show that features western greats like Herbie Remington and Maurice Anderson. Still, our club gets plugged all throughout this two-day event; HSGA might well consider playing a role at some point. But for now, just the facts!

The Texas show is held each spring at the Sheraton Grand Hotel at the Dallas-Ft. Worth Airport, very handy for attendees who fly in. I want to say this is the second most attended convention besides Scotty's? The non-pedal portion is now a two-day event, held Friday and Saturday in the Chagall banquet rooms on the mezzanine level of the hotel. Rooms are around \$100 per night, but you can find better deals at adjacent hotels within short walking distance. There is no charge for attending the non-pedal sessions, but there

Nashville steelman Carco Clave playing steel at the Non-Pedal Sessions with singer Ike Jonson of the Roadhouse Rangers.



At the main entrance to the Non-Pedal Sessions banquet room, a tribute to the late Rick Alexander, tireless promoter of the event.

is a range of fees for attending the pedal steel guitar performances downstairs.

The non-pedal event was originally the brainchild of HSGA member Wade Pence who mentioned it to convention president Albert Talley five years ago. The inaugural event took place at the 2006 Dallas Show and was basically a simple one-room affair with some donated music gear. Those early sessions were run by Wade, George Piburn, and Chuck Lettes, and were very well received. In 2007, the name was changed to "Chuck Lettes and Friends." At the last minute, some equipment had to be purchased due to a slight mix up. This was the first year Rick Alexander attended the show, and luckily he brought a couple of amps that were used, too.

In 2008, Rick took charge and the sessions were held in the Sheraton's sports bar on Friday from 10 AM to 5 PM. For starters, Rick provided all the sound gear and paid for the venue allowing it to be open to all performers and convention-goers. Participants played 20-minute sets throughout the day, and the sessions were very well received.

In 2009, Rick moved the event to two banquet rooms on the mezzanine level of the hotel. He had to cover the cost of two vendor rooms, but as there was nothing to sell at this point, the TSGA staff was nice enough to offer a discounted

price. The event was a huge success, but sadly we lost Rick later that year (see our Closing Notes feature on Rick in the Summer 2009 issue).

HSGA members Jeff Strouse and Howard Reinlieb stepped up to take charge of the 2010 event, newly launched in Rick's memory as the Rick Alexander Non-Pedal Sessions. Says Jeff, "Rick put a lot of heart and soul into planning the sessions, and when he passed away, I thought it would be fitting to have the session as a memorial to him. Rick was a peaceful, easy-going guy. We spent many hours on the road together traveling to the steel shows. We also spent a lot of time in his studio, sharing stories, laughs, and having fun playing the vintage instruments in his awesome collection. He was like a brother to me and I miss him every day."

Jeff did all the emceeing for the shows this year so he didn't have a chance to make a lot of notes on the performances. Here are just a few highlights:

Nashville steel guitarist Carco Clave performed with his group, including a rousing version of "Steel Guitar Rag." Carco played a single-neck 10-string Fender. He was joined on lead guitar by an original Texas Troubadour, Pete Mitchell. Ike Jonson, who in Nashville is known at the "Gold Chain Troubadour," took the vocals on many western swing classics like "Take Me Back To Tulsa," "Okie Boogie," and "Oklahoma Hills." The band provided backup for many of the artists over the two days.

The New England-based hillbilly boogie band 'Girl Howdy' featuring Rose Sinclair on a Carvin double-neck steel wowed the audience, donating their playing time as well as the considerable travel expense. Rose was joined by Lyon Grauly on lead guitar, and they played many of the Speedy West-Jimmy Bryant twin guitar classics such as "Flyin' High" and "Skiddle-Dee-Boo."

HSGA member Howard Reinlieb, who along with member Jeff Strouse, was prime organizer of this year's Non-Pedal Sessions.



Gerald Ross electrifying the crowd (and his uke!) with Austin fiddler Howard Kalish and 'Girl Howdy' steeler, Rose Sinclair.

Speaking of travel from afar, HSGA member Kevin Brown came all the way from the U.K. to attend and perform! On Friday, he played a nice acoustic set on both Beard and Benoit resonator guitars, featuring the D9th tuning and its various uses.

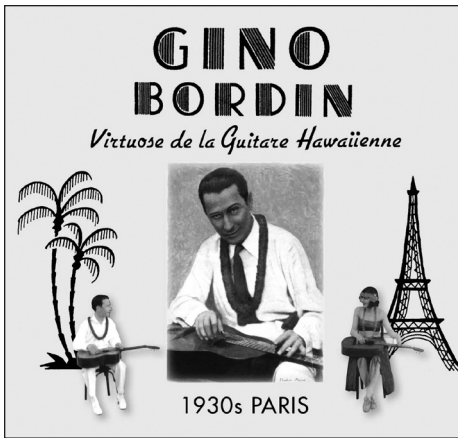
Mike Neer of the New York City based Moonlighters played a superb set on his Clinesmith steel guitar. We reviewed the Moonlighters CD many years ago when Mike was playing all acoustic steel guitars. Now, we understand he plays electric instruments almost exclusively. Mike played a range of music including a jazzy "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy," an *a cappella* version of "Georgia on My Mind" with lots of chords, and Dick McIntire's "I'm Pau," which he sang! Special thanks go to Mike for offering to donate proceeds from the sale of his DVD "Steelin' from the Masters" to the event. By the way, a couple of the Todd Clinesmith built Bigsby copies were displayed at the 2009 Non-Pedal Sessions by Ray Montee, and Mike Neer ended up with one of them. The word on the street is that these steel guitars are fantastic instruments with all the Bigsby attention to detail and craftsmanship.

Steel Guitar Hall of Famers Herbie Remington and Maurice Anderson, both veterans of the Bob Wills band, turned in great performances. Maurice's wife Teresa joined Reece for a super version of the jazz standard "Deed I Do." Reece builds and plays his own brand, the SuperSlide non-pedal guitar. Herbie builds those console Steelmasters you've seen Cindy Cashdollar and others play.

Mark Roeder was the event's first paying vendor, offering super nice custom lap steel stands. Herb Remington's booth was downstairs with the other pedal vendors, but Jeff's trying to talk him into joining Mark next year. Mark is going to be a major sponsor for next year's show and he

Continued on Page 20

DISC 'N' DATA



“Virtuose de la Guitare Hawaïenne” – Gino Bordin (Grass Skirt Records, GSK-1003)

Review by John Ely

Grass Skirt Record’s recent release of material by France’s steel guitar virtuoso, Gino Bordin, covers the early part of his career from 1930 to around 1938 when he was the leading Hawaiian steel guitarist in Paris. It gives us an unusual look at how the Hawaiian guitar impacted parts of western Europe, literally on the other side of the globe from Hawai‘i. Or perhaps, how European music impacted the Hawaiian guitar! The CD is packed with elaborate paintings of the greater European musical landscape from classical music to Viennese-style waltzes to regional folk music influences and tango, all employing the expressive, dramatic power of Hawaiian guitar for its delivery.

Joseph Kekuku, himself, introduced steel guitar to France, but ultimately the Hawaiian idiom did not have traction in this part of the world. Rather European musicians would adapt the steel guitar to material more suited to European tastes. The 44 pages of liner notes, written in French and English by Cyril LeFebvre, the leading authority on Gino Bordin, are a thing of beauty and so comprehensive that I didn’t dare review the CD without taking an hour to study all the material included. The

careers of Gino and musical cohorts such as Alex Manara are well-documented in this impressive package, which also includes a lot of interesting vintage photos.

The CD features Bordin’s own compositions and other elaborate musical settings, 25 tracks in all, which are full of key changes and rubato sections where the tempo dramatically slows down in the popular dance styles of the day. All but one track was done on a 7-string Selmer acoustic steel guitar, Gino’s favorite instrument in the 1930s. Gino’s playing is gorgeous and technically flawless with a distinctive shimmering vibrato perfect for these kind of tunes but not particularly Hawaiian sounding in the sense of steel guitar imitating the rich resonance of the Hawaiian voice.

