

The Legendary Leonard Kwan

This first CD reissue of the late Leonard Kwan's historic Tradewinds recordings marks an important event for all fans of slack key. Leonard's unique and beautiful style is lovingly represented on these legendary tracks recorded from 1957-1974. This CD includes all of the masterful Tradewinds tracks with Leonard as a leader, plus two songs featuring him as a sideman. His classic 1960 album SLACK KEY (the "Red Album"), part of this reissue, was the first ever all-instrumental album of slack key guitar. It influenced and inspired everyone who plays slack key and continues to be the most influential slack key guitar album in history.

Liner Notes:

NOTE: Hawaiian words include the 'okina (glottal stop) but do not include the kahako (macron).

"Producing Leonard was the most enjoyable thing I have ever done - both for the music and for who he was personally. He was full of endless delightful surprises. He and his music were one - every note, chord, and musical phrase reflects who he was."

George Winston

With his recording debut in 1957 on an Island Recording Studio 45 rpm, and especially with these landmark Tradewinds label releases from the 1960s and early 1970s, Leonard Ke'ala Kwan (1931-2000) established himself as one of slack key's most distinctive and influential talents.

According to producer George Winston, Leonard is one of the three most influential slack key players in history, along with Philip "Gabby" Pahinui (1921-1980), and Edwin "Sonny" Chillingworth (1932-1994). All three of these legendary figures were influential for three main reasons. First, each had a very individualistic style and played with great soul and beauty, often in his own set of preferred tunings. Second, their recordings were not only of very high artistic quality but were also among the earliest and most widely distributed slack key albums. Third, while Gabby and Sonny were high profile live performers and Leonard better known as a recording artist, all three were prominently recorded as featured soloists in group settings. This helped establish slack key as an integral part of the typical Hawaiian band. Previously, slack key guitar had been commonly heard at family gatherings, at private parties, and in homes, but was seldom brought into the commercial music world. Now, thanks largely to Gabby, Sonny, and Leonard, it has become a mainstream sound in local Hawaiian music.

Leonard also served as a de facto house session slack key guitarist for Tradewinds. In an interview in 1994, Leonard told J. W. Junker that Tradewinds owner Margaret Williams had originally asked his uncle, "Pete" Hau'oli, to record in the late 1950s. When Pete

recommended Leonard instead, and loaned him his Gibson F-hole electric guitar (which Leonard made all of his recordings on from the 1950s through the 1970s), a test recording was made which yielded an innovative, very catchy instrumental, without a name. Don McDiarmid, Sr., the great swing era composer and bandleader, named it '*Opihi Moemoe*. When released as a 45 rpm single in the late 1950s, it became an instant classic among slack key guitarists. Don also named some of the other original instrumentals that didn't have titles, including '*Opihi Bounce*, '*Opihi Momona Nui*, and '*Nahenahe*. Margaret Williams then possibly named the remaining two compositions by Leonard, '*Pau Pilikia* and '*Manini*.

A full album of instrumental tracks, titled SLACK KEY, soon followed in 1960. Known affectionately as the "Red Album", this was the first album in Hawaiian recording history devoted exclusively to slack key instrumentals, and it has influenced and inspired virtually all slack key players since, as much or more than any other slack key album. It established repertoire, techniques, and tunings (five out of the eleven slack key tunings that Leonard used were on that album) that have become standard features in the tradition. It also featured six originals by Leonard, out of the ten songs on the album (there were twelve tracks, but two were repeated), a feat unheard of before or since on an instrumental slack key recording, until Keola Beamer's eight originals on his 2002 album SOLILOQUY (Dancing Cat Records). Gabby Pahinui was the most influential slack key guitarist in history, but Leonard's "Red Album" was the most influential slack key *album* ever.

Also according to George Winston, Leonard is honored in slack key circles with two tunings named for him, since he was the one who most prominently recorded in them: the C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-D), which is often referred to as "Leonard's C" or "Leonard's C Wahine Tuning"; and the F Wahine Tuning (C-F-C-G-C-E), sometimes known as "Leonard's F" or "Leonard's F Wahine Tuning" (and he was the first one to ever record in this F Wahine Tuning).

Kwan's recordings also impressed guitarists outside of Hawai'i, including folk musician Pete Seeger, who invited Leonard to the prestigious Newport Folk Festival (he declined); and the great Nashville guitarist Chet Atkins, who heard his golf caddy play Leonard's '*Opihi Moemoe* while in the Islands, and on his return to Nashville recorded his own great take on the song (under the title *Hawaiian Slack Key*), on his 1974 solo guitar album ALONE (RCA Records).

Like most slack key masters, Leonard grew up in a musical family. His mother, Rose Hau'oli, sang traditional Hawaiian music. His grandfather, Reverend Ambrose Hau'oli Kaua, directed the choir at the family's church. Reverend Kaua also played a little slack key, but Leonard's main teacher was his uncle, Joseph "Pete" Hau'oli. "I started when I was about ten," he said. By all accounts, Leonard progressed rapidly and soon was playing with his uncle in downtown Honolulu during the boom days of World War II. "I got the chance to play with Genoa Keawe, Andy Cummings, Benny Rogers, all the union guys," he said. He also studied band at school, picking up alto sax, music theory, and what would be his main instrument for many years, the string bass.

“When I was about sixteen I joined Charlie Kaniyama’s fifteen piece band,” Leonard said. “We played dance music, the popular hits of the day, Hawaiian and pop.” Big band music became one of the influences on his slack key playing: for some of the chord structures (especially the Seventh and Ninth chords), and for the use of push beats (playing just before a downbeat). He was also influenced by the Latin music of the day, most specifically the rhythm of the maracas. He also played with smaller groups, often on string bass, electric bass, rhythm guitar, and slack key guitar. He especially enjoyed playing with slack key great Sonny Chillingworth’s band. “Sonny always encouraged me to play slack key. Compliments from such a great player like that really meant a lot,” Leonard said. As with most slack key guitarists, Leonard also cites Pops Gabby Pahinui as a major influence. “I never did play with Gabby,” Leonard said. “But I like the way he played.”

At the height of the big slack key revival of the 1970s, Tradewinds released a second full album of Leonard’s work in 1975, appropriately titled THE OLD WAY. Still using his uncle’s famous Gibson electric, he performed twelve more classics in his inimitable style and created one of slack key’s first instruction manuals, SLACK KEY INSTRUCTION BOOK, on Tradewinds Publications (see the discography).

Health problems and growing family commitments took Leonard out of the limelight in the late 1970s and the 1980s, though his influence continued to grow. In the late 1980s, he began recording his extensive repertoire in the solo format for Dancing Cat Records, the label specializing in slack key recordings which is owned by pianist/guitarist and slack key enthusiast George Winston. “Recording Leonard was the most enjoyable thing I have ever done,” says Winston. “Both for the music and for who he was personally. He was full of endless delightful surprises. He and his music were one - every note, chord, and musical phrase reflects who he was.” Winston has also produced the reissue of these classic Tradewinds recordings, a long time dream of his.

Tradewinds was an interesting label, founded by Margaret Williams (1906-1993), a Florida native who settled in the Islands with her first husband Cy Williams. Margaret was greatly attracted to the local music scene, especially the musicians who performed in older, traditional styles.

In 1958, she decided to begin a record label. While it relied, like the other labels of the time, on musicians playing in Waikiki for its talent pool, Tradewinds crafted a unique sound by recording the music you would hear after hours in the clubs or at private parties. This included the *nahenahe* (soft and gentle) traditional singing of Noelani Mahoe, the rural-inflected vocals of Linda Dela Cruz, the Halekulani Girls (a trio with singers Alice Fredlund, Linda Dela Cruz, and Sybil Andrews), the spectacular *leo ki’eki’e* (falsetto) of Uncle Bill Ali’ihoa Lincoln, Maui singer Emma Farden Sharpe, ‘ukulele stylists Mungo Jerry (Harry Kalahiki) and Nelson Waikiki; and it became the main label for *ki ho’alu* (slack key guitar). According to Margaret’s second husband, Dr. Robert Tufft, slack key was her chief musical interest. Slack key giants Gabby Pahinui (1921-1980), Atta Isaacs (1929-1983), and Ray Kane (1925-2008) all recorded for Tradewinds, but the mainstay

was Leonard Kwan. Singer Linda Dela Cruz mentioned how wonderful and enhancing it was to sing to Leonard's beautiful slack key accompaniment (see the discography), and how nice of a person he was.

(For a list of the Tradewinds Records recordings, also see the discography).

This album collects, for the first time, all of Leonard Kwan's masterful tracks under his own name for the Tradewinds label and the Island Recording label. They were recorded from 1957-1975, and each track has a timeless quality. Leonard's talent, creativity, humility, delightful smile, sly sense of humor, and *aloha* shine through as clearly now as then. Though he passed away in 2000, his music continues to delight, expressing an individual style firmly rooted in a deep tradition.

In an interview in the early 1990s, Leonard told J. W. Junker that, for him, meaning resides in how you say something much more than in what you say. "If you shout 'come here!' at someone, they'll run away," he said. "But if you whisper gently, then they'll come...and they'll stay!" On these classic recordings, he whispers very gently indeed; one more reason they will always stay close to the hearts of all lovers of slack key.

1. *Hawaiian Chimes* (2:51)

B Flat Wahine Tuning (F-Bb-D-F-A-D), from the lowest pitched string to the highest. Originally issued on 45 rpm (Island Recording Studio 45-314-A). Sidemen unknown.

This was Leonard's very rare debut recording, released around 1957, near the end of Hawai'i's days as a Territory. He plays this original composition from the 1950s, in the older and rarely recorded (but not obsolete) B Flat Wahine Tuning.

Its chief characteristic is Leonard's unique way of playing harmonics, which gives the recording its title. For this technique, he touches the strings lightly with his right hand index finger at the natural harmonics found at the fifth, seventh, and twelfth frets (the frets they sound out the loudest and clearest on), while *simultaneously* plucking them with his right hand thumb, a move usually done with two hands. On certain notes, he also hammers on the first fret of the second and fourth strings, after plucking the open (unfretted) harmonic note (a hammer-on means to rapidly fret a note somewhere above the first note played on the string just after it is plucked). This is the first time this unusual and exotic technique was ever recorded in the slack key tradition. He also used it on his 1975 recording *New 'Opihi Moemoe* (song # 14), which is in the same B Flat Wahine Tuning.¹

Leonard begins the songs with beautiful C Ninth, F Seventh, and B Flat Sixth chords, then plays great variations for ten verses, telling a story with his musical phrases, as he did so well, before playing the harmonic chimes for the last four verses.

Leonard redid this tune with the title *Ki Ho'alu Chimes* on his 1995 recording KE`ALA'S MELE (Dancing Cat Records). There he played it in the related D Wahine Tuning (D-A-D-F# -A-C# - from the lowest pitched string to the highest), which basically uses the same finger positions, except one string *up* in pitch (the highest

pitched first, second, third, fourth, and fifth strings in the D Wahine Tuning play what is played on the second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth strings, respectively, in the Bb Wahine Tuning).

