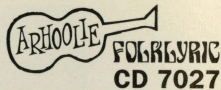


# HAWAIIAN STEEL GUITAR CLASSICS



1. PALOLO – Sol Hoopii Trio
2. FORT STREET –  
Madame Riviere's Hawaiians
3. SASSY – Kalama's Quartet
4. ST. LOUIS BLUES – Jim & Bob
5. SPANISH SHAWL –  
The Three Jacks
6. LA ROSITA –  
Sol K. Bright's Hollywaiians
7. HONOLULU BOUND –  
King Nawahi
8. BLACK BOY BLUES – King Nawahi
9. HAWAIIAN MELODY –  
King Nawahi
10. WHITE BIRDS –  
Hawaiian Orchestra
11. PALOLO – Kane's Hawaiians
12. MELODIAS POPULARES  
MEXICANA– Trio De Hawaii
13. MAUI – Palakiko & Paaluhi
14. HULA GIRL – Sol Hoopii's Quartet
15. LEILEHUA – Honolulu Players
16. WABASH BLUES –  
Tubize Royal Hawaiian Orchestra
17. LEI E – Kalama's Quartet
18. HAWAIIAN COWBOY –  
Sol K. Bright's Hollywaiians
19. THE SONG OF THE RANGE –  
Jim & Bob
20. INDIANA MARCH –  
Roy Smeck's Tropical Serenaders
21. HUEHUE  
(Hawaiian Hula) – Sam Ku West
22. MAI GIVEE (Don't Give It  
Away) – Hoot Gibson
23. LEPE ULAULA –  
Sam Alama & His Hawaiians
24. HULA SHAKE THAT THING –  
Kaai Serenaders
25. NA MO KUEHA (The Four Islands)  
– Hoot Gibson
26. TICKLIN' THE STRINGS –  
Mena Moeria Minstrels

Edited by Bob Brozman & Chris Strachwitz

Cover photo: Sam Ku West

Cover by Wayne Pope

Notes by Bob Brozman

Transfer of original 78s from Bob Brozman's  
collection to DAT by Chris Strachwitz

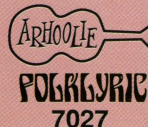
Sound restoration by George Morrow using  
the NoNoise System.

(Continued inside on page 10)

Copyright © & © 1993 by Arhoolie Productions, Inc.



# Hawaiian STEEL GUITAR CLASSICS 1927-1938







Sol Hoopii

## Hawaiian Steel Guitar Classics

### *Historic Recordings 1927 – 1938\**

The Hawaiian guitar has a vast range of expression found on very few instruments and is surpassed only by the human voice in this respect. As with singing, no two Hawaiian guitarists sound the same: each has his own "voice." The music on this CD is a sampling of the finest Hawaiian recording artists of the Golden Age of acoustic Hawaiian lap steel guitar. These musicians lived and performed in an exciting musical era when players of all instruments were exposed to a variety of new styles by the "folk process" of phonograph records and seeing live performances by Hawaiian artists who toured and popularized this music literally all over the world. This is one reason why there is a large gradual spectrum of styles ranging from "ethnic" or "primitive" Hawaiian music to what can only be

called jazz-influenced steel playing. Though the span of these recordings is 1927-1938 (except #26 which dates from 1955), the styles here range from turn-of-the-century military ragtime (*Fort Street*) to hot "moderne" swing style. Along the way there are all sorts of traditional Hawaiian hulas with light and heavy tempos, with some of the most beautiful vocals (by the Kalama Quartet) ever recorded.

The first selection is *Palolo*, a fast hula by **Sol Hoopii**, generally regarded as the king of Hawaiian steel players. Sol was one of the few truly "hot" players of the 1920s, with a sense of phrasing, tone, and attack that was years beyond his contemporaries. His records were all made in Los Angeles, with a total output of over 200 sides. *Palolo* was recorded in October, 1927, and is typical of his driving, hot sound of this period. As

---

\* (except #26 which dates from 1955)



we shall hear, his style became quite sophisticated later in the 1930s and he paved the way for all of the modern players since that time.

