

LINER NOTES

George Kahumoku, Jr. **DRENCHED BY MUSIC**

George Kahumoku, Jr. is an artist, musician, songwriter/composer, farmer, storyteller, and teacher. He is a graduate of the Kamehameha Schools and of Oakland's California College of Arts and Crafts, where he earned a BFA in sculpture. A graduate of the Hawai'i State Ag–Leadership Program, George has also achieved several awards for his farming abilities, and has been a 4–H leader.

Although George has spent the majority of his time as a self–employed farmer and musician, he has also held jobs such as a teacher and principal for a Native Hawaiian alternative school, and as an advocate for Native Hawaiians on the Big Island. George is currently teaching the Special Motivation Program at Lahainaluna High School on Maui, and focusing on his music and songwriting.

George likes to think of his music as nature songs; songs of love, hope, desire, and lament. His music and voice have been described as "earthy and organic — at one with the *'aina* (land)." George's love and respect for the *'aina*, instilled from birth, permeate his music. His large musical *'ohana* (family) exposed him to traditional Hawaiian music and *ki ho'alu* (slack key guitar) at an early age.

George began playing music professionally at the age of 13 with the legendary singer/songwriter Kui Lee in the mid–1960s, and performed and recorded albums with his brother Moses as The Kahumoku Brothers in the 1970s and 80s. In 1979, George received the highest honor in the Hawaiian music industry — a Na Hoku Hanohano Award — for his slack key compositions on Aunty Edith Kanaka'ole's landmark album HI'IPOI I KA 'AINA ALOHA (CHERISH THE BELOVED LAND). In 1995 George and his son Keoki Kaliko Kahumoku got together for the Kahumoku Family release, HO'OILINA – THE LEGACY. This old tradition of Hawaiian slack key passed on from father to son is also evident on DRENCHED BY MUSIC.

George explains, "When I'm playing an instrumental on my favorite guitar, the 12–string, or when I'm jamming with others, I imagine in my musical mind's eye all of my family members playing or singing along with me." He hears the strong bass, rhythm and lead of his dad George Kahumoku, Sr. on 6–string Martin guitar, the foundation of his slack key music; the steady rhythm of Tutu Koko'o Kahumoku on 'ukulele and her wailing *'i'i* (shrill vibrating) voice; and the rhythm 'ukulele sounds of Aunty Maile Tanaka. He can hear the four–part chorus sung by his Auntys Gwen, Queeny, Helen, and his mom; the mandolin and tipo sounds of Uncle Kali Kahumoku and the 'ukulele picking and *nahenahe* (soft and sweet) sounds of Uncle Moke Kahumoku. He hears the 12–string haunting slack key sounds of cousin Michael Naihe, and the steady bass of William "Billy 'Aina" DeMotta or Uncle Take on the wash tub. He can see the 6–string guitar with a capo made of a broken pencil and an old tire tube, played by his great grandfather Willy Kahumoku; and he can hear the piano sounds of butterflies and waterfalls played by his grandmother Emily Lihu'e Dulay. He imagines the laughter of Grampa Tommy Ei Nei Martinez' 4–string tenor guitar, then the *nahenahe*, raging flamenco stylings, and chimes of his brother Moses' 6–string nylon guitar. There are times for each player to take a *pa'ani* (play a

solo), and then it's "go for broke" and everyone goes off and just jams! This is the music that George remembers and plays for himself. At home in the backyard, late at night in the *aumoe* hours — between being awake and half asleep. George's experience in these odysseys is one of shared *aloha* (love) and being *pulupe o mele* (drenched by music).

This is the music and sound that George seeks to pass on to the next generation. "In the new tradition, we embrace the extended family too, and go beyond the Hawaiian race or family ties." An example of this is George's Lahainaluna High School Slack Key and 'Ukulele Club, where slack key is shared with all races and ages in an effort to keep slack key alive. Vocalist/'ukulele artist Diana Aki and acoustic steel guitarist Bob Brozman, who recorded duets with George for this album, are also artists in this extended family.

