

HSGA QUARTERLY

Published four times a year in Honolulu, Hawai'i
by the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Association

Volume 36, Issue 142

Spring 2021



Inside this Issue...

- 3 "Bobby Black to Headline Virtual Fest 2" by John Ely
- 3 Member Donation Acknowledgements
- 4 "'Lionizing' Kiyoshi Kobayashi" by Haruko Ozeki
- 6 "HSGA Board Notes" by Teri Gorman
- 6 "New HSGA Video Archives for Members" by R. Alaniz
- 7 "Spotlight on Mark Prucha" by Addison Ching
- 8 "Oh, Lady Be Good" – Steel Arrangement by S. Müller
- 11 "Sebastian Müller Interview" by Christo Ruppenthal
- 14 Closing Notes – Herbert Hanawahine
- 14 Quarterly Treasurer's Report from Roberto Alaniz
- 15 "Board Scholarship Program Amendments" by R. Alaniz
- 16 "Waikiki Festival On, Then Off!" by Addison Ching
- 16 HSGA New Member Acknowledgement



Virtual Festival 2 Guest Artist, Bobby Black, from Manteca, California, long overdue at an HSGA festival. His performance is at 8:30 PM Friday, October 8. Not to be missed!

Countdown to Virtual Festival 2!

Mark Your Calendars: Oct. 8-9, 2021

By Roberto Alaniz

Our second Virtual Festival (VF2) is taking shape. Twenty-three members are contributing new video performances. Bobby Black has accepted our invitation to be our Special Guest Performer. Bobby will perform on Friday, October 8 at 8:30 PM Eastern Time. As many of you know, Bobby is one of the all-time great steel guitarists with a 70-year professional career.

Bobby's performance as Special Guest will be presented in a different format: we will insert segments of a Zoom call conversation I had with Bobby, Alan Akaka and Chris Kennison

throughout the course of Bobby's musical program. We all enjoyed the "talk story" and hope that our viewers find it as entertaining as Bobby's great musicianship.

Member Chris Kennison, who has served as master of ceremonies at the Fort Collins festivals, will be emcee for the festival.

There will be one workshop included in the festival, "Hawaiian Steel Guitar 101," presented by Troy Brenningmeyer on Saturday, October 9 at 2:30 PM Eastern. Troy is a member of HSGA, a master steel guitarist and offers lessons via the internet with an impressive output of high-quality instructional video.

Continued on Page 2

HSGA QUARTERLY

Volume 36, Issue 142



OFFICERS

Christo Ruppenthal (WI), President
Margie Mays (AZ), Vice-President
Roberto Alaniz (CA), Secretary-Treasurer

DIRECTORS

Jack Aldrich, Seattle
Teri Gorman, California
John Limbach, Montana
Mike Wittmer, Fort Collins

FORMER DIRECTOR EMERITUS

Jerry Byrd

JAPAN COORDINATORS

Masahiko Ibamoto, Shinichi Kakiuchi

QUARTERLY EDITOR

John Ely <johnely@hawaiiansteel.com>

WEBMASTER

Mike Wittmer <webmaster@hsga.org>

SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR

John Mumford

ORIGINAL CLUB FOUNDER

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 ARTICLES & COMMENTS TO:

HSGA Quarterly, 2145 Tiffany Walk, Manteca, CA 95336-9555 USA; E-mail: hsga@hsga.org. In addition, email submitted items directly to the editor at johnely@hawaiiansteel.com. Letters to the president and general club comments should be sent to: Christo Ruppenthal at 552 Apollo Way, Madison, WI 53718 or emailed to christo@christoruppenthal.com.

VIRTUAL FEST 2 *Cont. from Page 1*

The festival will highlight some of our HSGA Scholarship recipients. These young players are very talented and hold the promise that Hawaiian steel guitar will continue into the next generation.

The festival will also include previews of videos of past HSGA convention performances taken by the late Paul Weaver, who served as official club photographer and videographer for many years. These videos were made available to us earlier this year by Paul's widow, Hideko Weaver, and the donation of the videos was facilitated by longtime HSGA member Wally Pfeifer and former president Frank Della-Penna. Mahalo, Hideko, Wally and Frank! HSGA is making this video collection available exclusively to members on the HSGA website. (For details see the Video Archives article on page 6.)

On Saturday, October 9 at 8 PM Eastern, the Virtual Festival will conclude with a performance by Jerry Byrd at the 1988 HSGA Convention in

Joliet, Illinois. Jerry played true to his recordings, demonstrating that his unique style and tone was all him and not due to studio enhancements.

On Saturday, October 9 at 5:30 PM, we will attempt to hold our first ever annual membership meeting via Zoom. We'll get you instructions for accessing the online meeting in the upcoming issue soon to follow.

HSGA Virtual Festival 2 is shaping up to be another great program. Please join us! ■

Editor Wanted

Yes, our newsletter editor, John Ely, is stepping down after 20 years of service. We are looking for a new editor to take over sometime this fall. We already have someone to take over the newsletter design, layout and formatting. We need someone to gather and edit stories, poll key members for content, and other details we can go over with you. It is a paid position. If you're interested, please contact us at: board@hsga.org. Mahalo!

HSGA arranger and Virtual Festival 2 workshop instructor, Troy Brenningmeyer, pictured here with his Hawaiian trio St. Luau on the set of "Show Me St. Louis" on St. Louis NBC affiliate KSDK Channel 5. Troy is playing his Asher Haumana 8-string steel guitar.



Hall-of-Famer Bobby Black to Headline Virtual Festival 2

By John Ely

I was thrilled to learn that Bobby Black was selected as our Virtual Festival 2 Guest Artist. And I had been planning on writing a feature on him anyway, as Hawaiian music and the Hawaiian touch is very much a part of his sound despite his huge success playing other musical styles. It's hard to pin down, but I think a kind of Hawaiian "voice" comes through in the sweetness of his vibrato, so that even on a western song something more romantic or exotic is felt. The greatest players seem to carry a unique singing voice packaged in their vibrato, and Bobby is no exception.