Tracks 2- 11 were originally issued in 1960 on the album SLACK KEY [the “Red Album”] (Tradewinds 103). They were produced by Margaret Williams and feature Leonard Kwan on slack key guitar with Noelani Mahoe on ‘ukulele, and probably the following sideman: Napua (Matthew Wright), upright bass; Aina (Mungo Harry Kalahiki, who recorded the first album that Tradewinds ever issued in the late 1950’s, MUNGO PLAYS UKULELE), on ‘ukulele, and rhythm guitar; Alike (Alex Cash), rhythm guitar; Kaia (Harold Haku’ole), ‘ukulele, and rhythm guitar; and Charlie Makua’ole Parker, rhythm guitar.

Tracks 2-13 and Track 27 were recorded in Margaret Williams’ living room; or at SOS Studio, recorded by Ted Takase.

2. *‘Opihi Moemoe* [2:57]
G Major “Taro Patch” Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D)

Leonard’s best known and most recorded composition, which he put together in the 1950s, features a modulation (going between the keys of G and C), and it was the first recorded slack key composition to do so.

It also has three distinct melody sections, and it features a distinctive way of playing the opening melody on the G Major chord in Leonard’s two-finger picking style, using his thumb and index finger. He starts it by playing the open (unfretted) G bass note on the fifth string with his thumb, followed by a signature triplet phrase: beginning on the third string open G note played with his index finger, then playing the same G note on the fifth fret of the fourth string with his thumb, and back again to the open G note played on the third string with his index finger. On the answering phrase he plays it in a similar way, with the addition of a fourth G note, played on the fifth fret of the fourth string with his thumb. This playing of the same note on two successive strings gives the first melody a strong drone quality.

On the next chord, the D Seventh, he plays triplets and uses his trademark slide technique, giving the song a marvelous flowing quality. The third string slide is from the A note to the B note (from the second fret to the fourth fret - and he also sometimes just plays the open G note on the third string here instead of sliding), and the fourth string slide is from the F# note to the G (from the fourth fret to the fifth fret); then he hits the third string open G note (and when he sometimes plays the open third string G note instead of the slide as mentioned earlier, he gets even more of a drone feeling). He also plays other beautiful phrases in triplets throughout the song.

On the last two verses he plays an unusual (for slack key guitar) bass pattern with the lowest note played on the fifth or sixth string on beat one of the measure (depending on whether he is using the G Major chord, where he plays the fifth string; or the D Seventh chord, where he plays the sixth string); and then the fourth string played on the second, third, and fourth beats of the measure (for both the G Major and the D Seventh chords). 'Ukulele players, such as the great Eddie Kamae, sometimes use this rhythm; as sometimes did slack key guitarist Gabby Pahinui, most notably on the songs *Waikiki Hula*, and *Kilakila 'O Moanalua/ Inu I Ka Wai*, on his recording THE GABBY PAHINUI HAWAIIAN BAND, VOLUME 2 (Panini Records).

The modulation to the key of C is played with an E note bass, on the fourth string, second fret, creating an unresolved tension, which resolves when the song modulates back to the key of G (also see *Sase*, song # 21, for more on this principle).

'*Opihi Moemoe* became an instant classic when it first appeared on 45 rpm around 1958, and it wound up on jukeboxes throughout Hawai'i, and got radio play as well, expanding its influence. The 45 disc credits the following sidemen: Napua (Matthew Wright), upright bass; Aina (Mungo Harry Kalahiki), 'ukulele; and Alika (Alex Cash), rhythm guitar.

Because Leonard rarely sang, he often used song titles and medleys to express the important Hawaiian poetic value of *kaona*, or deeper hidden meaning (his two recorded vocals are on the song *E Lili'u E*, on his album KE'ALA'S MELE on Dancing Cat Records, and on his family song *We Wish You Merry Christmas* [not the Mainland American Christmas standard with the similar name], on the compilation album HAWAIIAN SLACK KEY CHRISTMAS, also on Dancing Cat Records). He enjoyed telling stories with his music and associated many of his tunes with very specific narratives along with the *kaona*:

An '*opih*i is a limpet, a type of marine mollusk that clings to tidal rocks. '*Opihi Moemoe*, which means the sleeping limpet (shell fish) on the beach, starts off a series of tunes that, for Leonard, celebrate the life cycle. Leonard always enjoyed talking about the *kaona* of the story within the "Red Album", and it was wonderful to hear him tell it each time, with slight variations, and to see the looks of astonishment and wonderment on the faces of the uninitiated (and even the partially and the fully initiated). Next in the cycle are '*Opihi Bounce* (which is self-explanatory), and '*Opihi Momona Nui* (the big '*opih*i). According to Leonard, the cycle is continued through *Maori Brown Eyes* (for a newborn), *Manini* (the portrait of an energetic child), *Yellow Ginger Lei* (for graduation from high school, a time when people get smothered in leis from all their relatives and friends), and *Silver Threads Among the Gold* (for old age; although occasionally when Leonard told the story, he instead stated *Grandfather's Clock*, from THE OLD WAY album, for the end of the story). Often with Leonard, the *kaona* was expressed in unexpected and always delightful subjects (musical and otherwise).

'*Opihi Moemoe* was also most notably recorded by these slack key guitarists: Led

Kaapana, on his 1994 recording LED LIVE – SOLO (Dancing Cat Records); Cyril Pahinui, uniquely played in the D Major Tuning (D-A-D-F# -A-D), on his 1998 recording NIGHT MOON [PO MAHINA] (Dancing Cat Records); and Peter Moon, on the Peter Moon Band's 1980 album MAILE (Panini Records 1011). Nashville guitarist Chet Atkins also recorded a beautiful and unique version (under the title *Hawaiian Slack Key*), on his 1974 solo guitar album ALONE (RCA Records).

3. ***My Yellow Ginger Lei/ E Huli Huli Ho'i Mai*** [2:35]
G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D)

This great medley of the John Keawehawaii classic, My Yellow Ginger Lei, composed in the 1920s, and combined with the older traditional love song E Huli Huli Ho`i

Mai, is another slack key standard, thanks to this beautiful and influential recording. Since Leonard's 1960 recording of this, when most slack key guitarists play My Yellow Ginger Lei, they put E Huli Huli Ho`i Mai with it Leonard plays two verses of the first song, then two verses of the second song, and returns to the first song for two more verses. His medleys sometimes used songs that did not have a chorus, so that the second song, in effect, becomes the "chorus" of the first song (for three more of these kind of medleys on this recording, also see *Kane'ohe [Aloha Ku'u Home Kane'ohe] / Mama E* [song # 8], *Aia Hiki Mai/Koni Au/Palisa* [song # 13]), and *'Akaka Falls/Imi Au Ia'Oe*[song # 19].

On his 1995 recording KE'ALA'S MELE (Dancing Cat Records), he recorded three more medleys like the one here (combining songs that don't have bridges): *Pretty Kehaulani/Ipo Hula*; also *None Hula/He Aloha No'O Honolulu*; also *Puamana/Mi Nei*; and *E Lili'u E/ Ki Ho'alu*. By contrast, slack key guitarist Keola Beamer more often composes a bridge when playing a song that doesn't have one, rather than making a medley with another song.

Here he uses the tremolo setting on his amplifier, an effect which was sometimes favored by Leonard and other slack key guitarists, such as William Namahoe, who used this sound on his song *Music for Dreaming*, recorded in the late 1940s or the early 1950s (issued on THE HISTORY OF SLACK KEY GUITAR, on Hana Ola Records).

Slack key master Led Kaapana recorded a great version of this medley as a pure duet with acoustic steel wizard Bob Brozman on their album KIKA KILA MEETS KI HO'ALU (Dancing Cat Records).

4. ***'Opihi Bounce*** [2:18]
G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D)

This composition from the 1950s, the second part of Leonard's famous '*opih*i cycle,

features a traditional old-style theme, song structure, and arrangement. He also sometimes plays the bass pattern that he used in the last two verses of '*Opihi Moemoe* (song # 2), playing a bass note on each of the four beats of the measure: on the lowest pitched fifth or sixth strings on the first beat (depending on if the G Major chord or the D Seventh chord is being used, respectively); and then on the fourth string for the next three beats (for both the G Major and the D Seventh chords). He plays the main theme in the first, fifth, and the ninth (last) verses, with the other verses featuring variations. On the seventh and eighth verses, notice the use of natural harmonic chimes at the twelfth fret. A staple technique of the slack key tradition, natural harmonics are played by touching a string lightly at (usually) the twelfth, seventh, or fifth frets with the left hand, while picking normally with the right hand; and the harmonics often are used to answer another phrase.

5. '*Opihi Momona Nui* [2:25]
G Wahine Tuning (D-G-D-F# -B-D)

For his third original composition from the 1950s from his '*opih*i cycle, Leonard switches from the G Major "Taro Patch" Tuning to the G Wahine Tuning. Wahine Tunings contain a Major seventh note (here the F#), which gives them their characteristic sound. This open (unfretted) note is also the third of the V chord (here the D Seventh), another characteristic sound of Wahine Tunings.

In addition, in this G Wahine Tuning (D-G-D-F# -B-D), the first position G Major and D Seventh chords (with the G Major chord formed by fretting the first fret on the third string and leaving the rest of the strings open [unfretted]; and the D Seventh chord formed by fretting the second fret of the fifth string and the first fret of the second string), are the exact same relative voicings as, in the Standard Tuning (E-A-D-G-B-E), the first position A Major chord (formed by fretting notes on the second fret of the fourth, third, and second strings, and with the sixth, fifth, and first strings open), and a common E Seventh chord (with the sixth and first strings open, and fretting notes on the second fret of the fifth string, the second fret of the fourth string, the first fret of the third string, and the third fret of the second string). The similarity of these voicings shows that this G Wahine Tuning was an early slack key tuning that the Hawaiians created, influenced by the sounds of these Standard Tuning A Major and E Seventh chords, commonly used in the traditional music of the Mexican and Spanish cowboys who brought the guitars to Hawai'i around 1832.

Slack key guitarist Sonny Chillingworth (for whom Leonard sometimes played bass), also used this tuning for his famous fast-paced instrumental, *Whee Ha Swing*, which he composed around 1958, and recorded several times, including on the album HAWAII ALOHA: ECHOES OF OLD HAWAII [Anthology Recording] (Waikiki Records 107 –out-of-print), with the title *Slack Key II* (the title given on the album jacket; on the inner sleeve of the LP the title is *Slack Key*), and this same track was also issued on 45 rpm under the real title, *Whee Ha Swing* (Waikiki Records 45-571 –out-of-print). Sonny also recorded *Whee Ha Swing* on his 1964 album WAIMEA COWBOY (Lehua Records 2003); on his 1977 album SONNY (Poki Records 9025 –out-of-

print); and on the 1960s anthology album WAIKIKI SWINGS (Hula Records 520 –out-of-print). Other notable versions of *Whee Ha Swing* have been recorded by Led Kaapana, on his 1994 album LED LIVE – SOLO (Dancing Cat Records); also by George Kuo (with the group Hui Aloha), on the 1999 album HUI ALOHA (Dancing Cat Records); and by Cyril Pahinui (with the Peter Moon Band), on the 1980 album MAILI (Panini Records 1011).

