ELEVEN Three Moments in *Kī Hōʻalu* (Hawaiian Slack Key Guitar)

Improvising as a Kanaka Maoli *(Native Hawaiian) Adaptive Strategy*

KEVIN FELLEZS

Kī hōʻalu, or Hawaiian slack key guitar, is a fingerpicking acoustic guitar folk music tradition that emerged from the *paniolo* culture of Hawaiʻi in the mid-nineteenth century. *Paniolo* is a Hawaiian-language term denoting "Hawaiian cowboy"; derived from the Spanish word *español*, the term indicates the significant role Mexican vaqueros played in the formation of a recognizably Kanaka Maoli (native or indigenous Hawaiian) guitar tradition.[1] In this essay, I think through a series of questions regarding the role of improvisation in slack key by Kanaka Maoli musicians in performative as well as musical terms. In speaking of Native Hawaiian performativity, I recall Laura R. Graham and H. Glenn Penny's observation that "performances of indigeneity . . . are contextually situated embodied speech and action . . . anchored in past performances, local traditions, and ideologies. At the same time, they are always creative and forward looking, infused with expected outcomes."[2] While sympathetic to their definition, I want to extend their conceptual framing by thinking about performances of indigeneity that have either resulted from or resulted in *unexpected* outcomes. The three moments in Hawaiian slack key guitar history I detail in this essay will help think through Kanaka Maoli responses to the unexpected and the key role of the improvisatory in those responses, which are rooted in Kanaka Maoli indigeneity.

Conventional musical analysis asks, How does improvisation shape the music? Performative improvisation, as I am calling it here, is more concerned with questions such as, How can we think of the jumble of histories that came together to produce slack key as improvisatory? How might the various strategies adopted by slack key guitarists at various moments in the tradition's

history be heard as improvisations, as unrehearsed yet thoughtful responses by Kanaka Maoli guitarists to non-Hawaiian, colonial interests, which were often in conflict with Native Hawaiian concerns, such as those mobilized by Christian missionaries, US imperialism, and the global music industry? How might we think of Hawaiian guitarists as masters of improvisation when acting as agents of change in the face of these powerful interests that have tried to corral and constrain Hawaiians while also profiting from their creative labor?

In this regard, indigenous Hawaiian guitarists have acted as agents of preservation as well as transformation in both social and musical senses, as I describe below. The decidedly mixed success of Native Hawaiian guitarists in raising slack key's visibility both inside and outside of Hawai'i has proven double-edged. The recognition of its value as an indigenous Hawaiian tradition, and of Hawaiian guitarists as guardians of an invaluable musical tradition, initially took place in the 1970s, a time when Hawaiian culture was felt to be at a nadir, which sparked an outburst of activities dubbed the Second Hawaiian Renaissance.[3] At that time, slack key was seen as one of Native Hawaiians' cherished musical traditions that exemplified in its *nahenahe* (sweet, gentle) aesthetic the core Hawaiian values of *aloha* (love, welcome) and generosity.

Yet criticisms of the deleterious effects of slack key's formation as a commercial genre and circulation within the marketplace, particularly since the 1990s, link it to a long history of commodification of Hawaiian culture (or what is taken to be Hawaiian culture), especially its music.[4] With its dominance as a visible Hawaiian musical export—slack key is far less popular at home in Hawai'i than other Hawaiian musical idioms—critics have more recently questioned the place and value of Hawaiian slack key guitar within Kanaka Maoli culture. These moments, I argue, highlight issues of the improvisatory within Hawaiian slack key as an adaptive strategy in which unforeseen circumstances force unrehearsed, immediate responses. Musicians' responses are, as detailed below, grounded in a musical aesthetic in which a commitment to spontaneity and a willingness to take calculated risks, shaped by a traditional pedagogical practice based on active listening sans explicit instruction, become articulated as both musical and social practice. As Daniel Fischlin, Ajay Heble, and George Lipsitz argue, "Improvised musicking is a critical form of agency, of embodied potential that is inseparable from other social practices that call upon us to be purposeful agents of our cocreated, lived reality."[5] Likewise, the three moments highlighted in this essay will illuminate the ways in which the meanings of musical improvisation extend outward from Native Hawaiian musicians'

musicking as a performative and social practice with resonances beyond the musical.

The first moment is concerned with the early history and origin narrative of kī hōʻalu, which will afford us the chance to think about improvisation as indigenization, by which I mean the creative (re)use of materials by indigenous populations that resists prior determination of uses or the "intentionality" of materials. This redefines appropriation, for instance, by suggesting that Hawaiians appropriated the Spanish guitar in order to sing songs proscribed by Christian missionaries, who decried Hawaiian song as pagan, licentious, or trivial. This history speaks to the ways in which musical improvisation articulates broader social processes.

The second moment occurs during the Hawaiian Renaissance of the 1970s with the revival of slack key, along with a number of cultural practices, including use of the Hawaiian language, revealing improvisation as a process of renewal, meaning the active and acknowledged "(re)inventing" of tradition by indigenous tradition bearers confronting more than a century of efforts to eradicate Kanaka Maoli and their culture. This revitalization of Hawaiian culture and identity came on the heels of the post–World War II era in which Hawaiʻi became one of the most militarized areas in the world—a feat obscured by the higher visibility of the islands' number-one industry, tourism, which is predicated on notions of the Hawaiian Islands as a "tropical paradise." As a primary industry in the Hawaiian Islands, the US military presence complicates Kanaka Maoli self-determination efforts, particularly those seeking an autonomous solution external to US jurisprudence.[6] Importantly, the musicians of the Hawaiian Renaissance of the late 1960s and 1970s helped shape the continuing struggle for Kanaka Maoli self-determination in the public sphere, including the world beyond Hawaiʻi.

The third moment involves the Grammy Awards, in which slack key's domination of the Best Hawaiian Music Album category raised questions in the Hawaiian music community about whether or not slack key was truly representative of Kanaka Maoli culture. Improvisation, in this instance, can be thought of as the often ill-fitting accommodations Kanaka Maoli have been forced to negotiate under unequal power relationships with, first, colonial and, subsequently, US military and transnational corporate power. In this light, improvisation as accommodation may appear overdetermined by its relationship with corporatist logics. While accommodation may appear too much like unprincipled compromise, it is important to remember that these guitarists have labored at the shallow end of the music industry, reaping little material benefit. Theirs is not the tale of unearned plenitude but,

rather, another instance of Kanaka Maoli culture bearers being caught in the gap between indigenous priorities and capitalist prerogatives. What, for instance, might we make of the fact that almost all of the guitarists mentioned in this chapter have relied on nonmusical day jobs?

I would like to suggest other possibilities that accommodation provides—*to accommodate* is to provide comfort, or, as the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines the term, "to provide with something desired, needed, or suited," and "to make fit, suitable"—definitions that seem less concerned with avoiding compromise and more concerned with working with others toward "desired, needed, or suited" goals.[7] As my initial hesitancy to use *accommodation* indicates, this moment may also serve as a cautionary tale of unintended consequences, which is always a risk in improvisation.

Each moment involves improvising—not in the sense of performing a completely spontaneous composition or unleashing unrestricted, uninhibited expression but in the sense of adjusting to a momentary finger flub that proves fortuitous (the first moment, with its series of historical happenstance), extemporizing on a melodic line (the second moment, with its active resuscitation of older musical aesthetics), or allowing for another musician's phrasing to dictate the flow or rhythmic emphasis in a given performance (the third moment, in which Hawaiian slack key guitarists become involved with powerful music industry interests).