Most of the CD’s song titles will be unfamiliar to HSGAers as they were to me. And the waltz in a minor key is the sound that will strike most of us as a departure from the steel guitar repertory we are use to hearing and playing. And waltzes abound on the CD, including “J’ecoute La Guitare,” (“I listen to the guitar”) which goes from major to minor keys with a very French sounding vocal. “Hawaiian Berceuse” is brilliantly played, a brisk waltz with lots of strumming and rich vibrato. “Addio Signora,” is a slow waltz with some fantastic left hand work mixing glissandos with vibrato.

Humor is sprinkled throughout. In the march “Crépuscule hawaïen” (“Hawaiian Twilight”) Gino quotes a little of the melody of “Aloha ‘Oe” to remind us that, yes, this instrument does come from Hawai‘i! Likewise, “Retour d’Hawai” (“Return from Hawai‘i”) starts off like a traditional steel guitar march, but accordion and xylophone reel us in from that slow boat to Hilo and bring us back to the Parisian café.

The one cover tune HSGAers will know is “L’île aux rêves d’or” or “Isle of Golden Dreams.” Beautifully played

with some island flair, but overall it has its own voice.

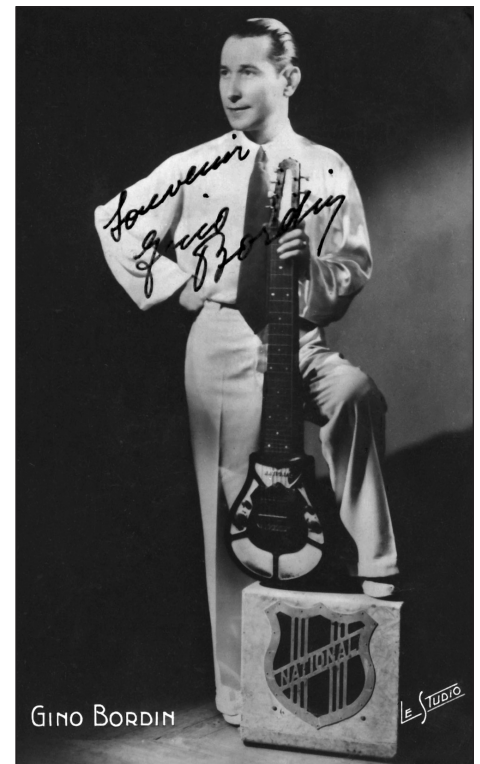
The piano accompaniments pull a few of selections in a classical music direction. Steel harmonics and arpeggios are perfectly executed throughout. The arrangements are very tight with lots of string and horn section interplay, piano fills, and other orchestral textures from the period. For the most part the selections give the impression of being “through-composed” (entirely written out).

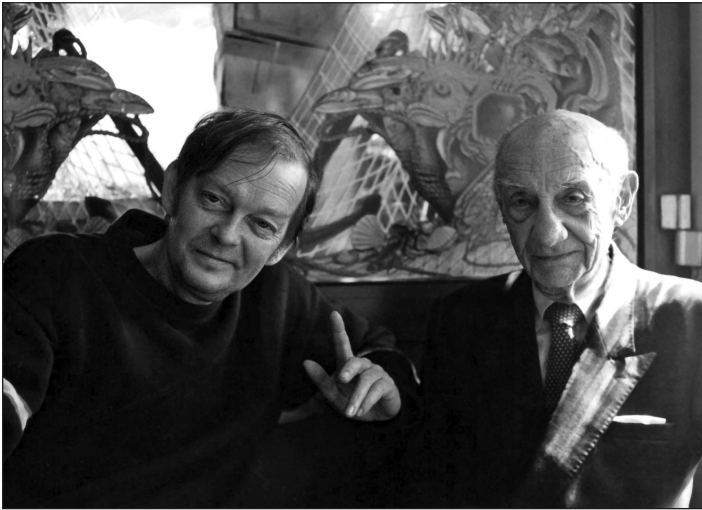
“Viens dans ce joli pavillon” is a sweet French-style melody reminiscent of “La Vie en Rose” made famous by Edith Piaf whom Gino Bordin knew personally.

“Sérénade bleue” (“Blue Serenade”) is another superb example of pure left hand virtuosity. Gino also shows us how to play solo acoustic steel complete with rhythmic accompaniment. Fabulous!

There are a handful of vocal performances on the CD with Gino playing solos that beautifully complement the

A Gino Bordin publicity shot with the electric steel guitar he favored in later years.





Cyril LeFebvre (left) with Gino Bordin's friend Alex Manara, who played second Hawaiian steel guitar on some tracks of the CD.

voice, including the tango “Je n’ai plus personne” (“I No Longer Have Anyone”) and “Hawai’i nous appelle” (“Hawai’i Calls”).

“C’est une valse qui chante” (“Singing Waltz”) has a *saw* solo, deeply nostalgic like the roller rink organ you might hear in an old silent film!

The sound of the CD is excellent. The original Gino Bordin 78s were remastered by Ted Kendall.

“Virtuoso de la Guitare Hawaiienne” is a spectacular working of steel guitar into the musical idioms of post World War I Europe. It may not grab you if you are a Hawaiian steel guitar purist, but if you love acoustic steel

guitar, this CD will open your ears to a wealth of different styles and sounds you probably haven’t heard.

A good chunk of Hawaiian music consists of European harmony merged with the island voice and rhythm. In a sense, the music on this release completes the circle with Hawaiian guitar injected back into its European source with fascinating results. If you can open up your ears a bit, I think you’ll agree that the steel guitar music on this CD does nothing to dispel the notion that with steel guitar you can play anything in your head and heart.

The CD is available direct from Grass Skirt Records (www.GrassSkirt.co.uk) and HSGA members can order at a discounted price of \$13 including shipping by emailing gino@GrassSkirt.co.uk. You can also order via the Internet from Amazon or Elderly Instruments. The CD should be available in most record stores throughout North America. Tell the salesman that the CD is distributed by City Hall. You can also send a check for \$13 in U.S. funds to: Robert Armstrong, 213 Grant Ave, Winters, CA 95694. Indicate that you are ordering the Gino Bordin CD and make your check payable to Robert Armstrong. ■

Buy & Sell

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Treasurer’s Report

(Current as of March 31, 2010)

General Fund

FHB Checking	\$14,241.25
Credit Union CD	\$6,465.88

Total General Fund	\$20,707.13
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Scholarship Fund

FHB Checking	\$10,822.72
Credit Union CD	\$10,934.17

Total Scholarship Fund	\$21,756.89
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Joliet Checking	\$2,513.11
Japan Account	\$2,497.00

Grand Total	\$47,474.13
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Reminiscing...

Anyone who knew Jerry Byrd well enough to share a cup of coffee at Zippy's or meet up for lunch during one of Jerry's busy days teaching at Harry's Music store can appreciate the following story from noted Nashville steelman Bobbe Seymour. For a split second I hesitated to print it; you have to understand Jerry's uncompromising standards and sometimes brutal honesty to fully appreciate this little anecdote. Take it away, Bobbe.

Steel Guitar Hall of Famer Billy Robinson just came by and we reminisced about our dearly departed steel guitar playing friends of yesteryear: Hal Rugg, Don Helms, John Hughey, Jimmy Day, Shot Jackson, Jimmy Crawford and Jerry Byrd. The great humor that these wonderful players displayed to us had us laughing with fond memories. Of course, tainted with twinges of remorse that these wonderful players and incredible people have left us. We were doing real well until the name of Howard White came up.