I first heard Bobby in the mid-to-late '70s, a big show at the Armadillo World Headquarters in downtown Austin. He was playing with Commander Cody and His Lost Planet Airmen and I think that Asleep at the Wheel was the opening act. I couldn't believe how polished he was on the variety of styles the band was known for—country, western swing, rockabilly, old rock 'n' roll, boogie woogie, big band, you name it. I got to meet Bobby backstage after the show, as the band I was currently with, The Reynolds Sisters and the New Oso Band, had connections with both the Wheel and Cody band during their Oakland days. Bobby was both gracious and unassuming, which stunned me given his musical abilities.

After signing on with Asleep at the Wheel in the mid-'80s I would occasionally run into Bobby and the Cody band on the road, most memorably on a show we played together at Slim's nightclub in San Francisco. Between shows I "caught" Bobby strumming my triple-neck Fender to see what tunings I had on it. I had just put Jerry Byrd's C diatonic tuning on my less-used neck and Bobby spotted it right away. We had a nice conversation about Jerry and about Hawaiian music in general, and I could really see what an influence that was on him. And, of course, his playing on the show was flawless.

At around the same time I obtained a cassette copy of Jerry Byrd's 1987 Ho'olaule'a, a premier annual event held at various Waikiki venues in which Jerry featured the best Hawaiian players from around the globe. Bobby was the only mainland player invited to that show. His set was just great, and I think it included his version of "Bali Hai." My recollection is that at the conclusion of Bobby's set, Jerry, who emceed the event, commented to the audience, "What do you need me for?!" High praise from the master, who was infamous for his brutal honesty and sparing praise. (I should mention that Jerry was in many ways equally hard on himself.) This was eye-opening for me—the first time I heard Bobby play without pedals.

The last time I saw Bobby was at the Asleep at the Wheel 40th Anniversary show in Austin on November 5, 2010,

which included almost all of us Wheel steel guitar alums. Bobby toured and recorded with the band beginning in 1980 not long after the departure of original Wheel steel guitarist Lucky Oceans. The anniversary show was a blast, with all of us taking solos on the Joaquin Murphey instrumental classic "Oklahoma Stomp." It came off without a hitch and I got a great view of Bobby's playing just off my left shoulder. He was playing a double-8 Fender Stringmaster if memory serves, and I noticed he was using a pedal steel bar, which is much thicker than the normal non-pedal bar. At some point I asked him, "How in the world can you control that bar on slants, Bobby?" Well, he had no trouble in that regard and he commented that he felt the larger bar with its added weight gave him a better tone.

Well, I thought I'd share just a few recollections I have about our Virtual Festival Guest Artist, one of the true steel guitar greats and one heck of a nice guy. I know you'll enjoy seeing and hearing him at VF2 this coming October. In the upcoming issue, due out in September, we'll cover Bobby's amazing career and accomplishments in detail. ■

HSGA Donations

HSGA members really came through with amazing donations to our General and Scholarship funds this past quarter.

Honolulu members **Daniel Tremblay and Linda Mentzer** gave \$250 to our Scholarship Fund and another \$250 to our General Fund! **Mark Roeder** of Milwaukee gave \$200 to our General Fund. **Kris Oka** of San Francisco gave to both funds for a total of \$200. **Paul and Kathleen Wecker** of Sacramento, California donated \$150 spread across both funds. Oak Forest, Illinois member **Maurie Junod** gave \$125 to our General Fund. **Delano Kruzan** of Macomb, Illinois gave to both funds for a total of \$125.

The following members, most of them perennial donors, donated \$100 to our funds: **Bo Bahret** of Cordova, Tennessee; **Rick Collins** of Claremont, California; **Bill Gordon** of Sun City Center, Florida; **Chuck Moore** of Pahoia, Hawai'i; Seattle member **Bill Rosen**; **Bill Thomson** of Ocean City, Maryland; and **Kalina Wong** of Fremont, California. Big mahalos to all the above for these generous contributions!

The following members donated at least \$10:

Jeff Coop, Federal Way, WA
Beat Iseli, Winterthur, Switzerland
Ron Johnson, Hau'ula, HI
Janet A. King, Watsonville, CA
Margo L. Klundt, Sherrard, IL
Robert and Mary Moore, Wellington, CO
Wally and Peg Pfeifer, Dwight, IL
Russell and Kathleen Pollock, Zanesville, OH
Donald and Donna Weber, New Lenox, IL

"Lionizing" Kiyoshi Kobayashi

It's been too long since our last article on Japan steel guitar master Kiyoshi "Lion" Kobayashi, whose musical skills in fact go far beyond the steel guitar realm. He just turned 88 this past July and still has music projects up his sleeve! Here's Haruko Ozeki to fill you in on Lion's musical development, career highlights, and his many activities as both a performer and a teacher.

Kiyoshi was born in Hokkaido, the northern island of Japan, in 1933. He began his musical education at the age of four with music dictation training (an advanced practice of listening to a musical phrase and being able to write it correctly on the spot). He began studying the piano at age five under the guidance of a Russian pianist in Tokyo who asserted that "music is not merely a matter of technique—it has to come from the heart." Kiyoshi taught himself to play the 'ukulele at age thirteen and began playing steel guitar at age fifteen.

In high school Kiyoshi's primary stylistic influence was Japan steel guitar legend Bucky Shirakata. However, exposure to "Hawaii Calls" and the country music popular at that time changed his style completely. And he would also incorporate the sounds of West Coast jazz, which he heard while active at U.S. military camps.