**Madame Riviere's Hawaiians** recorded *Fort Street* in 1929 in Tokyo, while on tour. The steel player is Tau Moe, accompanied by his wife Rose, and his three uncles. Mme. Riviere was the manager. The Moes continued touring from 1928 to 1980, when this writer found them living in Hawaii. Since 1980 the Tau Moe Family has newly recorded many of their old songs and they are now available on Rounder CD 6028.

**The Kalama Quartet** was simply the top Hawaiian recording group of the 1920s and early '30s. An entire record of their material can be found on Arhoolie/Folklyric CD 7028. Their vocal work is outstanding by any standard. Mike Hanapi's steel playing is simple, but very effective. He is also the tenor falsetto vocalist.

**Jim & Bob**, "The Genial Hawaiians" were Jim Holstein and Bob Kaai. Little is known of this duo

though they played on Chicago's WLS in the early 1930s on a program sponsored by Willard's Stomach Tablets.

**The Three Jacks** cut only 2 sides, both in Chicago in June 1928. Rodney Rodgers is the steel player in this hillbilly-sounding version of *Spanish Shawl*, a fox-trot that was popular in 1925. He makes good use of percussive effects, including the bar dragging on the frets to produce a washboard sound. This trick was used by other artists, and can be heard again on this CD by **Kane's Hawaiians**.

**Sol K. Bright** played rhythm guitar for **Sol Hoopii** in 1930-1931, and then formed his own group which he led through the 1930s. *La Rosita* was recorded by black violinist **Ed-die South** in 1927, and Bright's version was recorded in Hollywood in March 1934. This arrangement reflects South's version, and Bright's steel playing shows Sol Hoopii's influence. He makes use of the C# minor tuning, which is the basis for

all modern pedal steel tunings.

Steel player **King Benny Nawahi** recorded in New York in January of 1930. He was another "hot" player, with a slightly more country feel than Sol Hoopii, and was a very popular radio artist in the Los Angeles area in the 1930s.

Hawaiian guitar music became popular all over the world, and, for some reason, even Germany had several recording steel players. *White Birds* was recorded there in 1931, by unknown musicians credited only as "**Hawaiian Orchestra**." The group included 2 steels, violin, cello, banjo-guitar, and guitar, for a very unusual texture.

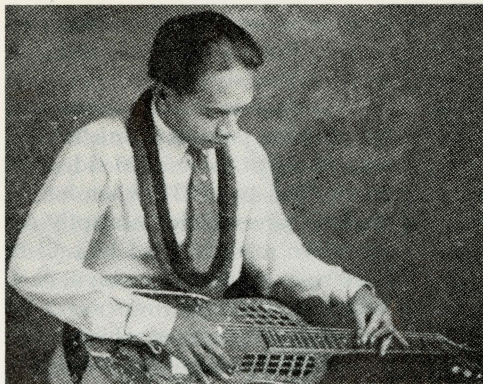
**Kane's Hawaiians'** steel player gets the "Mr. Eccentric" award for his novel version of the traditional Hawaiian hula *Palolo*. Recorded in April 1927 in Oakland, Ca., this number features some of the wildest sounds obtainable on an acoustic Hawaiian guitar. This group played vaudeville shows throughout the West, which may explain the style.

Most of Kane's records sound like this, but he could also play well in a more serious style.

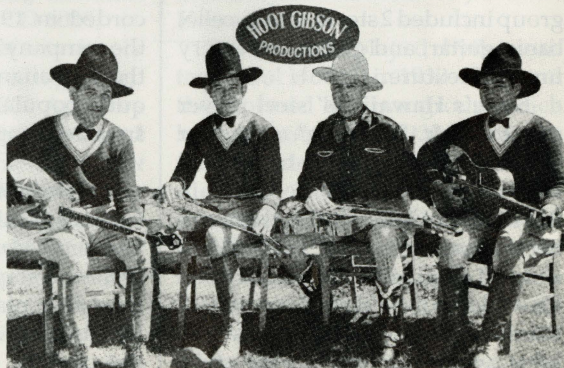
**Trio de Hawaii** is a pseudonym for the ever present **Frank Ferera**, who made at least 2,000 sides between 1915 and 1931, when his recording career ended abruptly for unknown reasons. He was said to have been living in Brooklyn, N.Y. in the late 1950s, but was never interviewed. While most of his records are held in low esteem by collectors, his last 40 sides are quite good, as *Melodias Populares* demonstrates. Recorded in 1930, it was released in the company's Mexican series, since the Hawaiian guitar sound became quite popular among the Spanish-speaking population of the Southwest.