Howard had to be one of the funniest steel players any of us has ever known. He didn't mean to be funny and didn't try to be funny. He just was.

Howard sent a cassette tape to the great Jerry Byrd one time and asked Jerry to critique it. Jerry gave it a listen, recorded his comments on the tape and sent it right back to him. When he got it, Howard rushed over to my store so I could hear what Jerry had to say.

Jerry and Howard were very good friends, but you wouldn't know it from Jerry's comments. It was the most embarrassing putdown I've ever seen Jerry do to anyone. His comments were so horrible that I couldn't believe Howard brought it for me to hear.

I looked at Howard and said, "Howard, he's insulting you horribly and he's saying nothing good about your playing."

Howard replied, "What do you mean? Jerry Byrd is probably the greatest non-pedal steel player in the world and always has been. I'm just wonderfully honored to have even been critiqued by him." He continued, "Anything that grouchy old Jerry Byrd says is really a compliment!"

He looked at me and said, "Have you ever had Jerry critique your playing?"

I said, "No."

Howard said, "Well I have and I feel very lucky to have had it done."

I can really understand how Howard felt. I guess Howard felt honored to have been close enough to Jerry to have had him actually do this. It's just one of the many things that made me appreciate Howard for the wonderful person he truly was and Jerry, too, for that matter.

All of the steel players I mentioned have wives, children, and family who we try to stay in touch with. Remember, these



A super shot taken in Honolulu in the early years of our club, Lorene Ruymar, Billy Hew Len and Jerry Byrd (right).

family members were the force behind these players that made them the successful players that we were. [ED: Bobby Seymour is proprietor of Steel Guitar Nashville. You can check him out at <http://www.steelguitar.net>]. ■

MIA: The Billy Hew Len Story

From Lorene Ruymar

Hi, ladies and gents. I just thought of something you might be able to help me with. I imagine you know who Billy Hew Len was? He was a very fine steel player who lost his left hand at age 17 while doing mechanical work on a car. He had a most difficult time for the first years until someone tried to build a mechanical assist. It didn't work. Then a second attempt was made involving a leather glove attached to his hand with the glove holding a steel bar so he could carry on with his steel guitar playing.

Well, someone wrote a beautiful story about Billy's life and I did read it years ago, but darned if I can tell who wrote it and how can I get my hands on the story again? The story goes into all the agony and how he faced his trouble and became a great player in spite of it. It goes far beyond what I wrote in my book. A sad story but a great tribute to his strength of character overcoming the pain and the happy-ever-after ending. Our editor would like to print the story, plus someone in the Netherlands is also keen to remember him in a newsletter article.

Can any of you tell me where to find this treasure?

Members, if any of you have seen the story or know of its whereabouts, please contact Lorene at ruymar@shaw.ca or John Ely at johnely@hawaiiansteel.com. Mahalo! ■

Henry Allen's Steel Guitar Course

Here's the next in our newsletter series on steel guitar courses, this one from noted Hawaiian and jazz musician Henry Allen from Maui. It was hard to corner Henry for this article. He's busy promoting steel guitar events in Maui these days, including the Henry Kaleialoha Allen Hawaiian Steel Guitar Festival, which was just held at the Ka'anapali Beach Hotel this past April. And he has received numerous awards of late including a commendation from Hawai'i Governor Linda Lingle for his lifelong contribution to music appreciation and education. Here are Henry and Sherron Allen to tell you all about the course.

While touring and teaching in the schools in the 1990s, we noticed there was a lack of instructional material for the Hawaiian steel guitar. Henry's course, "How to Play the Hawaiian Steel Guitar" covers the serious side of the music profession, stressing learning to read and write music as a platform for success.

The book is for the beginner, seasoned and professional player. Says Henry, "One should have some musical knowledge, but I will teach and work with serious players and give private

lessons to get the them started and help them overcome anything blocking them from progressing. One lesson should be all that's needed to get started. I have the formula and have helped many to do so. Anyone that buys the book direct from me gets an autographed version, and telephone and email help if needed. I will give private lessons to anyone who can come here or meet me when I am on tour or in their area. I can be reached at www.henrykallen.com or at 808-669-6189." Henry adds that experience playing another instrument does make things easier.

The course starts from the beginning. Part I contains information on steel guitar history, how to tune up, the basics of using the bar and picks, how to read music and tablature, how to play harmonics, and beginning chord theory. Part II includes the study of scales, more advanced chord theory, slant bar, and the basics of playing Hawaiian vamps. Part III includes a number of complete arrangements for practicing the techniques covered in the course including Henry's composition "Steel on Blues," "Mauna Kea," "Maile Lei," "Pūpū O 'Ewa," "Imi Au la 'Oe," "Across the Sea," "Wahī'ika-ahu'ula," "Aloha 'Oe," and three more tunes penned by Henry, "Huahine 'E," "Aloha from Hawai'i," and "Kalele." The featured steel guitar arrangement in this issue is "Pūpū O 'Ewa" from Henry's book.

All music throughout the course uses the familiar scheme of standard notation with a tablature staff underneath. The book comes with an audio CD of a keyboard playing through some of the Part I and Part II examples and all of the songs from Part III of the book, which should help students get an idea of what the material sounds like [ED: rhythm tracks are not provided on the CD—the keyboard plays the exact notes to be played on steel guitar]. We believe it is the only steel



Henry Allen posing with one of his custom built Kalei Aloha steel guitars.

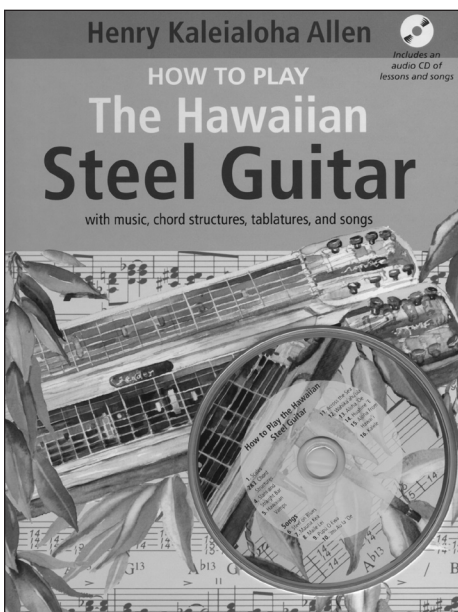
guitar instruction book written by a native of Hawai'i. And the course is endorsed by the Musicians Union of Hawai'i.

Says Henry, "It took me years to get this book right. If anyone can finish this book and play the songs, then they are right up next to me! I am now working on a book of songs for the steel guitar. I just need to get the necessary "clearances" to be able to use the songs I want to include.

"I played with Alfred Apaka in 1949 and then laid aside the steel guitar for more than twenty years. I started over again in the early 1970s. This was during the period when slack key took over with no steel guitar being promoted or taught in our schools. I also traveled and performed with Merle Kekuku.

