

LINER NOTES

Various Artists

HAWAIIAN SLACK KEY GUITAR MASTERS COLLECTION, VOL. 2

1. ***Popoki Slack Key*** (instrumental)

Ray Kane: slack key guitar

From the album [WA'AHILA](#)

The title of this beautiful poignant instrumental can mean "little cat". Composed by Ray Kane, the elder statesman of slack key, this song suggests the end of the day and evokes the beautiful Hawaiian sunsets.

2. ***'Ulii E*** (vocal)

Dennis Kamakahi: slack key guitar & lead vocal

David Kamakahi: 'ukulele & back-up vocal

From the album ['OHANA \(FAMILY\)](#)

This traditional Hawaiian standard describes a tattler bird running along the shore of a calm, deserted beach. The father-son performance honors the classic Gabby Pahinui and Eddie Kamae duets from the Sons of Hawai'i, whose version can be heard on their classic album GABBY PAHINUI WITH THE SONS OF HAWAII (Hula 503).

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

Cyril Pahinui: 12 string slack key guitar

Bob Brozman: National acoustic steel guitar

From the album [FOUR HANDS SWEET & HOT](#)

Cyril Pahinui, one of the sons of the late Gabby Pahinui - the most influential slack key guitarist in history - is one of the greatest improvisers in the slack key tradition. Bob Brozman is recognized as the greatest exponent of 1920s style acoustic steel playing and is especially inspired by the late great Sol Hoopii. Strong syncopation and easy give and take infuse these two classic songs with the backyard feel so crucial to slack key.

Hilo E is sometimes attributed to Mary Heanu. It celebrates the lehua flower, Waiakea and other natural beauties in and around the famous Big Island harbor town of Hilo.

A traditional *mele inoa* (praise chant) adapted by John Kaulia and Charles E. King, **E Lili'u E** honors Queen Lili'uokalani (1838-1917), Hawai'i's last reigning monarch (so far). Lili'uokalani was one of Hawai'i's greatest composers and poets. Eighty years after her passing, she remains a very beloved and influential figure. Bob has also recorded this song with slack key guitarist Led Kaapana on [KIKA KILA MEETS KI HO'ALU](#).

4. ***Liloa's Mele*** (instrumental)

Sonny Chillingworth: slack key guitar

From the album [ENDLESSLY](#)

The late Sonny Chillingworth was one of the three most influential slack key guitarists in history (along with Gabby Pahinui and Leonard Kwan). From the beginning of his career, in the early 1950s, Sonny had the respect of the slack key community. In the 1960s, club dates and recordings brought him wider recognition. He was also, at times, a member of the Sons of Hawai'i and the Gabby Pahinui Hawaiian Band. Sonny's repertoire was always diverse, encompassing Hawaiian standards, original compositions, country, Portuguese, rock oldies, Puerto Rican, Mexican and R&B. Sonny's unique approach to bass patterns, chord voicings, bass runs and vamps made his style easy to identify.

Written for one of Sonny's grandchildren, **Liloa's Mele** features beautiful hammer-ons and pull-offs, and two bass patterns. Since Liloa was also Sonny's Hawaiian name, the song takes his music full circle, from listening to his grandfather play for him to playing for his own grandchild.

5. **Radio Hula** (instrumental)
Led Kaapana: slack key guitar
Pat Bergeson: guitar
Viktor Krauss: upright bass
Tom Roady: percussion
Joey Miskulin: accordion

From the album [WALTZ OF THE WIND](#)

Led Kaapana, one of the greatest slack key guitarists ever, is especially recognized for his improvisational prowess. Royal Hawaiian Band singer Lizzie Kahau Alohikea composed this *mele hula* (song with choreography) in the 1920s to celebrate the arrival of radio in the Islands. Led's uncle, the late, great slack key guitarist Fred Punahoa, created an arrangement of this song for slack key in the 1940s, which Led learned as a teenager and used as the basis for his own improvisations. This Nashville session marks the first time Led has recorded the song with so many backing musicians, including percussion and accordion. "It was nice having all that support," he says. "It takes the song to a whole new dimension."