These three moments also serve notice against the idea that the "moments of improvisation" I detail here are merely case studies exploring a widely distributed sense of just what, exactly, improvisation entails in terms of performance, aesthetics, and politics. In contrast to the urge to draw universalist ideals from particularized improvisatory practices, I mean to draw out the implications of rooting slack key's improvisatory moments within Native Hawaiian acoustemologies, to borrow Steven Feld's generative portmanteau, in which "local conditions of acoustic sensation, knowledge, and imagination embodied in the culturally particular sense of place" are enacted, articulated, and performed by slack key guitarists.[8]

By drawing on the notion of acoustemology, I understand Kanaka Maoli improvisation as emerging out of a culturally specific set of practices originating from a particular place, namely, Hawai'i, and articulating a particularly Hawaiian perspective. My argument is that the sense of Hawaiian-ness attributed to Hawaiian slack key guitar musicking rests on an improvisatory sensibility promoted by traditional Hawaiian pedagogical practice (detailed below) in which guitarists' articulations spring from an acoustemology shaped by living in a land of waterfalls, waves, and volcanoes. Slack key mu-

sicking is steeped in a landscape in which patterns and cyclic structures include built-in unpredictability capable of dramatically shifting geographies and recalibrating humans' place within them.

Additionally, the nahenahe (sweet, gentle) aesthetic not only enables guitarists to sound out specific wind patterns or evoke significant sites such as the Hiʻilawe waterfalls in the Waipiʻo Valley on the island of Hawaiʻi but also helps them articulate an underlying mischievous impulse that is part of Native Hawaiian sensibilities, preventing nahenahe from becoming saccharine or anodyne. Slack key's deceptively "soft" orientation is more properly thought of as elastic and flexible, allowing Hawaiian guitarists to absorb or deflect foreign elements, gauging nonindigenous elements as either innovative or invasive. In this light, we can hear that performances of slack key are not completely planned, but they are not without an internal logic, either, while slack key's deceptively simple forms make infinite variations available. Again, improvisation in this sense is not restricted to the musical but can be thought of as a set of social practices.

As Daniel Fischlin and Eric Porter point out in the introduction to this collection, improvised vernacular musics fill a contradictory space. On one hand, musical improvisation can be seen as the acts of agentive subalterns in negotiating, even challenging, hegemonic standards of musical evaluation and aesthetics. By extension, I posit that Hawaiian guitarists and their musicking have enacted improvisational logics that transcend the musical as a result of being raised in a social world in which improvisational approaches reflect, express, and partially constitute a social order in which creativity can be mobilized in the moment to deal with, for example, geological as well as political changes.

On the other hand, improvisational skill does not *necessarily* mitigate the downsides of participation with, in the case of Hawaiʻi, the settler-colonialists' desire to incorporate subaltern communities into their social order, which is also nimbly improvisational as, to continue with this example, it is through the commodification of indigenous cultural productions within capitalist structures of exploitation that settler-colonialist interests accrue surplus value from the labor of subaltern culture bearers. Improvisation as both a methodology and a technology manages to cut both ways.

Throughout this chapter, I aim to demonstrate that improvising Hawaiian musicians articulate social relations as much as they display instrumental prowess. Recognizing that instrumental can mean both a *musical instrument* and the *instrumentalizing* of social relations gives additional support to the ways in which Hawaiian guitarists have enacted an improvisational approach that is both musical in a strict aesthetic sense and social in a broader

context. The linkages from the musical to the social, from the musical performance to the politically performative, can be heard in the intentional aesthetic pursuit of Hawaiian musical values as well as in their (mis)interpretation by non-Hawaiian listeners, even those sympathetic to Hawaiian concerns and sensibilities.

The nahenahe aesthetic orientation, for instance, is often limited by non-Hawaiian misinterpretation. The "sweet, gentle" sounds of slack key guitar can be misheard as mollifying, even acquiescing to, Kanaka Maoli exploitation rather than as resisting or protesting, as calculated by indigenous Hawaiian musicians and audiences. It is within this gap between non-Hawaiian interpretation and Native Hawaiian intention that the limits of slack key improvisation may be heard (and these were played out publicly in the third moment).

The politics of Kanaka Maoli improvisation are complicated further by its basis in Native Hawaiian pedagogical practices, which rest on a pragmatic yet nonexplicit and intuitive approach. Slack key's traditional method of transmission is best described as an aural tradition in which improvisational possibilities—and, just as important, their limits, such as the borders between kī hōʻalu and other Hawaiian musical expressions—are conveyed solely through musical sound. Native Hawaiian master guitarists such as Charles Philip "Gabby" Pahinui and Raymond Kane followed an older *paʻa ka waha* ("shut your mouth") school of aural transmission. The four pillars of traditional Hawaiian pedagogy stress performativity and require unquestioning silence of students: *nānā ka maka*, see with your eyes; *hoʻolohe ka pepeiao*, hear with your ears; *paʻa ka waha*, shut your mouth; *hana ka lima*, use your hands. When Pahinui was asked what a beginning guitarist desirous of learning Hawaiian slack key guitar should first go about accomplishing, he responded, "I would think, first, Hawaiʻi style is, you listen but don't ask question. Never ask question."[9]

Finally, I do not mean that improvisation, or improvising, should be used casually, or merely as a metaphor. As an *adaptive*—rather than solely disruptive—strategy, kī hōʻalu improvisation indicates the open-ended and often-unspoken or implicit nature of Kanaka Maoli resistance, as its teaching methods suggest. Even the most talented student with the most astute ears will introduce variations—"mistakes" in other traditions—that are not exactly innovations, at least at the student level, but continually transform kī hōʻalu as part of its very definition. The three moments in kī hōʻalu history I detail in this chapter reveal the ways in which improvising has always been, and continues to be, a vital yet complicated Kanaka Maoli strategy of survival, resistance, and renewal.

Much of early slack key history remains obscured because of a historical lack of interest in a rural Hawaiʻi that had been transformed by imported ranching and plantation culture. Early non-Hawaiian observers painted the erasure of indigenous Hawaiians and their culture in poignantly nostalgic colors that obscured their investment in the very ranch and plantation cultures displacing Native Hawaiians and erasing their culture and way of life. These early writers figured Hawaiian land as virginal and underdeveloped, on which they were bringing a much-needed civilizing project to bear. It served their interests to construct Kanaka Maoli traditions not only as disappearing but also as untouched by outside influences, thus rendering a rural, hybrid, and vibrantly contemporaneous Kanaka Maoli musical practice such as kī hōʻalu invisible.

Slack key guitar history, then, can be heard as a series of performative improvisations shaped by Kanaka Maoli attempts to sustain their ways of life in the face of imperialism, resource extraction for settler-colonial interests, and external religious and political ideologies that, if not rendering them completely invisible in their own land, attempted to trap them in amber depictions of a disappearing culture, unfit for modernity. Kanaka Maoli and their culture survived by relying on indigenous ways of improvising provided by an indigenous culture produced by working *with*, rather than against, the natural world around them, a world of potentially cataclysmic volcanoes, seasonal surf patterns, and always-shifting winds overseen by fickle gods and goddesses—a habitual practice of creating meaningful lives out of circumstances for which previous experience neither fully accounted nor wholly prepared them, though tracked meticulously for millennia. This long-standing practice of improvising within forms as foundational to Native Hawaiian epistemology and cultural formation was transferred to the adoption of the guitar by Hawaiian musicians and shapes my idea of indigenization as improvisatory practice.

