

LINER NOTES

Cyril Pahinui

He'eia

THE SONGS

1. He'eia

Instrumental - 12 string guitar

C Mauna Loa Tuning (C-G-E-G-A-E)

The title track, *He'eia* describes He'eia Bay near Keauhou on the Kona side of the Big Island of Hawai'i. This is also where the photos for the cover were taken. A traditional *mele inoa* (name chant) with the music attributed to an adaptation by J. Kalahiki, it honors King Kalakaua, and describes a day at the beach enjoying the waves. Like many songs in Hawai'i, it uses *kaona* (hidden meaning) to describe something on the surface level while also discussing deeper issues known only to people familiar with the hidden meanings.

He'eia is one of many songs closely associated with Cyril's father, who recorded it in his C Wahine Tuning (C-G-E-G-B-E) for his 1972 album GABBY [the "Brown Album"] (Panini Records), in 1972. "I have such a fond memory of Daddy, Joe Gang, and me sitting on the side of the lawn at my parents' Waimanalo home, playing this song together," Cyril says. "Joe was on 'ukulele, Daddy had his guitar in his C Wahine Tuning (C-G-E-G-B-E), and I had the D Tuning (D-A-D-F#-B-E) tuned to a C note. That was one of the reasons why I wanted to name this album HE'EIA, and why I wanted the CD cover photo to be of me at He'eia Bay." You can see Gabby and Cyril playing *He'eia* together on the lawn in their respective tunings, along with Joe, in the great film about Gabby, GABBY PAHINUI, FAMILY & FRIENDS/ THE PAHINUI BROTHERS (Private Music/ Panini – see www.mele.com).

Cyril plays this classic Hawaiian piece with a powerful yet subtle rhythm, enhanced by the beautiful muting with the heel of his right hand that he goes to four different times in the song. This song also beautifully showcases Cyril's great improvisational ability.

He plays it in the C Mauna Loa Tuning (C-G-E-G-A-E), which was also one of Gabby's favorite tunings. Mauna Loa Tunings are based on a Major chord with the two highest pitched strings tuned a fifth interval apart. These two strings can then easily be played in sixth intervals (as the first string and the thicker third string usually are in several other tunings), producing the recognizably sweet Mauna Loa sound. They can also be frailed (strummed) rapidly with the index finger, producing another characteristic sound of this tuning. Cyril later features a vocal version of *He'eia* (song #6).

Slack Key guitarist Atta Isaacs also recorded *He'eia* in his C Major Tuning (C-G-E-G-C-E) on the 1966 album THE MAILE SERENADERS-HAWAI'I'S FAVORITE SLACK KEY & STEEL GUITAR, VOLUME 1 (Hula Records – formally titled KANI KA PILA!

VOL.1). Despite the name, the Maile Serenaders were actually Eddie Kamae & the Sons of Hawai'i.

2. 'O Kamawailualani

Instrumental - 6 string guitar
Atta's C Major Tuning (C-G-E-G-C-E)

The music for this piece was written by the great Hawaiian composer Liko Martin. The words are by Hawai'i painter Laka Morton (www.lakamorton.com), and the title is an ancient name for the Island of Kaua'i. This heartfelt song was written about a ka'e'e (sea bean) plant that Laka was surprised to find blooming in his yard one day. When he saw its beautiful lime green flower with green birds clustered around it, he knew he was seeing a living treasure. Cyril recorded it as a vocal and played it in the C Major Tuning in 1992 on THE PAHINUI BROS album with his brothers Bla and Martin. Here he plays some beautiful variations on the verses, adding even more on the bridges (he also plays it on 12 string guitar later on song #10).

Composer and *Aloha 'Aina* artist Liko Martin's music reflects the deepest *Aloha* for life and the caring for the land ('*aina*). He has composed many classic pieces that have been played and recorded by many musicians since the early 1970's, including *All Hawai'i Stand Together (Hawai'i Loa Ku Like Kakou)*, *We Are the Children*, and the 1970s rallying cry *Nanakuli Blues*, which proved so meaningful to Windward O'ahu band Country Comfort that they retitled it Waimanalo Blues to represent their (and Cyril's and Gabby's) hometown. Other beautiful pieces of Liko's are *Do You Love Me*, *Sun Lite Moon Lite*, *Far Away Places*, *Kaho'olawe I Feel Your Your Pain*, *New Day*, *North Shore Road*, *End of the Line*, *We Are an Island Under the Sun*, *Endangered Species*, and many more.