6. **'Imi Au Ia 'Oe** (instrumental)
Keola Beamer: slack key guitars

From the album [MAUNA KEA - WHITE MOUNTAIN JOURNAL](#)

Keola recalls, "In a small koa church, my Grandfather's voice would carry this song up along the pews, reverberating against the windows. As a small boy, I would stand next to him, holding my hymnal, not knowing about Good or Evil, who or what God was, just listening to the sound of the old man's voice and watching the skylarks high above the open fields."

Keola created this arrangement for two nylon string guitars and one electric guitar, adding a second melody to fill out the song. He is especially noted for his ability to compose additional parts to instrumental arrangements of simple, yet deeply profound Hawaiian melodies where, especially in the past, the words have been the most important element.

7. ***Pu'u Anahulu*** (vocal)

Martin Pahinui: lead vocals & bass

Dennis Kamakahi: slack key guitar

George Kuo: slack key guitar (K. Yairi 6 and 12 string double neck guitar)

David Kamakahi: 'ukulele

From the future Kamakahi/Kuo/Pahinui Hawaiian Slack Key Band album

This traditional *paniolo* (cowboy) classic tells the story of a beautiful and lofty Big Island *pu'u* (hill) where dwells some 'o'o birds with yellow feathers. The chorus asks the birds to give their love, suggesting that the Hawaiian compositional technique of *kaona* (hidden meaning) is at work. Most likely, the 'o'o, in a poetically round about way, represent people the composer would like to get to know better.

The song was a favorite of Pops Gabby Pahinui and remains a staple of the slack key scene. Gabby recorded it on his influential 1975 album THE GABBY PAHINUI HAWAIIAN BAND (Panini 1007). His son Cyril recently released an instrumental version on [NIGHT MOON • PO MAHINA](#). Gabby's son Martin soulfully sings it here with Dennis and David Kamakahi and George Kuo. Longtime friends, these celebrated musicians love playing **Pu'u Anahulu** at jam sessions, especially around three in the morning. "Sometimes you get to playing it and it just takes you to another place," says George. "You forget about the time and almost miss your plane." The recording comes from the upcoming album, to be released in January 2000, that the foursome has been working on between other commitments. "We've each had our own groups," says Dennis, "but we've always kept in touch. Finally, after all these years, we've started a group together and it feels great."

8. ***Hurrah Lani Ha'a Ha'a*** (vocal)

Cyril Pahinui: slack key guitar & vocals

From the album [NIGHT MOON • PO MAHINA](#)

This vintage march-type piece celebrates three famous things on Maui: the wind called Kili'o'opu; the Iao Needle, a natural landmark and sacred burying place near Wailuku; and Lani Ha'a Ha'a, an old poetic name for the town of Hana. Cyril sings the verse four times, but mostly uses the song to blast into some of his powerful and incredibly inventive improvisations.

9. ***Maori Brown Eyes*** (instrumental)

James "Bla" Pahinui: slack key guitar

From the album [MANA](#)

Bla, another son of Gabby Pahinui, does a unique, instrumental nylon string version of Claude Malani's slack key classic, which extols the beauty and powerful attraction of a certain resident of Aotearoa, the land of the long white cloud, also known as New Zealand. **Maori Brown Eyes** was originally played as a waltz back in the 1920s and 30s, but since the 1950s it has been played more often in 4/4 time. Other guitarists have recorded this well-known piece in different tunings. The most influential version is Leonard Kwan's instrumental rendition from his landmark 1960 album, SLACK KEY (Tradewinds 103), known in slack key circles as the "Red Album".

10. *Wahine 'Ilikea* (vocal)

Dennis Kamakahi: slack key guitar & vocals

From the album [PUA'ENA - "GLOW BRIGHTLY"](#)

Dennis is one of Hawai'i's greatest, most prolific and romantic songwriter in history.

Wahine 'Ilikea, a Hawaiian standard by Dennis frequently performed around Hawai'i, describes the white mist of Kamakou, a mountain on the island of Moloka'i. "At a place called Kamalo, the mountain reveals the beauty of eleven waterfalls," Dennis says, "like a woman who reveals her beauty to the one she loves."

