

Cyril PaHinui & Bob Brozman
FOUR HANDS SWEET & HOT

1. *Hilo E/E Lili'u E* (instrumental)

Cyril: 12 string in C Major "Atta's C" Tuning (C-G-E-G-C-E, from the lowest pitched string to the highest) slacked to B flat

Bob: National steel in G Major "Taro Patch" Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D) raised to B flat

Strong syncopation and easy give and take infuse these two classics with the backyard feel so crucial to slack key. Cyril's tuning is often referred to as "Atta's C" because it was used most prominently by Cyril's mentor, the late, great slack key guitarist, Leland "Atta" Isaacs (1929-1983).

Hilo E is sometimes attributed to Mary Heanu. It celebrates the lehua flower, Waiakea and other natural beauties in and around the famous Big Island harbor town of Hilo. Slack key versions appear on [Ray Kane's](#) recording, [WA'AHILA](#) (Dancing Cat), and Cyril's [6 & 12 STRING SLACK KEY](#).

A traditional *mele inoa* (praise chant) adapted by John Kaulia and Charles E. King, **E Lili'u E** honors Queen Lili'uokalani (1838-1917), Hawai'i's last reigning monarch (so far). Lili'uokalani was one of Hawai'i's greatest composers and poets. Eighty years after her passing, she remains a very beloved figure. Bob recorded this song with [Led Kaapana](#) on [KIKI KILA MEETS KI HO'ALU](#). Led and [Leonard Kwan](#) did solo versions on [LED LIVE - SOLO](#) (Dancing Cat) and [KE'ALA'S MELE](#) (Dancing Cat), respectively.

2. *Wai Ulu* (instrumental)

Cyril: 12 string in C Major Tuning (C-G-E-G-C-E)

Bob: Weissenborn in Mainland C Tuning (C-G-C-G-C-E)

E awaiawalu i ke aloha (a love securely bound) is the subject of this popular *mele ho'oipoipo* (love song) attributed to Lala Mahelona and George Kalelohi, Sr., and frequently played at weddings. Slack key versions include Gabby Pahinui with The Sons of Hawai'i on AN ISLAND HERITAGE (Panini 1001) and Sonny Chillingworth on [SONNY SOLO](#) (Dancing Cat) as well as this powerful performance.

3. *Lei 'Ohu* (instrumental)

Cyril: 12 string in D Major "Open D" Tuning (D-A-D-F#-A-D) slacked to C

Bob: Kona in G Major Tuning raised to C

Lei 'Ohu takes us island hopping, at each stop receiving the lei that represents the island: lehua (Big Island), roselani (Maui), 'ilima (O'ahu) and mokihana (Kaua'i). George Akiu composed this song, which Pops sang on his very influential album, GABBY (the Brown album, Panini 1002). Cyril followed suit on [6 & 12 STRING SLACK KEY](#). This version features a lovely rhythmic interplay, between the deep 12 string and the high-strung Kona, that lends itself to swooping lines and intense rhythmic decoration.

4. *Lihu'e* (instrumental)

Cyril: 6 string in D Major Tuning slacked to C

Bob: Kona in G Major Tuning raised to C

Immortalized by Pops on PURE GABBY (Hula 567), **Lihu'e** was composed by Annie Kohlukou as a *mele hula* (chant or song with choreography based on the text) celebrating the Kaua'i town of Lihu'e, beloved in the Pa'upili rain. It also mentions the sea at Niumalu, the roses of Hauola and the precious shell leis of Ni'ihau. "This is one of my dad's signature songs," Cyril says. "The melody is kind of sad but really beautiful, bittersweet." Bob agrees, "It's one of my favorite sad Hawaiian blues."

5. *E Mama Ea* (instrumental)

Cyril: 6 string in D Major Tuning slacked to C

Bob: Kona in G Major Tuning raised to C

A favorite of *leo ki'eki'e* (falsetto) singers, **E Mama Ea** is often attributed to either Hiram Kaehu or Johnny Noble. It dates from the 1920s, when a racetrack at the foot of Le'ahi (Diamond Head) drew *malihini* (visitors) and their *kala* (dollars). Once at the track, more than one young Honolulu resident caught the travel bug, winding up in *Kaleponi* (California) or some other exotic locale. In the song, the protagonist tells his mother, I'm going, but don't worry, I'm coming back.

Tau and Rose Moe recorded this song for Columbia in 1929 while in Japan, with Tau re-writing the melody. Bob originally learned it from them, although he and Cyril play the better known melody. This version is offered as a musical *makana* (gift) to the Moes. Leonard Kwan also recorded a slack key version, as part of a medley with **Kaneohe**, on his album, SLACK KEY (the Red album, Tradewinds 103).