As mentioned, the slack key aesthetic aspires to nahenahe, soft and sweet, expression and therefore avoids abrasion except for the gently mocking. Indeed, slack key guitarists enjoy the slightly naughty or mischievous, which keeps slack key from becoming overly precious or cloying despite its emphasis on nahenahe. For example, a number of songs on a landmark recording, *Pure Gabby*, by renowned Kanaka Maoli musician Gabby Pahinui, are openly sexual in nature. A verse from "Nanea Ko Maka I Ka Leʻaleʻa" is translated in the liner notes as "I get inside your muʻumuʻu [dress] / To the

shiny window / Here I am, long-nosed / The opening gets the large member," leaving little to the imagination or esoteric *kaona* (hidden) readings.[10]

There are various theories concerning the origin of the guitar in Hawai'i, though an advertisement in 1782 for a musical performance featuring a number performed on a guitar indicates that the instrument was already familiar to Hawaiians a mere four years after their first encounter with Europeans.[11] By 1840 there are advertisements for the sale of the instrument in Honolulu newspapers. Still, the debate about the initial person or persons who introduced the six-stringed instrument to the islands remains unsettled.

A significant event in early kī hō'alu history was the arrival of Mexican vaqueros and the introduction of their cowboy and ranch culture to Hawai'i in the early 1830s. On February 22, 1793, cattle were first introduced to Hawai'i as a gift from British admiral George Vancouver to King Kamehameha I. Initially, Kanaka Maoli were both excited by and apprehensive of these *pua'a pipi* (beef pigs). Because Vancouver had experienced numerous losses to his original gift, which was reduced by the hardships of sea travel to a mere four cows, two ewes, and a ram, Vancouver requested that a *kapu* (taboo) be placed on the killing of the cattle and advised Kamehameha I to build an enclosure for them. Built from shaped rock, the Pa Nui (Big Pen) is still in evidence today in the area around Honalo, Hawai'i. The cattle, however, were not contained. As little as eleven years later, the cattle had multiplied into large herds of feral animals that were dangerous to the native flora and fauna, occasionally killing humans.[12]

In 1830 King Kamehameha III sent an official of his court to Mexico. While visiting there, the court official observed a rodeo and was impressed by the cattle-handling skills displayed by the Mexican vaqueros. Convinced the vaqueros were the answer to Hawai'i's cattle problem, the official arranged for their hire on the island of Hawai'i, settling them primarily in the area around Waimea. The Parker Ranch, now one of the oldest and largest cattle ranches in the United States, was established there in 1847 as part of an already established ranching culture initiated "four decades before The Alamo [1836], a generous eighty years before the great cattle drives along the Chisolm [*sic*] and other trails [post–US Civil War, 1865], and fully 140-plus years before the Taylor Grazing Act [1934]."[13] By 1859 the *Honolulu Pacific Commercial Advertiser* announced that "the imported cowboys [Mexican vaqueros] have disappeared and in their place has sprung up a class of Hawaiian mountaineers, equally skilled as horsemen as their foreign predecessors."[14]

Along with their knowledge of horse riding and cattle handling, the vaqueros brought their music and their guitars. In the evenings, after working

out in the pastures, paniolo listened to the vaqueros playing their music around the campfires. A common performance practice called for two Mexican guitarists performing together with one guitarist playing the lead melody and the other providing a bass line and harmonic accompaniment. When the vaqueros returned to Mexico, some of them left their guitars with their paniolo companions, who began integrating the instrument into their native songs and rhythms. There is a strong possibility of musical exchanges between vaqueros and paniolo occurring throughout the period, as some Mexicans remained in Hawaiʻi, a number of whom may have been guitarists.

The lack of widespread knowledge about kī hōʻalu at one time fueled speculation that Hawaiian guitarists' use of nonstandard tunings in kī hōʻalu was the happy result of mistakes in tuning the instrument, but the dominance of major tonalities in the most common open tunings used by kī hōʻalu musicians is reflective of Hawaiian musical sensibilities, indicating a systematic adaptive approach to integrating the guitar into Hawaiian musical culture. Moreover, Hawaiian musicians' seemingly offhand informality, even casualness, is the result of a particular musical aesthetic and cultural orientation in which apparent effortlessness, even carelessness, is valued and not simply the result of a natural correspondence between the "pleasantness of the Hawaiian Islands" and the "benevolence of her people." That is, kī hōʻalu is a learned craft reflective of a particular cultural aesthetic, not an ethnic essence expressing itself as an easygoing pleasantness.[15] Thus, Spanish instrumentation, Mexican performance practices, and Hawaiian musical forms and aesthetics—a history of performative improvisations—would merge in the creation of kī hōʻalu.[16]

Owing to Protestant missionaries' proscriptions of Kanaka Maoli religious and cultural practices such as *hula* (dance) and *mele* (chant) as pagan, uncivilized, and morally degenerate, along with their enactment of measures to eradicate Kanaka Maoli culture, by the end of the nineteenth century slack key guitarists no longer performed the music publicly as such, guardedly passing its secrets down exclusively among *ʻohana* (family).

Indeed, it wasn't until 1946, when Pahinui recorded "Hiʻilawe," that a commercial kī hōʻalu recording was widely available. Until that time, while Hawaiian steel guitar and *ʻukulele* musicians had circulated Hawaiian music around the world, kī hōʻalu had remained largely in Hawai'i, performed at family *lūʻau* (feast) and other private functions, and had not entered the music industry as a commercial genre. Still, kī hōʻalu recordings, including those by Pahinui, appeared as B-sides on 78 and 45 rpm singles, meaning these recordings were not promoted by their record labels nor were they

played on Hawaiian radio.[17] Tellingly, a recording produced in 1961 that is now considered a definitive recording for modern slack key guitar, *Pure Gabby* (Hula Records, 1978), was withheld from release for seventeen years owing to record companies' assumption that the buying public was disinterested in exclusively slack key guitar recordings.

Sharing and Selling

The development of kī hōʻalu as a commercial genre and Hawaiians' strategic involvement with the music industry to share their musical traditions demonstrates the ways in which Native Hawaiian improvisation is articulated through a sharing rather than a hoarding sensibility, a mark of a Kanaka Maoli ethos of generosity, which was distorted by various nonindigenous interests such as the tourism industry to portray Native Hawaiian culture as readily accessible. Yet, in the second moment, which we now consider, Kanaka Maoli began reaching outward in order to not simply resuscitate but invigorate their cultural heritage, highlighting Native Hawaiian improvisational practices as an inclusive, as opposed to insular, set of performativities. Though striking a devil's bargain by participating in the global music market, Hawaiian musicians calculated their exploitation against a growing sense of slack key's obsolescence, especially in Hawaiʻi.

By the 1960s, kī hōʻalu's role as accompaniment to hula or other forms of Hawaiian music had become primarily a thing of the past. Importantly, Hawaiian music scholar Elizabeth Tatar insists that "of the Hawaiian music types considered traditional—chants, hymn-like songs and *hula* songs—[each] evolved in the 20th century to their present status as traditional musical styles because of tourism's cumulative influences. Each was shaped by the Hawaiian musical community in response to the changing tastes of the US mainland tourist. Indeed, tourism has been a major influence on the development of Hawaiian music in the 20th century, and its effects on musical performance continue unabated."[18]

Kī hōʻalu continued to survive below the radar of the tourist industry for the most part, hidden away within various ʻohana as guitarists jealously guarded their music from outsiders, including Kanaka Maoli outside of their particular ʻohana. Scholars such as Noenoe K. Silva and Jonathan Kay Kamakawiwoʻole Osorio have documented how a long history of efforts by European and American elites to efface the vitality of Hawaiian culture for political and capital gain simultaneously elided the political and cultural opposition

of Native Hawaiians.[19] The result was a narrative of Hawaiian cultural loss that obscured the ways in which Hawaiian cultural traditions managed to survive.

Kī hōʻalu "disappeared" as Hawaiian cultural producers moved their art and folkways underground to avoid continual harassment by colonial authorities and the zealous proscriptions of missionaries.[20] But living connections to traditional Hawaiian culture were disappearing in the 1970s and, along with them, the knowledge of the old ways, the traditions, and the songs. As much as these practices safeguarded kī hōʻalu, the insularity of these musicians began to choke off the musical tradition they were invested in preserving. So, the circumstances that had spawned a particular set of performative improvisations to preserve slack key had shifted, requiring Native Hawaiian musicians to improvise anew.

As noted Native Hawaiian musician Keola Beamer asserted, "I'm old enough to remember when we all thought slack key would die. There were many reasons for that. One of them was that our *kupuna* [elders] had lost so much: their land, their religious system, their sense of place in the universe. The last thing they wanted to lose was their music, so tunings became very cultish and protected. The irony was that by way of holding the secrets too close, this art form was actually dying, suffocating because the information wasn't being communicated."[21] Drawing on non-Hawaiian music, Beamer's inventive variations on traditional and original themes mirror the broader improvisational ethos of shared reciprocity in Kanaka Maoli culture. His slack key recordings are virtuosic examples of fingerpicking acoustic guitar musicking that argue convincingly for the tradition's continuing vitality and flexibility and provide a rationale for serious aesthetic engagement. He is not the only slack key artist to engage this ethos. We can hear this same willingness to incorporate non-Hawaiian musical aesthetics in the work of earlier guitarists such as Gabby Pahinui, drawing on jazz, and Raymond Kane, anchoring his music with overt Spanish influences. As part of the 1970s Hawaiian Renaissance, Beamer was explicit about this broader approach to slack key. Yet for all his transcultural borrowings, Beamer performs, as Pahinui and Kane were widely acknowledged to have performed, unquestionably identifiable "Native Hawaiian music"—another sign of Native Hawaiians' performative sense of cultural reciprocity and the depth of Hawaiians' acoustemological sounding out of their sense of emplaced belonging.

Improvising creative new ways to reach out beyond the ʻohana, Beamer published the first slack key guitar method book in 1973, fomenting no small controversy. He survived the criticisms largely because he hails from a family whose musical roots can be traced for hundreds of years as elite Hawaiian

musicians and defended his publishing of Native Hawaiian cultural "secrets" in terms of Kanaka Maoli traditions of generosity.

Throughout the 1970s, other young Hawaiian musicians also began researching and revitalizing Hawaiian music culture at a time when many thought that much of traditional Hawaiian music had disappeared, along with the catastrophic decimation of the Hawaiian people, or had been so thoroughly corrupted by consumerist interests that it appeared forever severed from traditional Hawaiian aesthetics and concerns. In response, young Hawaiian musicians began not only learning older styles of Hawaiian music but also invigorating the music with a number of innovations, including the merging of traditional and modern instrumentation and the unapologetic use of modern recording technologies. They also began drawing on outside influences, adding wider improvisational latitude beyond the melodic obbligatos dictated by the subordination of the guitarist to the vocalist and dancer in traditional Hawaiian music, borrowing, for example, from contemporaneous rock's expressive lead guitar styles.

They also sang in the Hawaiian language, effectively making their music less attractive to tourists and challenging the influence of the tourist market in the commercial music arena. Singing in Hawaiian was a political act, a counter against attempts to eradicate Hawaiian language codified in the 1896 passage of the Republic of Hawaii constitution, which made English the official language and the sole language of schools, effectively banning the Hawaiian language. As Kay Akindes points out in her study of Sudden Rush, a contemporary *na mele paleoleo* (rap) group, "muting the Hawaiian language and imposing the language of the colonizer was a means of controlling the minds of the colonized"—and Hawaiian Renaissance musicians literally challenged the muting of their mother tongue.[22]

But as kī hōʻalu became known as instrumental guitar music (as detailed in the next section), it evaded the politics of language use and entered the public imaginary as the "soft, inviting sounds" of Hawaiʻi, allowing musicians to perform it, and audiences to appreciate it, without knowledge of the Hawaiian language or culture.[23] There is nothing new about this practice—a survey of popular music trends from the early twentieth century to the contemporary moment quickly reveals a series of relevant antecedents. Traveling around the globe in the Hawaiian music craze of the early twentieth century, Hawaiian sounds such as the lap steel guitar were appropriated by Nashville musicians, while the ʻukulele soon appeared in music that did not attempt to link to Hawaiian music at all, a practice continued by contemporary Hawaiʻi-born musicians such as Jake Shimabukuro.[24]

Kī hōʻalu's role as accompaniment to hula or other forms of Hawaiian music is primarily a thing of the past, though slack key artists occasionally feature a hula dancer on a song or two in concert (the guitarist remains the main attraction, inverting the historical relationship between music and dance in traditional Hawaiian culture). You can hear it, if faintly, embedded within arrangements of popular Hawaiian music on recordings from the post–World War II period as well as within the work of current Hawaiian artists such as vocalist Raiatea Helm, who recorded a duet album with Beamer (*Keola Beamer and Raiatea*, Mountain Apple Records, 2010). But the overwhelming proliferation of solo guitar recordings since the 1990s has increasingly framed kī hōʻalu as a soloist's art—a profitable transformation that came at a price, as the final moment reveals.

Accommodating Natives

I mean to play on the two possible meanings with this section title. On one hand, we might read the title as "making room for Hawaiians" in the world market or among the heritage-culture industrial complex.[25] On the other hand, we can read the title as noting the ways in which Native Hawaiian musicians have made their music culture fit with, or suitable to, vested interests dependent on shaping Hawaiian musicking into commodities while attempting to retain some sense of Kanaka Maoli imprimatur. Both involve improvisational skills in the sense of producing something for which there is no precedent. As I note earlier, working to "make fit [or] suitable" to outside dictates may necessitate compromise, but the fundamental orientation of Native Hawaiian performativities takes place within a sphere of reciprocal generosity. The question remains, though: What role might improvisation have played in the increased visibility yet diminished status in Hawaiʻi, at least for a time, of slack key musicians? I return to this question at the end of this section.

On February 13, 2005, the first Grammy for Best Hawaiian Music Album was awarded to *haole* (literally, "foreigner" but used to mark whites) guitarist Charles Brotman for his role as the producer of the compilation album *Slack Key Guitar*, *Volume 2* (Palm, 2004). The recording featured a field of ten guitarists, eight of whom were Native Hawaiian, but because Grammy regulations dictate that awards for compilation recordings are given to the producers, not the individual musicians, Brotman became the winner of the first Hawaiian Grammy despite being relatively unknown as a Hawaiian music guitarist at the time.

Less than a month later, the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* ran an article that described the other nominees (Keali'i Reichel, the musical group Hoʻokena, the Brothers Cazimero, Amy Hanaialiʻi Gilliom)—all of whom claim Hawaiian lineage and enjoy higher-profile careers than Brotman in the Hawaiian Islands—fielding calls of "outrage from friends, fans and family in Hawaii over the fact that Brotman is not Hawaiian."[26] During this time, Lilikalā Kameʻeleihiwa, director of the University of Hawaiʻi's Kamakakuokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies and noted Kanaka Maoli scholar and activist, argued in an on-air interview with a local television news reporter that Brotman's Grammy win was yet another instance of the commodified appropriation of Hawaiian music and culture by non–Kanaka Maoli that profited non–Native Hawaiian interests.

Grammy trustee Keith Olsen, who lives on Kauaʻi, drafted the winning proposal for the Best Hawaiian Music Album category. Yet in the wake of Brotman's win—and as slack key recordings came to dominate the Grammys—Hawaiian musicians began clamoring for recognition of other Hawaiian musical traditions. Olsen responded, "The chances of expanding the [Hawaiian Grammy] within the next five years is [*sic*] slim to none, because there were so few submissions. We can't be like the Hokus [Nā Hōkū Hanohano, the local Hawaiian music awards given by the Hawaiʻi Academy of Recording Arts]. We have space for one [award]. And if they don't support it, we'll have space for none." Despite the active public discussions over the newly established award throughout 2004 and 2005, only twenty albums were submitted for consideration. Olsen argued that the small number of entries proved that the Hawaiian music community didn't fully support the new category, adding, "The Grammys don't operate on aloha time."[27]

Olsen's evocation of aloha time registered music industry leaders' frustrations with Hawaiian infighting over the definition of "Hawaiian music" that was a proxy war over economic leverage in the small Hawaiian music market and that had stalled the approval of a Hawaiian Grammy for two decades.[28] "Aloha time" refers to the allegedly poor time management skills of the Native Hawaiian that demonstrated the indigenous population to be unfit for colonial labor or capable of self-regulation. It was a way of impugning Kanaka Maoli who were able to escape demeaning plantation labor by disappearing into the hills, or onto whaling ships, as lazy and unfit to be members of modern society. Similarly to European colonization of the Americas, in which indigenous populations either died or escaped into the "wilderness," not only were nonnative laborers encouraged to immigrate, but

stereotypes about Kanaka Maoli were offered as a legitimating rationalization of their subaltern status and eventual "tragic disappearance."

Because concepts such as aloha time figure Kanaka Maoli as a naive people with a natural disposition toward languid indulgence, plantation owners and their political allies mobilized its representative and rhetorical power to justify their claims to a "natural" dominance over Native Hawaiians. Indeed, the idea that Hawaiʻi is a multicultural paradise was built on the backs of immigrant plantation and ranch workers, who arrived in tandem with aggressive attempts by missionaries and their descendants to eradicate Kanaka Maoli culture. As Lisa Kahaleole Hall points out, "the most widespread American mythology about contemporary and historical Hawaiʻi revolves around the vision of the melting pot, a multicultural paradise where elements from every group combine into a rich whole that all can share. . . . The pleasure of this vision erases a violent, coercive, and tragic history. The multiplicity of races and cultures in contemporary Hawaiʻi was born in the attempt by plantation owners to divide and conquer their workforce."[29] The resistance of Kanaka Maoli to exploitive labor conditions led to the importation of, in Hawaiʻi's case, Asian laborers, primarily Japanese, Chinese, and Filipino. Many Locals (non-Native Hawaiians born and raised in Hawaiʻi) can trace their roots to Hawaiʻi plantation workers imported to perform work that neither Native Hawaiians nor white Americans could be induced to do, arriving in successive but overlapping waves from Portugal, Japan, China, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico, beginning in the eighteenth century. This history, including US militarization of the Hawaiian Islands, disappears owing to the tourist and hospitality industry's interests in promoting Hawaiʻi as a multicultural paradise, an exotic but welcoming destination for tourists.

This history of misrepresentations, appropriations, and dispossessions would reemerge in the controversies unleashed by the Grammy Award for Best Hawaiian Music Album. The impetus to lobby for the creation of a new category was largely economic. The debates surrounding the Hawaiian Grammy categorization, however, focused on Native Hawaiian cultural meanings and aesthetic values rather than increased marketing budgets or the upscaling of media interest, a silence that served to further obscure the material stakes at play. In the end, Grammy regulations specified that eligible recordings were required to feature the Hawaiian language on "more than half" of any vocals on a given recording, though instrumental recordings were acceptable, a stipulation that would prove to be a growing point of contention. Whatever their personal thoughts about the final agreement,

at least at the outset, everyone involved claimed publicly that any individual's victory was secondary to the fact that "Hawaiian music" was going to be the ultimate victor.

Hawaiian slack key guitar recordings dominated the Grammy for Best Hawaiian Music Album throughout its seven-year history (note that the debates that led up to the establishment of the Hawaiian Grammy took longer). Before the arguments about slack key's place in Hawaiian music fomented by the Grammy Award, kī hōʻalu remained linked to ideas regarding precontact Hawaiian music culture, despite its hybrid roots. George Lewis, writing about the 1970s Hawaiian Renaissance movement, noted as late as 1991, "Many of the new songs also used musical forms that were associated with *native tradition*—from the chants of early Hawaii to *the song stylings of the slack-key guitarists*."[30] Most Hawaiians—and I use the term here as simply shorthand for "any individual who is living somewhere on the Hawaiian Islands"—would have found the idea of questioning slack key's Hawaiian cultural bona fides laughably inarguable prior to 2005.

In a recent conversation, Brotman conveyed a larger sense of the Hawaiian community that saw his Grammy win as a collective win for Hawaiian musicians: "To think that with this Grammy, it's come right back here to this [Kamuela] community, right back to the birthplace of kī hōʻalu, just like a full circle—it's an amazing thing. If there really is a controversy, it only exists because people were misinformed about the CD and didn't know anything about the music, the musicians, the recording, the Grammy voting process. It really is about the music, after all."[31]

For six years of the award's seven-year history, producer and musician Daniel Ho took home a Grammy statue. While raised in Hawaiʻi, Ho has not lived there since the late 1980s, leaving Oahu after his high school graduation to study in Los Angeles, California, at the Grove School of Music. Although Ho is a talented multi-instrumentalist, three of his six Grammy wins were as a producer of recordings featuring slack key guitar performances culled from a weekly Hawaiian concert series that slack key guitarist George Kahumoku directs at the Napili Beach Resort on Maui. In 2007 producer, slack key guitarist, and five-time Grammy nominee Milton Lau confessed, "The funny part is, [slack key guitarists are] the black sheep of the music industry on the island. We're not at all the most popular form of music at home, in terms of airplay. So all the island guys who get the publicity are pretty angry with us because they keep getting upstaged."[32]

But the attitude of "Hawaiian music wins no matter who takes home the trophy" ended when the first performers to claim a Hawaiian Grammy *as*

performing artists were California-based Tia Carrere and Ho for their 2009 duo effort, *ʻIkena*. As Ho and slack key continued to win Hawaiian Grammys, some observers in Hawaiʻi became openly dismissive of slack key, pointing to the fact that the slack key recordings avoided the "foreign-language problem" Hawaiian-language singers encountered within the English-dominant US music market despite the fact that every Grammy-winning slack key recording contained Hawaiian language vocals. Additionally, as critic Nate Chinen neatly observes, "wariness about slack key probably has to do with how it has been commercialized by mainlanders, from the guitarist Ry Cooder, who recorded with [Gabby] Pahinui in the 1970s, to the new age pianist George Winston, whose Dancing Cat label began releasing slack-key albums in the '80s and still sponsors national tours."[33]

Tatar's assertion (quoted above) regarding the relationship between tourism and Hawaiian music is exemplified by pianist George Winston's decision to popularize kī hōʻalu as a result of a vacation in Hawaiʻi. Better known for his pastoral piano work than his affiliation with Hawaiian music culture, Winston happened to hear kī hōʻalu while vacationing in Hawaiʻi and was immediately enthralled. On returning to California, he persuaded his label, Windham Hill, to allow him to distribute slack key guitar records under his own private label, Dancing Cat, located in the seaside town of Santa Cruz, well known for its California brand of laid-back beach culture. Dancing Cat recordings enabled kī hōʻalu musicians to move beyond Hawaiʻi, as the label's distribution networks and promotional influence exceeded those of the music industry in Hawaiʻi. Dancing Cat's catalog is also significant, containing the final recordings for many of the guitarists of Pahinui's generation, such as Raymond Kane and Sonny Chillingworth, produced in settings that recognized and honored their achievements, for audiences otherwise unfamiliar with Hawaiian music culture.