11. *Lei 'Awapuhi (Yellow Ginger Lei)* (instrumental)

Bob Brozman: Weissenborn koa wood guitar

Led Kaapana: slack key guitar

From the album [KIKA KILA MEETS KI HO'ALU](#)

On this rendition of the *nahenahe* (relaxing) local standard by John Keawehawaii, there is some particularly nice interweaving of parts. Bob says, "There was no rehearsal, just real careful listening - not just to notes but also rhythm and tone and timbre. Ledward really listened and I really listened, and we took turns."

This version with the traditional song *E Hulihuli Ho'i Mai* is based on the medley by the very influential slack key guitarist Leonard Kwan, who first recorded **Yellow Ginger Lei**, again on his Red Album, SLACK KEY on Tradewinds Records.

12. *The Beauty of Mauna Kea* (vocal)

Keola Beamer: slack key guitar, 'ohe hano ihu (bamboo nose flute) & vocals

George Winston: piano

From the album [KOLONAHE - FROM THE GENTLE WIND](#)

Dating back to Keola's first album in the early 1970s, this song eloquently expresses love for the Big Island's famous white capped peak. The *mele* (chanted poetry) that opens the performance was written by Nona Beamer, and can be translated as: "The soft white lei encircles the crest of the mountain, the mountain high above, standing in great majesty,

majestic on high, veiled in the clouds."

"I've wanted to do a fresh take on **The Beauty of Mauna Kea** for a long time," Keola says. "It's always been one of my favorites." It's also one of his most requested songs. In both arrangements, Keola plays *'ohe hano ihu* (bamboo nose flute). "That beautiful, ethereal sound is like wind off in the distance," he says. Because it's played with breath from the nostrils, the *'ohe hano ihu* forms a very close communion with the few who play it."

13. ***Mai Poina 'Oe Ia'u (Not To Be Forgotten)*** (vocal)
Sonny Chillingworth: slack key guitar & vocals

From the album [ENDLESSLY](#)

Anyone who has looked up at night in Hawai'i has probably been struck speechless at least once by the sight of enormous billowy clouds, illuminated by the moon, majestically making their way across the heavens. In this old favorite, Lizzie Doerin calls her lover *ka 'opua hiki ahiahi* (the cloud that comes at night). She requests more frequent visits and makes the title plea, "Don't forget me." Note Sonny's beautiful and unusual bass pattern. Sonny will certainly never be forgotten.

14. ***Aloha 'Oe*** (instrumental)
George Kahumoku: slack key guitars

From the album [DRENCHED BY MUSIC](#)

George Kahumoku is one of Hawai'i's great composers and slack key guitarists. He wears many hats as, among other things, he is also a gifted school teacher and farmer.

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.

BONUS TRACKS:

15. ***Ulu Niu Ke'eke'e (The Crooked Coconut Tree)*** (vocal)
George Kahumoku: slack key guitars & 'Ukeke (Hawaiian mouth bow)
Kekuhi Kanahale: vocal & 'ili'ili (percussion stones)
Kekuhi Kanahale appears courtesy of Mountain Apple Records.

Kekuhi's husband, noted chanter and dancer Kaipō Frias, wrote this song about a coconut tree on Hilo Bay that has lived through several tidal waves. Each tidal wave knocks over the top of the tree and distorts its shape. By repeatedly surviving the destructive force of these tidal waves, the tree has become a symbol of hope and inspiration.

George overdubs two slack key guitars, ingeniously in two different tunings. One is in the G Major "Taro Patch" Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D) capoed up two frets to sound in the key of

A. The other is in a C Major 7 "Wahine" Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-D) tuned down to the key of A. The 'ukeke George plays was made by master-craftsman and music instrument maker, Calvin Ho.

Kekuhi has released two solo albums, HAHANI MAI (Punahale 004) and KEKUHI (Mountain Apple 2054). Elegantly combining chant, song and composition, Kekuhi perpetuates and expands her highly esteemed family traditions.

16. ***Slack Key Serenade*** (instrumental)

Leonard Kwan: slack key guitar

Ozzie Kotani: slack key guitar

This previously unreleased duet, with slack key legend Leonard Kwan and Ozzie Kotani, was created spontaneously in the studio. Leonard is playing in a G "Wahine" Tuning (D-G-D-F#-B-D) tuned down to the key of E. Ozzie is in the G Major "Taro Patch" Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D) tuned down to the key of E. It is common in the slack key tradition for guitarists to play together in different tunings so that they can complement each other in different ways.

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