In his first year at Keio University, he designed his own pedal steel, and he was probably the second steel guitarist in Japan to adopt the use of pedals after Poss Miyazaki. His early prototype pedal steel had problems with string breakage. Then, one day, at a U.S. military base in Tokyo, Kiyoshi saw an eight-string, four-pedal Gibson Electraharp steel guitar. He studied it closely, took notes and drew up a design, which he handed to Mr. Yukichi Iwase of the Teisco instrument manufacturing company, and Mr. Iwase created a trial model for Kiyoshi. It was tuned to an A diminished seventh chord (high

Lion Kobayashi "frying up some goodies" at a gig in Tokyo last July.



Lion and the Ladies Steel Guitar Ensemble performing in Yamagata Prefecture last summer. (l. to r.) Masako Wakamatsu, Sakae Machida, Lion Kobayashi with his Excel "Knee Lever Special," Yoko Tanaka and Akiko Watanabe.

to low, GbEbCAGbEbCA). The four pedals raised each octave by a half-tone. This model became the prototype of the pedal steel guitar that Teisco and Guyatone later put into commercial production.

At age twenty-one, Kiyoshi began playing piano professionally. After graduating from Keio, he got a job with the film company Nikkatsu where he spent most of his time working in marketing and advertising. At around the same time a friend in broadcasting got him work as a steel guitar session player in local recording studios. So he was busy wearing three hats: employee at the film company, studio musician, and pianist.

Beginning around 1964, Kiyoshi was active in session work, recording commercials and TV shows. In 1971 he left the film company and began studying jazz theory under Sadao Watanabe. He had the opportunity to meet and hear the great Jerry Byrd on one of his Japan trips, and fascinated by Jerry's unique bar-slanting technique, Kiyoshi became passionate about steel guitar without pedals.

In May 1983, Kiyoshi participated in Jerry Byrd's Third Annual Hawaiian Steel Guitar Ho'olaule'a as the first representative from Japan, and thereafter became a "regular" at the event each May Day. Kiyoshi was highly regarded for his modern playing methods, performing old songs and attracting audiences with his ever-changing novel arrangements. In 1998, he released an album of fifteen such arrangements titled *My Memories of Hawaiian Steel Guitar Ho'olaule'a* recorded at a local studio in Hawai'i. His jazzy playing created lots of "buzz" in Japan and overseas. The CD got lots of press at HSGA and other steel guitar clubs along with airtime on Internet radio, including a 60-minute special for Japan satellite radio network St. Giga.

Following the HSGA Honolulu 2000 Convention, he recorded his second self-produced CD titled *Honolulu I'm*

Coming Back Again. His third release, *Song of Old Hawaii*, was recorded in 2007 and featured Hiram Olsen on guitar and vocalist Tatsuo Wakui. In 2018, he released the fourth self-produced CD *Hawaiian Be Bop*. Kiyoshi's CDs are frequently streamed on TuneIn internet radio and Aloha Joe's "Steel Guitar Island" webcast.

Educating the Next Generation

Since 1972, Kiyoshi has been teaching steel guitar, piano, bass guitar and 'ukulele during the day while "moonlighting" playing piano at restaurant bars in Akasaka, Roppongi and Ginza, and a Hawaiian bar in Setagaya.

In 1983, he published his *Modern Steel Guitar Method* in three volumes, covering the techniques he has developed over the years. At the same time, he began teaching steel guitar lessons online. Volume I of his method was

republished in 1999, which led to a 2012 instruction book/DVD with the same title and covering similar material.

Beginning in the early 1980s, he created a correspondence course consisting of 28 cassettes complete with steel guitar, backing tracks, and performance tips. (A CD version of this course is in the works.)

In the spring of 2000, he produced an instruction video *Kiyoshi Kobayashi's [Pure Hawaiian Style] Steel Guitar Technique*, later offered in DVD format.

Recent Activities

Since 2006, Kiyoshi has been focusing on elevating the young players, educating them on professional skills and theory, and producing professional steel guitarists. He continues to offer steel guitar and 'ukulele classes along with private lessons at home and at culture

Continued on Page 16



Young Kiyoshi with his prototype pedal steel model inspired by the Gibson Electra-harp. This design would be picked up by Teisco and Guyatone as the basis for their production pedal steel guitars. Nice!

Caladesi Guitars

NON-PEDAL STEEL GUITAR MANUFACTURER • DAN CAMPBELL, OWNER/LUTHIER
(727) 385-4170 • WWW.CALADESIGUITARS.COM • DAN@CALADESIGUITARS.COM

Models:

LAP STEEL

inspired by vintage Gibson and Rickenbacker designs

SINGLE NECK CONSOLE

inspired by vintage Fender Deluxe design

DOUBLE NECK CONSOLE

inspired by vintage National design

THREE NEW MODELS, CAN BE CUSTOMIZED AS FOLLOWS:

- All models available in 22.5, 23.5 and 24.5 scale
- Six or Eight Strings available on all models
- Standard - Wood fretboards with inlay options
- Standard - Solid, nickel plated brass nut and bridges
- Standard string spacing (nut 11/32, bridge 3/8 inch)
- Different wood & finishing options
- Stand & leg options



HSGA Board Notes

By Teri Gorman

Well, our board has not been bored! A flurry of work has been going on to put together Virtual Festival 2, scheduled for October 8-9. Roberto Alaniz has coordinated and collected member video performances for the festival and recorded a special online Talk Story conversation he had with Guest Artist Bobby Black, Alan Akaka, and Chris Kennison. Roberto also tackled the huge project of digitizing the wonderful Paul Weaver video collection of performances from past HSGA conventions, which was recently donated to HSGA by Paul's widow, Hideko Weaver. The videos will be made available exclusively to members on our website.

New HSGA president Christo Ruppenthal has interviewed German acoustic steel ace Sebastian Müller (see the article on page 11), which you can also access online. He is also busy with the launch of his new CD *Café Allongé* and gigging with his group, Christo's Novelty Combo. And brainstorming on how to bring more value to HSGA for all of us.