Underlining the ways in which non-Hawaiians have sometimes had an outsized influence on Hawaiian music, a Dancing Cat web page reads, "Historically, most recordings have included slack key guitar only as accompaniment in a group setting. On Dancing Cat Records' Hawaiian Slack Key Guitar Masters Series, producer George Winston *brings the solo guitar to the forefront*, showcasing the stylings of some of the best players in the Islands."[34] Transforming slack key from an ensemble to a solo voice echoed earlier displacements of Kanaka Maoli cultural imperatives in Hawaiian music, giving way to the interests of a non-Hawaiian music market.

Yet Dancing Cat also provided a significant node in kī hōʻalu's recent resurgence, building on the efforts of Hawaiian musicians such as Gabby

Pahinui, Peter Moon, and Keola Beamer during the Hawaiian Renaissance of the 1970s. Besides recording and distributing their recordings beyond Hawai'i, Winston provided a national and international platform for kī hō'alu musicians by using his position to organize tours for them in the continental United States, Europe, and Japan. Thanks to his efforts, kī hō'alu, which had remained largely an oral tradition even after the Hawaiian Renaissance, was transformed into a global commercial popular music genre—a Hawaiian variation of a "world music" fingerstyle guitar tradition within the global marketplace, notable because it was their slack key guitar skills rather than, say, their singing abilities in Hawaiian that were being recognized and valued by large non-Hawaiian audiences.

To return to the award controversy, Hawaiian critics, musicians, and fans disappointed by Grammy results began to insist that the fundamental distinction between Hawaiian music and all other musical traditions was the use of the Hawaiian language. Instrumental music such as kī hō'alu, they argued, while wonderfully expressive of Hawaiian values and certainly part of a multitextured Hawaiian musical culture, was unable to as fully or as powerfully articulate Hawaiian-ness as could Hawaiian-language verse, reversing long-held beliefs regarding kī hō'alu's place in "traditional" Hawaiian music.

In 2011, the final year the Hawaiian Grammy was awarded, Tia Carrere's winning recording featured all-Hawaiian-language vocals on every track.[35] No matter that Carrere sang arrangements based on Western concert music chestnuts such as Johannes Brahms's "Lullaby" and Giacomo Puccini's "O mio babbino caro" rather than repertoire more readily recognized as Hawaiian. More pertinently, Carrere's recording was far less popular in Hawai'i than perennial bridesmaid vocalist Amy Hanaiali'i's nominated recording, *Amy Hanaiali'i and Slack Key Masters of Hawai'i*. In the end, Native Hawaiian and Local artists "born, raised, and stayed" in Hawai'i, such as Raiatea Helm, the Brothers Cazimero, and Amy Hanaiali'i, who are far more popular in Hawai'i than Carrere, Ho, or any of the slack key guitarists, never won a Grammy for Best Hawaiian Music Album. Aloha time, it seems, doesn't just make Kanaka Maoli late to the show—it almost completely disappears them from the stage, as well.

I want to return now to the question regarding the role of improvisation in this bittersweet tale. In answering, I want to recall my cautionary note that improvisation is not always productive in the ways improvisers might hope for and that unintended consequences will sometimes win out—those "unexpected outcomes" I alluded to at the beginning of this essay. In this case, Ho and, to a lesser extent, Brotman were capable improvisers in the extramusical

social sense I have been discussing throughout this essay. While musicians based in Hawaiʻi naively thought the Grammys would reflect the Hawaiian music scene, Ho understood that the Grammys represented the larger music industry and operated according to their own, rather than Kanaka Maoli, dictates. A significant outcome often left out of this story, particularly by those who wish to disparage Ho's participation, is that many Hawaiian musicians benefited from being associated with Ho's production work. George Kahumoku, Jeff Peterson, Sonny Lim, and other slack key artists were featured on the albums Ho produced and have been able to use their status as Grammy awardees to further their musical endeavors. In fairness to Ho, many of the other Hawaiian musicians will often promote themselves as Grammy nominees, particularly when addressing non-Hawaiian audiences. In this sense, all of these guitarists, Grammy winners or not, are improvising—using fresh approaches to circumstances they had not envisioned or encountered before and, similar to their musical precursors in other historical moments, accommodating themselves to sometimes-ignoble circumstances in order to assure the continuance of a Kanaka Maoli musical tradition.

Improvising Kanaka Maoli Indigeneity

Kanaka Maoli guitarists have used the performative improvising I outline throughout this essay as an adaptive strategy in confronting colonialism, US imperialism and militarism, and global corporatist capitalism by maintaining a central core of Native Hawaiian aesthetic ideals such as nahenahe around which any number of non–Kanaka Maoli elements—jazz, rock, reggae, hip-hop—might intermingle while remaining identifiably Hawaiian.[36] Kī hōʻalu is the aural expression of Kanaka Maoli musicality, a sounding presence against all efforts to remove and silence Kanaka Maoli. The uneasy relationship between Hawaiian music—and I include the history of that term, which has covered a lot of music in the past that most listeners today would agree is *not* Native Hawaiian music—and the music industry is double-edged. On one hand, it has offered many Kanaka Maoli musicians the opportunity to travel beyond Hawaiʻi, to be recognized and even gain mass-audience popularity. On the other hand, it has transformed Hawaiian music in ways that have not always benefited Kanaka Maoli or their culture. The pointed reactions to the dominance of slack key, for example, in the short-lived Grammy for Best Hawaiian Music Album demonstrate the limits of improvisational acuity. Improvisation, in short, provides no guarantees.

The performative improvisations within Hawaiian slack key guitar are the result of a Kanaka Maoli acoustemology, a sensibility rooted in the sounds or aural phenomena of a particular place that is not limited to the sounds created by humans but is, in fact, the relationship between humans and the environment in which they are embedded. Performative improvisation is a function of human soundings, both musical and nonmusical, produced out of specific geographic spaces and sound environments that are the result of interactions with the wider, nonhuman world. Understanding this dynamic grounds slack key not only in the nahenahe aesthetic but also in the ways in which Native Hawaiians have dealt with settler colonialism and global capitalism with aloha, capacious generosity, and infinite flexibility.

The Hawaiian landscape has been altered over the past three centuries, transforming the relationship of Kanaka Maoli to their homelands, which is articulated musically through the changing nature of their slack key guitar tradition. Performative improvisation still holds the key to the continuation of Hawaiian cultural and material existence or, even more important, their flourishing in a land that has not been altered for their benefit or according to their desires. Yet Native Hawaiians remain, maintaining a living presence and connection to the land, despite a history of "unsettling" and attempts to disappear their way of life. Committed to regaining self-determination and political autonomy, Kanaka Maoli are abetted by a legacy of improvisational strategies conceived within a Hawaiian acoustemology that continues to celebrate aloha, reciprocal generosity, and inclusivity through a nahenahe aesthetic.

The improvisatory bedrock on which kī hōʻalu rests was brought home by a story from Yuki "Alani" Yamauchi, a Japanese guitarist who studied under Raymond Kane under the older paʻa ka waha method.[37] The second day of his lessons took place at a performance in which he was to accompany Kane. When Yamauchi asked what they would be playing, Kane simply said, "Watch me and listen up!" Yamauchi quickly learned to never ask about anything—tunings, song lists, lyrics—and Kane would eventually give detailed explanations but only when he decided to explicitly disclose information. Yamauchi knew he had won approval when Kane began suggesting him for gigs Kane was unable to accept, and they would eventually record a number of albums together.

Native Hawaiian musician Brother Noland, writing in *The Hawaiian Survival Handbook*, notes that "'the lessons of aloha' . . . foreground practices of 'adjusting, adapting, blending, and being aware' of others, whether they be the inhabitants of the reef or the locals of an unfamiliar neighborhood."[38] Improvisation in kī hōʻalu is rooted in a Native Hawaiian acoustemology in

which an acknowledgment of humanity's emplacement within the so-called natural world requires openness to the moment. Brother Noland also reminds us of improvisation's accommodation to and with others, including its unexpected outcomes as exemplified by, on the one hand, the Grammy Awards debacle and, on the other, Yamauchi's receipt of the Ki Hoʻalu Foundation Legacy Award in 2014, an open acknowledgment of a non–Kanaka Maoli's legitimacy and authority within the tradition. Equally significant is slack key's transmission through an embodied pedagogical approach in which patient yet active listening is encouraged, rooting as well as routing Kanaka Maoli resilience in the face of always-changing circumstances. In these ways, Hawaiian slack key guitarists' improvisatory approaches embody and articulate the enduring power of Kanaka Maoli performative indigeneity.

NOTES

1 I will be using *Kanaka Maoli*, *native Hawaiian*, *indigenous Hawaiian*, and *Hawaiian* interchangeably throughout the text. I am following J. Kēhaulani Kauanui's usage in *Hawaiian Blood: Colonialism and the Politics of Sovereignty and Indigeneity*. Kauanui cites, in turn, Queen Liliʻuokalani's use of the simple term *Hawaiian* to denote indigenous Hawaiians (xii). I am also following Noelani Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, Ikaika Hussey, and Erin Kahunawaikaʻala Wright's usage of *Kanaka Maoli* to indicate nonspecific plural usage of the term. They, in turn, cite Hawaiian language experts Noʻeau Warner and Noenoe K. Silva. There are other terms such as *Kanaka ʻŌiwi* (People of the Bone), among others, but I will not be using them in this essay. As with all Hawaiian terms, any errors are entirely mine. The Mexican vaqueros were likely called *paniolo*, rather than *Mexicans* or *vaqueros*, because they spoke Spanish.

2 Graham and Penny, *Performing Indigeneity*, 2.

3 The First Hawaiian Renaissance is credited to King David Kalākaua (1836–1891), who revived the hula and surfing and also sanctioned the guitar and *ʻukulele* by incorporating the instruments into his 1886 Silver Jubilee celebrations.

4 See Haunani-Kay Trask's "'Lovely Hula Hands': Corporate Tourism and the Prostitution of Hawaiian Culture," in her collection *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawaiʻi*, for a critique of Hawaiian cultural appropriation. See also Christine Skwiot's excellent transatlantic-transpacific study of the relationship among the United States, Cuba, and Hawaiʻi, *The Purposes of Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Cuba and Hawaiʻi*, for a detailed analysis of the histories of use of tourism by the US political class to drive imperial dreams in Cuba and Hawaiʻi, leading to a number of failed attempts for the former and the eventual illegal annexation of the latter. See also Diamond, *American Aloha*; Desmond, *Staging Tourism*; and Picard and Wood, *Tourism, Ethnicity, and the State*. For a succinct history of the uses of Hawaiʻi in continental US American popular music, see Garrett, "Sounds of Paradise."

5 Fischlin, Heble, and Lipsitz, *Fierce Urgency of Now*, xv.

6 See Ferguson and Turnbull, *Oh, Say, Can You See?*; and Shigematsu and Camacho, *Militarized Currents*.

7 *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* online, accessed July 13, 2019, https://www.merriam-webster.com/.

8 Feld, "Waterfalls of Song," 91.

9 From an interview in the film *Slack Key and Other Notes*, directed by Ron Jacobs.

10 Dave Guard, liner notes to *Pure Gabby*. Kaona enjoys a long history in Hawaiian *mele* in which plural, even multiple, readings are available to the astute listener. The practice remains an essential element in mele and Hawaiian music broadly. There was also a tradition of *mele ma'i*, or genital or procreative chants, which were composed primarily for the firstborn child and celebrated the genitals, which were considered the life-giving parts of the human body. Needless to say, Christian missionaries found the practice reprehensible and prohibited it. The practice has survived as a historical rather than contemporary practice.

11 Tatar, "Slack Key Guitar," 351. Captain James C. Cook's first landing in Hawai'i was in January 1778.

12 See Slatta, Auld, and Melrose, "Kona." There were additional shipments of cattle subsequent to Vancouver's initial gift.

13 Starrs, "Millennial Hawaiian Paniolo," quoted in Slatta, Auld, and Melrose, "Kona."

14 Slatta, Auld, and Melrose, "Kona," 8. In 1908 paniolo Ikua Purdy became the world champion in the steer-roping competition in Wyoming. He was elected posthumously to the National Rodeo Hall of Fame in 1999.

15 This is an argument Rona Tamiko Halualani charts in the chapter "Abstract Nativism," particularly pages 9–26. She describes the ways in which Hawaiians were also figured as savage primitives. These two sides of colonial misrepresentation have been somewhat displaced by the "soft" representation of Hawaiians as an open and giving people through the workings of the tourist industry, serving the tourist trade as well as US national interests.

16 A wonderful example is provided by Auntie Alice Nāmakelua and her performance of "Paniolo Slack-Key" on her recording *Ku'uleialohapoina'ole*.

17 Tatar, "Slack Key Guitar," 359.

18 Tatar, *Strains of Change*, 2.

19 See Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*; and Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui*.

20 See Dancing Cat Records, *A Brief History of Hawaiian Slack Key Guitar (Kī Hō'alu)*.

21 This quote is from Beamer's comments about the song "Lei 'Awapuhi," in the liner notes to his recording *Moe'uhane Kīkā: Tales of the Dream Guitar*.

22 Akindes, "Sudden Rush," 82. The emergence of Hawaiian language classes and total immersion schools occurred during this period.

23 For an investigation of the relationship between Hawaiian language and musical meanings as performed in the Kamehameha Schools on O'ahu, see Szego, "Singing Hawaiian."

24 Such non-Hawaiian 'ukulele music was revived for a brief moment in the 1970s by Tiny Tim (Herbert Khaury), whose 1968 recording of "Tiptoe through the Tulips" was a top-twenty hit. Besides Shimabukuro, masterful 'ukulele artists such as James Hill perform a repertoire that includes Michael Jackson and Radiohead in addition to

original work that alludes more to North American folk and bluegrass antecedents. For a fascinating history of the Hawaiian lap steel guitar and its circulation outside of Hawaiʻi, see Troutman, *Kīkā Kila*.