A great 2006 interview with Liko Martin, for the public access television series *Voices of Truth*, sponsored by the Koani Foundation, is available at www.youtube.com - search for Liko Martin. Also for concert footage of Liko Martin, go to the *Na Maka o ka 'Aina* site (www.namaka.com), then go to "Video Catalogue", then to "Art, Music and Dance", then to "Aloha 'Aina Concert" -Parts 1&2 [Liko is in the red shirt]).

3. Makee 'Ailana

Instrumental - 6 string guitar
Atta's C Major Tuning (C-G-E-G-C-E)

Played as a beautiful deep impressionistic ballad here by Cyril, beginning with a rubato verse, one of his signature trademarks. As Cyril describes it, "Here, I play it almost like a waltz but with no tempo, just flowing into the music kind of thing. And then sometimes I almost do a tempo, but it's so slow, because I am playing like I am talking a story about it."

This song was also a signature song of one of Cyril's main influences and inspirations (and a dear friend of his dad Gabby), the late great Slack Key guitarist Sonny Chillingworth (1932-1994). Sonny played it in the normal faster tempo in the C Wahine

Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-D). It also perfectly suited his deeply romantic voice, and he recorded it four times in the C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-D), including: on his very first recording, on 78 RPM, in 1954, with singer/guitarist/composer (and the song's composer's granddaughter Vicki I'i Rodrigues (1912-1987) [to be reissued on the recording THE HISTORY OF SLACK KEY GUITAR-VOLUME 2 on Hana Ola Records]; on his 1964 album WAIMEA COWBOY (Lehua Records); for an upcoming recording on Dancing Cat Records; and on the 1973 Gabby Band album RABBIT ISLAND MUSIC FESTIVAL (Panini Records). Cyril joined Sonny on the classic 1973 version with the Gabby Band. "I was inspired to learn this song from Uncle Sonny," says Cyril. "He sang it so beautifully and *nahenahe* (gentle). When I play it I always think of him and the way he sang it with so much feeling."

Composed by James I'i, the song *Makee 'Ailana* dates back to the early 1900s, a time when many small islands dotted a large lagoon in Kapi'olani Park. *Makee 'Ailana* was the biggest of these islands, reportedly over 7,000 square feet. Here, where spray from nearby Waikiki Beach refreshed the land, The Royal Hawaiian Band used to give their still on-going free concerts on Sundays, and couples would often linger on into the evening. Today where *Makee 'Ailana* stood is the parking lot for the Honolulu Zoo.

Cyril also recorded a vocal version of this song, playing in the C Major Tuning in the keys of A minor and C Major, on his 1998 recording KA HO'OLINA MAU [THE LEGACY CONTINUES] (Poki Records), with a more Latin-influenced feeling.

4. **Hula Blues**

Instrumental - 12 string guitar
Atta's C Major Tuning (C-G-E-G-C-E)

Like most of the rest of the world, Hawai'i fell in love with jazz in the period after WWI. Soon musicians were adding it to their repertoires and composers were blending it with local traditions. Bandleader at the world famous Moana Hotel, Johnny Noble wrote Hula Blues in 1919 with Sonny Cunha, the local music legend who helped kick start the Waikiki entertainment scene.

Since the Jazz Age, many Hawaiian performers have done versions of this song, especially steel guitarists. On Cyril's version one can hear inspiration throughout the song from the late great Slack Key guitarist Atta Isaacs, as well as from the steel guitar playing of both Cyril's dad Gabby and the late Barney Isaacs (Barney was Atta's brother, and a dear friend of Gabby and Cyril's - they all three recorded with Barney, and Cyril's pure duet tracks with Barney will be issued in the future on Dancing Cat Records).

Note Cyril's great chord variations in the second half of each verse on the F Major chord (with either the F note or the A note in the bass), going to an F minor chord (with an A flat note in the bass) or to an A flat 7th chord (both chords sounding the A flat note prominently, here in the bass note); then going to the C7th, then to the B flat 7th (with the A flat note sounding again, here on the *highest* pitch of the chord), then to the A7th, the D7th, the G7th, and resolving to the C Major chord. Cyril says, "I love using progressive chords in playing slack key, just like my dad and Atta did. Folks wouldn't think

progressive chords are a part of slack key, but they are.”

