

# Hawaiian Music Sampler

*An Introduction to the Music of Hawai'i*

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February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016

## Introduction

### My Story

Growing up in Hawai'i in the 1970s and 1980s I was surrounded by music, anything from classical to pop radio was in the air, but there was also something else there – the music of Hawai'i. Sometimes it was more traditional Hawaiian music that was part of a special event, performance, May Day festival or just in the background at a restaurant. Other times more contemporary Hawaiian sounds would play in the mix on the radio.

It wasn't until I left the islands to attend college in Boulder, Colorado that I realized how much I missed not only the sights but also the sounds of Hawai'i as well. It was then that I began to build my collection of music by seeking out classics like Keola and Kapono Beamer's *Honolulu City Lights* and *Seabreeze* which would always take me back to the islands wherever I was.

In the 1990s, I mostly listened to Hawaiian Style Band until a cousin of mine gave me two albums that I would realize later really sparked my interest in playing the 'ukulele. *The Best of the Ka'au Crater Boys*, with Troy Fernandez's fast picking and incorporations of new sounds to the genre changed my perception of what 'ukulele playing could sound like. *Pure Heart 2* introduced me to Jake Shimabukuro's playing and both albums helped me to later discover artists like Dennis Kamakahi and Herb Otah.

While I enjoyed listening to and singing along with Hawaiian music, it wasn't until years later that I even considered learning to play the 'ukulele myself. On a trip back to Hawai'i, my daughter showed interest in playing and we decided to bring one back with us – it wasn't long before I became addicted, especially when I discovered how easy it was to go online to websites like [ukuleleunderground.com](http://ukuleleunderground.com) or [youtube.com](http://youtube.com), find lessons and learn songs whenever it was convenient.

Finding local groups like the Boulder Ukulele Group and the jams at H.B. Woodsongs expanded my playing by learning how to play with a group.

In October of 2014, I was lucky enough to get to spend an afternoon working with George Kahumoku, Jr. learning new techniques and songs on 'ukulele as well as slack key guitar.

I hope that this introduction will inspire you to explore the Music of Hawai'i more and I look forward to continuing our musical journey together.

*Mahalo nui loa,*

Alan

## A bit of history

Traditional Hawaiian music often tells a story. Before the arrival of non-Hawaiians in 1778 there was no written language in Hawai'i. Chants (*mele*), music and dance were used to record Hawai'i's history, religion, genealogy and stories. Rhythmic instruments like the *ipu* and *'uli'uli* were used as accompaniment.

As non-Hawaiians began to arrive in the islands they brought with them their music which began to affect the music of the islands.

An interesting development in Hawaiian music began with the gift of cattle to Kamehameha I from Captain George Vancouver in 1793. A *kapu* was put in place and the cattle grew in numbers. Around 1832, King Kamehameha III hired Mexican and Spanish vaqueros to teach the Hawaiians how to handle the cattle – with them, they brought their guitars. As the story goes, they gave some guitars to the Hawaiian *paniolo* who in turn made it their own by slacking the tuning keys to create open tunings like “taro patch” tuning, creating a new style of music called slack key guitar or *ki ho'alu*.

The arrival of the SS Ravenscrag brought Portuguese immigrants to the Hawaiian Islands in 1879. With them, they brought a small guitar-like instrument called the machete. From this, the 'ukulele was born. Luthier Samuel Kamaka began making 'ukulele in the early 1900s, founding Kamaka Ukulele and Guitar works in 1916, which is now celebrating their 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. As we all know well, the 'ukulele's popularity has continued to grow, not only influencing the sounds of Hawaiian music but also finding its way into many other styles of music.

The invention of the lap steel guitar in 1885 by Joseph Kekuku would bring other new sounds to the music of the islands, especially those of the 1920s and 1930s, and would go on to be adopted into other styles of music like Bluegrass.