"Regarding my recently held steel guitar festival in Maui on April 23, I invited music teachers and band instructors from all the schools to come to a special afternoon session to learn more about the proposed class for teachers; I will basically teach them how to play

Continued on Page 20



Pūpū O 'Ewa

(Pearly Shells of 'Ewa)

C6th Tuning

Arrangement by Henry K. Allen

Medium ♩ = 100

G G7

Pu - pu i ka nu' - a E nau-e

Steel Gtr. (C6th)

E T 2 2 7 7 5 7 7 5 5
 C A 2 7 7 5 7 7 7 7 7 7 5 5
 G A 7 7 5 7 7 7 7 7 7 5 5
 E B 7 7 5 7 7 7 7 7 7 5 5
 C

5 C D7

mei i ka me - a - hou. A he

4 4 2 2 7 7 5 5 2 2
 3 3 2 2 7 7 5 5 2 2
 3 3 2 2 7 7 5 5 2 2

9 G G7 C

'ai - na ma - i na ku - pu - na mai A - la - hu - la

7 7 7 5 7 12 12 12 12 12 7 7 5 5
 7 7 7 5 7 12 12 12 12 12 7 7 5 5
 7 7 7 4 7 12 12 12 12 12 5 5

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

13 G D7 G

Pu-'u-lo-a, ke a-la he-le no ka-'a-hu-pa-hau. A-la-hu-la

7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 12-12 2-2 2-2 2-7 7 7 7-7 5 5
 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 12-12 12-12 2-2 2-7 7 7 7-7 5 5
 12-12 12-12 2-2 2-7 7 7 5 5
 7 7

17 G D7 G6 G

Pu-'u-lo-a, ke a-la he-le no ka-'a-hu-pa-hau. Pu-'u

7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 12-12 2-2 2-2 2-7 7 7 2 2
 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 12-12 12-12 2-2 2-7 7 7 2 2
 12-12 12-12 2-2 2-7 7 7 2 2
 7 7

strum w/ thumb

21 C6 Cmin G6 G

hau, hau, hau.

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 3 3 3 7 7 7 7 7 7

strum w/ thumb

strum w/ thumb

Vintage Axes

Recent HSGA Quarterly readers have been treated to some really nice exposés of greater Chicago steel guitar personalities such as Letritia Kandle-Lay and Kay Koster, written by one of our newer Chicago-area members, Paul Warnik. What many of you might not know is that Paul is a known expert on vintage steel guitars; heaven help you if you're after an old classic steel guitar that Paul has his eyes on! Here's Paul to launch a series on vintage instruments, which ought to be the final word for any of us wandering aimlessly East of Fenderland.

I first started collecting vintage steels in 1982 concentrating on pre-World War II National and Dobro resophonics. I had no idea where it would lead me. Since then I have been blessed with the ownership of many types of steel guitars from the earliest days through the present in acoustic, resonophonic and electric versions.

In this series I am not going to rewrite the history of steel guitar evolution. Many books and Internet websites already exist to explain it all. Lorene Ruymar's book, "The Hawaiian Steel Guitar and its Great Hawaiian Musicians" and Andy Volk's book, "Lap Steel Guitar," are two good examples. Instead I am going to select a specific maker and model of steel guitar design that has proven to be a mainstay instrument for steel guitarists over time starting from the earliest days of their production.

After Joseph Kekuku's legendary invention of the first steel guitar, most acoustic steel guitar players simply took existing "flattop" guitars and added a higher bridge saddle and nut to elevate the strings for Hawaiian-style playing. In 1923, the premiere American manufacturer of guitars—the C.F. Martin Company of Nazareth, Pennsylvania—introduced its first models designated for Hawaiian style, the 0-18K and 0-28K models. The 'K' designated koa wood construction and these guitars provided bracing for steel (not gut) strings. By 1929 the Gibson Company of Kalamazoo, Michigan had also begun production of Hawaiian designated models. Both Martin and Gibson Hawaiians were basically just standard flattop acoustic models altered for Hawaiian style. Some had "flush frets," which were for fretboard position reference only and could not be played in Spanish style without refretting the instrument. Note: Many Hawaiian Martins and Gibsons with flush frets were later converted for Spanish style playing.

One of the first makers of acoustic Hawaiian guitars to produce an instrument design that would take it to the next level was Herman Weissenborn. His original works are highly prized and collectible today with an estimated fewer than 5000 instruments produced from the 1920s to his death in 1936. Bob Brozman estimates that approximately 80 per-



A very rare vintage photo of Herman Weissenborn posing with one of his brilliant acoustic Hawaiian steel guitars.

cent of his production was completed before 1927 and the subsequent introduction of National Tri-cone resophonics.

The Weissenborn story actually begins with another instrument maker named Chris Knutsen, who was already an established maker of harp guitars by the turn of the century. Knutsen is generally credited with inventing "hollow neck" construction, which improved tone and volume because of its larger sound chamber that extended through the neck. While Knutsen is accepted as the developer of hollow necks, Weissenborn is credited with perfection of the design, manufacturing instruments that were superior to that of Knutsen. In fact, Weissenborns are considered tonally superior to most if not all other acoustic, non-resonator Hawaiian guitars.

Herman C. Weissenborn emigrated from his native Germany in 1902 and first settled in New York as an instrument repairman. In 1910 he moved to Los Angeles, and by 1920 he was building Hawaiian guitars in four styles from the plain unornamented Style 1 to the extensively fancy bound and embellished Style 4. While some of his earliest examples were made of maple with spruce top, it's the koa wood construction that his guitars are most famous for.

While Herman Weissenborn made fine Hawaiian guitars, the quality of construction varied, with some models showing visible saw marks, rough braces, and squeezed out glue. Also the lightweight construction is considered both a blessing and a curse. While it contributes to their distinctive tone it also makes the guitars very susceptible to wood cracking, seam separation, and loosening of the interior braces and pin bridges.

A 1920s catalog listed prices from \$40 for the Style 1 to \$79 for the Style 4. Weissenborn also made tenor and plectrum guitars, 'ukuleles, mandolins, and Spanish neck guitars

as well as a few lesser encountered variants of the Hawaiian models with “teardrop” shaped bodies.

While Weissenborns fell out of favor with the introduction of the louder National and Dobro resonophones by 1928 their resurgence in popularity was largely begun in 1987 when Dolly Parton, Emmylou Harris, and Linda Ronstadt released their celebrated “Trio” album featuring a cover of the 1960s Phil Spector penned “To Know Him Is To Love Him.” The song featured a hauntingly beautiful instrumental break by legendary guitarist David Lindley on a Weissenborn steel. In an instant, Weissenborn had regained its stature as a premier instrument. Throughout the 1990s players snapped up the instruments and the Weissenborn renaissance was on, nearly 60 years after the last one was made.

Weissenborns could have been relegated to obscurity if not for the likes of David Lindley, Bob Brozman, Ben Harper, Jerry Douglas, and my friend Ry Cooder. The subsequent demand for Weissenborn-style instruments then spawned a whole slew of luthiers worldwide, who made

A photo of Letritia Kandle’s Weissenborn (see Paul Warnik’s excellent article on Letritia in the Winter 2008-09 issue).



even more elegant high-end guitars such as those by Bear Creek, Mermer, and Celtic Cross, as well as lower-end mass production varieties by Gold Tone and the late John Pearse’s Breezy Ridge.

In the next newsletter, I will be discussing my favorite Hawaiian acoustic guitar of all time—the National Tri-Cone resonophonic. ■

HSGA Donations

Thanks to the many HSGAers who made donations this past winter.

A. Hinano Kaumeheiwa donated \$100 to our Scholarship Fund as did **Don and Lynn Keene**. Mahalo! As you’ve seen in recent issues, we’re beginning to put our Scholarship Fund monies to good use. **Dee Ryan** contributed \$100 to our General Fund. Many thanks for these generous donations. **Matthew Dawson** made a nice donation to our Scholarship Fund on behalf of Rick Aiello.

Big mahalos to everyone who contributed. The following members donated at least \$10:

Clifford and Barbara Adams, Huntington Station, NY
Bob Alaniz and Mary Correro, Manteca, CA
Michael Cord, Cord International, Ventura, CA
Janis B. Crum, Williamston, MI
Frank Della-Penna and Stephanie Ortoleva, Washington, DC
Ivan R. Ginter, Wausau, WI
Jim and Mary Hambelton, Coarsegold, CA
Kay Koster, Rockford, IL
Mae and Art Lang, Shelby Twp., MI
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Donald and Donna Weber, New Lenox, IL
David S. Wier, Okeechobee, FL

It’s Dues Time Again!

