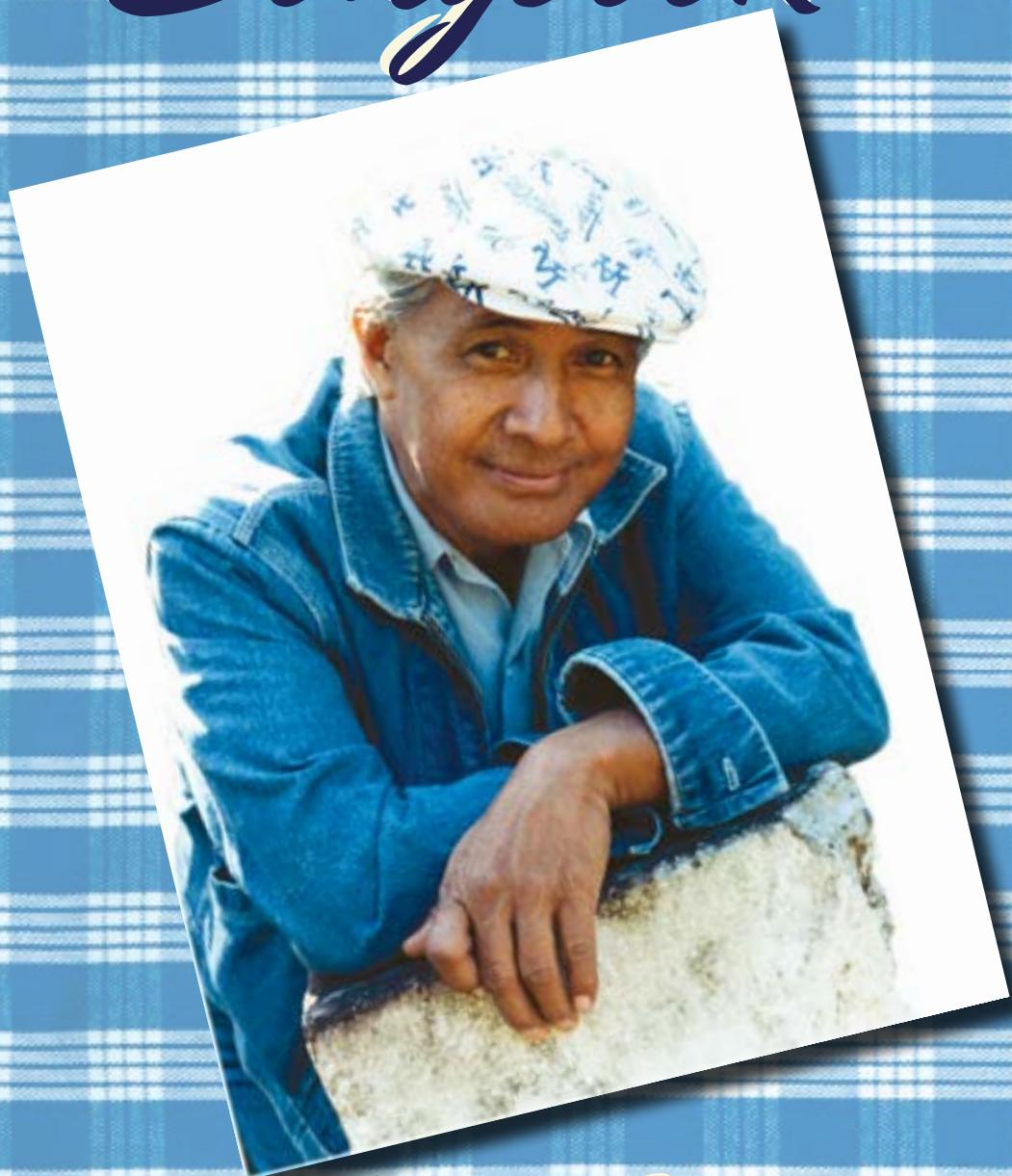


# *The Eddie Kamae Songbook*



## *A Musical Journey*

"KANANAKA" DIGITAL PŪ'OLO

**The Hawaiian Legacy Foundation**

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# Kananaka

Lyrics and music by Kauhailikua ‘Ōpūnui

1

‘O ka pā mai a ka Ma‘a‘a<sup>1</sup>  
Halihali mai ana lā i ke ‘ala  
Ke ‘ala onaona o ka līpoa<sup>2</sup>  
Hana ‘oe a kani pono<sup>3</sup>