Also note Cyril’s signature ending, with chromatic four note 9th chords made up of close voicings: with the 9th as the lowest note, the 3rd as the next higher note, the 7th as the next higher note, and the tonic as the highest note. The notes for the D7th chord that this end progression starts with are E-F#-C-D, from the lowest pitched note to the highest, a jazz voicing he learned from Atta Isaacs (and which Slack Key guitarist George Kuo uses a lot when playing in the C Wahine Tuning [C-G-D-G-B-D]). Cyril starts the ending with the D9th chord, then to the C9th, and then more rapidly, the B9th, the B flat 9th, the A9th, the A flat 9th, the G9th, the B flat7th, the B7th, and ending on a C7#11 chord.

This popular song, as well as being a standard for steel guitarists, has also been recorded by many Slack Key guitarists: Gabby Pahinui, in his F Wahine Tuning (F-C-E-G-C-E), with steel guitarist Barney Isaacs on his album HAWAIIAN SLACK KEY GUITAR VOLUME 1–WITH GABBY PAHINUI (Waikiki Records 320); Sonny Chillingworth, in the G Major “Taro Patch” Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D), on his albums WAIMEA COWBOY (Lehua Records) and ENDLESSLY (Dancing Cat Records); George Kuo, also in the G Major Tuning, as a duet with Barney Isaacs on acoustic steel on their album HAWAIIAN TOUCH (Dancing Cat Records); Leonard Kwan (1931-2000), in the C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-D), on his recording LEONARD KWAN –SLACK KEY MASTER–THE COMPLETE EARLY RECORDINGS (Hana Ola); and Led Kaapana, in the G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D), as a pure duet with Bob Brozman on acoustic steel guitar on their album KIKA KILA MEETS KI HO’ALU (Dancing Cat Records).

5. **Ku’u Pua I Paoakalani**

Vocal - 12 string guitar

Atta’s C Major Tuning (C-G-E-G-C-E)

This strongly evocative song was composed by Hawai’i’s most beloved composer, Queen Lili’uokalani (1838-1917), on March 20, 1895, while imprisoned at the ’Iolani Palace after the overthrow of the Monarchy in 1893. The counter revolt by Wilcox and other Royalists had failed to reinstate the monarchy and the Queen was placed under house arrest at the palace. The Queen was allowed few visitors, though young Johnny Wilson was allowed to bring flowers from her gardens. On Wednesday, March 20, she reportedly recognized flowers from Paoakalani, which this poignant song commemorates. Maintaining the Hawaiian love of riddles, the verses describe the flowers and challenge listeners to guess the type. The music, text, and full story can be found on page 61 of The Queen’s Songbook, published by *Hui Hanai*.

Cyril plays *Ku’u Pua I Paoakalani* on the 12 string starting with a signature long rubato opening, then going into a beautiful heartfelt *nahenahe* (gentle) vocal. Notice the beautiful impressionistic chords of E Flat Major, to D Major, to G7th at the end of the first instrumental verse in the introduction, and his use of jazz chords with an emphasis on the C Major 7th chord and the G7th augmented chord.

A solo instrumental version of this song was recorded by Ozzie Kotani in the G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D), on his recording [TO HONOR A QUEEN \(E](#)

[HO`OHIWAHIWA I KA MO`I WAHINE\)-THE MUSIC OF LILTUOKALANI](#)

(Dancing Cat Records). Ozzie and many others have been inspired and influenced by the beautiful version by falsetto singer and *Aloha 'Aina* activist George Helm (1950-1977), which appears on his very influential posthumous release GEORGE HELM-A TRUE HAWAIIAN (Hana Ola Records) – for footage of George Helm, see the DVD from the *Na Maka o ka 'Aina* site titled *Kaho'olawe Aloha 'Aina: George Helm* (go to www.namaka.com - then to the “Video Catalogue”, then to “Miscellaneous”).

6. **He'eia**

Vocal - 12 string guitar

Atta's C Major Tuning (C-G-E-G-C-E)

It is fascinating to compare this vocal version with the guitar played in the C Major Tuning (C-G-E-G-C-E), with the earlier instrumental version (song #1) played in the C Mauna Loa Tuning (C-G-E-G-A-E). One of Cyril's great abilities is the many different ways he may choose to play a song – not only playing in different tempos, but also arranging a song as a vocal or an instrumental, and playing it on the 6 string or the 12 string guitar, and also playing it in one of the two C tunings or the two D tunings that he uses the most..

“When I recorded these songs I just went in there without any sheets,” Cyril says. “I didn't know what I was going to play. I just started playing everything I know, everything I could think of. Sometimes I would play for 8 to 10 hours at a time. I learned a lot by playing solo. As I listen to them now, I wish I could add something else. I'm always thinking of different ways I can arrange a song, how I can make it sound better. I love doing the same song in many different ways. For example, I think to myself: ‘One other guitar will bring up the song better’, or, ‘next time I'll try playing on the beat’, or, ‘I can make the notes linger, or sustain longer’, or, ‘I can bring the vocal up a little’, or, ‘next time I'll play it softer or louder.’ When I record, I just bring a songbook, I don't bring any charts. I just play how I feel.”

7. **Meleana E**

Instrumental - 12 string guitar

Atta's C Major Tuning (C-G-E-G-C-E)

Another classic song, played as a beautiful soulful instrumental ballad. Note Cyril's signature three finger rolls in his improvised chord progression in the introduction, played by going from his thumb to his middle finger and then to his index finger with his picking hand, before he goes into his wonderful variations on the melody in a slow tempo. You can hear some influence from the Mexican music his dad Gabby so loved.

Cyril says, “This was the first time I ever played this song alone, so I tried to add things in there with the plucking, to make it a fuller sound; to make it sound like more than one guitar was playing another part. When my dad played this song, he'd say ‘Get ready, son’, and I'd grab my guitar, because it was my cue to do a solo. Me and my brothers mostly just accomp'd when we played music with our dad. Daddy never heard me play like this, solo kine. I think if he heard the way I play now, he'd really like it. I think he'd

say, ‘Why you never did this before?’”

This party standard, translated as “Maryann,” is sometimes attributed to Francis Samuel Ka’a’a, from around 1907, possibly talking about the *lomilomi* (massages) that the composer’s daughter, Maryann, gave his tired shoulders. Local football fans should recall Maryann’s son, longtime Farrington football coach Skipka Dias. It is also sometimes attributed to Kaimanahila around the same time, or it is possibly an even earlier traditional piece from around 1870.

This song was also recorded in a slow tempo by Slack Key guitarist Led Kaapana in the G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D), as a duet with acoustic steel guitarist Bob Brozman on their album [IN THE SADDLE](#) (Dancing Cat Records); and also in the normal faster tempo by Cyril’s brother Bla Pahinui on his albums [MANA](#) and [WINDWARD HEART-LIVE SOLO](#) (both on Dancing Cat Records).

8. **Kilakila ’O Moanalua/ Inu I Ka Wai**

Vocal- 12 string guitar

Atta’s C Major Tuning (C-G-E-G-C-E)

background vocals on Inu I Ka Wai by Bla Pahinui and Martin Pahinui

Cyril learned this medley of two old traditional favorites from his father, and they translate as “Majestic Moanalua” and “Drink the Water”. He also recalls hearing it played and sung by his father’s longtime friend Andy Cummings, who Gabby played steel guitar for from the late 1930’s through the 1950s with his band, Andy Cummings and His Hawaiian Serenaders, and Gabby always credited him as a big influence and inspiration. This song is a good example of the kind of lighthearted sing-along one often heard at parties.

Gabby Pahinui arranged and recorded it on the 1977 album GABBY PAHINUI HAWAIIAN BAND, VOLUME 2 (Panini Records). Cyril here, as Gabby also did, just plays the chorus part of *Inu I Ka Wai*, letting it function as a bridge for *Kilakila ’O Maunalua*. For the vocals on *Inu I Ka Wai*, brothers Bla and Martin dropped by to lend their support. It’s nice to hear all three making magic together again!

9. **Ki Ho’alu**

Instrumental- 12 string guitar

G Major “Taro Patch” Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D)

This popular theme finds its way into the repertoire of most Slack Key guitarists. Each tends to bring it something different, which nicely illustrates the individualism that is so important to the tradition. “This is a standard Slack Key tune that has been played by many Slack Key players,” confirms Cyril. “It has two chords going back and forth, and I am playing it on the 12 string guitar, because it has the octave chords, which makes it sound like two guitars playing.”

This is a beautiful improvisation with many unique variations on this traditional type of Slack Key guitar piece put together by Cyril, played in the G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-

D). Again note Cyril's beautiful three finger rolls in the beginning. This type of instrumental guitar piece, sometimes with the title *Ki Ho 'alu* (literally meaning *Slack Key*), is often played with different tempos, different melodies, different distinct guitar ornaments, and different ways of going back and forth between the two chords - the I and the V7 chords, here the G and D7th chords. It is often played in the G Major "Taro Patch" Tuning, as Cyril has recorded it here, but has also been recorded in several other tunings.

10. 'O Kamawailualani

Instrumental - 6 string guitar
Atta's C Major Tuning (C-G-E-G-C-E)

More great variations played by Cyril on the beautiful Liko Martin/ Laka Morton song, again especially on the bridges, here on the 12 string (also see song #2).

11. Waikiki Hula

Vocal -12 string guitar
Atta's C Major Tuning (C-G-E-G-C-E)

Isaac Keola wrote this hula in the 1920s. It tells the story of a boy waiting for his girlfriend, a Kamehameha school student. She told him to meet her at nine o'clock. As he waits long past the appointed time, he wonders if she will come. At least he put the time to good use coming up with a good song that still delights audiences eight decades later! As Cyril says, "I was in my best vocal pitch when I sang this."

Cyril also learned this from his dad Gabby, who recorded it twice in the C Mauna Loa Tuning (C-G-E-G-A-E): on the 1977 album THE GABBY PAHINUI HAWAIIAN BAND, VOLUME 2 (Panini Records), and with Eddie Kamae and the Sons of Hawai'i on their very influential 1971 album AN ISLAND HERITAGE (Panini Records 1001). Cyril's great thumb playing on the bass gives the rhythmic feeling of the Gabby Band.

Cyril recorded another vocal version of this song, again playing in the C Major Tuning, on his 1998 album KA HO'OLINA MAU [THE LEGACY CONTINUES] (Poki Records), with a more Latin-influenced feeling.

12. Salomila

Instrumental - 6 string guitar
Cyril's D 6/9th Tuning (D-A-D-F#-B-E – aka D Ni'ihau/ Old Moana Tuning)

Another beautiful improvisation on this traditional standard. Cyril again begins with his signature soulful *rubato* playing in the first two verses, sounding a bit like a lullaby, and featuring his soulful hesitations, rolls, and chord substitutions. He plays in tempo from verse three on, with his great variations on the melody, and other variations including rolls, bass lines, and also playing the melody with harmony notes in two registers: in the lower register in the eighth verse, in the higher register in the ninth verse, and again in the lower register in the tenth verse.

Salomila is a traditional party song that Cyril also learned from his dad, and it enjoyed great popularity in Hawai'i during the early 1950s while Cyril was growing up. Like many party songs in that era, *Salomila* illustrates an exciting mix of ethnic traditions. The title is Samoan; the lyrics, when sung, are English, though a couple of other verses are also sung in the Bahamas; the rhythm has some Puerto Rican elements; the guitar came to Hawai'i from Mexico and Spain and Portugal; but the feeling is still so very Hawaiian.

Some of the greatest improvisations that Cyril has recorded have been in his D6/9th Tuning that he uses here on *Salomila*. They are: *Moloka'i Nui A Hina*, and his compositions *Marketplace* and *Lullaby for Pops*, all three from his recording [6 & 12 STRING SLACK KEY](#) (Dancing Cat Records); and *Hurrah Lani Ha'a Ha'a*, the instrumental version of *Po Mahina*, *Ho'okena*, and *Sanoë*, all from his recording [NIGHT MOON \[PO MAHINA\]](#) (Dancing Cat Records); and *Pauoa Liko Ka Lehua*, which will be on his next Dancing Cat album.

Total Time: 50:41

TUNINGS USED BY CYRIL ON THIS ALBUM:

1. C Major "Atta's C" Tuning (C-G-E-G-C-E), for *He'eia* (the vocal version), *Hula Blues*, *Kilakila 'O Moanalua/ Inu I Ka Wai*, *Ku'u Pua I Paoakalani*, *Makee 'Ailana*, *Meleana E*, *O Kamawailualani* (both versions), and *Waikiki Hula*.
2. C Mauna Loa Tuning (C-G-E-G-A-E), for *He'eia* (the instrumental version).
3. G Major "Taro Patch" Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D), on *Ki Ho'alu*.
4. D 6/9th Tuning (D-A-D-F#-B-E - also known as "Cyril's D" or "D Ni'ihau/ Old Mauna Loa Tuning"), on *Salomila*.

Cyril has also used four other tunings on other recordings:

1. D Major Tuning (D-A-D-F#-A-D)
 2. G Wahine Tuning (D-G-D-F#-B-D)
 3. C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-D)
 4. Standard Tuning (E-A-D-G-B-E)
-

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