Slack key guitarist Ray Kane also features this G Wahine Tuning for his signature song *Punahele*, as well as for his song *Wa'ahila*. He recorded these songs on his albums for Dancing Cat Records, PUNAHELE (from 1994), and WA'AHILA (from 1998); and on his 1975 Tradewinds album NANAKULI'S RAYMOND KANE, reissued on CD on Hana Ola Records, with the title THE LEGENDARY RAY KANE – OLD STYLE SLACK KEY – THE COMPLETE EARLY RECORDINGS, which also includes his earlier recordings of these two songs from the early 1960s. Both Ray Kane and Sonny Chillingworth have cited Leonard's recordings as an inspiration.

'Opihi Momona Nui, with eleven great verses of variations, features in the second and third verses an influential technique where Leonard plays a note, then immediately moves to the next fret above on the same string, which is sometimes the same note as the next highest string above that one. For example, during this run for the G Major chord, he frets the *third* string B Flat note on the fourth fret, then moves to the B note on the fifth fret, then strikes the open (unfretted) same B note on the *second* string. Slack key guitarist Led Kaapana, who cites Leonard as a main influence when he was growing up, is currently the guitarist using this technique most prominently, and he recorded a version of this piece (actually, with the title *'Opihi Bounce*), in the G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D), on his 1983 album LIMA WELA (reissued on Shaka Records). Slack key guitarist George Kuo sometimes uses this technique as well.

Notice Leonard's great signature run at the end of the seventh verse on the D Seventh chord. Also, in the tenth verse he uses soulful octaves on the first and fourth strings, in the section with the V chord (the D Seventh); these octaves are used much more often by Leonard and others in the C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-D), on the V chord (the G Seventh in that tuning – see *Nahenahe*, song # 6).

6. ***Nahenahe*** [1:53]
C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-D)

Although all slack key masters play in a variety of tunings, most have a favorite. Leonard always said that this particularly sweet one was his. To honor him, many slack key guitarists refer to it as “Leonard's C.”

A marvelous and unique original composition from the 1950s, combining a bass note, a picking pattern, and lead variations, *Nahenahe* translates as “gentle”, “soft”, or “relaxing.” This performance features a beautiful Latin-tinged bass line, played by the thumb on the open (unfretted) lowest string C note on the first beat; an index finger strum up the strings (in pitch) starting on the beat “one and”, and ending on beat two;

with the thumb again playing the open third string G note on the beat “two and”; and with the thumb playing the fourth string, fretted on the second fret (the E note), on the beat “three and.” Leonard was very influenced by Latin music, especially the rhythms of the maracas.

This track also features Leonard’s signature way of playing the bass with his thumb on the sixth or fifth strings, on *just* the first beat of the measure (depending on whether he is playing the C Major chord, where the sixth string is used; or the G Seventh chord, where the fifth string is used), instead of the alternating bass (also sometimes called “*double-thumb*ing” in Mainland America, where it has been prominent since the early 1900s) favored by many slack key guitarists, such as Gabby Pahinui and Ray Kane, where the thumb plays on all four beats of the measure, while the other fingers play the melody - for example, in the G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D), the lowest pitched fifth or sixth string is played on the first and third beats of the measure (depending on the chord being used, with the fifth string for the G Major chord, and the sixth string for the D Seventh chord), and a higher alternating bass note is played on the fourth string for both chords, on the second and fourth beats of the measure (this fourth string D note functions as the fifth for the G chord, and a higher octave tonic bass note for the D Seventh chord). Leonard’s bass technique here was directly influenced by his playing of the acoustic stand-up (and later the electric) bass since his youth.

He finishes each verse with a great signature lick on the G chord, which he also uses in the song *Po Mahina*, song # 26: with the F# note sliding to the G note (from the fourth fret to the fifth fret of the fourth string), then playing the open G note on the third string, then the G note again on the fifth fret of the third string, then the E note on the fifth fret of the second string, and again the G note on the fifth fret of the fourth string; then the F note on the third fret of the fourth string, then the D note on the second fret of the second string; to the open (unfretted) B note on the second string, then the open G note on the third string, then the C note on the first fret of the second string; then to the low C bass note on the sixth string. Also on the G Seventh chords, he uses the powerful and expressive octaves, played on the fourth and first strings, that are a natural attribute of this tuning.

Slack key guitarist Led Kaapana also recorded *Nahenahe*, with great variations, on his 1983 album LIMA WELA (reissued on Shaka Records); his brother Ned Kaapana also recorded it as a slack key medley with the song *Hilo Hawai’i*, on his 1996 album HIS OWN MAN (Lehua Records), and he features a great variation of Leonard’s G chord lick described above, playing it on higher frets on the fourth and second strings.

7. *Pau Pilikia* [3:06]

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

This traditional-based original from the 1950s (which is similar to the song *Ki Ho`alu*, song # 16), translates as “trouble’s end.” Released as Leonard’s second

single, it also wound up on jukeboxes throughout Hawai'i, giving it wider exposure than most slack key recordings of the time. Leonard plays this in an unusual Mauna Loa Tuning, with the fourth string tuned down to C (this is also done sometimes by players from the Island of Ni'ihau, and sometimes by Samoan guitarists such as Vainu`u Tu`igale`ava, who, according to guitarist and researcher Dennis Ladd, calls it "Ki Tufa", which possibly refers to "fourth position").

For comparison, from Sonny Chillingworth's album SONNY SOLO, on the Samoan song *Let Me Hear You Whisper*, he uses a C Mauna Loa Tuning with the fourth string also tuned down to C, but with the lowest pitched sixth string tuned *up* to F, that he called Samoan Mauna Loa Tuning (F-G-C-G-A-E).

Mauna Loa Tunings are usually based on a Major chord, with the two highest pitched strings tuned a fifth interval apart. This way, the two highest pitched thinnest strings in a Mauna Loa Tuning can easily be played in sixth intervals (intervals that in most other tunings are played on the highest pitched first string and the third string; or on the second and fourth strings – since in most other tunings most of the highest four pitched strings are tuned a fourth, a major third, or a minor third interval apart), producing the recognizably sweet sound that Mauna Loa Tunings bring out.

Leonard here uses the alternating bass so favored by Ray Kane, described in the song just above, *Nahenahe* (song # 6). He rarely used this bass technique, but also used it in the song *Ki Ho`alu* (song # 16); and in part of the song *Mauna Loa* on his 1995 recording KE'ALA'S MELE (Dancing Cat Records). Leonard here plays soulful slides (also favored by Ray Kane), on the two highest pitched strings, sliding up to the higher notes after the initial note is struck, and sometimes sliding down after a note is struck. Unusually and wonderfully long for a slack key recording from this time period, the first, sixth, and the tenth (last) verses state the main theme, and the other verses feature great variations, again telling a story with instrumental music that Leonard did so well.

The 45 rpm single release of *Pau Pilikia* credits the accompanists as: Mungo (Harry Kalahiki), rhythm guitar; Kaia (Harold Haku'ole), 'ukulele; and Napua (Matthew Wright), upright bass.

Again, slack key guitarist Led Kaapana also recorded a version on his 1983 album LIMA WELA (reissued on Shaka Records).

For other songs played by Leonard in Mauna Loa Tunings, also see *Maori Brown Eyes* (song # 11), and *Ki Ho`alu* (song # 16).

8. ***Kane'ohe*** (*Aloha Ku'u Home Kane'ohe / Mama E* [3:01]
C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-D)

This popular Kwan medley, which has also become the standard way to play these

songs in slack key, seamlessly combines two old favorites, neither of which have bridges, so here *Mama E* functions like a bridge to *Kane'ohē* for two more of these kind of medleys on this recording, also see *My Yellow Ginger Lei/E Huli Huli Ho'i Mai* [song # 3], *Aia Hiki Mai/Koni Au/Palisa* [song # 13]), and *'Akaka Falls/Imi Au Ia'Oe* [song # 19].

Kane'ohē (actually titled *Aloha Ku'u Home Kane'ohē* composed in the 1930s by Louise Hart Hopkins, honors the greenness and peacefulness of her home in the mountains of the Windward coast on the Island of O'ahu, near the town and district of Kane'ohē, with its beautiful lushness, streams, and the steep green cliffs of the *Ko'olaus* (which is also a term for the windward side of each of the Hawaiian Islands; on O'ahu, they are the also the name of the windward mountain range on the northeastern shore, which span the length of the Island's eastern coast from the vicinity of Kahuku Point, heading southeast towards Honolulu, then swerving east to Makapu'u Point, a distance of 34 miles). This range, because of the warm and moist winds coming in from the northeast, receives much rain and cloudy weather. This range has eleven *ahupua'a* (land divisions defined by natural resources, usually extending from the ocean to the uplands), including Waimanalo, He'eia, Kahalu'u, Kailua, and Kane'ohē, the beauty of which have been honored in songs over the years. One of the classic versions of *Kane'ohē* that Leonard heard is by Aunty Genoa Keawe, from her 1967 album GENOA KEAWE SINGS LUAU HULAS (Hula Records 514).

A *leo ki'eki'e* (falsetto) showcase piece, *Mama E* is a love song composed by Hiram Kaehu, with the original title of *E Mama E* (sometimes it is also called *E Mama Ea* as well), maybe as early as 1913. It tells a story about fishing for excitement at the old race track at the foot of Diamond Head, that lured so many young men away from home in the 1920s. Two of the definitive vocal versions of *Mama E* heard by Leonard are: an early 1950s version by Genoa Keawe for the 49th State label (reissued on the recording MELE HULA HAWAIIAN STYLE, on Hana Ola Records); and a 1946 version by Linda Dela Cruz for the Bell label (reissued on the recording ORIGINAL RECORDINGS FROM HAWAIIAN MUSIC'S GOLDEN AGE, on Tantalus Records). Great versions were also recorded in 1928 by steel guitarist/vocalist Sol Ho'opi'i (78 rpm –out-of-print), and in the late 1920s by Mme. Riviere's Hawaiians (Tau & Rose Moe), with the same lyrics, but with the Moe's version having a completely different melody and chords and rewritten by Tau Moe; the Moe's version was reissued on the recording VINTAGE HAWAIIAN MUSIC - THE GREAT SINGERS 1928-1934 (Rounder Records).

Leonard here plays just the four highest pitched strings, leaving the bass notes for the upright bass player, as is common in slack key when playing more jazz influenced songs without open bass strings for those chords. This was also often done by slack key guitarist Atta Isaacs, when playing in his C Major Tuning (C-G-E-G-C-E). Usually Leonard would play the bass notes for the C and G Major chords in songs like this one, but he doesn't even use those bass notes here. Notice his signature D

Ninth chord, influenced by the sounds he heard when playing bass with big bands in his youth, with the third (the F# note), played on the fourth string, fourth fret; and a G Seventh chord after it, with the flatted seventh (the F note), played on the fourth string, third fret. And notice his soulful dissonant sliding C chords at the end of each verse as well as his signature C Sixth end chord. Leonard plays three verses of *Kane'ohe*, then two verses of *Mama E*, and reprises with another verse of *Kane'ohe*.