Remember, HSGA’s membership year begins on July 1, 2010. Dues are now \$30 and all issues go out ‘Air Mail’. Look for the renewal form in the insert that was mailed along with this issue. Don’t miss out on the latest info on Hawaiian steel guitar, including news, instruction, and lots of photos.

Islands to the Delta: The Steel Guitar in Blues and Country Music

Have you ever wondered what the connection is between slide guitar blues styles and Hawaiian music? Well, here's Russell Shor to clear up some of the mystery. It was primarily written from a roots blues perspective for collectors of original 78s. I've made a note or two where understanding of steel guitar in the blues world does not agree with established steel guitar "orthodoxy."

Not long ago, I watched an interview with bluesman B.B. King who recalled, growing up in the 1930s, falling in love with the sound of the Hawaiian guitar. The way those guitarists bent their notes was beautiful, like the human voice, he said, adding that these sounds gave him the inspiration to practice his instrument. King also noted that his much older cousin, Bukka White, listened to Hawaiian guitarists who were touring all over the South back in the 1920s and '30s, as well as on the radio. And, as every 78 collector knows, Hawaiian music formed a large section of record catalogs of that day and can still be found in great numbers in junk shops all around the world.

Indeed, some research and connect-the-dots listening shows that Hawaiian music is one of the most pervasive yet under-appreciated and overlooked influences in blues and early country music. Connecting the dots is important because there is a huge amount of literature on blues and country music history and a surprising amount of material on Hawaiian music, but nearly all are written as if none of these musicians ever crossed paths when in reality just the opposite is true.

The Hawaiian Islands in the nineteenth century were a crossroads of the Pacific with the guitar being introduced before the 1860s by Mexican and Portuguese workers. By the 1880s, islanders had already developed a distinct style of playing so that by the time the United States annexed the islands in 1898, troupes were making the rounds of mainland vaudeville houses, circuses and carnivals.

The man credited with being the inventor of the "slide" steel guitar (the Buddy Bolden of Hawaiian music, if you will) is Joseph Kekuku (1874?-1932) who, according to legend, was fooling around with a metal bolt and began sliding it across his guitar strings, and was delighted at the sound it made as the pitch varied up and down. He told interviewers that happened in 1885. Later, he found that a knife blade (or metal comb) worked better. Other accounts dispute Kekuku as being the first—Indian classical music, of course, is filled with such techniques—but it is generally agreed that he developed the first Hawaiian steel guitar. The

steel refers to strings made with metal strings instead of gut. [ED: In the steel guitar world, of course, we understand that the name 'steel guitar' comes from the steel bar used to fret notes.]

"The Hawaiian Steel Guitar and its Great Hawaiian Musicians" by Lorene Ruymar is an excellent reference work on this early period. Her YouTube video on executing Hawaiian guitar style is fascinating as well. Because manipulating the slide is so critical, musicians played the Hawaiian guitar on their lap. There's a striking film of Bukka White (1909-77) executing this way of playing "Poor Boy" on YouTube, which he also recorded for the Library of Congress in 1939. This technique is strongly evident on his 1930 version of "The Panama Limited" (Victor 23295), redone ten years later as "Special Streamline" (Vocalion 5526).

By the 1890s Kekuku was leading his own Hawaiian ensemble and a decade later began tours of the U.S. mainland, possibly recording with Toots Paka's Hawaiian Troupe for the Edison label in 1909, and then to Europe in 1919. He later recorded in the U.K., accompanying the singers Layton and Johnstone on several sides.

Edison recorded a number of Hawaiian musicians in San Francisco in 1899 and Victor recorded 53 titles in Honolulu in 1906 including the 1909 Edison cylinders mentioned above. By then, however, Hawaiian knife playing was already making its mark on blues.

W.C. Handy, on page 75 of "Father of the Blues," recalled a 1903 encounter with a singer outside of Clarksdale, Mississippi. "A lean, loose-jointed Negro had commenced plunking a guitar beside me while I slept. His clothes were rags; his feet peeped out of his shoes. His face had on it some of the sadness of the ages. As he played, he pressed a knife on the strings of the guitar in a manner popularized by Hawaiian guitarists who used steel bars. His song, too, struck me instantly. "Goin' where the Southern cross the Dog." The singer repeated the line three times, accompanying himself on the guitar with the weirdest music I had ever heard. The tune stayed in my mind."

The real Hawaiian craze in the U.S. began the following decade after the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. Within months Hawaiian troupes were playing the major vaudeville circuits and several players, notably Frank Ferera (1885-1951) and his wife Helen Louise Greenus, became popular recording stars whose discs circulated to every corner of the world. Ferera's records, successful as they were, were nearly all sentimental, "sleepy lagoon" material, typecasting Hawaiian repertoire and belying the fact that Hawaiian guitar was extremely adaptable to other forms of American music, especially ragtime, blues and hillbilly. By the early 1920s, the Hawaiian music boom ensured that every U.S. record company had a Hawaiian section in its catalog.

The first non-Hawaiian artist to play a slide guitar solo on record was Sam Moore on the extraordinary “Laughing Rag,” which Sam and Horace Davis cut on Gennett 4747, Victor 18849 and Okeh 4412 in 1921, and Vocalion 14917 in 1924 with Carl Freed replacing Davis.

Moore, according to the research of Alan Sutton, was born in Florida in 1887. He grew up around classical music but learned the banjo and built a vaudeville act called Spooning and Ballooning around making music from ordinary objects such as handsaws, balloons, tire pumps and the like. He and his partner had a two-year run with the Ziegfeld Follies in 1920-21. For “Laughing Rag” Moore fashioned an 8-string Hawaiian-like steel guitar which he called an ‘octo-chorda’. While in New York, Moore taught Hawaiian guitar technique to Roy Smeck and Andy Sanella.

In the liner notes to RCA Victor’s CD, “Classic Ragtime,” historian Richard Spottswood praises Moore’s “aggressive mainland verve...which stands halfway between Hawaiian and the 1920s country guitar rags of Sam McGee, Blind Blake, Roy Harvey, and Sylvester Weaver.”

Indeed, Weaver, a Georgia bluesman, recorded the first blues slide guitar solo in 1923 on “Guitar Rag” (Okeh 8109), which shows a strong Hawaiian influence that carried over to Leon McAuliffe’s “Steel Guitar Rag,” which Leon recorded with Bob Wills in 1935.

As record companies delved deeper into the South starting in the mid-1920s, it became apparent that Hawaiian music had already forged its influence quite deeply, given its obvious commercial success on records and traveling vaudeville circuits. Jimmy Tarlton who recorded extensively with Tom Darby for Columbia’s hillbilly catalog, told interviewers in the 1960s that he took lessons from Frank Ferera, the most recorded Hawaiian guitarist, when the two crossed paths in Columbus, Georgia. Sam Moore also played Columbus quite often and the result can be heard in Darby and Tarlton’s stunning 1928 version of “Laughing Rag,” retitled “Mexican Rag” (Columbia 15319), a guitar tour-de-force.

Cliff Carlisle played Hawaiian guitar on nearly all of his discs from 1930 through the 1950s and there were a number of southern musicians who formed Hawaiian combos such as Masters’ Hawaiians (Victor). The influence, of course, went both ways because a number of Hawaiian musicians integrated rags, blues and jazz into their repertoire; King Benny Nawahi recorded with New Orleans pianist Fats Pichon as the QRS Boys in 1929 and the Georgia Jumpers; Andy Aiona made a number of sides with jazz groups between 1928 and 1935 while Sol Ho‘opi‘i adapted a number of jazz standards to traditional Hawaiian instrumentation.

Unfortunately, there is not much in blues literature beyond Handy’s 1903 account and offhand comments such as those by B.B. King and Bukka White that directly tie Hawaiian slide guitarists to the blues, but the connections to

where bluesmen grew up and played has been strongly established.