Today you can hear the influences of many styles of music in the music Hawai'i's – including Reggae, Blues, Bluegrass and pop to name a few.

## Hawaiian Language Primer

In elementary school we would learn Hawaiian songs for May Day (also called Lei Day) by memorizing the lyrics phonetically. My goal with this section is to get you started with enough knowledge to be able to do exactly that – to be able to listen to a song in Hawaiian and follow along with the lyrics. If you're interested in learning more, I encourage you to look into some of the resources available online. I have included some in the resources section of this packet to get you started.

### *Vowels:*

- **A** “ah” as in “father” (can have a slight “uh” sound as in “nut”)
- **E** “eh” as in “get” (can have a slight long “ay” sound as in “pay”)
- **I** “ee” as in “breeze”
- **O** “oh” as in “row”
- **U** “oo” as in “moon”

### *Consonants:*

- **H, K, L, M, N, P** pronounced as in most English words
- **W** pronounced as either “w” as in “wave” or “v” as in “volcano” depending on the word

### *Special characters:*

- **‘okina** glottal stop like in “uh-oh”, is a consonant
- **Kahakō** elongates a vowel

### *Some practice words:*

**Hawai‘i** (Name of the state and island)

**Honolulu** (State capital)

**‘Āina** (Land)

**Mele** (Chant or song)

**‘ukulele** (Jumping flea or gift that came here)

**Aloha, Aloha kākou** (Hello, Hello to all)

**E Komo Mai** (Welcome)

**Mahalo** (Thank you)

**Hui** (Chorus)

**Pau, Pau Hana** (Finished, work finished)

**Hana Hou** (Do it again)

**Maika‘i** (Good)

**Makai** (Towards the ocean)

**Mauka** (Towards the mountains)

**Makani** (Wind)

**Wa‘a** (Canoe)

**Ohana** (Family)

**Hau‘oli** (Happy)

**Paniolo** (Cowboy)

**Ku‘uipo** (Sweetheart)

**Kanikapila** (Play music together, Jam)

**Pipeline** (Famous beach)

**Humuhumunukunukuapua‘a** (State fish)

**Mākaukau?** (Are you ready?)

**‘ae** (yes)

**‘a‘ole** (no)

### *Tips:*

- Break words down to syllables
- Read along while you listen, note any differences as some artists may change the words
- Try reading the words aloud slowly without the music, then put it all together

## Common Song Structures, Vamp and Turnaround Examples

### Song Structures and vamps:

Songs typically tell a story with each verse being a portion of the story. A vamp is used:

- As an introduction to the song and to create breaks between verses
- To create movement
- To keep everyone in sync: musicians, singers, dancers
- Can also be used to change keys

*Three common vamps are:*

- **I17-V7 I      D7-G7 C      G7-C7 F      A7-D7 G**
- **V7 I      G7 C      C7 F      D7 G**
- **I17-IIb7 I      D7-Db7 C**

Contemporary songs often use a mix of verses and a chorus and may not have a vamp. Similar to how the vamp is used, the **V7**, **I17** or even **I7** chord (**G7**, **D7** or **C7** in the key of **C**) may be used as a transitional chord between parts of the song.

### Scales:

Major Key	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>C</b>	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
<b>D</b>	D	E	F#	G	A	B	C#	D
<b>E</b>	E	F#	G#	A	B	C#	D#	E
<b>F</b>	F	G	A	Bb	C	D	E	F
<b>G</b>	G	A	B	C	D	E	F#	G
<b>A</b>	A	B	C#	D	E	F#	G#	A

### Chord Families:

Major Key	I	I17	ii	iii	IV	V7	vi	vii dim
<b>C</b>	C	D7	Dm	Em	F	G7	Am	Bdim
<b>D</b>	D	E7	Em	F#m	G	A7	Bm	C#dim
<b>E</b>	E	F#7	F#m	G#m	A	B7	C#m	D#dim
<b>F</b>	F	G7	Gm	Am	Bb	C7	Dm	Edim
<b>G</b>	G	A7	Am	Bm	C	D7	Em	F#dim
<b>A</b>	A	B7	Bm	C#m	D	E7	F#m	G#dim