**Palakiko & Paaluhi** also hide the name of Frank Ferera in this snappy version of *Maui*, later known as *Maui Chimes*, a staple in the repertoire of most steel players. Ferera's playing left a strong impression on most of the country steel guitarists, espe-





*Kane's Hawaiians, left.*



*Hoot Gibson, right.*



*Frank Ferera*



cially Clell Summey (who recorded *Steel Guitar Chimes* with Roy Acuff) and Jenks "Tex" Carmen. *Maui* was one of Ferera's last records, done in 1930.

**Sol Hoopii** plays an incredible version of the 1915 Sonny Cunha tune *Hula Girl*, recorded in Los Angeles in 1934. One can easily hear his maturity here with fabulous techniques including hammer-ons, pull-offs, and spectacular clean triplet runs. His entire sense of harmony and particularly phrasing is extremely sophisticated, employing some very modern rhythmic concepts. Again he uses the C# minor tuning.

There is currently no known information on the **Honolulu Players**, other than the existence of this one recording made in Honolulu in 1928. This very ragtime-influenced tune played on a National tricone (also used by every major Hawaiian player and most of the artists in this collection) is made more interesting by the presence of Hawaiian per-

cussion instruments played in traditional ancient rhythm which is superimposed over the uncompromisingly ragtime melody.

*Wabash Blues* is an early example of the cross-fertilization between Hawaiian, blues, and jazz which was enhanced and accelerated by both records and travelling shows and perhaps reached its peak with the advent of Western Swing in the mid-1930s. The players are unknown and may not even be Hawaiian.

**Sol K. Bright** recorded again in 1938 and had a minor hit with *Hawaiian Cowboy*, his own novelty composition which he performed live for many years in San Francisco. Sol passed away in 1992. This song, reissued in 1976 on a Folklyric LP, has since become popular with radio programmers in Hawaii.

**Roy Smeck** chimes in with *Indiana March*, a standard in Hawaiian guitar repertoire. The entire "tradition" of waltz and march music on the steel guitar can be traced to 1870 when King Kalakaua imported Ger-

man band master Henry Berger to create a European-style "royal band" for special events, etc. Normally, Smeck played steel guitar like a man whose taste had been surgically removed, however he is fairly restrained on this selection.

**Sam Ku West** was right up there among the best of the 1920s players. Adopted by and a member of Irene West's troupe in the 'teens, he was a world traveller who died in Paris ca. 1932, about two years after *Huehue* was recorded. This steel guitar masterpiece was an extension of M.K. Moke's 1927 recorded composition *Moana Chimes*. There are some beautiful and (to the steel players) mindbending passages in this quintessentially Hawaiian piece.

Movie star cowboy **Hoot Gibson** may have played rhythm guitar and certainly at least sponsored the quartet which bore his name and featured two very well synchronized steels. All four musicians are using silver National resonator instruments for this blazing performance

of *Mai Givoe*, and the lead vocal is credited to one Kaena Silva.

**Sam Alama** was known for his enthusiastic not-quite-falsetto singing, and worked with various bands in Hawaii during the 1930s. *Lepe Ulaula* was recorded in Honolulu in 1935.

The **Kaai Serenaders** were probably made up of a young Bob Kaai and guitarist Jim Jackson. Little else is known about this duo.

The **Mena Moeria Minstrels** were led by Indonesian steel guitarist Rudy Wairata. *Ticklin' the Strings* was recorded in Holland in 1955. A challenging piece for any steel player, it was said that Wairata could play this piece blindfolded.

The acoustic Hawaiian guitar fell out of favor in the 1930s, when all the players switched to the electric steel. This brought about the end of many old techniques, and the birth of a newer, more lush style. The real flowering of the acoustic steel happened over a very short period, less than ten years. Despite the efforts of



a handful of young steel players, we shall never hear such music again.

(Bob Brozman 1981 & 1993)

*Note: Bob Brozman's own remarkable musicianship and Hawaiian guitar work can be heard on records with the Cheap Suit Serenaders and on his own recordings on Rounder and Skyranch/Virgin).*

*Many of the songs heard on ARH/FL CDs 7027 & 7028 can be found in the following printed collections:*

1) **King's Book of Hawaiian Melodies** – Charles E. King, Honolulu (1948).

2) **101 Hawaiian Songs** – collected by Samuel H. Elbert & Noelani Mahoe, University of Hawaii Press.

*Spelling of Hawaiian titles is given as on the labels of the original 78 rpm records. In some cases we have supplied English translations of titles.*

K. Roseguo – Hawaiian language consultant.

*Discography:*

1: W 144753, C 1292 (1927); 2: S 32259, C 40007 (1930); 3: W 403822B, Ok 41390; 4: Bb 5316; 5: W 400963, Ok 41102 (1928); 6: 79109-2, Vi 24671 (1934); 7: 3886A, Gg 4297 (1930); 8: Qrs 1015B; 9: 3825, Mad 5067 (1930); 10: Ow 179, ViV-81; 11: 280-2, Vi 20700 (1927); 12: Vo 8382 (1930); 13: Br 4731 (1930); 14: Br 6768 (1934); 15: W 146660, C 1666; 16: S 401787B, Ok 41233; 17: W 402591, Ok 41285; 18: Mla 233B, C 3143; 19: Bb 5316; 20: Mel 13410B; 21: 42082, Vi 21415B; 22: W 400570, Ok 41316; 23: Vi 25286; 24: (430) (3084) Para 12433A; 25: W 400559, Ok 41316; 26: Du 1008, Omega 35-112

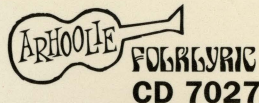
For our complete illustrated catalog of CDs, Cassettes, Videos and LPs send \$2.00 to: **ARHOOLIE CATALOG, 10341 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530 USA**



Roy Smeck



# HAWAIIAN STEEL GUITAR CLASSICS



## Historic Recordings 1927 – 1938

1. PALOLO – Sol Hoopii Trio (3:13)
2. FORT STREET –  
Madame Riviere's Hawaiians (3:22)
3. SASSY – Kalama's Quartet (3:21)
4. ST. LOUIS BLUES – Jim & Bob (2:51)
5. SPANISH SHAWL – The Three Jacks (2:55)
6. LA ROSITA –  
Sol K. Bright's Hollywaiians (2:55)
7. HONOLULU BOUND – King Nawahi (2:46)
8. BLACK BOY BLUES – King Nawahi (2:49)
9. HAWAIIAN MELODY – King Nawahi (2:30)
10. WHITE BIRDS – Hawaiian Orchestra (3:15)
11. PALOLO – Kane's Hawaiians (3:21)
12. MELODIAS POPULARES MEXICANA  
– Trio De Hawaii (2:47)
13. MAUI – Palakiko & Paaluhi (2:46)
14. HULA GIRL – Sol Hoopii's Quartet (4:02)
15. LEILEHUA – Honolulu Players (2:44)
16. WABASH BLUES –  
Tubize Royal Hawaiian Orchestra (3:05)
17. LEI E – Kalama's Quartet (3:11)
18. HAWAIIAN COWBOY –  
Sol K. Bright's Hollywaiians (2:53)
19. THE SONG OF THE RANGE –  
Jim & Bob (3:05)
20. INDIANA MARCH –  
Roy Smeck's Tropical Serenaders (2:52)
21. HUEHUE (Hawaiian Hula) –  
Sam Ku West (3:00)
22. MAI GIVEE (Don't Give It Away) –  
Hoot Gibson (3:01)
23. LEPE ULAULA –  
Sam Alama & His Hawaiians (2:56)
24. HULA SHAKE THAT THING –  
Kaai Serenaders (3:00)
25. NA MOKU EHA (The Four Islands) –  
Hoot Gibson (2:22)
26. TICKLIN' THE STRINGS –  
Mena Moeria Minstrels (2:49)

Edited by Bob Brozman & Chris Strachwitz

Cover photo: Sam Ku West

Cover by Wayne Pope

Notes by Bob Brozman

Transfer of original 78s from Bob Brozman's collection to  
DAT by Chris Strachwitz

Sound restoration by George Morrow using the NoNoise  
System.

© & © 1993 by Arhoolie Productions, Inc.