6. *Hawaiian Cowboy* (instrumental)

Cyril: 6 string in D Major Tuning slacked to C

Bob: Kona in G Major Tuning raised to C

For over half a century, Sol K. Bright regaled audiences around the world with this *mele paniolo* (cowboy song) about Roselani and her hard riding daddy, the pride of Maui Island. According to Bright, he improvised **Hawaiian Cowboy** in 1933 in a California nightclub when he noticed a couple high rollers passing long green to a fellow Hawaiian musician who was yodeling. In the impromptu spirit of the original, this new arrangement for steel and slack key came out of the clear blue sky in front of the studio while Cyril and Bob were taking a break. "I knew the song from *hana buttah* (little kid) days," Cyril says. "And I've always loved it, so we just started going for it."

[Keola Beamer](#) created the first slack key arrangement of this song for his 1973 album, HAWAIIAN SLACK KEY GUITAR IN THE REAL OLD STYLE (Music of Polynesia 22000). Cyril also recorded a powerful instrumental version on his album, [NIGHT MOON - PO MAHINA](#). Cyril and [Led Kaapana](#), both being master improvisers, often play a song in more than one tuning.

7. ***Inikiniki Malie (Gentle Pinches of the Wind)*** (vocal)

Cyril: 6 string in D Major Tuning slacked to C

Bob: Kona in G Major Tuning raised to C

Inikiniki Malie gives reign to the *nahenahe* (relaxing) side of Cyril and Bob's playing. Bob says this song reminds him a little of the blues; not surprising since it dates from the 1920s, a period when many of Hawai'i's leading performers shared stages and swapped ideas with blues musicians on the vaudeville circuit. According to Bob, "Hawaiian music is one of the few types of music in the world where deep sadness or at least a wistful quality occurs in major keys." This can also be heard on the recording of **Inikiniki Malie** by the Kalama's Quartet on EARLY HAWAIIAN CLASSICS 1927 - 1932 (Folklyric 7028)

8. ***Lei No Ka'iulani*** (instrumental)

Cyril: 6 string Santa Cruz Brozman model in C Major Tuning slacked to B flat

Bob: National steel in G Major Tuning raised to B flat

Lei No Ka'iulani was composed by John Edwards as a *mele inoa* to Princess Victoria Ka'iulani, the daughter of Princess Likelike and Archibald Cleghorn, and heir to the throne of her aunt, Lili'uokalani. With its graceful melody and focus on the long denied but never forgotten Hawaiian monarchy, it remains a popular song with *himeni* (choral) groups as well as slack key guitarists. Cyril learned the song from his father, who recorded it on GABBY PAHINUI WITH THE SONS OF HAWAII (Hula Records 503) and on the Brown album, GABBY (Panini 1002).

9. ***LBC Slack Key*** (instrumental)

Cyril: 6 string in D Major Tuning slacked to C

Bob: Kona in G Major Tuning raised to C

This original composition is Bob and Cyril's tribute to their friend [Led Kaapana](#). Both have played with Led a lot and feel great aloha for him as a musician and a human being. While Led's style inspired **LBC Slack Key**, Cyril doesn't attempt to imitate him. The song illuminates the differences, as well as the similarities, between these two modern slack key masters.

10. ***Coquette*** (instrumental)

Cyril: 6 string in D Major "Open D" Tuning (D-A-D-F#-A-D) slacked to C

Bob: Kona in G Major 7 "Wahine" Tuning (D-G-D-F#-B-D)

Both being big fans of swing and having recorded it at various times in their careers, it was natural for Cyril and Bob to include a classic of this genre. **Coquette** dates from 1928. This version shows off Cyril's jazz influence, which he attributes primarily to his dad and Atta Isaacs. As Bob points out, Open D Tuning is used a lot in the blues as well as in east Indian guitar. "It gives you great chord voicings and makes it easier to play some real tricky rhythms." The G Wahine Tuning, in which Bob plays, is a variation of Sol Hoopii's C# Minor Tuning tuned down two half steps.

11. *E Nihī Ka Hele* (vocal)

Cyril: 12 string in C Major Tuning slacked to A

Bob: National steel in G Major Tuning raised to A

E Nihī Ka Hele can be translated into English as "step softly". The song, popularly attributed to King David Kalakaua's Healanī Glee Club, dates back to 1887 and centers on the trip Queen Kapi'olani and Lili'uokalani (Kalakaua's wife and sister, respectively) took to England. Like most Hawaiian mele, **E Nihī Ka Hele** is highly poetic and makes good use of many traditional Polynesian literary devices, including nature imagery. The first verse asks the ocean to stay calm and the wind to blow gently. The second describes California and compares the snow there to the skin of the princess. The third verse reminds the travelers to return home. Gabby recorded this on **THE GABBY PAHINUI HAWAIIAN BAND, VOL. I** (Panini Records 1007).