## Fingerstyle 'ukulele:

The playing styles of artists like Israel Kamakawiwo'ole, Troy Fernandez and others use fingerstyle 'ukulele to add another dimension songs. Try the following finger picking patterns which can be used separately or in combination with each other. You can use them to play the chord progressions we learned in the vamp section, or experiment with playing an entire song with one or more of them:

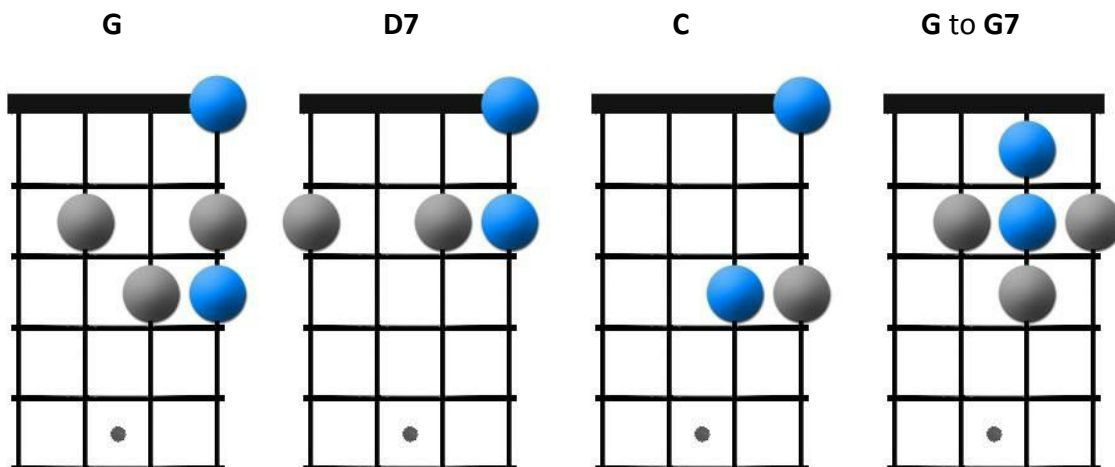
In-to-out (low-to-high):	<b>3, 2, 4, 1</b>	Low-G:	<b>4, 3, 2, 1</b>
Out-to-in (high-to-low):	<b>1, 4, 2, 3</b>		<b>1, 2, 3, 4</b>
Banjo-style roll:	<b>1, 4, 2, 1</b>		
Banjo-style roll, alternating bass:	<b>3, 1-2, 4, 1-2</b>		<b>4, 1-2, 3, 1-2</b>

Note: **4, 3, 2, 1 = G, C, E, A**

## Adding notes, hammer-ons, pull-offs, slides:

Hawaiian music is very expressive and several techniques can be used to mimic the expressiveness of vocals on the 'ukulele such as hammer-ons, pull-offs and slides. Adding notes to standard chords can also add an additional layer of texture.

Let's look at adding some notes to some familiar chords to add movement and find melody notes in and around the chords of a song:



Experiment with hammering-on notes in the chord, or the entire chord.

Try pulling off to play the open A string.

Try sliding the entire **G** chord, starting with it ½ step lower than normal, sliding up to the usual position. When going from **G** to **G7**, try walking down the 2<sup>nd</sup> string.