Much of the slack key tradition includes playing classic and traditional Hawaiian songs as instrumentals, such as Leonard does here, as well as often backing up vocals with slack key guitar, and sometimes taking an instrumental break in between the vocal verses.

9. ***Manini*** [1:13]
G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D)

Another traditional type original by Leonard from the 1950s, this short melody appropriately named *Manini* (a small striped reef Surgeon fish; it is also used to mean “stingy”), provides a showcase for two of slack key’s signature sounds: the hammer-on and pull-off ornaments. A hammer-on is created by putting a finger down somewhere on a string after plucking it in the open position. This creates two pitches, the second a softer tone that rings within the halo of the first.

A pull-off is the reverse, made by plucking a string normally with the right hand, with a left hand finger fretting a note normally on the fretboard, then immediately pulling away the left hand for a second note (sounding either on the open string or with a note fretted somewhere else on the string). Both ornaments are tied aesthetically to *mele kahiko*, the most traditional and ancient known Hawaiian music, which is built entirely around chant and places a high value on sliding between registers, vibrato, and other often subtle vocal manipulations.

In the fourth verse, Leonard also features a bass run, one of the sub-traditions of slack key. He also plays natural harmonic chimes on the twelfth fret as an answer to a musical phrase, another prominent technique in the slack key tradition; and he ends the song with the twelfth fret chimes, also commonly done.

10. ***Silver Threads Among the Gold*** [3:42]
C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-D)

Sentimental American parlor songs of the 19th Century traveled the world and certainly found a warm reception in Hawaiian music, serving both as an influence for Hawaiian songs, and as repertoire performed in their original form. Composed in 1873 by Hart Danks and Eben Rexford, *Silver Threads Among the Gold* is a slack key standard, thanks to Leonard’s sweet, gently flowing arrangement. He starts with a beautiful rubato verse, featuring rolls played both up (in pitch) with his thumb and down with his index finger, as well as playing his trademark octaves on the first and fourth strings. He then goes into two verses in tempo, featuring beautiful C Sixth

chords, and then, following the D Seventh chord, a great roll up and down in pitch on the G Seventh chord.

Slack key guitarist Gabby Pahinui also helped diffuse it later through his recording of it, as part of the song *Slack-Key Medley (Hula Medley)*, recorded in 1961 and released in 1978 on the album PURE GABBY (Hula Records 567). Slack key guitarist Led Kaapana also recorded three versions in the same C Wahine Tuning as Leonard did here, with the title *Silver Strings*: first with the group Hui Ohana, backed by a string section, on the 1975 album HUI OHANA – FROM KALAPANA TO WAIKIKI, on Lehua Records 7020 (and this same track also appears on the recording BEST OF HUI OHANA, VOLUME 1, on Lehua Records); then on his 1983 album LIMA WELA (reissued on Shaka Records); and again on his 1994 album LED LIVE - SOLO (Dancing Cat Records).

Led Kaapana also recorded another similar song from outside of Hawai'i, *Rings on Your Fingers*, a hit from 1909, actually called *I've Got Rings on My Fingers* by the British composers R.P. Weston and F.J. Barnes, also on his LIMA WELA album. Slack key guitarist Atta Isaacs recorded a medley of old traditional American songs under the name *Leaping Loli (Polly Wolly Doodle/ I've Been Working on the Railroad)*, on his late 1960s duet album with Gabby Pahinui, TWO SLACK KEY GUITARS (Tradewinds Records).

11. **Maori Brown Eyes** [2:42]

G6th Mauna Loa Tuning (D-G-D-E-G-D)

This classic *mele ho'oipoipo* (love song), originally a waltz, speaks of romance with the lyrics “*ku`u ipo Maori brown eyes onaona* (my Maori sweetheart with the alluring brown eyes).” One of the earliest recordings of it as a waltz, was by the great steel guitarist Sol Ho'opi'i in 1934. It took on a new life in 4/4 time when Leonard recorded this celebrated and influential version in an unusual and rarely recorded G6th Mauna Loa Tuning, that has become known as “Maori Brown Eyes Tuning” (he also used this tuning for a version of the song *Ki Ho'alu*, as a medley with *E Lili'u E*, on his 1995 recording KE'ALA'S MELE, on Dancing Cat Records).

Here he uses a special bass line that he designed for this unique Mauna Loa Tuning, with the thumb playing the bass on the fifth or sixth strings, on the first beat of the measure (depending on the chord); and with the thumb also playing the fourth, third, and (again) the fourth strings, on the second, third, and fourth beats of the measure, respectively. He uses these bass patterns while playing the chords of the song: G Sixth, C Sixth, D Ninth, and A Seventh (for the A chord, he plays an A Seventh by barring [holding the index finger on all of the frets vertically] on the second fret and also fretting the third string, third fret; rather than just barring the A Sixth chord and not fretting any other notes - as he does for the C Sixth chord, using only the barre on it). He plays most of the melody by stroking up on the two highest pitched strings (with the notes therefore going down in pitch) with his index finger, enhancing the pensive mood of this version.

Sonny Chillingworth, the nephew of the song's composer, does a beautiful vocal version with slack key accompaniment in this same Mauna Loa Tuning, on his album SONNY SOLO (Dancing Cat Records). Sonny's version ends in waltz time, but sticks to 4/4 time in the body of the song, reflecting Leonard's impact even as it salutes the composer, Claude Malani, who probably wrote it around the early 1930s

For other songs played by Leonard in Mauna Loa Tunings, also see *Pau Pilikia* (song # 7), and *Ki Ho`alu* song # 16).

12. *`Opihi Moemoe* – (alternate version) [3:04]
G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D)

Slack key masters often add variations to each performance, but this alternate take recorded later, stays close to the version heard earlier (song # 2). There are subtle variations, such as the bass run at the end of the next to last verse. This track originally appeared on the early 1960s Tradewinds album SLACK KEY [the “Black & White Album”] (Tradewinds Records 106 – out-of-print), which also featured tracks by slack key guitarist Ray Kane (all the Leonard tracks from that album have been reissued by Hana Ola Records on this CD, and all the Ray Kane tracks have also been reissued by Hana Ola Records, on the recording THE LEGENDARY RAY KANE – OLD STYLE SLACK KEY – THE COMPLETE EARLY RECORDINGS).

13. *Aia Hiki Mai/Koni Au/Palisa* [2:05]
D Wahine Tuning (D-A-D-F#-A-C#), tuned up two half steps to sound in the key of E

In the late 19th Century, marches enjoyed a great vogue in Hawai`i, especially after the 1872 arrival of Prussian bandmaster Heinrich (Henry) Berger (1844-1929). Berger's fifty plus years leading the official band of the Hawaiian nation had a profound impact on local music, steel guitarists, and slack key guitarists, reflected especially in the first two of these three local favorites:

Aia Hiki Mai comes from the pen of Princess Likelike (1851-1887), and describes memories, some flashing in like lightning, others opening slowly like flowering buds.

Koni Au I Ka Wai, by King Kalakaua (1836-1891), probably composed in the 1870s, tells a more exuberant but equally poetic story of love at O`ahu's Waialua Bay. More than a century after its debut, it remains a popular standard with the still-functioning Royal Hawaiian Band, now under the leadership of bandmaster Aaron Mahi. These first two songs have sometimes been played by the Hawaiian National Guard band for marches.

As its Hawaiian-ized title suggests, *Palisa* moves the setting half way across the world to France's famous city of lights. The song then moves to other locales, each as exotic to Hawaiians as Hawai`i is to Parisians. The song allegedly came in the

early 1900s from a youngster in a hospital who was inspired by a silent movie he had seen, and imagined himself in the exotic places mentioned in the song.

Leonard's beautiful and unique arrangement here is in the older D Wahine Tuning, and is in his trademark style of creating seamless medleys (for other medleys on this recording, also see *My Yellow Ginger Lei/E Huli Huli Ho'i Mai* [song # 3]; *Kane'ohe [Aloha Ku'u Home Kane'ohe] /Mama E* [song # 8]; and *'Akaka Falls/Imi Au Ia 'Oe* [song # 19]).

Here he plays two verses of each of the three songs. This track originally appeared on the early 1960s Tradewinds album SLACK KEY [the "Black & White Album"] (Tradewinds Records 106 – out-of-print), and the same track appeared on the early 1960s album PARTY SONGS HAWAIIAN STYLE, VOLUME 2 (Tradewinds Records 104 – out-of-print).

Arranging marches for guitar is a distinct part of the slack key tradition, and twelve other notable examples are:

1. Gabby Pahinui recorded a march medley called *Slack Key Medley* with the songs *Kuhio Bay*, *Roselani*, *Henderson's March*, *Koni Au I Ka Wai*, and *Hu'i E* in his F Wahine Tuning (F-C-E-G-C-E), on his influential 1960 album, HAWAIIAN SLACK KEY, VOLUME 1 – WITH GABBY PAHINUI (Waikiki Records 319).
2. Gabby Pahinui recorded *Nani Wale Lihue* in a march tempo as part of his *Hula Medley*, in his F Wahine Tuning (F-C-E-G-C-E). He recorded it twice: In 1946, reissued on THE HISTORY OF SLACK KEY GUITAR-VINTAGE HAWAIIAN TREASURES, VOLUME 7 (Hana Ola Records 24000), and in 1961 on the album PURE GABBY (Hula Records 567) Sonny Chillingworth also recorded this medley in the C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-D) on his album SONNY SOLO (Dancing Cat Records 38005), and Ray Kane also recorded it in 1975 in another C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-E) with the title *Nani Wale Lihu'e / Wai'ala'e/ Halona (Hula Medley)*, on his album THE LEGENDARY RAY KANE-OLD STYLE SLACK KEY-THE COMPLETE EARLY RECORDINGS (Hana Ola Records HOCD 52000).
3. Gabby Pahinui recorded *Hoi Mai* as part of *Slack Key Medley: Nalani/Akahi Hoi/Hoi Mai* on the album HAWAIIAN SLACK KEY VOLUME 2 – WITH GABBY PAHINUI (Waikiki Records 320).
4. Atta Isaacs and Gabby Pahinui recorded *March Medley: Aia Hiki Mai/Haili Po Ika Lehua*, on their 1969 album TWO SLACK KEY GUITARS (Tradewinds Records 1124), with Atta in his C Major Tuning (C-G-E-G-C-E), and Gabby Pahinui in his C Wahine Tuning (C-G-E-G-B-E)
5. Atta Isaacs recorded *Kohala March* in his C Major Tuning (C-G-E-G-C-E), on his 1971 album ATTA (Tradewinds Records 1126 - (reissued as THE LEGENDARY ATTA ISAACS-HAWAIIAN SLACK KEY GUITAR MASTER on Hana Ola Records HOCD 84000).
6. Atta Isaacs also recorded *Maikai Makani/Kui Au* in his C Major Tuning (C-G-E-G-C-E) with The New Hawaiian Band, on their 1975 album THE NEW HAWAIIAN BAND

(Hana Ola Classic Collector Series, Volume 7 HOCD 12000 - formerly released on Trim Records 1975).