12. *Wai'alae* (instrumental)

Cyril: 12 string in C Major Tuning

Bob: Weissenborn in G Major Tuning, playing in the key of C

Former Royal Hawaiian Band director Mekia Kealakai composed **Wai'alae** around the turn of the last century when waltzing was in vogue in Hawai'i, as elsewhere. Though unmistakably Hawaiian, **Wai'alae** is reportedly based on a Mexican song. Similarly, the uniquely Hawaiian tradition of slack key traces its roots back to Mexican *paniolo* (cowboys). With this in mind, Cyril and Bob decided to give **Wai'alae** the full Latin-American rhythmic treatment by superimposing a strong 6/8 feel over the 3/4 waltz. "I love Latin music," Cyril says. "And **Wai'alae** for me has a real Latin feel."

Gabby Pahinui recorded **Wai'alae** around 1946 as one third of the song **Hula Medley** for the Bell label. This track has been reissued on **THE HISTORY OF SLACK KEY GUITAR** (Hana Ola 24000). In 1961, he recorded it as part of different medley on **PURE GABBY** (Hula Records 567). In 1973, he recorded it by itself on **RABBIT ISLAND MUSIC FESTIVAL** (Panini 1004).

13. *Kela Mea Whiffa/Hilo March* (instrumental)

Cyril: 12 string in D Major Tuning

Bob: National steel in G Major Tuning raised to A, playing in the key of D (bar on the 5th fret is the tonic)

Written by Eddie Kamae about the distinctive aroma of burning sugar cane, **Kela Mea Whiffa** debuted in the early 1970s on **EDDIE KAMAЕ PRESENTS THE SONS OF HAWAII** (Hawaii Sons 1001). "At the session we just spontaneously went to **Hilo March**, normally a stand-alone piece. They just seemed to fit together well," Bob says. **Hilo March**, written in the late 19th Century by Joseph Ae'a of the Royal Hawaiian Band, recalls the days when Hawaiian musicians readily absorbed marching rhythms and brass band melodies into their original music. Considered one of the Big Island's theme songs, it was especially popular with steel guitarists in the 1920s. The Kahumoku Brothers ([George](#) & [Moses](#)) recorded a slack key version in 1988 on their album,

SWEET AND SASSY - HAWAIIAN SLACK KEY STYLING VOL. 1 (Kahumoku Brothers 1005).

14. *Hula O Makee* (vocal)

Cyril: 6 string Santa Cruz in C Major Tuning slacked to B flat

Bob: National steel in G Major Tuning raised to B flat

This traditional *mele hula* speaks of a ship, the Makee, running aground on the reef at Kapa'a, Kaua'i. Another ship, the Malulani, comes to its aid. The *kaona* (hidden meaning) is said to represent two lovers: one who left and another who came looking. Frequently performed and recorded, Gabby recorded a version on the Brown album, GABBY (Panini 1002), [Ray Kane](#) did it on [PUNAHELE](#) (Dancing Cat), and Cyril recorded it on his album, KA HO'OILINA MAU...THE LEGACY CONTINUES (Poki Records 9062).

15. *Hilo Hanakahi* (instrumental)

Cyril: 12 string in C Major Tuning slacked to A

Bob: Weissenborn in Mainland C Tuning

A *mele pana* (place song) for the Big Island, **Hilo Hanakahi** celebrates lehua blossoms rustling in the rain in Hilo, fragrant hala in Puna, the wind at Ka'u and other notable experiences. The song is popular, especially with Big Island musicians. According to Bob, he and Cyril hadn't planned to record this very original arrangement; they just started jamming in the studio with the tape running.

16. *Ku'u Lei (My Wreath of Flowers)* (instrumental)

Cyril: 12 string in C Major Tuning

Bob: Kona in G Major Tuning raised to C

Although normally performed as a vocal, this vintage *mele ho'oipoipo* from around 1929 lends itself beautifully to the voice-like qualities of Bob's steel guitar. Cyril fingerpicks a sensitive but steady rhythmic accompaniment, decorating the melody with his unique cascading arpeggios. The chord progression, a haunting minor III chord (Em) followed by a chromatic descent to the II minor (Dm), was quite progressive in the 1920s and still sounds modern. A version of **Ku'u Lei** by the Kalama's Quartet is available on EARLY HAWAIIAN CLASSICS 1927 - 1932 (Folklyric 7028)

BIOGRAPHY

When steel guitar wizard Bob Brozman started performing with slack key master Led Kaapana back in the early 1990s, it was inevitable he would eventually also meet and make beautiful music with Cyril Pahinui. Cyril is another virtuoso Hawaiian musician deeply immersed in ki ho'alu, both maintaining and expanding the tradition. On the one hand, he lovingly performs slack key standards and gratefully acknowledges his teachers. On the other, he freely draws upon a wide variety of music styles. Like most slack key masters, Cyril revels in the exhilarating give

and take of a good jam session. His musical intelligence, great ear, killer chops and spirit of aloha make him an ideal partner for Bob.