The Ma‘a‘a breeze blows  
Bringing with it a fragrance  
The sweet scent of the līpoa  
Gather to your content

Hui

Nani wale ia pu‘e one  
I ka nalu he‘e mai a‘o Kananaka<sup>5</sup>  
Kahi a mākou a e he‘e ai  
I ka ‘ehuehu o ke kai<sup>7</sup>

How beautiful that bank of sand<sup>4</sup>  
With the waves that Kananaka surfs<sup>6</sup>  
Where we go to surf  
In the spray of the sea

2

‘O ka mahina hiki aloalo  
Ho‘ola‘ila‘i ana lā i nā pali  
Pōhina wehiwehi i ke onaona  
Koni mā‘e‘ele i ke kino<sup>8</sup>

The moon that rises at its fullest  
Is poised so serenely over the cliffs  
A hazy adornment of loveliness  
Sending a throbbing numbness through the body

1. A pleasant sea breeze at Lahaina, Maui. Pukui, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, 217. Referenced in the ‘ōlelo no‘eau, Ka Ma‘a‘a wehe lau niu o Lele (the Ma‘a‘a wind that lifts the coco leaves of Lele [the older name of Lahaina]), Pukui, ‘Ōlelo No‘eau: Hawaiian Proverbs & Poetical Sayings, 157.

2. *Dictyopteris plagiogramma* and *D. Australis* are both līpoa, a brown seaweed with golden-colored blades. Pukui, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, 208; Occurs in 3-15 ft. of water on all islands and washes up on shore in long heaps. Prized for its distinctive flavor, it is salted and preserved or chopped or pounded and salted for fresh use. Its unique aroma is mentioned in chants and songs. University of Hawaii, Botany Department, “Limu Lipoa (*Dictyopteris Plagiogramma*),” Edible Limu...Gifts from the Sea, 2002, <https://www.hawaii.edu/reefalgae/publications/ediblelimu/>; Hawaiian botanist Dr. Isabella Abbot once said, “The līpoa brings fragrance to the land.” Sanburn, “Be Hawaiian! Eat Seaweed!,” *Hana Hou!*, May 2006, [www.hanahou.com/9.2/be-hawaiian-eat-seaweed](http://www.hanahou.com/9.2/be-hawaiian-eat-seaweed).

3. Line repeats once.

4. Pu‘e one are sand banks or sand bars that usually occur at the mouth of streams where they meet the beach.

5. Kananaka is the beautiful mermaid known to appear on the beaches of Lahaina, Maui. Reichel, *Lei Hali‘a*.

6. According to Pukui, surfing over sand into the mouth of a stream was a traditional sport (he‘e pu‘e one), Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, 348.

7. Line repeats once.

8. Line repeats once.

**Lyrics correspond to audio recording from the documentary *Lahaina Waves of Change*.**

# Kananaka

*How amazing for me to feel like I was chosen to do this work.<sup>1</sup>*

When Eddie was growing up, he, his mother, and a handful of his siblings would take the interisland steamer from Honolulu to Lahaina in the 1930s to spend the summers with his maternal grandmother, Kauhailikua ‘Ōpūnui. Her home was in the ahupua‘a of Kaua‘ula, just before Lahaina town and between the shoreline and the base of Pu‘u Kukui, the highest peak of the West Maui Mountains.