Mike Wittmer and John Mumford seem to have had the most adventures with their exotic travels (follow them on Facebook to live vicariously!), and still manage to give us so much help. Mike keeps the website up to date and creates our festival graphics and marketing materials, and John keeps our Facebook fresh and will again stitch together the videos for the Virtual Festival. This year we are so lucky to have Chris Kennison on the festival team. He'll be our festival emcee and will play an active role in helping John Mumford assemble the virtual program.

Student scholarships—so important to our future and a big part of our mission—continues under the leadership of Margie Mays. We have five active students right now will be looking at more candidates this fall.

And our invaluable John Ely is still cranking out terrific quarterly newsletters, though he reminds us patiently that we are supposed to replace him as editor. Ahem, calling all potential editor types!

And when shall we meet again? I mean *really* meet! Roberto has been researching new West Coast venues for an actual 2022 in-person festival. Right now we have a couple of interesting possibilities in Northern California, and we're aiming for late summer or early fall 2022.

We would love your input, comments, ideas. That's why we are going to attempt a general Zoom membership meeting as part of our October festival. Big mahalos to board member John Limbach for figuring out how to host the meeting on his Zoom account. Look for the Zoom call details in the next newsletter due out in September. If you don't think you'll be able to make the meeting, you can send in questions and suggestions ahead of time to our board at board@hsga.org. ■



At the Halekūlani Hotel's 'House without a Key' in 2009, Paul Weaver with Hideko Kobayashi, soon to become Hideko Weaver.

New HSGA Video Archives Open to HSGA Members

By Roberto Alaniz

Many of you recall longtime HSGA photographer and videographer Paul Weaver, who was a fixture of our Joliet conventions from the late 1980s up until 2012. Sadly we lost Paul this past year. HSGA has now acquired Paul's collection of HSGA videos and is making them available exclusively to members on the HSGA website.

Early in 2021, former club president Frank Della-Penna asked longtime member Wally Pfeifer to contact Paul's wife Hideko Weaver to inquire about Paul's video collection. Fortunately, a good portion of the collection was still intact and Hideko agreed to donate it to HSGA. Hideko sent over 60 DVDs to Wally, and Frank arranged with Wally to have the videos archived with HSGA. Big mahalos to Hideko, Wally, and Frank!

The videos cover the Joliet conventions and one or two of the Honolulu conventions from 2004 through 2012. Unfortunately, there were some videos missing from the collection, so not all member performers who participated each year are included.

The video collection is posted on YouTube, but is only accessible through the HSGA website. Go to our home page, click the Membership tab (top of the page, far right), then select Member Portal from the dropdown menu. Then enter the password for the Member Portal: 'HSGA_aloha_member'. Once the Member Portal page loads, click on the link "Past

Continued on Page 15

Spotlight on Mark Prucha

The following article is taken from the "Spotlight ON!" feature of the excellent online newsletter Steel Trappings at steeltrappings.com. Check it out! "Spotlight ON" features noteworthy and/or up and coming steel guitar players. Here's Addison Ching to tell you more about Mark Prucha, who made a splash at the later Joliet Conventions and recently took over as president of the Aloha International Steel Guitar Club.

Mark Prucha comes from Naperville, Illinois, although he took up an interest in Hawaiian steel guitar after traveling to Hawai'i and hearing it played there. While in Hawai'i, he met Alan Akaka at a Hawaiian Steel Guitar Festival in Waikīkī and was inspired to learn the instrument. Upon returning home, Mark began Hawaiian steel guitar lessons with Alan via Skype.

With Alan's mentoring, Mark was able to begin publicly performing in less than a year. He performed at the

2012 and 2013 Waikīkī Steel Guitar Festival as part of Ke Kula Mele School of Hawaiian Music, and was a featured artist at the 2015 Waikīkī Steel Guitar Festival. Mark also performed regularly at the HSGA conventions in Joliet, Illinois, and performed with Alan Akaka, Gary Aiko, Kaipo Asing, and L.T. Zinn at Scotty's International Steel Guitar Convention in St. Louis.

In 2014, Mark joined Chicago-based Hawaiian band, Hoapili. With Ron Cabanada on 'ukulele, Keenan Kamae on 'ukulele, Danny Yamamoto on bass, and Mark on steel guitar, the band performs at various venues throughout the Midwest.

In 2018, Mark became president of the Aloha International Steel Guitar Club (AISGC), which hosts their annual conventions in Winchester, Indiana, and has worked to boost the organization's online and social media presence. He has also worked with the festival committee to bring Hawaiian steel gui-



Mark Prucha at his Naperville, Illinois, home sporting a JB Frypan.

tar masters to AISGC festivals in order to give seminars and perform.

Currently Mark has been arranging and composing music for the steel guitar and hopes to release an album sometime in the future. ■

Deluxe34 lap steel stands



stable
compact
lightweight
adjusts to fit any lap steel

Shop our eBay store:
ebay.com/str/deluxe34lapsteelstands

Oh, Lady Be Good!

(Transcription of a Sol Ho'opi'i solo on Brunswick 01780-B)

Swing Beat ♩=126

Transcription by Sebastian Müller

A G C₇ G D₇ G

Steel Gtr. (A major high bass)

T	10	8	7	10	10	10	12	10-12	10-8	5	7	3
C#	10	8	6	9	9	10-10	10	9-10	9	7	5	2
A						10	10	10	9	7	5	5
E						10	10	10	5	5	5	5
C#						10	10	10	5	5	5	5
A						10	10	10	5	5	5	5

8 D₇ G C₇ G D₇

T	5	7	8	10	8	7	10	10	10	12	10-12	10-8	5
C#	5	6	8	10	8	6	9	9	10-10	10	9-10	9	7
A									10	10	10	9	7
E									10	10	10	9	7
C#									10	10	10	9	7
A									10	10	10	9	7