7. Atta Isaacs recorded *Hilo March* in his C Major Tuning (C-G-E-G-C-E) with steel guitarist Jerry Byrd, on Jerry's 1974 album STEEL GUITAR HAWAIIAN STYLE (Lehua Records 7023). This song is played in the keys of E, A, and D and Atta's solo is in the key of D. This is a rare track featuring slack key guitar with acoustic steel guitar.

8. The Kahumoku Brothers (George and Moses) recorded *Hilo March/Maui Chimes*, in the G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D), on their 1988 album SWEET AND SASSY-HAWAIIAN SLACK KEY STYLINGS, VOL.1 (Kahumoku Farms Record Company KFRC-1010).

9. George Kuo recorded *Wai`alae/Koni Au I Ka Wai*, in the C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-D), on his 1996 album HE ALOHA NO NA KUPUNA-LOVE FOR THE ELDERS (Dancing Cat Records 38009).

10. George Kuo also recorded *Hawaiian March Medley: Hilo March/Ainahau/Ka Makani O Kohala*, in the G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D), on his 1981 album NAHENAHE (Hula Records 576).

11. Cyril Pahinui also recorded *Kela Mea Whiffa / Hilo March* in the D Major Tuning (D-A-D-F#-A-D) with acoustic steel guitarist Bob Brozman on their 1999 recording Four Hands Sweet and Hot (Dancing Cat Records 38048)

12. Led Kaapana recorded *Hilo March* and *Kohala March* as part of his *Big Island Medley: Hilo March/Kohala March/San Antonio Rose/Yellow Bird*, in the Standard Tuning (E-A-D-G-B-E) - *Hilo March/Kohala March* is played in the key of D (and *San Antonio Rose* is played in the key of G, and *Yellow Bird* is played in the key of C), on his album FOUR STILL PRESSIN' [with the group I Kona] (Kahale Music 2001).

13. Mika`ele Mike McClellan recorded *Mallonee Slack Key March* in the G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D) on his recording FOUR SOME NEW THINGS ! KI HO'ALU: HE MAU MEA HOU !

Tracks 14-25 were produced by Margaret Williams and were first released in 1975 on the Tradewinds album THE OLD WAY. The musicians are: Leonard Kwan, slack key guitar, with Noelani Mahoe on 'ukulele, background vocals, and 'ohe hano ihu (nose flute); Kekua Fernandes on bass and background vocals; and Eldon Akamine on rhythm guitar. Recorded by Don Tyler and Bob Lang at Sounds of Hawai'i Studio.

14. *New` Opihi Moemoe* [2:45]

Bb Wahine Tuning (F-Bb-D-F-A-D), played in the keys of B Flat and E Flat

As mentioned earlier, slack key masters often add variations to their performances. This can lead to new arrangements, some of which, as here, evolve into new compositions. *New` Opihi Moemoe*, composed in the 1960s, was Leonard's first major variation of his most famous song, 'Opihi Moemoe (songs # 2 and # 12). It is played in the older and rarely recorded (but not obsolete) B Flat Wahine Tuning.

It also features, in three verses, his unique approach to harmonic chimes, a technique that he used in the song *Hawaiian Chimes* (song # 1). He plays them by touching the strings lightly and simultaneously plucking them with his right hand on the twelfth, seventh, and (occasionally) fifth frets, a move usually done with two hands. He also sometimes hammers on another note (rapidly fretting, with the left hand, another note above the one normally plucked with the right hand), with his left hand index finger - especially on the second string open A note, hammering it up one fret to the B Flat note. He also makes use of combining normally played notes with the harmonic chimes. Also notice the interesting use of the sharp fourth note of the scale (the E note) in the fourth verse (in the key of B Flat), just after the third verse (where the song modulates to the key of E Flat for that verse, before going back to the key of B Flat), showing a subtle jazz influence.

Still composing variations into the 1980s, Leonard crafted a third variation in the G Wahine Tuning (D-G-D-F# -B-D), called *New 'Opihi Moemoe # 3*, for his 1995 recording KE'ALA'S MELE (Dancing Cat Records).

15. ***Mi Nei*** [2:41]

F Wahine Tuning (C-F-C-G-C-E)

One of Hawai'i's most famous composers, Charles E. King (1874-1950) combined innovative ideas of staging and melodic development with a firm grounding in Hawaiian language and traditional values. He was a pioneer in Hawaiian musical theatre, film, and television production, as well as a very successful publisher. *Mi Nei*, from 1930 or before, is a well known standard often performed with solo hula accompaniment. It describes a search for love. A classic vocal version by the Kahauanu Lake Trio can be found on their 1970 album HE ALOHA NO 'O HONOLULU (Hula Records 533), as well as on their second best-of compilation, KE PO'OKELA-Volume 2 (Hula Records 580).

Leonard's beautiful instrumental arrangement here in the F Wahine Tuning (he was the first slack key guitarist to record in this tuning), features his use of the C Seventh chord (here the V7 chord), which is always a strong tonality in the Wahine Tunings, since the open (unfretted) Major seventh note (here the E note) for the Tonic Cord (the I chord, here the F Major) in Wahine Tunings, is also the open third note of the V7 chord (here the C Seventh).

His signature two-finger rolls are featured in the chorus, with the chord progression of F Seventh, B Flat Major, G Seventh, to C Seventh. In the second chorus he plays some soulful and jazzy fourth intervals, with the G & D notes together, over the G Seventh chord. Note the partial chords of D Seventh and G Seventh, played without the root note in the bass, since those roots are not available on open (unfretted) strings.

Leonard's favorite tuning, the C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-D), has similar voicings to this F Wahine Tuning (C-F-C-G-C-E), except that everything in the F

Wahine Tuning is played one string *up* in pitch. For example, what is played on the is the second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth strings in the C Wahine Tuning, is played on the highest pitched first, second, third, fourth, and fifth strings, respectively, in the F Wahine Tuning,

The background vocals on this song are by Noelani Mahoe and Kekua Fernandes.

16. ***Ki Ho`alu*** [2:37]

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

The traditional slack key guitar piece *Ki Ho`alu* (similar to *Pau Pilikia*, song # 7), which translates as “slack key”, features Leonard in this powerful sounding Mauna Loa Tuning, with the third and fourth strings tuned to the same E note (the fifth of the scale). Tuning the third and fourth strings to the same note creates a drone effect for both the tonic (the A Major chord), and the Dominant Seventh chord (the E Seventh chord). Leonard plays this song with double-thumb style picking (see the explanation of “double-thumb” in the third paragraph of *Nahenahe*, song # 6), playing the fifth or sixth strings on beats one and three (depending on the chord), and the fourth string on beats two and four. The third string also vibrates sympathetically with the fourth string, and he also sometimes plucks the third string with his index finger simultaneously with the fourth string.

For comparison, on his 1995 recording KE’ALA’S MELE (Dancing Cat Records), Leonard redid this song, as a medley with *E Lili’u E*, in the G6th Mauna Loa “Maori Brown Eyes” Tuning (D-G-D-E-G-E), one note different from the A Mauna Loa Tuning used here (but tuned down two half steps to the key of G, as it usually is [D-G-D-D-G-D]).

It was also recorded by slack key guitarist Gabby Pahinui for the Bell label in 1946, with the title *Key Kohalu* (reissued on THE HISTORY OF SLACK KEY GUITAR, on Hana Ola Records), and on his album PURE GABBY (Hula Records 567), which was recorded in 1961 and released in 1978. Gabby played it in the C Mauna Loa Tuning (C-G-E-G-A-E), a popular tuning that he brought to prominence, and he was the first slack key guitarist to record in it. Slack key guitarist Sonny Chillingworth also recorded it on his 1965 album SONNY CHILLINGWORTH (Lehua Records 2014 – out-of-print), with the title *Key Kaholu*, in the same tuning as the one Leonard uses here, but tuned down two half steps to the key of G (D-G-D-D-G-D).

For other songs played by Leonard in Mauna Loa Tunings also see *Pau Pilikia* (song # 7), and *Maori Brown Eyes* (song # 11).

17. ***Palolo*** [2:25]

C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-D)

Another Charles E. King classic from 1917, this *mele pana* (place song) is about the beauty of the Palolo Valley, a Honolulu neighborhood nestled at the foot of the

Ko'olau Mountain Range, near the Ka'au Crater; and known for its gentle, misty rain and beautiful waterfalls (also see song # 8, *Kane'ohe (Aloha Ku'u Home Kane'ohe) / Mama E*, in the second paragraph, for more on the *ko'olau* mountain ranges). The *kaona* (hidden meaning) makes it a love song as well. It reflects the influence of ragtime and early jazz, in the use of Dominant Seventh chords with a I-VI7-II7-V7 chord progression (here the C Major, A Seventh, D Seventh, to the G Seventh). Leonard plays partial chords without the root notes for the A Seventh and D Seventh chords, since they are not available on open low bass strings.

Also note his many variations in three different octave registers. He plays soulful and jazzy high pitched fourth intervals (with the notes A & D together, to B Flat & E Flat together, to B & E together), between the D Seventh and G Seventh chords in the third and fourth verses (and he uses the same intervals an octave lower in the eighth verse), creating one of the most distinctive sounds on this recording. He plays his signature octave rolls, with the G and F notes, over the G Seventh chord in verse five. Notice his signature D Ninth and G Seventh chords at the end of the verses, and his signature roll on the resolving C Major chord that follows. Leonard also plays this roll for the C Sixth chords on the fourth measure of each verse of the melody, just after the G Seventh chords. He used similar rolls on the C chords in *Ke Aloha* (song # 22), '*Uhe'uhene* (song # 23), and *Hula Blues* (song # 24).

Gabby Pahinui also recorded it on his 1973 album *THE RABBIT ISLAND MUSIC FESTIVAL* (Panini Records 1004), playing in his C Wahine Tuning (C-G-E-G-B-E), and with slack key guitarist Atta Isaacs performing with Gabby, playing in his C Major Tuning (C-G-E-G-C-E). Another version with slack key guitar was recorded by the band Hui Aloha on their recording *HUI ALOHA* (Dancing Cat Records), featuring George Kuo playing a double neck guitar with the six string neck in the same C Wahine Tuning as Leonard uses here (C-G-D-G-B-D), and the twelve string neck in the C Mauna Loa Tuning (C-G-E-G-A-E); and also featuring slack key guitarist Dennis Kamakahi also playing in the C Mauna Loa Tuning (C-G-E-G-A-E).

18. ***Grandfather's Clock*** [2:12]

G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D)

Leonard's arrangement of a classic 19th Century American song, composed in 1875 by the Connecticut composer Henry Clay Work. Work rose to prominence during the Civil War, and composed other well known songs such as *Kingdom Coming (Jubilee)*, and later composed this sentimental gem that uses a catchy pattern of eighth notes and a pause when the clock stops, never to run again. Note Leonard's use again of natural harmonic chimes, played at the twelfth fret to answer the phrases at the end of the choruses and at the end of the verses. The endings of the verses also feature his variations on the main melody.

19. ***'Akaka Falls/'Imi Au Ia'Oe*** [2:48]

F Wahine Tuning (C-F-C-G-C-E)

A deep and powerful solo guitar recording (a format very rare on records before the Dancing Cat label releases from 1994 forward), Leonard's great medley here combines two beautiful love songs from the early 20th Century. Helen Lindsey Parker (1886-1954) composed the lovely *'Akaka Falls* in the early 1900s, and it has become one of the most famous melodies in Hawaiian music. It describes a lover's tryst at the Big Island *waialele* (waterfall) in the title. This version features Leonard's trademark two-finger rolls between two strings, playing the main melody. Also notice in the chorus, just after the B Flat Major chord (just before he returns to the F Major chord, where he plays the melody notes of D and C#), that he uses an A Major triad with the C# note, instead of the more commonly used B Flat minor chord.

'Imi Au Ia 'Oe (*King's Serenade*), another Charles E. King standard, composed in 1916, may have been inspired by a different song with the same name written around 1866 by Queen Lili'uokalani (1838-1917), Hawai'i's most beloved composer, its last monarch, and one of King's music teachers (see Ozzie Kotani's solo guitar recording, TO HONOR A QUEEN – E HO'OHIWAHINA I KA MO'I WAHINE, on Dancing Cat Records, for a whole album of her compositions played on solo slack key guitar). The setting of the song takes place a few miles away in the Puna district where a red *'i'iwi* bird makes its home. The Hawaiian title is often translated as "I search for you." It was featured in the operetta *Prince of Hawai'i* in 1925, and it also appeared in two versions of the film *Bird of Paradise*, in 1932 and again in 1951. Slack key guitarist Sonny Chillingworth's poignant vocal rendition can be found on ENDLESSLY, on Dancing Cat Records (*'Imi Au Ia 'Oe* was mistakenly uncredited on Leonard's original recording of this medley).

Leonard plays one whole verse and chorus of *'Akaka Falls*, then a verse and chorus of *'Imi Au Ia 'Oe*, before returning to a brief statement of *'Akaka Falls* again, ending with his signature turnaround, with the chords of F Major (the I chord), B Flat Major (the IV chord), B Flat minor (the iv minor chord), and back again to the F Major (the I chord), which is the same type of turnaround that he often uses in the C Wahine Tuning (with the chords of C Major, F Major, F minor, and C Major, in the C Wahine Tuning).

Slack key guitarist Keola Beamer also recorded both of these songs separately, both on his 1997 album MAUNA KEA (WHITE MOUNTAIN JOURNAL), on Dancing Cat Records: *Ka Waialele O 'Akaka* (*'Akaka Falls*), in his C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-E - with the highest pitched string tuned up to E, two half steps higher than the D note that Leonard uses for his C Wahine Tuning [C-G-D-G-B-D]), and played in the keys of F and C; and *Imi Au Ia 'Oe*, also in his C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-E).

Slack key guitarist Led Kaapana also recorded it three times: on the 1997 duet album with Bob Brozman on acoustic steel guitar, KIKI KILA MEETS KI HO`ALU (Dancing Cat Records), playing in the Standard Tuning (E-A-D-G-B-E), in the key of F; on his 2000 album BLACK SAND (Dancing Cat Records), playing in the Standard Tuning, in the key of G; and on the 1975 album with the band Hui Ohana (Lehua Records 7020), on electric guitar in the Standard Tuning, in the key of G.

For other great medleys arranged by Leonard on this recording, also see *My Yellow Ginger Lei/ E Huli Huli Ho'i Mai* (song # 3); *Kane'ohe [Aloha Ku'u Home Kane'ohe] / Mama E* (song # 8); and *Aia Hiki Mai/Koni Au/Palisa* (song # 13).

20. ***'Opae Tumatuma*** [2:45]

D Wahine Tuning (D-A-D-F# -A-C#)

Leonard's version of this traditional and obscure song, probably about the intense wind (*tumatuma*) that carries the scent of the *'opae* (shrimp), which may also have *kaona* (hidden meaning), is played in the older D Wahine Tuning, and this is the only known recording of it. Leonard became aware of its name from Noelani Mahoe, who had heard a friend sing it at the 'Aina Haina Fire Station. It also features Noelani Mahoe playing the *'ohe hano ihu* (nose flute), an ancient Hawaiian bamboo flute which in the past was usually played to accompany a vocal chanter. It is usually 10 to 21 inches long, has two or three finger holes, and is played by blowing into it with one nostril while the other nostril is pressed closed. It is used today occasionally to enhance the feeling of an old song such as this one. Leonard plays variations an octave higher in verses five and six, which is unusual for this tuning. In the eighth verse he plays, with the V7 chord (here the A Seventh), intervals in thirds, with the notes F# & A together, to F & A Flat together, to E & G together.

21. ***Sase*** [2:44]

G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D)

A traditional flirtatious travelogue by Joseph Kokolia and Solomon Hiram from the 1890s, *Sase* describes the activities of young ladies in various neighborhoods in Honolulu; from Iwilei, where they eat black crabs, all the way to the more restrained Wai'ala'e, where they ride donkeys. Noelani Mahoe recorded a charming vocal version in 1963 on the album FOLK SONGS OF HAWAII (Tradewinds Records 110 –out-of-print), and helped translate the piece with Samuel Elbert for their invaluable book of lyrics of classic Hawaiian songs, NA MELE O HAWAII NEI (1970, University of Hawai'i Press).

Leonard's great definitive and soulful instrumental arrangement here starts with solo guitar for the first verse, and then he adds subtle variations to the main melody as the band kicks in for the second verse on. Notice his soulful slides up from the open (unfretted) G chord to the C chord and back down to the open G chord in verses two and three, as well as his slide from a high G chord down to the open G chord in verse seven. He also used these same types of slides in the C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-D) on the similar song *Ke'ala's Mele*, on his 1995 album KE'ALA'S MELE (Dancing Cat Records).

Also notice his distinct use of the partial A Seventh/ Ninth chords in the sixth measure of the song, played with the G bass, since the A root note is not available as

an open string (he *does* play the A Seventh chord with the A bass, barring the second fret, in verses four and eight - a barre chord is one with [usually] the index finger placed vertically on a fret covering some or all of the strings). Also, he plays the C Major chord, in the first position (down at the beginning of the fretboard), in the second measure of the intro with a G note in the bass, instead of the full barred C chord on the fifth fret, that is often used in this situation.

It is the genius of the slack key guitarists that they find a way around this type of limitation in the slack key tunings (all tunings, including Standard Tuning, have limitations), and make it sound *right* and *better* to often not be playing the root note of the chords that don't have open bass strings. Slack key guitarists do all this by going with what sounds good, as well as what is possible technically, and by what story they want to tell with the music.

The technique of not using a root note in the bass of the chord (or as in this song, using the bass of the tonic [the key the song is in] for other chords) creates a unique tension, making the chord want to move on to one *with* a root in the bass - which it does here when it goes from the A Seventh chord to the D Seventh chord. Leonard also uses this principal when he modulates from the key of G to the key of C in '*Opihi Moemoe* (songs #2 and #12), where he plays the bass of the C chord on an E note, on the second fret of the fourth string, which creates a strong tension to get back to the key of G (with its open root note on the fifth string). Ray Kane uses this same technique for the VI7 chord (the E Seventh) in the key of G, on his version of '*Ulupalakua*, which he recorded twice: on his 1975 album NANA KULI'S RAYMOND KANE (Tradewinds Records 1130 - reissued on CD on Hana Ola Records, with the title THE LEGENDARY RAY KANE – OLD STYLE SLACK KEY – THE COMPLETE EARLY RECORDINGS); and on his 1998 album WA'AHILA (Dancing Cat Records).

Also note when Leonard starts the song solo for the first verse, his distinct use of the bass notes just at the beginning of each measure, and his distinct phrasings, always telling a story with his music. Also notice his beautiful run on the V chord (here the D Seventh) at the end of the fourth verse, just before the G chord that ends the verse.

Slack key guitarist Keola Beamer also recorded a version of this song for two guitars in his C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-E – again with one note, the highest pitched first string, tuned differently from Leonard's C Wahine Tuning [C-G-D-G-B-D]), on his recording MAUNA KEA – WHITE MOUNTAIN JOURNAL (Dancing Cat Records).

22. *Ke Aloha* [2:20]

C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-D)

By the revered Hawaiian composers and scholars Lei Collins (1913-1999) and Maddy Lam (1910-1985), composed in the 1950s or earlier, this gentle *mele ho`oipoipo* (love song) speaks of an alluring flower scent in the evening. One of the definitive vocal

versions was recorded by Aunty Genoa Keawe, on her 1967 recording GENOA KEAWE SINGS LUAU HULAS (Hula Records 514). Her relative (and Leonard's Tradewinds label mate) Ray Kane recorded a version that is very different from Leonard's, on his 1994 album PUNAHELE (Dancing Cat Records), one more illustration of the great individuality in slack key.

Leonard plays his signature roll for the C Sixth chords on the fourth measure of each verse of the melody, just after the G Seventh chords. He also used similar rolls on the C chords in *Palolo* (song # 17), '*Uhe'uhene* (song # 23), and *Hula Blues* (song # 24).

Near the end of the second verse, he slides wildly at the end of the D Seventh chord down to the G Seventh chord, just one of his beautiful and unique story-telling variations on this Hawaiian standard. Here he mainly uses the fourth string open D note for the D Seventh chord (played just before the G Seventh chord and the C Major chords at the end of each verse), rather than his usual technique of playing the bass note for this D Seventh chord on the F# note (on the fourth fret of the fourth string). In the sixth (and final) verse he uses an interesting variation on the second measure of the G Seventh chord, starting the verse with an F# note on the fourth fret of the fourth string, played together with a C note on the fifth fret of the third string, then going chromatically down one fret, with the F & B notes played together on the fourth and third strings, respectively. This creates an implied D Seventh chord going to the directly stated G Seventh chord.

23. '*Uhe'uhene* [2:39]
C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-D)

Also known as "the shouting song", this Charles E. King jazzy party song from 1930 describes a *paniolo* (Hawaiian cowboy) calling "whee ha!" as he lands a prize catch with his fishing pole. This song again shows Leonard's preference of playing partial chords for the ones that don't have open bass notes for the roots (the chords other than the C Major and the G Seventh chords, which *do* have open bass notes).

In the second verse, he plays the melody up an octave higher, showing his penchant for creating variety and variations in an instrumental rendition of a song, similar to the way the words tell the story in a vocal rendition. Also in the second verse, notice Leonard's use of soulful jazzy fifth intervals on the first and third strings, with the notes E & B together and D & A together, for *both* the C Major and the G Seventh chords, one of the most distinctive and memorable sounds on this recording.

Notice Leonard's great runs for the C Sixth and G Ninth chords in the first part of the melody. He also used similar rolls on the C chords in *Palolo* (song # 17), *Ke Aloha* (song # 22), and *Hula Blues* (song # 24). Both the C Major and the G Seventh chords use the A note to color them, creating C Sixth and G Seventh/ Ninth chords, respectively.

He again ends with his signature turnaround, with the chords of C Major, to F Major, to F minor, and to C Major again (the I Major, IV Major, iv minor, to I Major).

24. ***Hula Blues*** [2:48]

C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-D)

One of the most popular Hawaiian tunes of the 1920s, Johnny Noble's jazz and ragtime influenced melody, composed in 1920, with English lyrics by Sonny Cunha, spread far and wide, establishing itself as a bandstand and recording studio standard to this day.

Leonard here starts the song with a distinctive slide up to the first melody note, with the bass note for the G Seventh chord coming in at the end of the slide (he also uses this slide for the same phrase near the end of the verses, there adding in two beats more than are normally played to accent the slide).

He also plays his signature roll on the second measure of the C chords: with the notes D, E Flat, and then E (on the fourth string), then G (on the third string), then C (on the second string), and then A (on the third string). He used similar rolls on the C chords in *Palolo* (song # 17), *Ke Aloha* (song # 22), and *'Uhe'uhene* (song # 23).

Notice that after he plays the F Sixth chord, he goes up to an F# Sixth chord when the melody of the song goes to the E Flat note (rather than playing the E Flat melody note with an F Seventh chord, as is normally done). And again notice his great signature turnaround, with the C Major, F Major, F minor, and C Major chords, at the end of the verses. In the choruses, on the G Seventh chord, he plays soulful rolls with powerful octaves, using G and F notes on the first and fourth strings; and with the D Seventh chord he plays an octave roll with the open D notes on the first and fourth strings. In the verses after the second chorus, he interestingly doubles the length of each verse; and he ends the song with his signature C Sixth chord.

Hula Blues has been played more often as an instrumental than as a vocal since the last half of the 20th Century. It became a favorite instrumental with steel guitarists, and later with slack key guitarists as well. It was a signature tune for slack key guitarist Sonny Chillingworth, and he recorded it on two of his albums: *WAMEA COWBOY* (Lehua Records 2003), and *ENDLESSLY* (Dancing Cat Records), both versions played in the G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D). Slack key guitarist George Kuo also recorded it in the G Major Tuning, with Barney Isaacs playing acoustic steel, on their 1995 duet album, *HAWAIIAN TOUCH*, on Dancing Cat Records (on this recording they made the *first ever* recordings of pure duets of acoustic steel guitar and slack key guitar). Gabby Pahinui recorded it in his F Wahine Tuning (F-C-E-G-C-E), with Barney Isaacs on electric steel, in 1960 on his album *HAWAIIAN SLACK KEY, VOLUME 2 – WITH GABBY PAHINUI* (Waikiki Records 320). Led Kaapana also recorded it in the Standard Tuning (E-A-D-G-B-E), playing in the key of G, with acoustic steel guitarist Bob Brozman, on their 1997 pure duet album *KIKA KILA MEETS KI HO'ALU*, on Dancing Cat Records (the second recordings ever

with pure duets of slack key guitar and acoustic steel guitar). Comparing these versions with Leonard's approach, again shows slack key's emphasis on individuality.

25. *Old Mauna Loa* [2:34]

G Wahine Tuning (D-G-D-F# -B-D)

A traditional type instrumental by Leonard from the 1950s. In the first and fifth verses, for the second chord in the third measure, he substitutes a C chord with a G bass; in all the other verses he uses the normally played D Seventh chord there. Another beautiful story is told here, with the value Leonard gives to each note and phrase, as if each one is sung as words.

The original album liner notes erroneously stated that this song was played in the G Old Mauna Loa Tuning (D-G-D-E-A-D), but it is actually played in the G Wahine Tuning (D-G-D-F#-B-D).

Leonard did record this song in the G Old Mauna Loa Tuning as a solo guitar piece on his 1995 album *Ke'ala's Mele* (Dancing Cat Records), utilizing the unique aspects of that tuning to give that version a different flavor than the one on this recording - such as using hammer-on runs (ornaments produced by plucking a note and immediately fretting above that note on the same string to produce a second tone) on the third and second strings, as well as playing notes in intervals of thirds on those same two strings.

BONUS TRACKS:

26. *Po Mahina* [3:09]

Sung by the Kamaha'os Trio (singers Kalona Manning, Kaua Ioane, and Kape Kauhane), and accompanied by Leonard Kwan on slack key guitar, Thomas Kaheiki on bass, and William Kaawa on rhythm guitar. Recorded at SOS Studio by Ted Takase.

Leonard Kwan is in the C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-D), played in the keys of G and C.

On this Charles E. King classic composed in 1917, set under the dazzlingly bright Hawaiian night moon (*Po Mahina*), Leonard backs up the Kamaha'os Trio. Leonard plays two introductory verses in the key of C, before the song modulates to the key of G (the opposite of what Leonard does in the song *Opihi Moemoe* - songs # 2 and # 12). Note the great turnaround phrase that Leonard uses (the same one that he also used in the song *Nahenahe*, song # 6), at the end of the fourth and tenth verses, as the song modulates from G to C; he also plays it at the end of his featured instrumental break for verse six (there that turnaround phrase signals the return of the vocals); and he uses it again at the end of the song. This track was first issued on the late 1950s or early 1960s anthology album *PARTY SONGS HAWAIIAN STYLE, VOLUME 1*

(Tradewinds Records 102 – out-of-print).

Now a signature song for slack key guitarist (and Gabby Pahinui's son) Cyril Pahinui, *Po Mahina* appears twice, in two different tunings, on his 1998 album, also titled PO MAHINA (Dancing Cat Records): in the C Major Tuning (C-G-E-G-C-E), and in his D Sixth/ Ninth Tuning (D-A-D-F# -B-E).

27. ***Hawaiian Love*** [2:17]

Gabby's F Wahine Tuning (F-C-E-G-C-E), tuned down two half steps to the key of E Flat

Leonard's unique take on this Hawaiian standard, with music composed by Joseph Lopes and lyrics by Jack Hetzel in 1924, is the only time he recorded in Gabby's F Wahine Tuning (F-C-E-G-C-E), rather than the F Wahine Tuning he normally used (C-F-C-G-C-E - with the sixth, fifth, and fourth strings tuned *lower* than in Gabby's Wahine Tuning). For songs played in Leonard's normally used F Wahine Tuning, see *Mi Nei*, song # 15; and *'Akaka Falls' Imi Au Ia'Oe*, song # 19.

Leonard was only the second guitarist to ever record in Gabby's F Wahine Tuning. Gabby Pahinui was by far the main player to use this tuning, having recorded eleven tracks (six of them medleys) with it. Peter Moon and Carlos Andrade are the other slack key guitarists to have recorded in it, each also recording just one song with it (and Carlos Andrade used it to play in the key of C, rather than the key of F).

Leonard may have learned it from hearing Gabby Pahinui play in it, or, as he related one time, he may have discovered it on his own by tuning the five highest pitched strings to the same notes as the first position C Major chord in the Standard Tuning (E-A-D-G-B-E); and then tuning the lowest pitched sixth string to F for the root bass note. This could have been one of the ways that this F tuning (as well as the B Flat tunings) possibly evolved. The B Flat tunings all have the root note (the B Flat) on the fifth string, and the third (the D note) on the fourth string – the same relative notes on those same strings as the first position C Major chord in the Standard Tuning, where the root note (the C) is on the third fret of the fifth string, and the third (the E note) is on the second fret of the fourth string.

This song originally appeared on the early 1960s album SLACK KEY [the "Black & White Album"] (Tradewinds Records 106 – out-of-print), which also featured tracks by slack key guitarist Ray Kane; and this same track also appeared on the album PARTY SONGS HAWAIIAN STYLE, VOLUME 2 (Tradewinds Records 104 – out-of-print). The song also features rhythm guitar by an unknown accompanist, playing in the key of E Flat, in the Standard Tuning (E-A-D-G-B-E).

28. ***Noho Paipai*** (*Rocking Chair Hula*) [2:25]

Sung by the Kamaha'os Trio (singers Kalona Manning, Kaua Ioane, and Kape Kauhane), and accompanied by Leonard Kwan on slack key guitar, Thomas Kaheiki on bass, and William Kaawa on rhythm guitar. Recorded at SOS Studio by Ted Takase.

Leonard Kwan is playing in the G Old Mauna Loa Tuning (D-G-D-E-A-D).

One of the best known songs attributed to the Dean of Hawaiian Music, John Kameaaloha Almeida (1897-1985). This classic swing tune from around 1945, also called *Rocking Chair Hula*, is based on a traditional song and celebrates the joys to be had sharing a rocking chair with the one you love. Many classic versions of the tune have been recorded, and the best known recent one is by the Ka'au Crater Boys, on their 1993 recording MAUI STYLE (Roy Sakuma Records), featuring fast `ukulele leads from Troy Fernandez.

This song is again sung by the Kamaha`os Trio, featuring Leonard's slack key accompaniment in the old-style Old Mauna Loa Tuning. This tuning features hammered-on notes on *both* the second and third strings, which are both tuned down from the popular G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D, to D-G-D-E-A-D), to achieve this unique sound. Leonard also recorded the song *Old Mauna Loa* in this tuning on his recording KE'ALA'S MELE, on Dancing Cat Records (also see song # 25, where *Old Mauna Loa* is played in the *G Wahine Tuning* [D-G-D-F# -B-D], on this recording).

His playing on this charming period piece reflects his great rhythmic sense, as well as his (and many other slack key guitarists' and Hawaiian musicians') love of Latin music. Also in his introduction and in the instrumental break, in the fifth and sixth measures, he plays phrases based on the G Major chord, instead of the A Seventh chord that is used by the band in those same measures in the vocal verses. In the vocal verses he softly juxtaposes his G Chord phrasings *onto* the band's A Seventh chord, a technique slack key guitarists sometimes use when playing with a band, on chords that there is not an open (unfretted) bass note for, such as this A Seventh chord.

This track was first issued on the late 1950s or early 1960s anthology album PARTY SONGS HAWAIIAN STYLE, VOLUME 1 (Tradewinds Records 102 – out-of-print). Slack key guitarist Tommy Blaisdell also recorded a vocal version, with his own slack key guitar accompaniment in the D Wahine Tuning (D-A-D-F# -A-C#), around the early 1950s, reissued on THE HISTORY OF SLACK KEY, on Hana Ola Records.

While the vocal style is pure Polynesian, the guitar part here could have easily fit in with the great recordings being made in Kenya, Africa around the same time.