One who probably absorbed this influence second hand or tailored it to his individual approach, was the most prolifically recorded blues slide guitarist of the 1920s, Tampa Red (1904-81). Unfortunately, he was apparently never interviewed extensively about his musical influences. Several writers on the subject have attempted to make the connection between Tampa and Hawaiian steel guitarists but could never offer any documentation. Tampa Red grew up in Tampa, Florida and made his way to Chicago by the time he was in his early twenties. His first Paramount recordings, made while he was touring with Ma Rainey’s review, show that his sharp attack and single note slide style were already well formed.

Tampa Red’s first Vocalion session with pianist Georgia Tom Dorsey in September 1928, “Tight Like That” (Vocalion 1216), proved to be one of the biggest race hits of the decade. Interestingly, while numerous blues artists covered that song with seemingly infinite title changes, very few attempted to copy his guitar style despite the fact that Vocalion strongly promoted him as the “Guitar Wizard.” By contrast, Vocalion’s other top selling artist, Leroy Carr, attracted imitators into the 1960s.

It’s likely that Tampa Red discouraged imitators by refusing to show other would-be competitors his technique such as the case with Kekuku in his early days, but unfortunately we will probably never know exactly how Tampa Red developed his highly distinctive playing beyond the fact that Hawaiian playing was already well established in his formative years.

Other bluesmen such as Son House, Oscar Woods, Barbecue Bob, Blind Willie McTell and Leadbelly recorded slide guitar pieces, again probably absorbed from encounters with Hawaiian troupes in carnivals, dances and vaudeville theaters. And William Weldon, who as a member of the Memphis Jug Band recorded blues and hokum from a variety of sources, began a solo career in the 1930s as the Hawaiian Guitar Wizard.

The Hawaiian steel guitar still echoes in country music in the form of the pedal steel guitar, a staple of the Nashville Sound, and B.B. King is still around at age 85. The music created in the Islands in the late nineteenth century became an integral part of the great stew of American music. ■

Going to Joliet?

Please fill out and send in the convention forms included with your Quarterly. You may pay the convention fee on arrival, but please, let us know ahead of time that you plan to attend. Time slots for stage performances go quickly. Let us know your preferences on the convention form and get it to us ASAP. Mahalo!

The Tuning Controversy

By John Ely

Why the obsession with steel guitar tunings? We are admonished by the very best players that tunings don't really matter—it's all in the ear, touch, and ultimately the heart. If you can't get a handle on any of the basic steel tunings what on earth are you going to do with the C6+A7, B11th, or C Diatonic? This kind of logic has force but most of us are undeterred. When a hot lick or snazzy chord sequence is heard, the question, "Hey, what tuning was that?" is not very far off.

If you have a technical bent—and let's face it, lots of us do—the science of steel guitar tunings is endlessly fascinating. Yes, HSGA is up to its ears in engineers and builders, with a scientist here and a mathematician there.

Tracing the historical evolution of steel guitar tunings would be a huge undertaking. I think it's possible, but I'm not sure; like Hawaiian music itself, so much happened that was undocumented. One thing is for sure. The evolution of steel guitar tunings is both complex and controversial.

From the Simple to the Complex

For a generation following the invention of the steel guitar, there were really just a couple of tunings: first, the original A major low-bass (EAEAC#E) and then the A major high-bass (AC#EAC#E). I think it's a fair statement that steel guitar tuning innovation was a response to the evolution of the prevailing popular music of the '30s, '40s, and '50s, the use of more advanced melody and harmony—big band section work, for example—and the desire of steel guitarists to capture this sound with chord melody.

A big step forward harmonically was moving from the A major tunings to the E major tuning. On the A tuning you had the major chord positions and major and minor third intervals to approximate other chords, but sixth intervals were awkward often requiring a slant spanning two frets on strings 1 and 3. On the E tuning with a high E, you could play all the sixths without slanting the bar or at most slanting across one fret only.

The E7th tuning is worthy of mention. It goes BDEG#BE and was the tuning used for the popular Mel Bay two-volume series by Roger Filberto. The course was very well done and at just the right time in history when the instrument was being taken up by the thousands in communities across the country. And the pros of the day, among them David Keli'i, did some amazing things on the E7th.

Another important innovation was raising the B string of the E major up a whole step to C# creating the C# minor tuning (EBEG#C#E), which was taken to amazing heights by Sol Ho'opi'i. Now you could more easily harmonize both

thirds and sixths all the way up the neck. But more importantly, minor chords give you more harmony in more contexts than major chords. They function as minors, major sixths, and dominant ninths, to name a few.

When players took the E7th tuning and raised the B to C#, the incorrectly named C# minor seventh (BDEG#C#E), they had the first powerful chord melody tuning in steel guitar history. You had minors, majors, sevenths, and thirteenths all in the straight bar position with very playable ninths from the slant position.

Probably the biggest development tuning-wise was combining the sound of the E major and C# minor by inserting an extra string. Now, instead of having either a B or C# in the E chord, you had both—for example, the E6th tuning (BEG#BC#E). This concept led directly to the popular A6th and eventually the C6th tuning, the closest thing we have to anything resembling a standard tuning in "straight" steel guitar (steel guitar without pedals, that is).

Tuning development had gone from the simple to the complex by 1950, and sometimes even to the absurd. Combination tunings and chromatic tunings came and went, some of them spectacularly successful like the Jerry Byrd diatonic tuning, most of them fascinating but largely unplayable by mortals. The Eddie Alkire tuning could be an example of the latter. However, the tuning does have its proponents, and I'm hoping two of them, Art and Mae Lang, will lay it out for us in an upcoming issue.

The Controversy

Let's backtrack a bit. At some point in the development of steel guitar, I'm guessing sometime just prior to 1940, a threshold was crossed that the players of the day could not be aware of. Steel guitar was in the middle of its heyday. Amateur musicians all over the country were taking it up, and there was a high degree of standardization across the industry—just a few basic tunings and a wealth of published music available in those tunings. But it would possibly take a fateful turn affecting the immediate and distant future of the instrument.

New tunings exploded onto the scene in waves and with gathering force, leaving in their wake those who clung to traditional ways of playing on traditional instruments. Those early instruments and tunings, however, found their way into rural America and simmered in that great American folk music stew, a far cry from the popular innovations of the steel guitar mainstream. Blues players and early country players latched on to those simple major chord tunings and evolved styles of playing that thrive today in the form of electric and acoustic blues, rock and blues slide guitar, sacred steel, and country and bluegrass dobro styles. Modern steel guitar left the older styles in the dust during those golden years, but it is often the obscure and overly complex

Who's Playing Where

'Who's Playing Where' use to be a regular feature of the club newsletter. But let's face it, there hasn't been much to report regarding regularly scheduled steel guitar performances in the Islands. Well, here's the latest scoop for all of you who may be planning a visit to paradise.

Alan Akaka is still playing at the Waikīkī Marriott on Thursdays from 6:30-9:30 PM. They have a great time with the audience, and Alan regularly calls up to the stage anyone who wants to join in for a song or two. He also appears at Duke's Restaurant on Fridays playing the good ole "Hawaiian style" upright bass.

Steve Cheney with sons Benjamin, Sam and Michael take turns playing the Ali'i Lū'aus at the Polynesian Cultural Center on O'ahu's North Shore.

Wayne Shishido is at the Halekulani Hotel's House without a Key seaside patio on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. He is typically on steel and 'ukulele on Wednesday and Saturday, and standard guitar on Thursday. The musicians vary from night to night. He also performs at the Moana Beach Bar under the banyan tree on Mondays; he plays guitar and joins *wahine* uke player Elena Martinez. Says Wayne, "We have been very fortunate that these venues have continued to feature Hawaiian music, even in the down economy. It'll be great to see you folks again here in the Islands."