Cyril Lani Pahinui was born April 21, 1950. He grew up in Waimanalo on O'ahu's windward coast. As described more fully in the notes to 6 & 12 STRING SLACK KEY (Dancing Cat 38010) and NIGHT MOON - PO MAHINA (Dancing Cat 38030), Cyril started playing music very early. He credits his father, the legendary Philip "Gabby" Pahinui (1921–1980, affectionately called "Pops" by Hawaiians), with inspiring him. Gabby, who made the first ever recording of slack key in 1946, is the most influential slack key guitarist of all time, and has earned the title of Father of the Modern Slack Key Era.

Cyril's first Dancing Cat CD, the entirely solo 6 & 12 STRING SLACK KEY, came out in 1994, and won the Na Hoku Hanohano award for Instrumental Album of the Year. His second solo CD, NIGHT MOON - PO MAHINA, was released in 1998.

Born in New York in 1954, Bob also started music early. Like most great musicians, he takes his craft very seriously yet continues to maintain the infectious sense of fun that first drew him to pick up an instrument and play. His main influences for Hawaiian music have been the great steel guitarist Sol Hoopii (1902–1953) and Tau Moe (1908–) As discussed at greater length in the notes to his duet album with Led Kaapana, KIKA KILA MEETS KI HO'ALU (Dancing Cat 38031), Bob is not only a world class performer, but also a dedicated scholar. His book, THE HISTORY AND ARTISTRY OF NATIONAL RESONATOR INSTRUMENTS, is recognized as the most authoritative work on the subject to date. In addition, Bob writes, lectures, produces, and researches the music he loves.

Especially dear to Bob's heart is his documentary film, still in the works, on the incredible adventures of Tau and Rose Moe, who toured the world from 1928 to 1982, and are directly responsible for the presence of Hawaiian guitar in the popular recordings of many countries, including Japan, Germany, Greece, and India. Bob met Tau Moe when Tau called him to order some records he'd made. Learning that Tau also played National guitar, Bob asked him about an obscure 78 he had found of **Maika'i No Kaua'i** in a San Francisco basement in 1977. The album, which had deeply impressed Bob, credited Mme. Riviere's Hawaiians but not the individual musicians. To Bob's surprise, Tau and his wife had been in the group in the twenties. According to Bob, "He called his wife to the phone and they started singing it." Bob flew to Hawai'i and met the Moes. Together they recorded HO'OMANA'O I NA MELE O KA WA U'I (REMEMBERING THE SONGS OF OUR YOUTH) (Rounder 6028), which was chosen for the prestigious Library of Congress Select List. The documentary, directed by music buff Terry Zwigoff (LOUIE BLUIE, CRUMB), has been shot but remains unfinished due to arts funding cuts.

Meeting and playing with Cyril has been an enriching experience for Bob, who finds the differences between him and Led fascinating. "Cyril really wanted the melodies to be correct, and was very patient in teaching them to me," Bob observes. "Led takes a more improvisatory approach, over the underlying harmony. The harmony employed by Cyril is a little more modern than Led's, while Led's rhythmic variations expand the limits of slack key just a little more." The most obvious difference is Led's slack key thumb rhythm as compared to Cyril's Latin–

American thumb rhythm. Most slack key players, including Led, place their thumbstrokes on the straight or swung quarter–notes. Cyril constantly syncopates his thumbstrokes, usually on beats 1, 2 1/2 and 4 of a 4–beat measure, which sets up many polyrhythmic possibilities of 3 over 2 or 3 over 4. In waltz time, this thumb style allows the very Africa–to–Latin–America 6/8 over 3/4, which is what many colonized people did to the European waltz (on this album, see [Wai'alaē](#)).

This album is the fruits of Cyril and Bob's first series of meetings. A labor of love and mutual respect, of risk taking and stretching out, it conveys the pure joy of music. Rehearsing for the sessions often took the form of extended jams, which generated incredible excitement among the musicians and everyone present. Takes often ended in laughter, in high fives, or in tears. "I enjoyed every minute of it," says Cyril.

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