Her original property was granted in the time of the Māhele<sup>2</sup> and documents show that Royal Patent number 6562 was signed on March 19, 1863 certifying fee simple ownership of Land Commission Award 6801, parcel 2 in the ahupua‘a of Halaka‘a. Decades later, Pioneer Sugar Company needed more access to the many streams that bordered her property and so the ‘Ōpūnui ‘ohana swapped the Halaka‘a parcel for one at Kaua‘ula, closer to the ocean.

Eddie remembers, “My grandmother was a very stern woman. She didn’t speak English and she wouldn’t talk to us in Hawaiian.”<sup>3</sup> His summers were spent swimming, having fun, and eating the sugarcane the kids would pull off of the loaded trains headed for the processing mill.

In the long arc of his life, Eddie would learn much later through research he did for his *Lahaina: Waves of Change* documentary that his grandmother was a renowned healer, hula dancer, musician and composer. In the 1800s, she was a dancer in King Kalākaua’s court.

Eddie said that when he was growing up, Kauhailikua served as the family doctor for them and many others:

She was famous as a healer, you know. When I was growing up in Honolulu, we never went to a doctor or anywhere near a hospital. If somebody got sick, we could call my grandmother, and she would come over from Maui. She knew all about herbs and medicinal plants. When we needed Hawaiian medicine she would just look into our eyes and make us take what was needed. Sometimes it was very hard to take.<sup>4</sup>

Of all Kauhailikua’s gifts, it was her skill as a composer that resonates to this day. Imagine Eddie’s surprise and delight when he learned that the now popular song “Kananaka” was composed by his own grandmother. Two years into his Lahaina research, Eddie sought out respected kupuna Pua Lindsey who at the time was the cultural resource specialist at the Ka‘anapali Beach Hotel. Her mother-in-law and Kauhailikua were very close friends. “That’s her song,” said Lindsey. “She composed it, and she did it.”<sup>5</sup>

Lindsey explained the role Eddie’s grandmother played in beloved Maui kumu hula Emma Sharpe’s hula education. Kauhailikua was Emma Sharpe’s first kumu and Kauhailikua’s only student, an arrangement brokered by Sharpe herself: “I would ask your grandmother if she could teach me the old dances, you know. Your grandmother Kauhai told me no, but she said I was the kind of type that I persist and I was gonna go until she says yes.” Eddie asked her how she got his grandmother to agree and Sharpe told him, “I went back to her and I said, ‘what if you die?’ You know, I looked at her and smiled, and I said, ‘What [would happen]?’ She said, ‘Alright, I’ll consider you.’”

In return, Sharpe had to learn from her “the whole way.” She explained: “I have to take a ho‘okupu, and I have to crawl towards the altar and put it on before I learn the routines from your grandmother. But you know, when I went through this learning how to dance the ancient dances and chants, Kauhai told me when it was time for me to graduate, ‘I want you to bring your father and mother.’”

So she did. After a long talk with her parents in Hawaiian, Kauhailikua began the ceremony. When it ended, Sharpe was anxious. Her father had forbidden his children from learning hula, leaving Sharpe to sneak out for all her lessons. Sharpe now worried what his reaction would be: “I looked at my father thinking that he was still mad at me. He came right up to me and he says, ‘You’re my beautiful dancer.’ You don’t know how happy I was.”<sup>6</sup>

“Kananaka,” Lindsey explained, is a hula noho, a sitting hula, and whenever Sharpe’s students performed it, Sharpe would join them because this was the song that was composed by her kumu, Kauhailikua.

“Kananaka” celebrates the beautiful mermaid who would surf the waves at the mouth of one of the many streams that used to flow into the sea at Lahaina. According to Kīhei de Silva, Aunty Irmgard Aluli explained to him that, “on certain hazy, moonlit nights when the Ma‘a‘a trades blew the fragrant līpoa to the beaches of Lahaina, a band of sea-nymphs led by the beautiful Kananaka would swim ashore to feast on the seaweed, frolic in the sand dunes, and sport in the surf as it rushed over the sandbars of the river mouths.”<sup>7</sup>