Here's a Kaua'i update from longtime member and player Jess Montgomery. "I think about the only steel going on here these days, besides Alan and Eddie Punua's steel classes, is Eddie's show on Thursdays, I believe, at Waimea Plantation Cottages in Waimea, and myself with the Lost Pelican Band most Saturday nights at Cafe Coco in Wailua. We play from 7-9 PM in a delightful outdoor cafe atmosphere (read: mosquito repellent provided though not usually that necessary). I play lū'aus every week or so with Larry Rivera, though those are private shows for cruise boat passengers. If you have Internet access, you should check out public radio station KKCR's Hawaiian music calendar at <http://kkcrevents-linda.blogspot.com>. There are quite a few Hawaiian music venues, but not much steel. ■

A Word on Photos...

We love to get photos from members! A few things to keep in mind. Please avoid sending prints that are grainy or faded. Originals work best and we promise to send them back on request! Digital camera output usually works very well—make sure you use a high resolution setting (at least 250 dots per inch). The biggest thing to keep in mind is that images that are internet quality (72 dots per inch) are not suitable for print media. They look great on a computer screen but not in print.



Wayne and Brenda Shishido at a recent Joliet convention. Beauty!

that end up in history's dustbin. And there are a few who suggest that steel guitar itself died when that basic A major tuning was abandoned.

The big question remains. Did the explosion of advanced tunings harm the instrument in the long run? Now there is very little standardization for teaching and publication purposes. Had steel guitar become an esoteric pursuit better left to chess club presidents and rocket scientists? Had steel guitar painted itself into a corner? These are questions HSGA faces in attempting to replant steel guitar seeds in communities and schools. The questions continue to haunt us, but no one can question the heights to which steel guitar soared during that 30-year golden period.

One final thought. Isn't it odd that pedal steel with its infinite possibilities for tuning and pedal setups is much more standardized than steel guitar without pedals? The Nashville E9th and C6th is very much the norm in that industry. Is there a correlation between popularity and standardization? Does popularity *create* standardization?

Do you notice that there are more questions than answers in this, our favorite pursuit?

My purpose in writing this article is to generate some discussion on issues surrounding steel guitar tunings and if possible to clarify some of the history of tuning evolution. What I've written I believe to be largely correct though it's clear I've omitted a great deal. If you'd like to add to the story or have any corrections or have another take on issues I've brought up, by all means send it along to me at: John Ely, P.O. Box 509, Virginia, MN 55792; Email: johnely@hawaiiansteel.com. Remember, we're tackling the history of tunings and its impact on the popularity of our instrument. Let's not deal with the burning question of what the best tuning is. That's for later! ■

COCO WIRE

Congratulations to **Gerald Ross** for his win at the Fourteenth Annual Hawai'i Music Awards for best steel guitar recording!

Tim Mech and family made a little excursion to Honolulu at presstime. Says Tim, "Tonight we had the luck of running into **Isaac Akuna** at the Waikīkī Beach Marriott while he was setting up to do a corporate gig. We had dinner and sat around near where Isaac and his band performed. I talked to him before their soundcheck and after the gig. I played his *heavy* Aiello frypan. Man, that thing is a serious steel. Awesome night. This is the first performance with steel that we have seen. Hawaiian steel is scarce—not a good thing. Looking forward to getting down to some playing after this vacation. I have my Weissenborn copy here but I'm getting very little time to play since my son gets up when I do and really doesn't want to sleep!

Speaking of Isaac, his wife Gloria Murawski Akuna just informed us that **Ku'uipo Kumukahi** has been nominated in several categories for the 2010 Nā Hōkū Hanohano music awards. They took home honors for Album of the Year in 2008 and Isaac won his first Hōkū. Ipo, Karen Aiu, and Isaac have been nominated this year for Album of the Year with their release "Ku'uipo, E Hula Mai Me A'u." Here's hoping they can do it again!

Some recent news from Victor Rittenband, one of our "core" members when our club was launched in the mid-'80s. Vic and departed wife Nancy Gustafsson were kind enough to supply HSGA with its first banner for conventions and other club gatherings in the Islands. The banner was requested at one of Alan Akaka's recent STEEL the ONE performances in Kaua'i. Here is Vic's response:

At the Moana this past April, Isaac "Doc" Akuna playing an Aiello "Dustpan" with bassist Danny Kiaha (left) and Ha'a Heyer.



Another vintage HSGA shot: (l. to r.) Elmer Ridenhour, Nancy Gustafsson, Victor Rittenband, and Art and Lorene Ruymar.

"Of course, I would be pleased to have our banner displayed at the Kaua'i concert. Over the years, Alan has certainly promoted and performed steel! Like so many things in which Nancy and I were involved the inspiration came from her. She fell in love with steel when listening to a weekly broadcast in her native Denmark. The program featured the great Danish steeler Yngve Stoor. Because of Nancy, I not only met him but several other Danish steel players as well. Before these experiences, as a child in New Jersey, steel music to me was 'country and western'. I still remember hearing a song called "The Singing Sands of Alamosa."

"It has been a great pleasure for us to become involved with and friends with steelers in many countries. I have recently reestablished contact with one of these, Frank "Palani" Baum. He is still very actively performing. Of course, I have known and appreciated the friendship of John Marsden. I have carbon copies of our correspondence going back years and years. He is the only friend with whom I correspond by "snail mail" since he has refused to sign on to the computer age!

Well, I am still quite active myself, although I cannot walk any distances now. Fortunately, I am still able to drive my automobile and I have a handicapped decal that allows me to park closer to my destinations. I expect to have some fun tomorrow on St. Patrick's Day. I am going with a friend to the Marriott Hotel's Ocean Terrace where Aunty Genoa Keawe used to perform. We'll have corned beef and cabbage, some beer, and a good view of the annual parade on Kalākaua Avenue below. ■

For uninterrupted delivery of your HSGA Quarterly, please keep us informed of any address changes. Update us at our office address: HSGA Quarterly, 2434 Waiomao Rd, Honolulu, HI 96816-3424. Mahalo!

'Steel in the Schools' Update

From Lorene Ruymar

My old computer was acting up big time, so today Art and I ran out to the dealership and came home with a brand new one. Wow! What a big screen! So much to learn!

Of course now it's time to do the housekeeping. Checking all the files and scrapping the ones I should have scrapped long ago. I came across this one from almost a year ago, regarding the donation from the Japanese members to go toward the classroom project I'm *trying* to get going. And it seems to me I should let you all know what's happening.

Last year when Art and I were in Hawai'i we managed by hook or by crook to supply 100 guitars to nine teachers who had volunteered to give it a try. Included in the 100 were the 10 that Jade Louie had worked with and then stored. Mike Lucich of McKinley High school volunteered to keep track of where all the guitars went and what was happening with them. Well, after about six months of silence I emailed all of them to see how it's going. Most did not reply. The three or four who did reply said they were still working on learning to play the steel guitar and had a few interested students. But the big negative thing was the dire financial situation the country was in that caused the Hawai'i schools to be open only *four* days a week with teachers salaries cut by that amount. The days they were open were spent on the 3 R's, not on music, art, or P.E.

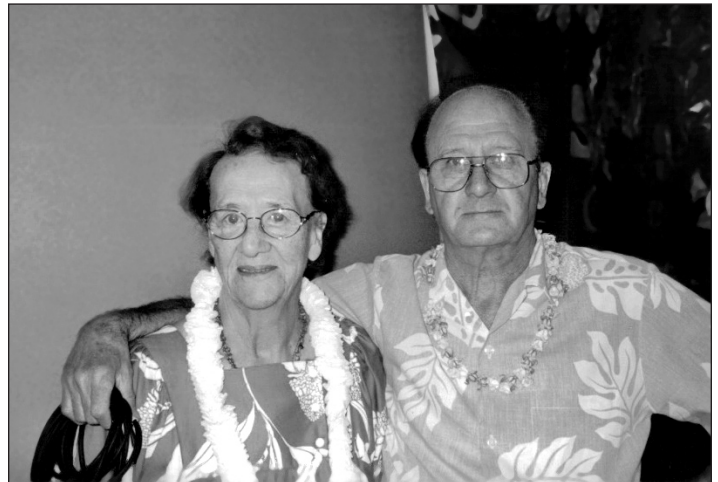
The other factor was the choices of the students themselves. They're not all that keen on Hawaiian language or culture, wanting to be more like the cool mainland kids.