## Some Artists and Songs to Look Into

I hope that this talk has sparked an interest in exploring the music of Hawaii. Below is a list of some of the artists that I have listened to over the years, in no particular order:

- Keola and Kapono Beamer
  - [\*Honolulu City Lights\*](#)
  - [\*Kaliponi Slack Key\*](#)
- Olomana: Jerry Santos, Haunani Apoliona and Wally Suenaga
  - [\*Ku'u Home o Kahalu'u\*](#)
- Dennis Kamakahi
  - [\*Wahine 'Ilikea\*](#)
  - [\*Koke'e\*](#)
- George Kahumoku, Jr.
  - [\*Ke Welina A Kealoha\*](#)
  - [\*Ho'okupu\*](#)
- Ledward Kaapana
  - [\*Radio Hula\*](#)
- Israel Kamakawiwo'ole
  - [\*Hawai'i Aloha\*](#)
  - [\*Henehene Kou Aka\*](#)
- Ka'au Crater Boys: Troy Fernandez and Ernie Cruz, Jr.
  - [\*Tropical Hawaiian Day\*](#)
  - [\*Opihi Man\*](#)
- Pure Heart: Jon Yamasato, Jake Shimabukuro and Lopaka
  - [\*Bodysurfing\*](#) by Herb Otah Sr.
- Keali'i Riechel
  - [\*Koali\*](#)
  - [\*E O Mai\*](#)
- Hawaiian Style Band
  - [\*Let's Talk Story\*](#)
- Gabby Pahinui
  - [\*Hi'ilawe\*](#)
- Bother Noland
  - [\*Coconut Girl\*](#)
  - [\*Kona Kai Opua\*](#)
- Ale'a
  - [\*Kananaka\*](#)
- Da Ukulele Boyz
  - [\*Hanalei Moon\*](#)

## Additional Resources

- [Ukulele Underground](#) has a large library of lessons covering multiple styles of music including Hawaiian Music. They also deserve a special thank you for helping me learn much of what is in this presentation and for providing resources used in this workshop:
  - [Song Library](#) with nearly 100 song lessons including several from Hawai'i:
    - [Guava Jelly](#) (Bob Marley version)
    - [Ehu Girl](#)
    - [Hawaii Five-O Theme](#)
    - [Waimanalo Blues](#)
    - [White Sandy Beaches](#)
  - [All That Ukulele Korea](#) (recorded Hawaiian music seminars)
  - Additional Resources for Ukulele Underground Plus members:
    - [Hawaiian Ukulele 101](#)
    - [Guava Jam](#) (solo instrumental arrangement)
    - [Hi'ilawe](#) (solo instrumental arrangement)
    - [TNC](#) (solo instrumental arrangement)
    - [Waimanalo Blues](#) (slack-key solo instrumental arrangement)
- [Huapala](#) has a large collection of lyrics for Hawaiian songs
- [Island Music Network](#) chord charts for Island Music including many from Hawai'i
- [Kimo Hussey](#) has a large library of video lessons for 'ukulele
- [Dominator Ukulele Tabs](#) has tabs and lessons for 'ukulele including:
  - [Opihi Man](#) and [Tropical Hawaiian Day](#)
  - [Guava Jam](#), includes video lesson and [tab](#)
- [HiSessions](#) YouTube channel has a great video collection, by *Pure Heart's* Jon Yamasato
- [The Ukulele Site](#) has a number of free lessons and tips on their site
- Hawaiian Language:
  - [Basic Hawaiian](#) high-quality Hawaiian language courses for a fee
  - [Nā Puke Wehewehe 'Ōlelo Hawai'i](#) Hawaiian Language Dictionaries
  - [Instant Hawaiian](#) Hawaiian Language Basics
  - [Ahonui Mims](#) has some free videos on her YouTube channel
    - [Introduction to Hawaiian, Class 1, Part 2](#)
    - [Small Talk Ka 'ōlelo](#) free e-book
  - [SAIVUS.org](#) the Society to Advance Indigenous Vernaculars of the United States
  - [Nā Kai 'Ewalu](#) Hawaiian language text book published by the University of Hawaii
- Other references used in this document:
  - [Wikipedia.org](#)
  - [HawaiianHistory.org](#)
  - [Dancing Cat Records](#)
  - [Ukulele Magazine](#)