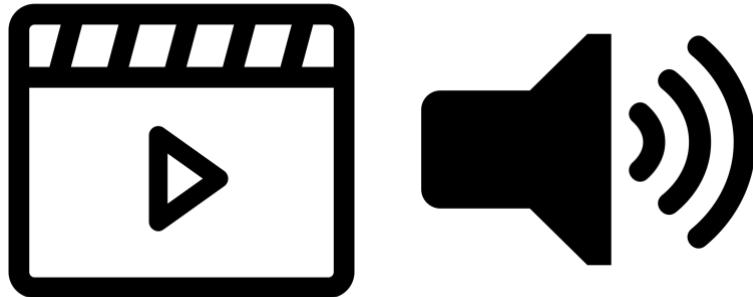
Kupuna Lindsey told Eddie that Kauhailikua composed many mele but kumu hula Emma Sharpe told him that he was “too late” to see any of them as they were either burned at Kīlauea crater or buried with her when she passed.<sup>8</sup> Despite this, by talking with those who knew his grandmother, Eddie gained a sense of her music and hula legacies. Understanding her ties to the song “Kananaka” made him feel deep inside that perhaps he was chosen to not only pursue composition but to perpetuate the music of others he spoke with and learned from.

1. Kamae, “Eddie Kamae’s Notecard on Three Living Treasures,” Hawaiian Legacy Foundation archive.
2. The Māhele was the division of lands that occurred from 1848–1855 transforming land tenancy to private ownership. Merry, *Colonizing Hawai‘i: The Cultural Power of Law*, 41.
3. Pennybacker and Okino, “Lahaina Waves of Change Script,” 2:21–3:01, Hawaiian Legacy Foundation archive.
4. Emailed notes from Myrna Kamae to author, October 8, 2020.
5. Kamae, “Eddie Kamae in Lahaina Interview Transcript,” 2:08:50, Hawaiian Legacy Foundation archive.
6. Kamae, “Eddie Kamae in Lahaina Interview Transcript,” 2:02:28–2:06:00, Hawaiian Legacy Foundation archive.
7. Personal communication Irmgard Aluli and Kīhei & Māpuana de Silva, May 7, 1989.
8. Personal communication from Myrna to author, October 18, 2020.

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## Video and Audio Resources for “Kananaka”



Video and audio resources for this song are on the online songbook page:  
<https://eddiekamaesongbook.org/songs/kananaka/>



Eddie Kamae and The Sons of Hawai‘i (George Kuo, Dennis Kamakahi, and Junior Daugherty)  
with seventh grader Kealoha Kahele at Ho‘okena Elementary School on Hawai‘i island  
performing at the first school program for the film *Li‘a: The Legacy of a Hawaiian Man*, 1990.

Photo credit: Bob Fewell  
Hawaiian Legacy Foundation archive

## Resource material for “Kananaka”

Pilahi Paki's handwritten lyrics and translation for “Kananaka” (front).

### Kananaka Sea Nymph Nymph

1. O ko ~~pa~~ mat a ka maāa eti mett.  
Hali hali mai ~~ana~~ we ~~pi~~nged  
La i ke alo eti go tenu ~~ma~~nged  
Ke alo ona ona ~~to~~ ~~teut~~ ~~teut~~ we wif  
O ko ~~lekoas~~ eti a ~~lupined~~ eti  
Hana ~~ni~~ a ~~kanin~~ fono eti budi  
“pu” & op “ot hee” we mett
2. Nani wale ~~et~~ pacone eti ~~groun~~  
I ka nalu he'e mai ~~report~~ ~~in~~ ~~bros~~ eti  
A o Kananaka ~~it~~ ~~was~~ ~~pi~~nged  
Kachi a makou ~~prende~~ + ~~pleas~~  
A e he'e a'e ~~it~~ ~~was~~ ~~wing~~ eti  
I ka chui chui o ke kai  
“ ” “ ” “ ” “ ”
3. O ka mahina i ke alo alo  
Ho'ola'i la'i ona la i na pali  
Poina wehi wehi i ke ona ona  
Koni ma eele i ke kino  
(Soni “ ” “ ” “ ” “ ”)

## Resource material for “Kananaka”

Pilahi Paki's handwritten lyrics and translation for “Kananaka” (back).

### Translation

1. When the winds blow from the sea<sup>(it)</sup>,  
Bringing in a fragrance wet with  
Fragrance sweet of the lipo<sup>(it)</sup> it is wet  
You can almost taste it<sup>(it)</sup> also it
2. The Beautiful is the sand mound  
and the sweeping waves of Kananaka  
Where we used to go to surf.  
Among the seas spray blow well<sup>(it)</sup>
3. The moon is hazy<sup>(it)</sup>  
Reposing over the hills<sup>(it)</sup>  
Lovely + charming<sup>(it)</sup>  
It gives one's body a thrill to watch  
it<sup>(it)</sup> behold.

As as it is another it<sup>(it)</sup>  
that we is at one with its self  
as as it is a love them more  
and it is the most most<sup>(it)</sup>

## Resource material for “Kananaka”

Kauhailikua ‘Ōpūnui, Eddie Kamae’s maternal grandmother.

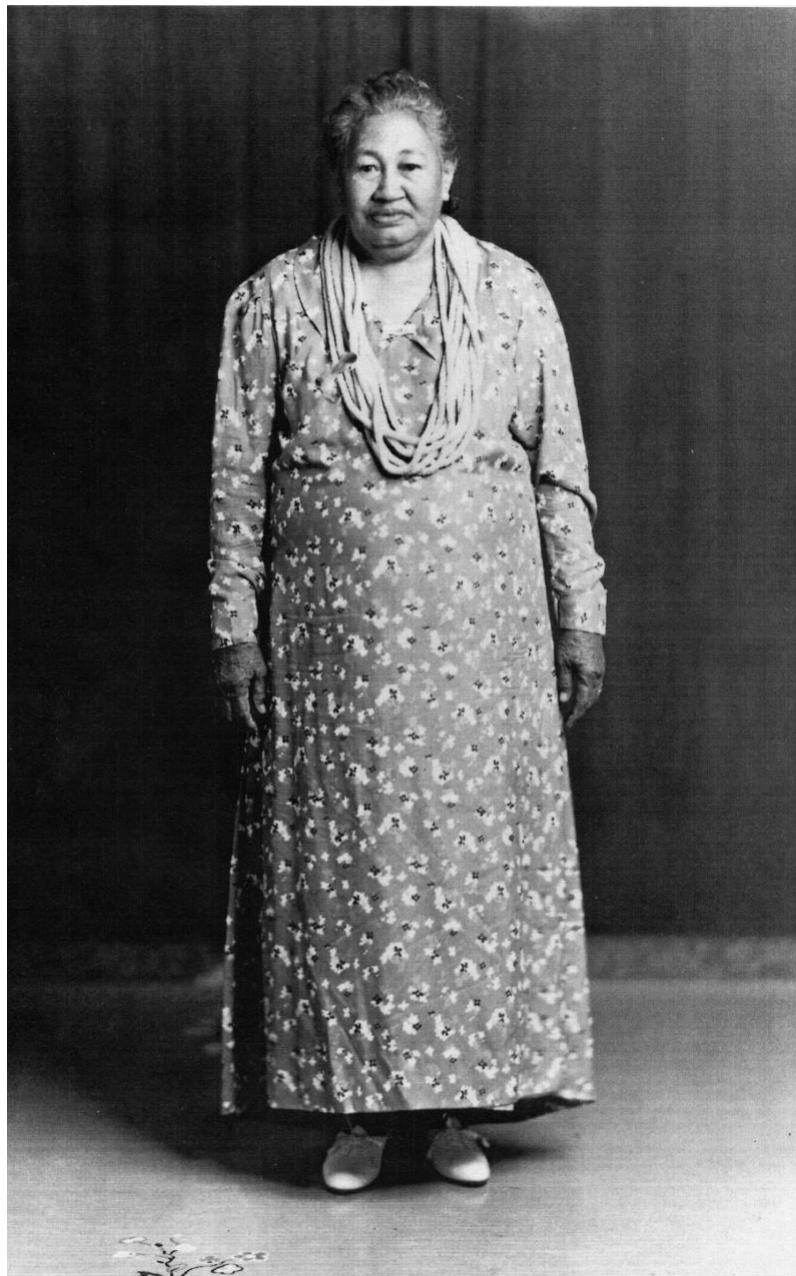


Photo credit: unknown  
Hawaiian Legacy Foundation archive

## Resource material for “Kananaka”

Eddie Kamae's notecard reflecting on how he was guided and chosen to do his work.

### “3 Living Treasures”

my spirit friend guided me to the Bishop museum and found the Music Manuscript of Queen Liliuokalani. And that started me on Hawaiian Music. Singing the Songs of Queen Liliuokalani, who's Grandmother was Kamacohalani. And Sam Lia told me, You, "Remind Me of Me" when I was a young man. Also my Grandfather come from "Waipio Valley". How amazing for me to feel like I was chosen to do this work. My Grandmother, Kauhi Libua Kahua "Ku Maka Kai Kena ia Hiilawe & Liliu E as Emma Sharpe Dance before her Mom & Dad on her Uniki.

## Educational questions for “Kananaka”

To get the most out of these questions and to find the answers: 1) read the song lyrics, translation and story; 2) review the footnotes; 3) engage the resource materials—watch the video clips and listen to the audio recording of the song; and 4) try to play and sing along with Eddie Kamae using the included sheet music.

1. What is “Kananaka” about and where does it take place?
2. Who wrote this song and how is this person related to Eddie Kamae?
3. What was Kauhailikua ‘Ōpūnui known for?
4. What did Emma Sharpe learn from Kauhailikua ‘Ōpūnui?
5. What happened to all of the music that Kauhailikua ‘Ōpūnui composed?
6. What was the Māhele and how did it change land ownership in Hawai‘i?
7. Why did the Pioneer Sugar Company need more access to streams and how did this impact the ‘Ōpūnui ‘Ohana?
8. What is the Ma‘a‘a breeze and where can you find it?
9. What is lipoa, where can you find it, and what is it used for?
10. What is the name of the kind of hula you see in the resource video?
11. Eddie felt he was chosen to do the work he did. Have you ever felt chosen to do a certain thing?

For additional resources and information, visit The Hawaiian Legacy Foundation’s website, [www.hawaiianlegacyfoundation.org](http://www.hawaiianlegacyfoundation.org) to explore other songs in the Eddie Kamae digital songbook, find streaming links to our ten award-winning documentary films, access additional study guides and link to hours of digitized raw footage from the films with our partner, ‘Ulu‘ulu: The Henry Ku‘ualoha Giugni Moving Image Archive of Hawai‘i. Read Eddie’s book, *Hawaiian Son: The Life and Music of Eddie Kamae* as this provides a great overview about Eddie and his journey playing (and learning about) Hawaiian music.

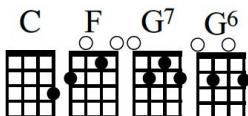
### A note to teachers and parents:

These questions are for grades 4-12 and post-secondary; use the ones that are most appropriate for the age of your learners. For each song, a central question is: “What did this song teach Eddie Kamae about Hawaiian music, about life and about how it was part of his journey as a Hawaiian Son?”

Our hope is that these mele are used as core curriculum. The materials in the songbook were written with an overarching goal to make music part of the core curriculum by helping learners see how mele is connected to all the subject areas they study. We also hope that the mele, resource materials, and exploratory questions are springboards for learners to engage with their co-learners, teachers and family to unpack each mele’s layered educational richness.

We are hopeful that these learners will dive deeper into the lyrics, translations and stories by continuing to research in the Hawaiian language newspapers and dictionaries and other sources found “in” and “outside” our libraries and archives.

# