

The Legendary Ray Kane

This historic reissue of Raymond Kane's classic first recordings for the Tradewinds label is a must for all lovers of Hawaiian slack key guitar. Each track clearly reveals why Kane is considered a legendary figure in modern slack key. His traditional sound and unique personality combine to create a deeply emotional experience that words can never express.

Liner notes:

“Slack key is very personal, so do it your own way, from the heart. Humble yourself. Play the best you can and share what you know. If we don't share slack key, we'll lose it. That almost happened once, so watch out. Take care of it.”

Raymond Kaleolohapoina'oleohelemanu Kane is a legendary figure in the Hawaiian art of *ki ho'alu*, (slack key guitar). A traditionalist with a unique sound and outgoing personality, Uncle Ray began playing as a child in the early 1930s, and has steadfastly maintained the style he learned then. “The way Albert Kawelo played - this is what I hear when I think of slack key,” he says. “That's the sound I heard when I was a little boy, nine years old. I just fell in love with it then and seventy years later it's still as strong as ever.”

Like most traditionalists, Ray defends his artistic turf with passion. “Slack key was created by the Hawaiian cowboys to put the cattle to sleep,” he says. “But the way some guys play it today, all wild and every which way, they would start a stampede!” However, after considering slack key's emphasis on individuality, he usually moderates his tone. “Now, when I say that to me that sound is slack key, I'm not running down anybody else, you understand. Slack key is music that comes from the heart so you're going to play what touches you, whatever that is. There are as many ways to play slack key as there are people who play it, but for me, it's got to be *nahenahe*; sweet, smooth, and full of aloha.”

Uncle Raymond was born October 2, 1925 in Koloa, Kaua'i but spent most of his childhood in Nanakuli, on O'ahu's Wai'anae coast, where his stepfather, William Panoke, ran a fishing boat. Ray's mother, Emma Cummings, came from one of Hawai'i's most famous musical families, which included her brother, popular bandleader Andy Cummings and Hawai'i's first lady of song, Genoa Keawe, plus several dozen professionals as well as hundreds of fine amateurs. Ray's father, Herman “Manu” Kane, reportedly played beautiful slack key, but broke off contact with the family before Ray could learn.

“Nobody else played slack key around our house,” Ray says. “But then one morning on the beach I heard the most beautiful guitar music coming from this tent. It sounded like three guys, but when I looked inside it was only one, a fella from Makua Ranch, Albert Kawelo. When he saw me watching him, he put the guitar away. Back then, see, you only played slack key by yourself, with your family, or close friends. It was *kapu* (forbidden) for anyone else.”

With his trademark energy and charm, Ray eventually wore down Albert's resistance to teach him. “I was really into diving back then,” Ray says. “I would go get him *kumu* (goatfish), *ulu*

(skipjack fish), all the *aweoweo* (Hawaiian bigeye fish) he wanted. Hell, I would've caught him a whale if he wanted one!" Ray also credits Henry Kapuana for teaching him some of his core repertoire.

Rooted to the traditional style of these older men, Ray tends to use his thumb to play the bass notes on the fifth and sixth strings (depending on the chord) on the first and third beats of the measure, with strong accented notes on the second and fourth beats on the fourth string, while his index finger plays the melody and phrases on the highest three pitched strings. This pattern illustrates slack key's many links to *mele hula*, Hawaiian traditional chant with dancing based on the text. Ray also stresses the importance of slides and finger picking to maintain a syncopated flowing quality, also highly prized in hula. Ornaments that Ray and other slack key masters integrate into their playing, such as harmonics, hammer-ons, pull-offs, and slides, provide a subtly vocalized quality reflective of Hawaiian chant.

Like many slack key masters then and now, Ray earned his primary living outside of music. "I was a welder," he says "and kept the music for fun; family parties and small gigs on weekends." He often ventured into Waikiki to join the amazing jam sessions going on after hours and at the beach. It was there he met Margaret Williams, owner of Tradewinds Records.

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 the late 1950s, she began a record label. While it relied, like other labels of the time, on 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'iloa Lincoln, and quite a bit of *ki ho'alu* (slack key guitar). It became the premier label for slack key in the 1960s, as slack key giants Leonard Kwan (1931-2000), Pops Gabby Pahinui (1921-1980), and Atta Isaacs (1929-1983) also recorded for Tradewinds. For Ray, his sessions marked a major turning point in his life, and they were first issued on the early 1960s album SLACK KEY (the "Black and White Album"), which also has tracks by slack key guitarist Leonard Kwan.

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

With these landmark Tradewinds recordings from the early 1960s and 1975, Ray established himself as a traditionalist with a unique sound and effusive spirit that helped spread the music beyond the traditional circles of family and Hawai'i.

In the early 1970s, the Hawaiian Music Foundation, the University of Hawai'i and other high profile culture organizations invited Ray to perform slack key in concert halls, taking the style to a new audience at a crucial time in its revival. Ray's devotion to the cause and his extroverted spirit won many new fans for the music around the world, and earned him a new nickname: The

Slack Key Ambassador. In 1987, in recognition of his work perpetuating and promoting slack key, Ray received a National Endowment for the Arts Folk Heritage Fellowship, America's highest honor for a traditional artist. He also at this time appeared in the Robert Mugge documentary *Hawaiian Rainbow* and toured widely both in and outside of Hawai'i. In 2003 he received the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award from the Hawai'i Academy of Recording Arts.

In 1985, Ray started recording in the solo format for George Winston's Dancing Cat label, and two recordings, PUNACHELE, and WA'AHILA have been issued, and a third volume is planned. "Producing and knowing Ray has been so inspirational and gratifying to me. He was the first slack key guitarist we recorded, and he and Elodia have so much soul and aloha. And he is the living embodiment of the older traditional ways of playing, His music has so many feelings –joy, love, aloha, good times, romance, poignancy, nostalgia, heart, soul, and sweetness –sometimes all in the same song—especially in his soulful slides", says Winston, who has also produced this reissue of Ray's complete classic Tradewinds recordings, a long time dream of his.

In early 2003, as these classic recordings are being prepared for reissue, Uncle Ray continues to teach on a limited basis, to play at home and, as always, to hold court to camera crews, reporters, students, fans, friends and other visitors from around the globe. If you call him, he'll likely answer the phone as "Nanakuli Police Station", "King Kamehameha speaking" or something similar. When he plays his music, this same *kolohe* (rascal) spirit combines with a tender love for the music that words can never express. "I'm so proud to have been part of it and I thank the good Lord and lots of good people for giving me the opportunity," he says with the genuine humility he invariably reveals in the most deeply-felt moments. "I mean it from the bottom of my heart. *Mahalo nui loa* (a very big thank you)."

NANAKULI'S RAYMOND KANE (Tradewinds Records 1130, recorded in 1975)

Ray Kane, slack key guitar & vocals with Al Ka`ailau, Jr., second and harmonizing slack key guitar (harmonizing slack key guitar on *Na Hoa He`e Nalu* and the end of *Keiki Slack Key*); Harold Haku'ole, rhythm guitar; and Brother Hohu, bass. Originally produced by Margaret Williams and engineered by Bob Lang at Sounds of Hawai'i Studio.

1. *Na Hoa He`e Nalu* - Instrumental [2:47]

G Major "Taro Patch" Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D), from the lowest pitched string to the highest, and played in the keys of G and C

Describing the Hawaiian art of surfing and the surfers who ride the waves, this classic from the early 1960s comes from the legendary composers Irmgard Farden Aluli (1911-2001), who wrote the music, and Mary Kawena Pukui (1895-1986), who wrote the words, after they began collaborating around 1950. It features modulations between two keys. Ray plays it in his favorite tuning, the most popular G Major "Taro Patch" Tuning, which is almost always the first tuning a beginning slack key guitarist learns. "I think it's the best tuning to start with," says Ray. "It sounds good even if you can play with only one finger. But you can do a lot with it, too." This song features Ray's trademark soulful slides, and sweet and seamless modulations between the keys of G and C.

Note Ray's use of the G bass for the C Major chord when the song modulates to the key of C, since the C root note is not available as an open string, which is one of the ways slack key guitarists adapt to 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. Using a note other than the root note in the bass of the chord creates a unique tension, making the chord want to move on to one *with* a root in the bass, or to modulate, which the song soon does when Ray plays the D Seventh chord, signaling the return to the key of G (also see *Ulupalakua*, song # 9). Slack key guitarists utilize this, going by what instinctively sounds good to them, and by what story they want to tell with the music.

On this recording, as with nearly all of his performances, Ray maintains a steady, unwavering tempo, reflective of Polynesian tradition and a hallmark of older slack key styles. The hallmark of this way of playing is the alternating bass (also sometimes called "double-thumbings" in Mainland America, where it has been prominent since the early 1900s) with, in the G Major Tuning, the thumb playing the lowest pitched fifth or sixth string on beats one and three of the measure (depending on the chord being used), and the fourth or sometimes third string played on beats two and four. Al Ka`ailau, Jr. plays some beautiful harmony guitar parts from the middle of the second verse to the end, and he is also in the G Major Tuning. Ray also recorded this song solo on his 1998 album WA'AHILA (Dancing Cat Records), and on his 1998 album HAWAIIAN SUNSET MUSIC with the Ray Kane Band, with slack key guitarist Michael Lowe.