14 G G₇ **B** C G

T	6	5	6	6	6	8	7	8	10	12	12	12	12	12	12	11	12	12	12	10
C#										10	10	10	10	10	10	10	9	10	10	10
A																				
E																				
C#																				
A																				

let ring-----

20 A₇ D₇ G

T	8	9	10	10	10	10	9	10	10	10	4	5	5	7	8	10	8	7
C#	10	8	9	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	4	5	5	6	8	10	8	6
A											4	5						
E											4	5						
C#											4	5						
A											4	5						

Sebastian's solo on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/pDpLpZ3ziTU> Questions? Contact Sebastian at hawaiiansteelguitar777@gmail.com

26

C7 G D7 G D7

hula

TAB

10 10 10 12 10 12 10 8 5 7 3 3 4 5 10 4 5 9 10

Solo

G C7 G D7

TAB

10-10 10-10 10-10 10-10 10 13-18 12-10 9-10 10 7-7-5 7-7 5-4-5 5-5-10 5

38

G D7 G C7

TAB

8-8 6-6-5 6-6 5-5-10-14-5 5 10-9-10 10 13-13-13 13-13-13 12-12-12

43

G D7

TAB

15-15-14-14-14-10-10-10 7-7-7-5-3-3 3-0 5-4-5 5-4-5 5-5-10 5 8-8 6-6-5 5-5-5

Oh, Lady Be Good! (Cont.)

Sol Ho'opi'i's solo on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLjkTp9jHNE

51

G

A⁷

D⁷

3

T

A

B

10 10 8 12 10 10 12 10 12 3 3 3 3 3

10 10 8 12 10 10 12 10 12 3 3 3 3 3

10 10 7 12 10 10 12 10 12 2 2 2 2 2

10 10 7 12 10 10 12 10 12 2 2 2 2 2

57

15-14-12-10 9-10 10 9 9 9 10 10 10-15 14 15 13 9 10 10-7 5 7 7

A Discussion with Berlin Steeler Sebastian Müller

by Christo Ruppenthal

Many of you know German steel guitarist Sebastian Müller from his professionally-produced steel guitar videos on Facebook and YouTube in the early “hot Hawaiian” style of Sol Ho‘opi‘i, King Bennie Nawahi and other seminal players. This issue’s arrangement is a transcription and video performance Sebastian did of Sol Ho‘opi‘i’s classic version of Gershwin’s “Oh, Lady Be Good.” Recently I had a chance to sit down with him via Zoom and discuss music, videos, gear, influences and many other things. Enjoy!

Christo: Hi Sebastian. How are you doing?

Sebastian: Thanks for having me. I’m doing good. Preparing for my summer vacation. I want to play a lot of steel guitar on the beach in Italy. Yeah. So, looking forward to do that.

Christo: Well, why don’t we start with where are you from?

Sebastian: I have been based in Berlin for the last twenty years. I was raised in the south of Germany in a pretty musical family. My father was church choir leader, so music always played a big role in the family.

Christo: So, what brought you to the Hawaiian steel guitar?

Sebastian: That’s an interesting story. My parents-in-law lived in Hawai‘i for ten years and during this period we visited them quite a bit. On one such vacation trip we were at the Kona Brewery where slack key great Ledward Kaapana was playing and that definitely got me interested. I bought Led’s slack key instructional DVD and learned that just for fun.

Christo: This finger-style slack key that Led does—that was what you were working on first?

Sebastian: Yeah, totally. It’s like the Hawaiian finger-style folk picking in a way. But it’s already in open G tuning and that’s pretty similar to what I’m using at the moment. And that was the first step into open tunings and an introduction to Hawaiian music.

Christo: And how about what grabbed your ear for the steel guitar? What pushed you into doing that?

Sebastian: It was a compilation record. I think it was *Hawaiian Steel Guitar Masters* or *Masters of Hawaiian Steel Guitar*.

Christo: One of the ones on Rounder?

Sebastian: I think it’s on Rounder, yeah. It was great stuff,



A super shot of Sebastian Müller’s Hawaiian band Hula Hut & The Seven Seas with (l. to r.) Derek Shirley, Patrick Arp, Taylor Savvy, Sebastian with his 1931 Style 1 National Tricone steel guitar, and vocalist Yuko Matsuyama. Chic!

I have to say. A lot of the tunes I still totally love on that compilation. Yeah, so I was really into slack key, and then I listened to that stuff, and I just thought, that sounds even more Hawaiian. So we were traveling, driving the streets of Hawai‘i listening to that music, and that really totally fit. I was pretty hooked. I think it was really King Bennie Nawahi’s tune “Honolulu Bound” that did it. He’s playing this crazy triplet stuff, and I just thought, this is really impressive. It’s like it’s so old and they had such good energy and stuff, so yeah.

Christo: How about your instruments. What are your favorite guitars to play?

Sebastian: My main guitar is a Tricone. It’s a National Style 1 from 1931. It’s a beautiful guitar. I had to order it by mail, of course, because there’s no way that you can find such an instrument in Germany. It is super, super rare here, I would say. So, I ordered it from Mandolin Brothers. But I started out with a Republic Tricone, a Chinese copy. And it was also definitely a fine guitar. But this National is the real deal. You play one as well, so you know what I’m talking about.

Christo: Oh, for sure. Yeah. In fact, I’ve only had my Tricone for less than a year. But I just love it. I was playing a Weissenborn prior to that. But yeah, the Tricone, there’s just something about it. It’s got that full, huge sound and all of the dynamics and harmonics. Everything just rings through.

Sebastian: Yeah, I really like the old ones. It’s kind of cliché, but they sound very Hawaiian. They sound sweet. They really sound warmer. I played the new ones like the National Resophonic ones... they sound different. They sound louder, but really not as sweet as the old ones. I’ll have to do an A/B

Continued on Page 12

test to really know. But that's my feeling. But I have new cones in it. National Resophonic cones. They are really good.

Christo: It seems like that's a typical upgrade that a lot of them go through. I've heard many times over that it improves the sound to do that, depending on the instrument I guess.

Sebastian: Yeah, I don't know. The cones that were inside were original, I think, but really heavy, and they didn't sound good. That's for sure. Putting new ones in mine made a huge difference.

Christo: Yeah, excellent. So that guitar is the one that you used for "Oh, Lady Be Good." I'm assuming you borrowed heavily from the Sol Ho'opi'i versions. Is that true?

Sebastian: It's almost a one-to-one copy of it. I would say I hope it's pretty accurate.

Christo: Can you tell us a little more about the arrangement and what was going on in the song?

Sebastian: I think it's a pretty typical Sol Ho'opi'i performance where he's playing a lot of his typical runs and also some quite sophisticated jumps over the whole fretboard. So, if [members] are not able to play it right away at Sol's speed, don't worry. It's kind of advanced, but I don't think the theme is too hard to play and it's beautiful. It's full of nice sounds. He's also using split bar slants and stuff like that. So you can get a lot of dominant seventh colors out of this rather simple tuning that I think is pretty powerful.

Christo: Yeah, what tuning did you use? What tuning did Sol use for that?

Sebastian: It's the A high-bass tuning. So, it's very easy for anybody who plays dobro. It's the same thing as dobro tuning, just a whole step up. I started using G dobro tuning because it was on the Bob Brozman DVD and in the Stacey Phillips books. They are all in G.

Christo: A lot of that stuff is in G and in the instructional stuff when I was starting, too.

Sebastian: Yeah, it is. When they wrote these books I guess they thought so many people are playing G tunings. But I reached a certain point where I always said, okay, if I want to transcribe something by Sol, I always have to de-tune his version by a whole step. But I also thought there might be a reason why he used A high bass. The sound was maybe different. So I tuned it to A. I bought a set of string that kind of fits the pitch better. I looked at John Ely's page at www.hawaiiansteel.com. He has this really nice page where you



A still from Sebastian Müller's polished YouTube performance of "Oh, Lady Be Good," this issue's steel guitar arrangement. To get there just do a YouTube search on 'Lady Be Good - Steel Guitar'.

can find the proper strings for your tuning. Yeah. I really liked it. But my band hated me for it because they had to relearn all the songs a whole step up. And it's also funny... I've urged some of my students and others to move to the A tuning, and they say that it's weird, a big change. But they stay there. They don't change back.

Christo: Yeah. So, you mentioned the band. Do you want to talk about that a little bit? Do you have gigs, or in normal times you would have a gigging band?

Sebastian: Yes, exactly. My band really began when I played some bluegrass stuff with a friend of mine. I was playing dobro at the time. And when another friend joined, I was playing a song called "Sailing to Hawai'i," which I learned as a dobro tune. That was our first Hawaiian song, and I think maybe we added a couple of other Hawaiian songs. After a short while we just realized what we had with Hawaiian music. It was so much more special. In Berlin, at least, there were no other Hawaiian bands, so we just changed the concept of the band. We said, okay, we are a Hawaiian band from now on.

Christo: I basically went through exactly the same experience with one of my groups. We played French swing, Django stuff and French popular music from back then, and we started adding a few slack key tunes where I was strumming the 'ukulele and my friend was playing guitar and people just freaked out about it. We kept building and building until we had a full repertoire of Hawaiian music. Our whole direction changed. So, what's the name of your band?

Sebastian: It's Hula Hut and The Seven Seas.

Christo: Nice. Do you have a website, recordings or anything like that available?

Sebastian: Yeah, we have a website. We have a record that's kind of available. If you are in Berlin, you can catch us and get a copy. It's like, sending it all over the world, I kind of stopped it because it's a little bit too much trouble.

It was a trio in the beginning, and we had a couple of gigs playing mostly instrumentals. And then Yuko joined. She's a musician I used to work with when I was doing electronic music and we worked with her as a singer. I told her about the Hawaiian band, and she said, "Oh, that sounds awesome." I sent her some Tau Moe recordings and she came back and really nailed the songs perfectly. She said that it's actually not too hard because she's Japanese and Hawaiian singing is pretty similar to Japanese classical singing. It came pretty easy for her.

Christo: Sounds good. And do you have recordings on your website? Do you have samples of some of this stuff or videos maybe?

Sebastian: Yeah, definitely. So, if you search for HulaHut.net, you will find stuff there. Rather old, though. So, I kind of feel bad because I have so many of my videos posted, but we don't have any from the band yet. So, really, the next thing we want to do is a proper video together.

Christo: Like in the style of the ones that you've been doing from home?

Sebastian: Yes. Where we have better closeups and stuff. Before that we had some videos with just one camera in a crappy sounding room.

Christo: So, your videos seem really well produced, and it's great that you have the multiple cameras and stuff. Do you want to talk about your process a little bit? Because I'm sure that a lot of people have seen them online.

Sebastian: Yeah. From my experience when you are playing steel guitar, people are really interested in this strange instrument. Sometimes I would practice outdoors during my lunch breaks. I just felt that when people can actually see what you are playing, it makes a big difference. I watched a couple of videos from Craig Booth and some of these Weissenborn players. I was really impressed. There were some really nice aesthetic looking ones and I just thought, okay maybe I'll do something similar. So my normal process is I record the song first, then I do the videos and can use different camera angles and stuff. But it means you have to do the song pretty much exactly the same, otherwise, it looks pretty off.

Christo: Do you have a home studio that you work in to do that?

Sebastian: I have actually a pretty good studio. But I'm not using it for my Hawaiian recordings. For the Hawaiian stuff I do it in our living room (our kitchen actually), because it's a big room and it sounds really live. I sometimes think that a steel guitar is a little bit like a snare drum—without room it doesn't work that well, so the room helps.

Christo: Cool. Well, I want to thank you for taking some time and chatting. Good luck with everything and let's stay in touch. HSGA members, remember, you can reach out to Sebastian if you need some help with the transcription of "Oh, Lady Be Good" (see his contact information at the top of page 9). Sebastian also offers rhythm tracks if you can get it up to speed. They are available directly from him. Besides selling tabs of your various projects are you taking students as well?

Member Dues Alert

If you received a renewal form with your newsletter, then it's time to renew. See the form for easy payment options.

Sebastian: I really started with this whole video thing so people can really see how it's played. As it turns out, when it comes to this old style of Hawaiian steel guitar playing, there are not so many videos out. So, originally I never thought that I would sell tabs, or teach, or stuff like that. These videos got a way better response than I really would ever have thought, especially on Facebook. In the beginning it was pretty tremendous and then people asked me "Okay, are there any tabs?" And I'm like, naw, naw... I think we were talking about the pandemic, right? So, the good thing about the pandemic for me was that I kicked into high gear and just said, okay, let's do tabs. And I got the right program for doing it and I attempted one. The response was also pretty good, so then I did tabs for all my videos. So,

Continued on Page 16



BAR & PICK HOLDER
Convenient storage for accessories!

LAP STEEL STANDS
3 & 4 leg models
Fully adjustable stands for lap steel and resophonic instruments
Case included!

Deluxe34
www.Deluxe34.com
phone 262.728.2686
Ask about customizing it!

CLOSING NOTES

Herbert Hanawahine

For those who don't know, we lost steel guitar master Herbert Hanawahine this past October 30, 2020 in Kailua after a long illness and following the passing of his wife Joanne Hanawahine, who was a favorite at many HSGA events over the years.

Writes Alan Akaka, "Herbert recorded with Kealoha Kalama and Her Hawaiian Echoes, Peter Ahia [on his 1977] *Peter Sings* LP and Auntie Genoa Keawe. What I recall about Herbert is that his style was very much like Benny Rogers, yet he told me that he never studied with Benny. He learned basically on his own. At the Aloha Grill in downtown Honolulu he was part of a sextet that included Genoa Keawe, Pua Rogers, Val Kepelino, John Lino and Peter Ahia. He played a triple neck 8-string Fender Stringmaster tuned to C13th, E7th and B11th. Herbert was a very quiet and low key person and did all his singing through his steel guitar. His technique was excellent and he could hit harmonics with great accuracy. He lived in Kailua and then relocated to Las Vegas. Unfortunately Herbert suffered from Alzheimers and after his wife Joanne passed he was brought back to Kailua to live with his 'ohana until his passing."

Herbert Hanawahine recorded a self-produced solo steel guitar album titled *He Kanaka Maoli, Pure Hawaiian*. The following LP liner notes, written by Sheldeen Haleaman, were sent to us by Roberto Alaniz and serve as a fine tribute to his life and work:

"From hearing the first sound of the steel guitar at age ten to *He Kanaka Maoli, Pure Hawaiian*, Herbert Hanawahine [was] determined to learn. With no formal music training, he taught himself to play the steel guitar. Playing [the] 'Taps' [section] from 'Maui Chimes' and listening to various artists like Benny Rogers on his steel guitar and Genoa Keawe's beautiful singing, Uncle Herbert began to develop a style of his own—so unique—which many have come to know.

"Soon after he married the love of his life, Joanne Leilani Hashimoto, in 1960, Uncle Herbert—both anxious and reluctant—auditioned for the show held by Pi'ilani Watkins and was hired immediately, beginning his musical career at the age of twenty three. Since then he has traveled around the world from Japan to Switzerland, the U.S. [mainland] and Hawaiian Islands. He has recorded albums and played with artists such as Genoa Keawe, Kealoha Kalama, Richard Ho'opi'i, Peter Ahia, Tavana, Greg Sardinha, Eddie Kamae, Linda Dela Cruz, Louise Kaleiki, Billy Lincoln, Lena Machado, and many other talented musicians.

"His list of accomplishments is great and so is his heart. *He Kanaka Maoli* (pure heart) describes him well. 'Aloha,' the fruit of the Spirit, is a way of life for Uncle Herbert and



The cover photo for Kealoha Kalama's LP on Genoa Keawe Records (GK-103) titled "Kealoha Kalama And Her Hawaiian Echoes." Herbert Hanawahine (top row, right) is the steel guitarist on the album, lending his brand of "backyard bliss."

he truly believes that his gift is from God and ... was given to him to share with you and I. So come, enjoy and appreciate the beautiful steel guitar style of Herbert K. Hanawahine. 'Ā 'oia! (that's it or that's right)." ■

Treasurer's Report

(Balances as of June 30, 2021)

Beginning Balance	\$27,953.09
General Fund	\$19,421.14
Scholarship Fund	\$6,895.45
End Balance	\$26,316.59
Japan Account.....	\$3,119.53

Expenses

Newsletter Editing/Database Mgmt	\$1,200.00
Printing (Newsletter, Member Cards)	\$455.95
Postage (Newsletter, Misc).....	\$288.60
Scholarship Payments.....	\$2,750.00
Bank Fees	\$13.00
Total Expenses	\$4,707.55

Income

Dues	\$1,156.00
General Fund Donations.....	\$1035.00
Scholarship Fund Donations.....	\$810.00
Festival Donations	\$25.00
Credit Card Points	\$44.84
Total Income	\$3,070.84

HSGA Board of Directors Approves Scholarship Program Amendments

By Roberto Alaniz

The HSGA Scholarship Program is dedicated to promoting the playing of Hawaiian steel guitar amongst children and youth. The program provides funding for music lessons provided by an approved music teacher or studio. The intent of the program is to provide lessons for sincerely interested students whose families may not have the financial resources needed. The program is administered by the HSGA Scholarship Committee whose members are appointed by the club president.