OK, so what now? I do talk with two staff members of the Hawai'i schools and got some help from them. One, by the way, is Ka'iwa Meyer, granddaughter of Joseph Kekuku's sister. We agreed that it might work better to go to the schools that are dedicated to teaching Hawaiian language, culture and history only. Perhaps they receive funding from some special historic fund that would give their teachers more leeway. *And*, forget the cool high school kids; let's go down to the grade 4, 5, 6, and 7 kids. I say that because that's where I was teaching many years ago—the kids were keen and the course was very successful. All kids in the class played the same song together. It's true not all are gifted in the same way but those who didn't have the gift could plunk along with those who were the hotshots, and I never gave anyone a failing mark.

I chose four schools of that sort, all in the remote areas of O'ahu. I sent my promo letter to each of them and now I await their reply. I am promising to sponsor and support only *one* of those schools because they'd be needing enough guitars for the whole class and that can be expensive. So

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CLOSING NOTES



A nice photo of HSGA member Ian Ufton with his mother Doris.

Sad news from new Board member Ian Ufton: "On Sunday, February 21 my mother, **Doris Annie Ufton**, passed away after a brief illness, leaving behind a husband of 70 years, two sons, four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren who miss her dearly. The Joliet conventions were very special events for her. She enjoyed the times she spent with the many friends she had made over the years. Thank you all so much for remembering her with kind words and warm thoughts. She was such a special person."

This from George "Keeki" Lake: "Just received the very sad news of the passing of a very dear friend and one of Hawai'i's legends, **Jacob Kaleikini**, at age 94. Uncle Jacob was one of the last of the Golden Age of Hawaiian entertainers whose career was very extensive on the Hawaiian scene. He was the last of two survivors of Johnny Almeida's Hawaiians, the remaining survivor being Solomon Kam.

"Uncle Jacob played steel guitar in his early days, but was noticed for his bass playing and fine falsetto voice. Songs like "E Mama E" will always be remembered by so many in the Islands. He was a member of the Hawaiian Serenaders playing at the Elks Club every Wednesday morning for the past 20 years or more. I have lost a wonderful friend whom I greatly loved and admired."

Sad news from our Japan Coordinator, Tom Tohma: **Ryouji Oguri** passed away recently. He was an HSGA member for the past 20 years, an amateur player, and an occasional visitor to the Islands. Our condolences to his wife, Setsuko.

We also wish to extend our condolences to Ruth Martin Freerks who lost her husband and longtime HSGA member **Russ Freerks** on October 3, 2009. They made occasional trips to Hawai'i and were friends with Don and Eleanor Sweatman. Russ was a professional pedal steel guitarist, and Ruth is continuing membership in HSGA. ■

E Komo Mai! Welcome, New Members

Is your address correct? Please notify us!

UNITED STATES

LARRY G. JEFFERSON, 9 N. Clay St., Apt. A, Coldwater, MI 49036

JOHN LIMBACH, 2226 Virginia Lane, Billings, MT 59102-2567

KEN JOESTING, PO Box 298, Captain Cook, HI 96704

MARK ROEDER AND KRISTY LARSON, 1228 Elizabeth St, Madison, WI 53703

RANDY MALLORY, 125 McGavock Pike, Nashville, TN 37214-2142

ROBERT YEE, 10299 Colby Ave, Cupertino, CA 95014

MARK PRUCHA, 2775 Springdale Circle, Naperville, IL 60564

L. BOGUE SANDBERG, 36430 Hwy. U.S. 41, Chassell, MI 49916

SCHOOLS Continued from Page 19

now I await their replies. My feeble old brain, when it's called to make a financial statement, would put it this way: The 100 guitars from last year are already paid for—by the \$500 the Nakamuras gave us last year, plus the 10 guitars HSGA had paid for and given to Jade Louie to use, and the rest from Art and me. I'd hate to add up that amount; better not to think of it.

So, what's being held on deck in case we do get more action? There are the funds from the Japanese members totaling \$450. And there's a donation from Julie Waters from the sale of some of Jerry's gifts to her and Bob. That is somewhere around \$450, too. I now have it in a bank account waiting to see what will happen next. Also, if I am reporting all the financial moves we've made, I must say that Art and I gave Harry's Music \$1,000 to keep in a special account, which would allow them to place time sensitive orders without having to worry about getting stuck with an unpaid order. They are still holding that amount.

So all we need now is one teacher who cares enough to say, "I'll do it!" Oh, I should say that another HSGA member, Ed Bettinger, paid for two guitars for Jade Louie to get started again teaching in her home. I believe just one of those two students is working hard at it, a young lady, maybe 9 or 10 years old and doing nicely. ■

HENRY ALLEN Continued from Page 9

so they can teach their students. Dr. Neil Scott of the University of Hawai'i's Archimedes Project has developed a way to make affordable steel guitars, and he has created a model for me, the "Kaleialoha" model, for use by our teachers and their students. I hope this project will accomplish our goal of preserving and perpetuating Hawaiian steel guitar in Hawai'i and throughout the world."

You can order Henry Allen's book by contacting: Sherron Allen, Hawaiian Entertainment Company, 5161-D Kahi St., Lahaina, HI 96761-9169; Tel: 808-669-6189; Email: hka1933@aol.com. The price of the book is \$25 plus \$4.25 shipping for U.S. orders. For shipping prices from other locations or for other info regarding the book, contact Sherron using the above contact information. Please send a check or money order (U.S. funds only) to the address shown above. If you have Internet access you can also place an order directly from the Mutual Publishing website at mutualpublishing.com. Just do a search on 'Hawaiian Steel Guitar' to pull up Henry's book. ■

Changed Email?

Please send email changes to both our office (hsga@hsga.org) AND John Ely at johnely@hawaiiansteel.com. We'll update you on our web directory.

has made a generous donation to the cause. He and his wife, artist Kristy Larson, were big supporters this year.

The Second Annual Rick Alexander Non-Pedal Sessions is a go for Friday and Saturday, March 11-12, 2011. Todd Clinesmith will have a booth and we hope a handful of other vendors will help cover the many costs of producing this event. Rick Alexander's widow, Cathe, helped defray some of this year's expenses and will make a donation next year in Rick's memory for continued success of the sessions.

Some final thoughts from Jeff: "A big thanks to the all the musicians, especially HSGAers Ivan Reddington, Gerald Ross, Dave Kolars and Chris Kennison, who came to the rescue many times for me when there was no bass player to be found.

"There seems to be a resurgence in non-pedal steel, which is wonderful. I've been hearing from more and more people how much they enjoy the instrument, and how they want to hear more of it. The TSGA Jamboree is a perfect venue for a non-pedal show. The biggest hurdle I foresee is funding, as these shows cost money to run. In the past, Rick paid for the show expenses out of his pocket. Going forward, we'll have to find other ways of funding, such as sponsorship and donations. Some have suggested that we charge admission to help defray costs. Rick and I both discussed that and felt it would take away from the magic of the room. We want people to come and enjoy the music. So everyone, please come to the 2011 TSGA Jamboree, March 10-13, 2011, and don't forget to bring your friends! ■

It's Dues Time Again!

Remember, HSGA's membership year begins on July 1, 2010. Dues are \$30 and all issues go out 'Air Mail' (see insert for membership renewal form).