The song's composer, Irmgard Aluli, recorded it in 1986 with her ensemble Puamana on the album HAVE A SMILE (Puamana Productions), and Kihei Brown also recorded it in 1972 with his trio on the album RIGHT ON KEIA (Hula Records 550), featuring guitarist Hiram Olsen playing the great instrumental breaks in the Standard Tuning (E-A-D-G-B-E) when the song modulates to the key of C, with the vocal verses in the key of G. Both of these versions have a strong swing feel, as opposed to Ray's smoother feeling he gives it here.

2. *Wai O Ke Aniani* - Vocal [3:01]
G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D)

Wonderfully keeping the same tempo and feeling as the first song, *Na Hoa He`e Nalu*, Ray next plays one of his signature tunes. As Ray's former student, the great slack key guitarist George Kuo says, "The old timers sometimes liked to lock into a groove and stay there all night. Ray learned this traditional song about the Keaniani Ridge in Moanalua Valley, on the Island of O'ahu, from the legendary Gabby Pahinui. Gabby first recorded his influential version for the Bell Label around 1946, along with four other tracks, and all five were the first slack key guitar tracks ever recorded (see THE HISTORY OF SLACK KEY GUITAR on Hana Ola Records, which has the 20 earliest recorded slack key tracks, including Gabby Pahinui's first recordings from the 1940s and pieces by eight other artists from the late 1940s and early 1950s). He also recorded it in the late 1950s for his album THE BEST OF HAWAIIAN SLACK KEY – WITH GABBY PAHINUI

(Waikiki Records 340) with the title *Wai Hu`ihu`i`O Ke Aniani*, and he recorded it with that same title in 1961 for his PURE GABBY album (Hula Records 576 - released in 1978), and again on his 1972 album GABBY (Panini Records 1002).

Ray often opens his performances with it. “I play it first because it’s one of my favorites,” Ray says. He also plays it to honor Gabby. “He was one of the greatest that ever was or ever will be,” says Ray. “As long as there are people playing slack key, Gabby’s memory will live on.”

In this recording, Ray illustrates his distinctive yet traditional vocal style, which retains a number of important Hawaiian chanting techniques such as *i`i* (vibrato), *kaohi* (glottal stops), and *ha`iha`i* (emphasized slides between registers). “I never studied any kind of singing,” says Ray, “I just opened my mouth and that’s what came out. When you sing, you have to put your whole body into it, but especially your heart.” Ray again also recorded this song solo on his album WA’AHILA (Dancing Cat Records).

3. ***Pua Sadinia*** - Instrumental [3:12]
G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D)

A composition from the late 1880s by David Nape (1870-1913), one of the most prominent composers of the late 19th century. This romantic ballad, which may be based some on a traditional Samoan song, honors the gardenia, and most likely, a specific individual associated through *kaona* (hidden meaning) with that intoxicatingly aromatic flower. One of his first original arrangements, Ray’s slack key adaptation of *Pua Sadinia* evokes in him strong feelings of nostalgia. “It reminds me of all the old folks and how much hard work and fun I was having back then trying to learn how to play slack key. Most of time when I play it, I’m dropping tears,” he says. Note the beautiful composed chorus added by Ray to this song, and notice the sweet and poignant C Sixth chords played sometimes by Al Ka`ailau, Jr. or Harold Haku`ole. At the end Ray plays his trademark Flat VI Major chord, here the E Flat Major, before ending with the G Major chord. Ray also recorded this song solo on his 1994 album PUNAHELE (Dancing Cat Records).

4. ***Punahele*** - Instrumental [2:43]
G Wahine Tuning (D-G-D-F# -B-D)

Ray’s greatest signature composition, and the one most played and recorded by other slack key guitarists. When he recorded it for Tradewinds, he didn’t have a title for it. “Noelani Mahoe gave it the name,” Ray says. “She’s a great lady. I met her at the Reef Hotel at their big jam sessions.” (see track # 17, *Hawaiian Reverie*, where she sings with Ray). *Punahele* is well named, as it means “favorite” or “pet” and it illustrates some of Ray’s favorite slack key techniques - especially hammer-ons and pull-offs. A hammer-on is created by plucking a note and immediately fretting above the note to produce a second tone. A pull-off involves plucking a string, then rapidly pulling the finger off the fret board, which produces an echoing note made either by the open string or by a fast repositioning of the finger. Ray plays here in the G Wahine Tuning. Wahine Tunings contain an open (unfretted) Major Seventh note, which gives them their characteristic sound, as the Major Seventh note can easily be

hammered on to produce the tonic note of the I chord (the tonic chord), and it is also, in Wahine Tunings, the open third interval of the very strong V chord (the dominant chord), here the D Seventh chord.

This song goes between the tonic and dominant seventh chords, as many Hawaiian songs do. This is paralleled in other great music traditions, such as traditional Cajun music, and some Appalachian and North American fiddle tunes. Additionally, many Hawaiian songs have three chords (the tonic, dominant seventh, and sub-dominant, or the I, V7, and IV chords [the G Major, D Seventh, and C Major chords in the key of G]). These chords are paralleled in the Blues, Cajun music, in Appalachian and North American fiddle tunes and folk songs, in Country music up to the mid 1970s, in Celtic music, and in many other music traditions in Spain, Portugal, Europe in general, Mexico, Africa, Cuba, and Latin America.