On August 17, 2021, The HSGA Board of Directors adopted several changes and clarifications to the Scholarship Program as follows:

- Scholarship eligibility will be youth age 17 and younger.
- No more than three scholarships (30 lessons) may be awarded to any scholarship recipient. The current cost of 30 lessons is \$1,650 (\$55 per lesson).
- Only the Board of Directors may consider exceptions to the number of scholarships.

The scholarship application has been simplified, requiring that student applicants complete a one-page essay explaining their interest in the Hawaiian

steel guitar and describing their music training or background if applicable. Family financial information is no longer requested. If approved, the student and his or her parent or guardian must also sign the Scholarship Agreement. There is also a separate Music Teacher Blanket Agreement for participating in the Scholarship program.

The Scholarship Fund is supported by member donations. In order to ensure that the program will continue in perpetuity, the Board has also established a spending limit. No more than 30 percent of the Scholarship Fund may be used in any fiscal year.

The board resolution, scholarship application and agreements are posted on the HSGA website. ■

VIDEO ARCHIVES *Cont. from Page 6*

Festival videos.” The videos are organized by year. To the greatest extent possible, we have attempted to name the performers featured in each video. Please submit any name or spelling corrections to hsga@hsga.org.

It is clear from the videos that face-to-face gatherings are important to keeping the spirit of our association alive and well. Members sharing their talent, backing each other, and the joy of a good set are at the heart of HSGA. Many members and artists featured in the earlier videos have now passed on. For those of us who knew them, the videos will hopefully cause us to smile and remember those friendships and the “good old days.” For those newer members, we hope that the videos will provide additional inspiration and entertainment. ■

Changed Email?

Please send email changes to both our office at hsga@hsga.org AND to John Ely at johnely@hawaiiansteel.com.

Please Contact Us!

Send news or comments to: HSGA Quarterly, 2145 Tiffany Walk, Manteca, CA 95336-9555. Email us at hsga@hsga.org.

Introducing...

The “Amos” Steel Bar Tapered Titanium - 3.1 ounces

3 1/8” Length - Taper 13/16” to 5/8” - Made in USA



ACTUAL SIZE!



Founding member of the Indy Pedal Steel Club, machinist, and founder of Arthur's Music Store in Indianapolis, IN, Amos Arthur always kept a tapered bar in his case. And now you can, too!

Arthur's Music Store 931 Shelby St. Indy, IN 46203
317-638-3524 www.ArthursMusic.com

Waikīkī Steel Festival On-Again, Off-Again!

By Addison Ching

It *appeared* that the in-person Waikīkī Steel Guitar Festival was finally going to proceed as planned at the Royal Hawaiian Center's Royal Grove Stage on August 28 despite rising concerns about the COVID-19 Delta variant. Last-minute revisions to the pandemic directives issued by Hawai'i Governor Ige on August 10 threatened the event, but management and staff of the center discussed the impact of the directives and concluded that the center would be able to proceed with its existing events as currently structured.

However, just at press time, Honolulu Mayor Rick Blangiardi's made the announcement to cancel all large gatherings for the next 28 days. Consequently the Royal Hawaiian Center is postponing the festival until a date later this year. We're looking at a date in early November.

The good thing is, the festival, when it finally happens, will be live-streamed on the Waikīkī Steel Guitar Week and Hawaiian Steel Guitar Showcase Facebook pages, and the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Showcase's YouTube Channel.

Pending other surprises like this, HIMELE plans to resume in-person festivals in 2022. Knock on koa! ■

E Komo Mai! Welcome, New Members

David Bradley, Madison, Wisconsin
Sonny Caycayon, Anahola, Hawai'i
Trina Cook, Freeland, Washington
Vito Sgromo, Sacramento, California
Jack Widner, Edinboro, Pennsylvania
Luc Van Casteren, Belgium
Ariel Agenor Lobos, Argentina
Stan Mosley, West Yorkshire, U.K.
Sebastian Müller, Berlin, Germany
Yoshiko Seo, Yokohama, Japan



Originally scheduled at the August Waikīkī Steel Festival, keiki performer Enosa Lyman (left) and Kapono Lopes, now on hold. More practice time! (Photo courtesy of Don Touchi)



SEBASTIAN MÜLLER *Cont. from Page 13*

now this is the plan: If I release a video you can always get the tabs and playbacks. If you want them just get in touch with me. I charge some money for it, but I hope it's reasonably priced. When it comes to students, I started giving a few lessons. Like I have a day job as a sound designer, so I can't take too many students. But if somebody's interested and wants to learn that early Hawaiian style, I'm happy to offer some lessons at least at the beginning.

Christo: Sebastian, I want to thank you for taking this time to talk to us about this cool project and your instruments and everything else.

Sebastian: Thanks for having me. I've been to one of the festivals, I think a couple of years ago. I really hope now that traveling is possible again. To meet again at a festival somewhere would be awesome.

Christo: That's what I'm hoping for. We're shooting for early next year. Details will be forthcoming. Mahalo. Aloha. Thank you.

Sebastian: Aloha! Good talking to you. ■

LION KOBAYASHI *Cont. from Page 5*

schools in Tokyo and nearby areas. Around 2010 he began working with steel guitar ensembles, which showcased his considerable arranging abilities. In 2018 he formed the Lion Ladies Steel Guitar Ensemble with four of his students, Yoko Tanaka, Akiko Watanabe, Masako Wakamatsu and Sakae Machida. The group has been performing regularly in Hawai'i and around Japan.

Kiyoshi's band, now called The New Trade Winds, has been busy performing and features a jazzy blend of steel guitar and standard guitar with a 1950s West Coast jazz flavor.

Kiyoshi's catalog features tablature arrangements for some 850 songs (some with CD backing tracks) that he has created and sold over his 70-year career. He turns 88 this July and is still excited about his various projects: teaching, performing, researching new tunings, and remodeling and improving his pedal steel guitar setup. ■

It's Dues Time Again!

If you received a renewal form with your newsletter then it's time to renew. Renewing via our website is a snap!