25 See Desmond, *Staging Tourism*; Diamond, *American Aloha*; and Skwiot, *Purposes of Paradise*.

26 Ryan, "Local Grammy Controversy."

27 All Olsen quotes are from Chang, "What Happened at the Grammys?"

28 Chang, "What Happened at the Grammys?"

29 Hall, "'Hawaiian at Heart,'" 406.

30 George Lewis, "Storm Blowing from Paradise," 63, emphasis added.

31 Brotman, interview with the author, October 16, 2012.

32 Quoted in Berger, "Nominees Talk Story."

33 Chinen, "Dear Grammy."

34 The Dancing Cat website has been redesigned since and this text no longer exists. A similarly worded rationale for the solo guitar recordings, however, can be found here (as of July 2019): https://www.dancingcat.com/liner-notes-masters-volume-1. The new wording does not alter my suggestion that Dancing Cat has had an impact on slack key priorities, at least in the realm of recordings.

35 Thirty other categories were eliminated, including contemporary folk, traditional folk, Native American, polka, zydeco, and Cajun. The Hawaiian, Native American, polka, zydeco, and Cajun categories were all replaced by a single American roots music award, now called the Grammy for Best Regional Roots Music Album. Besides the Grammys and the Nā Hōkū Hanohano awards, there are the Hawaii Music Awards, the Ka Leo Hano Awards, and the Hawaiian Music Hall of Fame and Museum awards, all based in Hawaiʻi.

36 Sudden Rush's cover of Pahinui's version of "Hiʻilawe," which they sample as part of their track, is a notable example of this cross-genre and cross-historical invigoration of Hawaiian slack key guitar.

37 Yamauchi's nickname, *ʻalani*, meaning "orange" in Hawaiian, was given to him by Kane in response to Yamauchi's love of the orange fruit. Yamauchi spells it without the *ʻokina*.

38 Quoted in Lyons and Tengan, "Introduction," 545.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Akindes, Fay Yokomizo. "Sudden Rush: Na Mele Paleoleo (Hawaiian Rap) as Liberatory Discourse." *Discourse* 23, no. 1 (Winter 2001): 82–98.

Beamer, Keola. *Moeʻuhane Kīkā: Tales of the Dream Guitar*. Dancing Cat, 1995, CD.

Beamer, Keola. *Moeʻuhane Kīkā: Tales of the Dream Guitar*. Dancing Cat, 1995, liner notes. Accessed July 13, 2019. https://www.dancingcat.com/liner-notes-dream-guitar.

Beamer, Keola, and Raiatea Helm. *Keola Beamer and Raiatea*. Mountain Apple Records, 2010, CD.

Berger, John. "Nominees Talk Story." *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, February 11, 2007. http://archives.starbulletin.com/2007/02/11/features/story02.html.

Brotman, Charles, prod. *Slack Key Guitar, Volume 2*. Palm, 2004, CD.

Chang, Heidi. "What Happened at the Grammys?" *Honolulu Magazine*, May 2005. http://www.honolulumagazine.com/Honolulu-Magazine/May-2005/What-Happened-at-the-Grammys/.

Chinen, Nate. "Dear Grammy, Is It Hawaiian Enough?" *New York Times*, February 4, 2011. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/06/arts/music/06danielho.html.

Dancing Cat Records. *A Brief History of Hawaiian Slack Key Guitar (Ki Hoʻ Alu)*. Santa Cruz, CA: Dancing Cat Records. Accessed July 13, 2019. https://www.dancingcat.com/section-1-history.

Desmond, Jane C. *Staging Tourism: Bodies on Display from Waikiki to Sea World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Diamond, Heather A. *American Aloha: Cultural Tourism and the Negotiation of Tradition*. Honolulu: University of Hawaiʻi Press, 2008.

Feld, Steven. "Waterfalls of Song: An Acoustemology of Place Resounding in Bosavi, New Guinea." In *Senses of Place*, edited by Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso, 91–136. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1996.

Ferguson, Kathy E., and Phyllis Turnbull, eds. *Oh, Say, Can You See? The Semiotics of the Military in Hawaiʻi*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.

Fischlin, Daniel, Ajay Heble, and George Lipsitz. *The Fierce Urgency of Now: Improvisation, Rights, and the Ethics of Cocreation*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013.

Garrett, Charles Hiroshi. "Sounds of Paradise: Hawaiʻi and the American Musical Imagination." In *Struggling to Define a Nation: American Music and the Twentieth Century*, 165–214. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.

Graham, Laura R., and H. Glenn Penny, eds. *Performing Indigeneity: Global Histories and Contemporary Experiences*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014.

Guard, Dave. Liner notes to *Pure Gabby*, by Charles Philip "Gabby" Pahinui. Hula Records, CDHS-567, originally released in 1978, CD.

Hall, Lisa Kahaleole. "'Hawaiian at Heart' and Other Fictions." *Contemporary Pacific* 17, no. 2 (2005): 404–13.

Halualani, Rona Tamiko. "Abstract Nativism." In *In the Name of Hawaiians: Native Identities and Cultural Politics*, 1–37. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.

Ho, Daniel, prod. *ʻIkena*. Daniel Ho Productions, 2009, CD.

Jacobs, Ron, dir. *Slack Key and Other Notes*. Honolulu: *Hawaii Observer*-Videololo 2-Foodland-Hawaiian Airlines, producers, 1977.

Kauanui, J. Kēhaulani. *Hawaiian Blood: Colonialism and the Politics of Sovereignty and Indigeneity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008.

Lewis, George. "Storm Blowing from Paradise: Social Protest and Oppositional Ideology in Popular Hawaiian Music." *Popular Music* 10, no. 1 (January 1991): 53–67.

Lyons, Paul, and Ty P. Kāwika Tengan. "Introduction: Pacific Currents." In "Pacific Currents." Spec. issue, *American Quarterly* 67, no. 3 (September 2015): 545–73.

Namakelua, Auntie Alice. *Kuʻuleialohapoinaʻole*. Hula Records, 1974, LP.

Osorio, Jonathan Kay Kamakawiwoʻole. *Dismembering Lāhui: A History of the Hawaiian Nation to 1887*. Honolulu: University of Hawaiʻi Press, 2002.

Pahinui, Charles Philip "Gabby." *Pure Gabby*. Hula Records, CDHS-567, originally released in 1978, CD.

Picard, Michel, and Robert E. Wood, eds. *Tourism, Ethnicity, and the State in Asian and Pacific Societies*. Honolulu: University of Hawaiʻi Press, 1997.

Ryan, Tim. "Local Grammy Controversy Strikes Sour Note." *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, March 17, 2005.

Shigematsu, Setsu, and Keith L. Camacho, eds. *Militarized Currents: Toward a Decolonized Future in Asia and the Pacific*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

Silva, Noenoe K. *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004.

Skwiot, Christine. *The Purposes of Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Cuba and Hawaiʻi*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.

Slatta, Richard W., Kuʻulani Auld, and Maile Melrose. "Kona: Cradle of Hawaiʻi's Paniolo." *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* (Summer 2004): 1–19.

Starrs, Paul F. "The Millennial Hawaiian Paniolo." *Rangelands* 22 (October 2000): 25.

Szego, C. K. "Singing Hawaiian and the Aesthetics of (In)Comprehensibility." In *Global Pop, Local Language*, edited by Harris M. Berger and Michael Thomas Carroll, 291–328. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2003.

Tatar, Elizabeth. "Slack Key Guitar." In *Hawaiian Music and Musicians: An Encyclopedic History*, rev. ed., edited by George S. Kanahele and John Berger, 351–59. Honolulu: Mutual, 2012.

Tatar, Elizabeth. *Strains of Change: The Impact of Tourism on Hawaiian Music*. Bishop Museum Special Publication 78. Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1987.

Trask, Haunani-Kay. *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawaiʻi*. Honolulu: University of Hawaiʻi Press, 1999.

Troutman, John W. *Kīkā Kila: How the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Changed the Sound of Modern Music*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016.