An original composition, *Punahale* dates from 1938. It was born one night at Zablun's Beach in Nanakuli. "Back in those days there were no cars, it was pitch black," Ray says. "So I sit there in the dark in the nice cool breeze and I hear the waves bouncing on the sand and see the moonlight flicker on the water. It inspired me."

Since then, the song has spread widely throughout the slack key world. At the end of Ray's set at a Honolulu concert on his 70th birthday, twenty-five of his students rose out of the audience with their guitars playing *Punahale* the way he taught them. "I was in a state of shock. I cried for five minutes," he says. "It was one of the only times in his life he couldn't think of a thing to say!" says his wife, Elodia, who helped J. W. Junker pull off the surprise. Ray also recorded this song solo on his album PUNAHELE (Dancing Cat Records). (*also see track 17*)

5. *Nani Wale Lihu'e / Wai'alae/ Halona (Hula Medley)* - Instrumental [3:08]
C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-E)

This is a solo guitar track, rare on recordings until the Dancing Cat recordings from the 1990s on. Medleys string together musical ideas in the same way that flowers can be formed into leis. They are a fairly common feature of slack key – perhaps because of its emphasis on short melody lines and creative elaboration.

This popular medley, with its strong hint of Mexican influence, showcases three classic tunes from the late 19th century:

Nani Wale Lihu'e was composed in the 1870s by Prince Leleiohoku (1855-1877) and Kamakau. Leleiohoku was the younger brother of both King Kalakaua (1836-1891) and his successor (and the last Hawaiian monarch) Queen Lili'uokalani (1838-1917), one of Hawai'i's greatest and most prolific composers of all time. The song uses the beauty of Lihu'e and other scenic spots on the island of Kaua'i to convey a romance that happened by chance.

Wai'alae, composed in 1898 by Ray's relative, legendary Royal Hawaiian bandmaster Mekia Kealaka'i (1867-1944), is about a Honolulu neighborhood near Diamond Head, and

especially shows the Mexican influence on Hawaiian music (also see Gabby Pahinui's version of *Lei Nani* with his Mexican influenced [and now standard] introduction on his landmark 1972 album GABBY [the "Brown Album"], on Panini Records 1002). Gabby also recorded *Wai'alaie* in the C Mauna Loa Tuning (C-G-E-G-A-E) with his band on his 1973 album THE RABBIT ISLAND MUSIC FESTIVAL on Panini Records 1003.

Halona, composed by J.Elia in the late 1800s, extols the beauty of the mountains above Lahaina on the island of Maui.

Gabby Pahinui created this now standard slack key arrangement in the late 1940s in his F Wahine Tuning (F-C-E-G-C-E), and debuted it on a Bell Label 78 r.p.m. that has been reissued on THE HISTORY OF SLACK KEY GUITAR (Hana Ola Records). Gabby also recorded a different version (with *Ka 'Iiw'i Polena* and *Silver Threads Among the Gold* and without *Halona*), under the title *Slack Key Medley* in 1961 for his album PURE GABBY (Hula Records 567 – released in 1978). Slack key guitarist Sonny Chillingworth (1932-1994) recorded the *Hula Medley* in a different C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-D), on his 1994 album SONNY SOLO (Dancing Cat Records). Leonard Kwan also recorded it in the early 1990s, in his F Wahine Tuning [(C-F-C-G-C-E), a different tuning on the lowest three pitched strings from Gabby's F Wahine Tuning (F-C-E-G-C-E)], for a future release on Dancing Cat Records.

Ray's version here from 1975 begins with an up tempo rendition of *Nani Wale Lihu'e*, as Gabby did, and he then plays *Wai'alaie* and *Halona* slowly and the most poignantly that these two songs have ever been recorded. "That's the way I like to take things," says Ray. "Slow and easy." In his two-finger picking style, he here plays the melody with his index finger, and the beautiful arpeggios from the bass strings up with his thumb (with a plastic thumb pick), the way these kind of arpeggios are usually done by slack key guitarists. Ray has also recorded a new solo guitar version for his upcoming third album for Dancing Cat Records.

6. ***Keiki Slack Key*** - Instrumental [2:31]
G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D)

Ray says the melody came to him in the early 1960s at Nanakuli Beach Park. "The *keiki* (children) were running around on the beach and I tried to play my guitar in time to them," says Ray. "They were having so much fun." Again note Ray's trademark soulful and smooth slides. Note Ray's beautiful and joyful harmonizing of the melody in the second verse. Al Ka`ailau, Jr. or Harold Haku'ole play some beautiful backup G Sixth chords throughout, accentuating the joy of this song, and Al Ka`ailau, Jr. plays the answering slack key guitar phrases in the G Major Tuning at the end. Ray also recorded this song solo on his album WA'AHILA (Dancing Cat Records).

7. ***Hi'ilawe*** - Vocal [3:07]

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

Set in Waipi'o Valley, the traditional *Hi'ilawe* uses the imagery of the title waterfall and chirping birds to tell the story of a love affair that created much gossip. After Gabby Pahinui's Bell Label recording of it in 1946 and his 1947 recording on the Aloha Label (both reissued on THE HISTORY OF SLACK KEY GUITAR [Hana Ola Records]), it became a slack key standard and his signature song. Gabby also recorded it in the late 1950s on his album BEST OF HAWAIIAN SLACK KEY – WITH GABBY PAHINUI (Waikiki Records 340), in 1972 on his album GABBY [the "Brown Album"] (Panini Records 1002), and on the 1974 album THE WAIMEA MUSIC FESTIVAL (Panini Records 1006). Gabby always played it in a different C Wahine Tuning (C-G-E-G-B-E) than the one Ray uses here.

Other notable vocal versions with slack key guitar have been recorded by:

- Sonny Chillingworth, in a different C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-D), on his album SONNY SOLO (Dancing Cat Records), and in another C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-D), on his album KA 'AINA 'O HAWAI'I (Lehua Records).
- Cyril Pahinui, in the C Major Tuning (C-G-E-G-C-E), on his album NIGHT MOON (PO MAHINA) (Dancing Cat Records).
- Bla Pahinui, in the Dropped D Tuning (D-A-D-G-B-E), singing a different melody, on his album BLA PAHINUI (Mountain Apple Records), and with the normal melody for a future recording for Dancing Cat Records.
- Led Kaapana, in the Standard Tuning (E-A-D-G-B-E), playing in the key of C, on his album LED LIVE-SOLO (Dancing Cat Records).
- Haunani Kahalewai recorded it twice in the D Wahine Tuning (D-A-D-F# -A-C#), on her album HAUNANI, THE VOICE OF HAWAI'I (Decca Records – out-of-print), and on a 78 r.p.m. (49th State Records 181), to be reissued in the future on THE HISTORY OF SLACK KEY VOLUME 2 (Hana Ola Records) – From the early 1950s and farther back, **Hi'ilawe** and similar traditional songs were often played in the D Wahine Tuning, a tuning used less often today.

Notable instrumental slack key versions **Hi'ilawe** have been recorded by:

- Atta Isaacs [with The Maile Serenaders (the Sons of Hawai'i)], in his C Major Tuning (C-G-E-G-C-E), on the album SLACK KEY & STEEL GUITAR INSTRUMENTALS, VOLUME 1 (formerly titled KANI KA PILA! VOLUME 1) (Hula Records).
- George Kuo, in the same C Wahine Tuning as Gabby (C-G-E-G-B-E), with the title **Old Hi'ilawe**, on his album NAHENAHE (Hula Records).
- Keola Beamer, in the G6th Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-E), on his album MAUNA KEA-WHITE MOUNTAIN JOURNAL (Dancing Cat Records).
- Cindy Combs, in the G6th Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-E), on her album SLACK KEY LADY (Dancing Cat Records).

Here Ray plays it in G Wahine Tuning (D-G-D-F# -B-D), very much the same way that *Punahale* (track # 4) is played, even though he usually plays it in a C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-E), a different one than the one Gabby always used (C-G-E-G-B-E). Ray also

recorded it solo in the C Wahine Tuning on his album WA'AHILA (Dancing Cat Records).

Noted local guitarist Harold Haku'ole is featured playing the nice arranged introduction in the Standard Tuning (E-A-D-G-B-E). He was a staple sideman on rhythm guitar and arranger for the Tradewinds label (backing up, among others, the late, great slack key guitarist Leland "Atta" Isaacs on the Tradewinds albums ATTA, and TWO SLACK KEY GUITARS, which also featured Gabby Pahinui). Just before the end of the song Ray plays a beautiful sequence of C Major, G Major, D Seventh, and G Major chords, unique to this version.

8. *Wa`ahila* - Instrumental [2:33]
G Wahine Tuning (D-G-D-F# -B-D)

Like most of Ray's original compositions, *Wa`ahila* came to life at the beach, and was composed around the late 1930s. "I was watching canoes in the water and the melody jut came to me," Ray says. This was another original that he didn't have a title for. "Noelani Mahoe gave it the name", Ray says. *Wa`ahila* is the ridge between Manoa and St. Louis Heights in Honolulu, and is the area where producer Margaret Williams lived.

For comparison, the G Major and D Seventh chords in the G Wahine Tuning are the exact same voicings as these two chords in the Standard Tuning (E-A-D-G-B-E): the first position A Major chord (with the sixth, fifth, and first strings open [unfretted], and with fretted notes on the second fret of the fourth, third, and second strings), and an E Seventh chord (with the sixth and first strings open, and the fretted notes on the second fret of the fourth string, the first fret of the third string, and the third fret of the second string). This shows that this G Wahine Tuning was probably an early slack key tuning influenced by the Mexican and Spanish cowboys that brought the guitars to Hawai'i around 1832. Ray also recorded this song solo on his album WA'AHILA (Dancing Cat Records). (*also see track 13*)

9. *Ulupalakua* - Vocal [2:55]
G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D)

Inspired by the famous and beautiful Maui ranch on the slopes of the Haleakala mountain and crater, this paniolo (Hawaiian cowboy) favorite by John Pi'ilani Watkins from 1947 has been widely performed, mostly as a vocal. Note Ray's interesting use of the VI Seventh chord (here the E Seventh) just before the II Seventh (the A Seventh), and the V Seventh (the D Seventh) before the tonic I chord (the G Major). He plays the E Seventh as a partial chord with the G note in the bass, since there is no open (unfretted) E bass note (this is hard to hear on this version because of the other instruments). Sometimes he plays this chord with an A flat note on the sixth fret of the fourth string, played on the second and fourth beats of the measure. Sometimes he also uses the open D note on the second or fourth beats (also see *Na Hoa He`e Nalu*, song # 1).

Sometimes on the last beat of the A Seventh chord he also uses the open D note on the fourth string, accentuating the old-time feeling with the constant accents on the second and fourth

beats, which come from the very old Hawaiian style of playing the *ipu* (gourd drum). Also note that when Ray takes the two instrumental breaks, he plays soulful verses that are different from the chord structure of the song, something he often does. And note his beautiful signature turnaround vamps at the end of each verse. Ray also recorded this song solo on his album WA'AHILA (Dancing Cat Records).

10. *Maui Chimes* - Instrumental [3:28]

G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D), played in the keys of G and D.

Slack key and the steel guitar are closely related and share many features as well as some repertoire. This song is based on the 19th Century traditional American children's song *My Boat is Sailing* and is also known as *Maui No Ka 'Oi* ("Maui, the Best"), after Reverend Samuel Kapu put Hawaiian words to it probably around 1897, praising the Island of Maui. It was recorded as an instrumental under the title of *My Boat is Sailing* in 1928 by Johnny Noble's Hawaiians, featuring the David Burrows Trio, with David Burrows on steel guitar, Samson Akaka on rhythm guitar, and Ray Kinney on 'ukulele (Brunswick 55029). It is one of the few Hawaiian songs that has become more popular as an instrumental piece than as a vocal song.

This classic steel guitar showcase may have been adapted first by slack key guitarists, but it became much better known as a steel guitar piece, and is often one of the very first pieces learned by a steel guitar student. It takes its title from the use of harmonic chimes on the twelfth, seventh, and fifth frets. Chimes are produced by touching the string lightly rather than pressing all the way down to the neck, especially at these three different frets. For this recording, Ray played the guitar in his lap as if it were a steel guitar, holding the side of the little finger of his left hand lightly against the strings to get the harmonics. Note the beautiful A minor seventh and the D Ninth chords by rhythm guitarist Harold Haku'ole as the song modulates from the key of D Major back to G Major.

Some notable slack key versions have been recorded by Sonny Chillingworth on his landmark 1964 album WAIMEA COWBOY (Mahalo Records 4011); by slack key guitarist Led Kaapana with acoustic steel guitarist Bob Brozman on their 1997 duet album KIKI KILA MEETS KI HO'ALU (Dancing Cat Records); by slack key guitarist George Kuo with Barney Isaacs (playing acoustic steel guitar for the first time on record) as part of the *Maui Medley* on their 1995 duet album HAWAIIAN TOUCH; and Mika'ele Mike McClellan on his early 1970s album THE LIFE OF THE LAND (Topsoil Records). It has also been recorded by many other slack key guitarists, all playing in the G Major Tuning, and all playing in the normal upright playing position, unlike Ray's way of playing it with the guitar on his lap, and there are many, many steel guitar recordings of it.

BONUS TRACKS:

These next eight songs are Ray's first recordings from the early 1960s.

11. ***Kila Kila O Haleakala*** - Instrumental [1:53]

Originally issued on the album SLACK KEY [the “Black & White Album”, which also has tracks by slack key guitarist Leonard Kwan] (Tradewinds Records 106), and on the anthology album PARTY SONGS HAWAIIAN STYLE, VOL. 2 (Tradewinds Records 104), with the title “Slack Key”.

A Mauna Loa Tuning (E-A-E-E-F#-C#), tuned down four half steps to the key of F

Another classic tune from around the 1930s written for Maui’s famous Haleakala Crater attributed to William Coelho or Charles E. King, which has enjoyed wide popularity with singers and instrumentalists. “Ray Kane is the only one to have recorded in this unusual and beautiful A Mauna Loa Tuning” says producer George Winston.

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

Ray’s A Mauna Loa Tuning combines the relationships of the two most popular Mauna Loa Tunings: the top two pitched strings of the C Mauna Loa Tuning (C-G-E-G-A-E), with the four bottom pitches of the G Mauna Loa Tuning (D-G-D-D-G-D). Tuning the third and fourth strings to the same note creates a drone for both the tonic (the G Major chord in the G Mauna Loa Tuning; the A Major chord in the A Mauna Loa Tuning), and the Dominant Seventh chord (the D Seventh in the G Mauna Loa Tuning; the E Seventh in the A Mauna Loa Tuning).

Ray has also recorded a solo version for his upcoming third album for Dancing Cat Records, and he also recorded his beautiful composition *Popoki Slack Key* in this A Mauna Loa Tuning, pitched *up* one half step to the key of B flat, on his album WA’AHILA (Dancing Cat Records),

12. ***Meleana E (Kane’s Mele)*** - Instrumental [1:30]

Originally issued on the album SLACK KEY [the “Black & White Album”] (Tradewinds Records 106, erroneously with the title “Auwe”).

G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D), tuned down two half steps to the key of F

This could be called an unusual interpretation of the classic party song, translated as “Maryann”, possibly composed by Francis Samuel Ka’a’a around 1907, or possibly attributed to Kaimanahila around the same time, or it is possibly an even earlier traditional piece from around 1870.

Ray actually here uses a different traditional slack key theme also used by slack key guitarist Sonny Chillingworth on his celebrated composition *Slack Key #1*, recorded on his albums WAIMEA COWBOY (Mahalo Records 4011) and ENDLESSLY (Dancing Cat Records).

Ray also recorded this same piece solo, under the title *Kane's Mele*, for his upcoming third album for Dancing Cat Records.

13. ***Wa`ahila*** - Instrumental [1:46]

Originally issued on the album SLACK KEY [the “Black & White Album”] (Tradewinds Records 106).

G Wahine Tuning (D-G-D-F# -B-D), tuned down two half steps to the key of F

An earlier, shorter version of Ray's beautiful original composition. (*also see track 8*)

14. ***Willy's Tune*** - Instrumental [0:51]

Originally issued on the album SLACK KEY [the “Black & White Album”] (Tradewinds Records 106), and on the album PARTY SONGS HAWAIIAN STYLE, VOL. 2 (Tradewinds Records 104).

G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D), played in C and G fingerings, and tuned down three half steps to sound in the keys of A and E

Another original composed by Ray around the 1950s, played in two different keys, inspired by a friend of his.

15. ***Moana Chimes*** - Instrumental [2:14]

Originally issued as part of the song *Slack Key Medley* (with the song *Punahale*) on the album PARTY SONGS HAWAIIAN STYLE, VOL. 2 (Tradewinds Records 104).

G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D), tuned down three half steps to the key of E

Another steel guitar standard often played by slack key guitarists, composed and recorded by steel guitarist M. K. Moke in 1928. Again, for comparison of styles, see slack key guitarist Sonny Chillingworth's versions on his albums WAIMEA COWBOY (Mahalo Records 4011) and ENDLESSLY (Dancing Cat Records). Slack key guitarist Led Kaapana also recorded it with acoustic steel guitarist Bob Brozman on their 1997 duet album KIKA KILA MEETS KI HO'ALU (Dancing Cat Records). Slack key guitarist George Kuo recorded it with steel guitarist Barney Isaacs (playing acoustic steel guitar for the first time on record) on their 1995 duet album HAWAIIAN TOUCH. Gabby Pahinui also recorded it in the C Mauna Loa Tuning (C-G-E-G-A-E), as part of a medley with *Kaulana Na Pua* and *Kuwili*, on his late 1950s album HAWAIIAN SLACK KEY VOLUME 2 – WITH GABBY PAHINUI (Waikiki Records 320), with Barney Isaacs on electric steel.

16. ***Hawaiian Reverie*** - [2:32] -Vocal and 'ukulele by Noelani Mahoe

Originally issued on the album PARTY SONGS HAWAIIAN STYLE, VOL. 2 (Tradewinds Records 104).

G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D), tuned down two half steps to the key of F

A Dick McIntire classic composed around the 1930s, an era often called the Golden Age of Hawaiian Music, *Hawaiian Reverie* is set in the town of Hilo. Here, in an unusual arrangement, vocalist Noelani Mahoe sings the harmony part while Ray plays the lead melody on the guitar, creating the unique sound this track has. Ray's unusual use of the G minor chord to the G Major chord in the chorus is also especially interesting. Ray also has recorded a version for his upcoming third album for Dancing Cat Records.

17. ***Punahale*** - Instrumental [2:26]

Originally issued on the album SLACK KEY [the "Black & White Album"] (Tradewinds Records 106), and as part of the song *Slack Key Medley* (with the song *Moana Chimes*) on the album PARTY SONGS HAWAIIAN STYLE, VOL. 2 (Tradewinds Records 104).

G Wahine Tuning (D-G-D-F# -B-D), tuned down two half steps to the key of F

Ray's first recording of his classic signature song. (*also see track 4*)

18. ***Auwe*** - Instrumental [2:20]

Originally issued on the album SLACK KEY [the "Black & White Album"] (Tradewinds Records 106), erroneously with the title "Meleana E".

G Major Tuning (D-G-D-G-B-D), tuned down two half steps to the key of F

Ray's first recording of another traditional type original from around the 1950s, which translates to the expression of "Oh Dear!". Ray has also recorded a solo guitar version for his upcoming third album on Dancing Cat Records.

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

Photographs of Ray Kane for the NANAKULI'S RAYMOND KANE album by Bob Young

Photographs of the sidemen, Al Ka'ailau, Jr., Brother Hoku, and Harold Haku'ole, for the NANAKULI'S RAYMOND KANE album by George Bacon

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 Ray & Elodia Kane, Noelani Mahoe, Michael Cord, George Kuo, Chris Orrall, Dirk Vogel, Harold Haku'ole, Al Ka'ailau, Jr., Winnie Kurokawa, Lea Uehara, T. Malcolm Rockwell, Keith Haugen, the people at the Kahului Library, Mika`ele Mike McClellan, Ke'ala Kwan, Jr., Howard Johnston, Jennifer Ramsey, Corrina Burnley, Gail Korich, KSA, Howard Johnston, Justin Lieberman, Ron Rigler, Porter Miller, Milan Bertosa, Harry Soria, Jr., Tony & Robyn Hugar, and J.W. Junker.

Complete Ray Kane discography

As a Leader

1. **SLACK KEY** [the “Black and White Album”] (Tradewinds 106) – Has seven tracks by Leonard Kwan and six tracks by Ray Kane: *Kila Kila O Haleakala*, *Willy’s Tune*, *Meleana E* (actually *Auwe*), *Auwe* (actually *Meleana E*), *Punahele* and *Wa`ahila* – late 1950s or early 1960s
2. **PARTY SONGS, HAWAIIAN STYLE, VOLUME 2** (Tradewinds 104) – Includes the songs *Punahele*, *Moana Chimes*, *Slack Key* (actually *Kila Kila Haleakala*), *Willy’s Tune*, *Meleana E* (actually *Auwe*), and *Hawaiian Reverie* – late 1950s or early 1960s
3. **NANAKULI’S RAYMOND KANE** (Tradewinds 1130) – 1975
4. **MASTER OF THE SLACK KEY GUITAR** (Rounder 6020) - 1988
5. **PUNAHELE** (Dancing Cat 38001) – 1994
6. **WA`AHILA** (Dancing Cat 38002) – 1998
7. **HAWAIIAN SUNSET MUSIC VOL.1** (Hula 604) -1998
- with slack key guitarist Michael Lowe & the Raymond Kane Band
8. **MAIKA’I NO BLUES** (Respect RES-30 - Japanese issue) -1999
- duet with slack key guitarist Yuki Yamauchi
9. **HOLOHOLO SLACK KEY** (Respect RES-37- Japanese issue) - 2000
-duet with slack key guitarist Yuki Yamauchi
10. **a third solo album will be issued on Dancing Cat Records.**

Backing up Yuki Yamauchi

1. **HAWAI’I ALOHA** (Ray backs up Yuki Yamauchi on *Ulupalakua*, *Nani Kaua’i*, *Meleana E*, *Hawai’i Aloha*) -1996

Elodia Kane (Ray’s wife) discography

1. **CHERISH THE MELE OF OUR ELDERS** – (with Ray Kane) - (Respect RES-24– Japanese issue) - 1998
2. **TRIBUTE TO LENA MACHADO** (Respect RES-29– Japanese issue) - 1999
3. **HE LEO ‘OHANA** (Respect RES-38 – Japanese issue) - 2000

Ray Kane’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. C Wahine Tuning (C-G-D-G-B-E)
 4. D Wahine Tuning (D-A-D-F# -A-C#)
 5. A Mauna Loa Tuning (E-A-E-E-F# -C#) - sometimes pitched down four half steps to the key of F, and sometimes pitched *up* one half step to the key of B flat.
 6. Standard Tuning (E-A-D-G-B-E) - for playing rhythm guitar
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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 – 1964
- 115 - Kaupena Wong w/ Leo Nahenahe Singers – HAWAII’S FOLKSINGERS -1964.
- 116 - 1964
- 117 - Bill Ali’ihoa 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’ihoa 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 -19
- 2201 - Linda Dela Cruz – BEST OF LINDA