"Aunty Diana and I go way back," George says. "We worked together as teachers in the Kamehameha Schools' Alternative Program in Kona called Hale O Ho'oponopono, and our families have played music together for years." And, although George hasn't known Bob Brozman for long, he compliments Bob's style as similar to the early 1920s sound of Hawaiian artists like Sol Ho'opi'i, before the steel guitar was electrified. "Bob can play those older styles just like my ancestors."

George has also played a part in several documentaries about the music and cultural richness of the Hawaiian Islands. He contributed to the soundtrack of San Francisco filmmaker Steven Okazaki's TROUBLED PARADISE, and had a part in two slack key films, Eddie Kamae's THE HAWAIIAN WAY, and Susan Friedman's KI HO'ALU – THAT'S SLACK KEY GUITAR. George recently finished the soundtrack for the David Kalama/Mele Anna Meyer film ONIPA'A, which chronicles the Hawaiian sovereignty movement, and focuses on issues that have affected Native Hawaiians since the overthrow of Hawai'i's last monarch, Queen Lili'uokalani, in 1893. George played several of Lili'uokalani's songs in the film and it inspired him to release his first solo album, E LILI'U, his heartfelt tribute to the Queen and her music.

Sharing music with others has always been a big part of George's life, and he has enjoyed the many opportunities he has had performing in Hawai'i and abroad. George played slack key guitar for 17 years at the prestigious Mauna Kea Beach Hotel on the Kohala coast of the Big Island, and currently performs with his son Keoki at the Westin Maui. His travels have included an appearance at the Strawberry Music Festival in California's Yosemite National Park; and rare opportunities to share music with the Queen of England, the Premier of China, the Baron of Tonga, and the Prince of Thailand, as well as ranchers and farmers throughout the heartland of America. George has also toured with slack key guitarists Ray Kane, Keola Beamer, George Kuo, and Rev. Dennis Kamakahi. His favorite pastime, however, is sharing music and food with family and friends, on the beach or the back porch. On these songs, he uses his 12-string to share very special music with the listener.

ABOUT THE SONGS

Set One

1. *Queen's Jubilee*

In 1887, much was happening in the lives of Hawai'i's *ali'i* (royalty). Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop was beginning the Kamehameha Schools, and Queen Kapi'olani and then Princess Lili'uokalani set off on a three month journey to San Francisco, across the United States and then to England to help celebrate the 50th reigning year of Queen Victoria. In hand was this song, **Queen's Jubilee**, composed for Queen Victoria by Princess Lili'uokalani.

In 1987, one hundred years later, a delegation from the State of Hawai'i was sent to London to participate in the 100th anniversary of the Queen's Jubilee. Hawai'i received back feathered capes, canoes, and other artifacts taken from the Islands by Captain James Cook in 1778, and George was invited to play the **Queen's Jubilee** and other songs for Queen Elizabeth. In March of 1996, his special concert performance of Lili'uokalani's music was broadcast on England's Capitol FM Breakfast Show live from the Westin Maui.

This extended version of **Queen's Jubilee** is played by George in his "instrumental odyssey" style in G Major "Taro Patch" tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D), tuned down three half steps to the key of E and capoed up seven frets to sound in the key of B.

2. *Ka Uluwehi O Ke Kai (Plants of the Ocean)*

Written by Aunty Edith Kanaka'ole in 1978, this song tells the story of an event common to Hawaiians who live close to the *'aina* (earth) and *kai* (sea) – the simple task of gathering favorite seaweeds for eating. George and Moses played on Aunty Edith's original recording of **Ka Uluwehi O Ke Kai** on HI'IPOI I KA 'AINA ALOHA (CHERISH THE BELOVED LAND). The song has since become a classic for hula dancers and singers.

This mainly instrumental version is dedicated to the Kanaka'ole family and all those who have managed to keep the *oli* (chant) and *hula* (dance) traditions alive. George plays it in C Wahine tuning (C-G-D-G-B-D, also known as "Leonard's C" or "Dropped C"), tuned down to A, fingered in the keys of C and G, and sounding in the keys of A and E. In the last *ha'ina* (verse) of the chant he tells us, "Alas, the bag is full, let's go (home)," and continues, "Come on, join us in the delicacies of the Land, that brings strength to her people." George ends the song with a dedication to, "Kekuhikuhi," Aunty Edith's Hawaiian name.

3. *Hanohano Hawai'i*

Acoustic steel guitarist Bob Brozman joins George on this duet, performing a compilation of traditional songs honoring the *lei* (wreaths) of flowers and colors of the islands of Hawai'i, Maui, O'ahu, and Kaua'i. George plays in G Major tuning, tuned down two half steps to sound in the key of F. Bob plays in G Major tuning, tuned to the key of G, and played in the key of F. In **Hanohano Hawai'i**, which has often been recorded

under the title **Sweet Lei Lehua**, notice the simplicity of the words and the inferred colors of each island.

4. *Kauanoeanuhea*

George was first introduced to Keali'i Reichel's music by his daughter Sarah Malie Hall and her friend Shilo Chang when they learned this song as 9th graders in the Lahainaluna High School Boarders' Chorus. In 1994 George had the honor of backing up Keali'i on his performance of **Kauanoeanuhea** at the annual L.L.H.S. David Malo Day Program, as senior Nohea Kahalewai performed the hula. It has since become a classic favorite of the Kahumoku family. George sings and plays it beautifully here in G Major tuning, tuned down two half steps to sound in the key of F.

5. *U'i Lani*

Composed by Hawai'i's Songbird, Lena Machado, **U'i Lani** is another Kahumoku family favorite. What makes a family song is not necessarily who composed it, but the aloha and ability to relate to it. **U'i Lani** was such a favorite of George's parents that his sister was named Sharleen U'ilani. Hawaiians call this tradition *mele inoa*, or child song naming. At family gatherings, Sharleen is usually asked to hula "her" song.

George dedicates this unique instrumental version to his hardworking sister and her five kids, Keone, Kahea, Keli'i, Ikaika, and Kai Malino. Played in C Wahine tuning, tuned down three half steps to the key of A, George puts a heaven space-like section in the song using harmonics. Together with the next piece, **Kaulana Na Pua**, the pair are an interesting example of tonality as both sound in the key of A, yet are in different tunings.

Set Two

6. *Kaulana Na Pua (Famous are the Flowers [Children])*

This song reflects the struggles of Hawaiians in their search for identity and sovereignty. It was written by Ellen Pendergast as a protest of the overthrow of her friend, Queen Lili'uokalani in 1893, and of the annexation of Hawai'i by the United States. At the time of its composition, **Kaulana Na Pua** was known as **Mele 'Ai Pohaku (The Stone Eating Song)** or **Mele Aloha 'Aina (Patriot's Song)**, because Hawaiians felt they would rather eat stone than give up their land. This song was considered sacred and not for hula.

In this soulful twenty chorus instrumental odyssey, George illustrates the feeling of despair, abandonment, and complete loss, yet also an embracing of faith, hope and love. He captures the loss of land and self-esteem felt by his *kupuna* (grandparents), his *makua* (parents), and the *keiki* (children) and what they have endured for over 100 years. Here, he plays in G Major tuning, tuned down three half steps to the key of E, and capoed up five frets to sound in the key of A.

7. *Kaulana O Kawaihae (Famous is Kawaihae)*

From 1977 to 1993, George and his family played *ki ho'alu* at the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel in Kawaihae on the Big Island. In this song by Kaili Awai, the composer tells a story about the Hawanawana (Whispering Breath of the Ocean), the view of Mauna Kea, and beauty of the *'ilima* (yellow flower). George was taught this song by his cousin Michael Naihe who heard it on the radio done by the group Hui Ohana (Dennis Pava'o, and Ledward and Nedward Kaapana) from their album ONO (Lehua Records 9010).

This duet version with Diana Aki was inspired by a previous recording of **Kawaihae** that George, Moses, and Diana did together in the mid-1970s. Here, George plays *ki ho'alu* in G Major tuning, tuned down to G, and Diana plays 'ukulele in the Standard 'ukulele tuning (G-C-E-A) in the key of G. These are actually "D" type guitar chord shapes.

8. *E Kupuna Ei Nei*

George calls this his "lost song" for two reasons. His original penned version of **E Kupuna Ei Nei**, written in 1975 with Kalani Meinecke, became lost, and was later found by George Winston on one of Moses' home recordings from 1977. Secondly, the song is about George's "long lost" *hanai* (adopted) grandfather, Tommy Ei Nei Martinez, who was named after the 1950s song **Ei Nei**. George rewrote it in 1995 in tribute to Ei Nei for the aloha he shared in caring for George's great grandmother, Tutu Koko'o Kahumoku, in her aging years.

George and his brother Van were reared by Tutu Koko'o and Grampa Ei Nei for awhile, and George recalls that Ei Nei was skilled in *Lua* (Hawaiian martial arts). In his younger years, Ei Nei traveled amongst sugar plantation camps on the Big Island, harvesting cane on the weekdays, and playing lead guitar, mandolin and banjo at dances held on the weekends. Ei Nei also taught George and his cousins how to play the banjo, mandolin, tipo, and four-string tenor guitar

While away at college in 1971, George got news of Tutu Koko'o's death. Unable to afford to come home, he lost track of his beloved Ei Nei. Upon graduation in 1973, George returned to the Big Island and began his search for Ei Nei. *E Kupuna Ei Nei* recounts his two year journey in search of Ei Nei. George thought he would find Ei Nei doing the farming tasks of picking coffee, harvesting taro, and papaya. But being up in years, farm work was becoming too hard for Ei Nei, and instead, George finally found him happy and contented, and working as a caretaker at the Old Waipuna Restaurant across from Hilo's Hukilau Hotel, and playing music with the Salvation Army. In 1975 Ei Nei moved in with George and his family in Hilo and lived with them until 1982. **E Kupuna Ei Nei** is played on the 'ukulele in Standard 'ukulele tuning in the key of C, tuned down a half step to sound in the key of B.

9. *Ho'oipoipo O Wai'anapanapa (Courtship of Wai'anapanapa)*

Kit Ebersbach of Pacific Music Productions is the master of recording Hawai'i's environmental sounds. He recorded all of the nature sounds on George's album *E LILI'U*,

and provided him with a slew of new sounds, hoping George would include some in a new song he might compose. While listening to Kit's recording of the cooing birds and dripping water of the Wai'anapanapa cold water caves near Hana, Maui, it brought forth visuals of lovers courting near water. It inspired him to compose this instrumental melody in the old D Wahine tuning (D-A-D-F#-A-C). George dedicates it to his friends Ben and Cecilia Churchill, the two cooing birds near the water.

10. *Aloha 'Oe*

Inspired by a tender parting scene, Queen Lili'uokalani penned this classic love song in 1877. Through the years, **Aloha 'Oe** has earned fame the world over, becoming a popular song of farewell.

George played with his brother Moses for well over 20 years. No doubt Moses has been the biggest influence on George's music since their dad died. For one, it was Moses who introduced George to the minor keys and other frets on the guitar key board that traditional slack key guitarists would skip or even leave out. It was also Moses who inspired George to go beyond the usual and invent these slack key odysseys.

The brothers would often interweave different tunings and experiment while playing a familiar melody. In George's eyes, Moses is the best 6-string nylon guitarist in the world. He dedicates this song of aloha to Moses, and in the tradition of the brothers' style, George plays the lead on a 12-string guitar in G Major tuning, capoed up five frets to sound in the key of C. He adds a second guitar, a 6-string nylon, in D Wahine tuning, tuned down two half steps to sound in the key of C, and visualizes Moses as he plays.

Liner notes by George Kahumoku, Jr., with technical assistance by George Winston.

George Kahumoku's Guitar Tunings Used on this Album:

G Major "Taro Patch" (D-G-D-G-B-D) used on all songs except where noted

C Wahine (C-G-D-G-B-D) for Ka Uluwehi O Ke Kai and U'i Lani

D Wahine (D-A-D-F#-A-C#) for Ho'oipoipo O Wai'anapanapa and the backup 6-string nylon guitar on Aloha 'Oe

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In memory of Willy Aki

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Nature sounds of birds and wet caves engineered by Kit Ebersbach, Pacific Music Productions

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