Original sessions produced by Margaret Williams

Reissue produced by George Winston

Reissue assembly, No Noise engineering, and mastering by Howard Johnston and Justin Lieberman

Disk transfer by Joe Bozzi, at Bernie Grundman Mastering, Hollywood, CA

Disk restoration on *Hawaiian Chimes* by Robert Parker, Vintage Productions, Sydney, Australia

Photograph of Leonard Kwan for the cover of THE OLD WAY album by Boone Morrison

Sheet music transcription of '*Opihi Moemoe* by Leonard Kwan

Liner notes by J. W. Junker, with assistance from Noelani Mahoe and Chris Orrall, with technical guitar notes added by George Winston

Special thanks to Ke'ala Kwan, Jr., Kevin Lee Kwan, Kenneth Kwan, Noelani Mahoe, Harold Haku'ole, Linda Dela Cruz, Chris Orrall, Lydia Ludin, Lea Uehara, Winnie Kurokawa, Eldon Akamine, Dirk Vogel, T. Malcolm Rockwell, Dennis Kamakahi, DeSoto Brown, the late George S. Kanahale, Howard Johnston, Bob Brozman, Michael Cord, George Kuo, Dennis Ladd, Keith Haugen, Mika`ele Mike McClellan, Ray & Elodia Kane, Ozzie Kotani, The Hawai'i State Library, The Bishop Museum Archives, Corrina Burnley, Jennifer Ramsey, Gail Korich, KSA, Justin Lieberman, Ron Rigler, Robert Parker, Porter Miller, Milan Bertosa, Harry Soria, Jr., Tony & Robyn Hugar, and J. W. Junker.

Complete Leonard Kwan Discography:

As A Leader:

45-RPM - *Hawaiian Chimes* – (Island Recording Studio 314 – out-of-print) – This was Leonard's first recording in approximately 1957

SLACK KEY [the "Red Album"] (Tradewinds Records 103 – out-of-print) – 1960

SLACK KEY [the "Black & White Album"] (Tradewinds Records 106 – out-of-print) – early 1960s

Has seven tracks by Leonard Kwan and six tracks by slack key guitarist Ray Kane. Leonard's tracks are: '*Opihi Moemoe*, *Yellow Ginger Lei*, *Nahenahe*, *Kane'ohe- Mama E*, *Manini*, *Aia Hiki Mai/Koni Au/Palisa*, and *Hawaiian Love*. These same tracks, except for *Aia Hiki Mai/Koni Au/Palisa* and *Hawaiian Love*, also appear on the album SLACK KEY [the "Red Album"] (Tradewinds Records 103 – out-of-print).

THE OLD WAY (Tradewinds Records 1128 – out-of-print) – 1975

- Two 45 RPM records of Leonard Kwan were issued in the late 1950s and early 1960s:

- '*Opihi Moemoe* with the credit of "Modern Slack Key by Leonard Kwan", on 45-RPM (Tradewinds Records 201-A – out-of-print); the B side was the track *Moani –Ke-Ala*, with the credit of "Noelani Kanoho [later Noelani Mahoe] & the Twilighters with Leonard Kwan" - (Tradewinds Records 201-B – out-of-print) – late 1950s
- *Pau Pilikia* - 45-RPM (Tradewinds Records 206 – out-of-print; Leonard Kwan is not on the B side) – late 1950s or 1960

KE`ALA'S MELE (Dancing Cat Records 38004) – 1995

HAWAIIAN SLACK KEY CHRISTMAS (Dancing Cat Records 38044) – Anthology album

with Leonard playing a family song, *We Wish You Merry Christmas* - 2000
- Also another Leonard Kwan solo guitar album is planned by Dancing Cat Productions.

Backing Up Others:

PARTY SONGS HAWAIIAN STYLE, VOLUME 1 (Tradewinds Records 102 – out-of-print)
– Features Leonard as a sideman, especially featuring his slack key accompaniment on these songs: *Po Mahina*, *Noho Paipai*, *A Song to Hawai'i*, “*Susy*” *Ana E*, and *Ahi Wela*; also issued on this album were these three slack key tracks by Leonard as a leader, *Manini* (with the title *Manini Chimes*), ‘*Opihi Moemoe*, *Yellow Ginger Lei*, and *Nahenahe* - these three tracks were also issued on the album SLACK KEY [the “Red Album”] (Tradewinds Records 103 – out-of-print), as well as on the album SLACK KEY [the “Black & White Album”] (Tradewinds Records 106 – out-of-print) – late 1950s or 1960

PARTY SONGS HAWAIIAN STYLE, VOLUME 2 (Tradewinds Records 104 – out-of-print)
– Features Leonard as a sideman, especially featuring his slack key accompaniment on the songs *Hi`ilawe* and *Manu O`o*; the album also had these two slack key tracks by Leonard as a leader: *Aia Hiki Mai/Koni Au/Palisa* and *Hawaiian Love* - these two tracks also appeared on the album SLACK KEY [the “Black & White Album”] (Tradewinds Records 106 – out-of-print) – early 1960s

TWILIGHT AT HALEKULANI (Tradewinds Records 107 – out-of-print) – The Halekulani Girls – (a.k.a. The Alice Fredlund Serenaders), with Alice Fredlund, Linda Dela Cruz, and Sybil Andrews; Leonard Kwan’s slack key accompaniment is featured on the songs *Ka Loke* and *Ke Ala O Ka Rose*. These same tracks also appear on the Linda Dela Cruz album BEST OF LINDA (Tradewinds Records 2201 – out-of-print) – early 1960s

LINDA: HAWAII’S CANARY (Tradewinds Records 118 – out-of-print) – With Leonard playing slack key guitar accompaniment for Linda Dela Cruz on the song *None Hula* – mid 1960s

EVENING IN THE ISLANDS [anthology album] (Tradewinds Records 113 – out-of-print)
– Leonard plays slack key guitar accompaniment for Noelani (Mahoe) & the Twilights on the songs *Moani Ke Ala* and *Hula O Makee* – mid 1960s

HAWAIIAN SLACK KEY GUITAR MASTERS COLLECTION, VOLUME 2 (Dancing Cat Records 38046) – On the song *Slack Key Serenade*, Leonard plays a pure duet with slack key guitarist Ozzie Kotani - 1999

Led Kaapana - BLACK SAND (Dancing Cat Records 38015) – On the medley *Salomila/ New `Opihi Moemoe*, Leonard plays a pure duet with slack key guitarist Led Kaapana - 2000

Instruction Book:

SLACK KEY INSTRUCTION BOOK—A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO GUITAR PLAYING THE HAWAIIAN SLACK KEY WAY – LEONARD KWAN (Tradewinds Publications). Available from Elderly Instruments at P.O. Box 14210, Lansing, Michigan, 48901; phone: 517-372-7890; fax: 517-372-5155; email webb@elderly.com (refer to catalog #92B-2);

also available from Harry's Music Store, 3457 Wai'ala'e Ave., Honolulu, Hawai'i, 96816; phone: 808-735-2866; fax: 808-734-2951. Leonard was assisted in writing this book by guitarist and researcher Dennis Ladd (who also assisted slack key guitarist Ozzie Kotani on his first slack key instruction book, GUITAR PLAYING HAWAIIAN STYLE, on Mel Bay Publications).

Leonard Kwan's Slack Key Tunings (all are from the lowest pitched string to the highest):

1. G Major "Taro Patch" Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D)
 2. G Wahine Tuning (D-G-D-F# -B-D)
 3. G Old Mauna Loa Tuning (D-G-D-E-A-D)
 4. G Mauna Loa Tuning (D-G-D-D-G-D) – sometimes pitched up two half steps to the key of A (yielding E-A-E-E-A-E), as on the song *Ki Ho`alu* (song # 16). ,
 5. G Sixth Mauna Loa "Maori Brown Eyes" Tuning (D-G-D-E-G-D)
 6. C Wahine "Leonard's C" Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-D) – Leonard's favorite tuning
 7. C Mauna Loa Tuning (C-G-C-G-A-E)
 8. D Wahine Tuning (D-A-D-F# -A-C#)
 9. F Wahine "Leonard's F" Tuning (C-F-C-G-C-E)
 10. F Wahine "Gabby's F" Tuning (F-C-E-G-C-E)
 11. B Flat Wahine Tuning (F-B \flat -D-F-A-D)
 12. Standard Tuning (E-A-D-G-B-E) – for playing rhythm guitar (not represented on this recording).
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RECORDINGS ON TRADEWINDS RECORDS:

- 101 - Mungo (Harry Kalahiki) — PLAYS UKE -1958-1959
- 102 - Various Artists – PARTY SONGS, HAWAIIAN STYLE, Vol. -1958-1960
- 103 - Leonard Kwan - SLACK KEY (the "Red Album") -1960
- 104 – Various Artists PARTS SONGS, HAWAIIAN STYLE, Vol. 2 – -1960-1961
- 105 — Pascual's Grey Line Maui Troubadours with Nelson Waikiki -early 1960s
- 106 - The Halekulani Girls (Alice Fredlund, Linda Dela Cruz, and Sybil Andrews) - TWILIGHT AT THE HALEKULANI -1961 – probably 1962
- 107 - Leonard Kwan and Raymond Kane (separate tracks for each artist) – SLACK KEY (The "Black & White Album") - 1961-1962
- 108 - Nelson Waikiki — UKUELELE STYLIST -1961-1963
- 109 – Alice Fredlund, Linda Dela Cruz, and Sybil Andrews (The Halekulani Girls) – ALICE, LINDA, & SYBIL – 1962 - probably 1963
- 110 - Noelani Mahoe – FOLKSONGS OF HAWAI'I -1963
- 111 -
- 112 -
- 113 - Various Artists – EVENING IN THE ISLANDS -1963-1964
- 114 – Kani Nahaki with Pasquals Famous Tour Drivers, the Maui Troubadours - 196
- 115 - Kaupena Wong w/ Leo Nahenahe Singers – HAWAII'S FOLKSINGERS -1964.
- 116 - -1964
- 117 - Bill Ali'iloa Lincoln – [MAYBE TITLE SAME AS HIS THREE NAMES??] -1964

- 118 - Linda Dela Cruz — LINDA, HAWAII'S CANARY -1965
- 119 - Bill Lincoln — MAHALO NUI -1965
- 120 - Emma Sharpe — LAHAINA'S FABULOUS EMMA'S SHARPE – 1965
- 121 - Linda Dela Cruz — LINDA SINGS, WITH THE HALEKULANI GIRLS -1966
- 122 – The Nahenahe Singers — HAWAIIAN CHRISTMAS -1965
- 123 - Linda Dela Cruz – KUHIO BEACH GIRL -1967
- 124 - Atta Isaacs & Gabby Pahinui — TWO SLACK KEY GUITARS - I'M A LIVIN'
ON A EASY - June 1969
- 125 - Bill Ali'iloa Lincoln – MAGIC ISLANDS -1969
- 126 - Atta Isaacs – ATTA - 1971
- 127 - Bill Lincoln — HULA IN FALSETTO - 197?
- 128 - Leonard Kwan — THE OLD WAY--1974
- 129 - The Waimanalo Keikis - MELE KALIKIMAKA—1975
- 130 - Raymond Kane — NANAKULI'S RAYMOND KANE—1975
- 1201 – Waimanalo Keikies – KEIKI O WAIMANALO/ SURF, AND SONG -197
- 2201 - Linda Dela Cruz – BEST OF LINDA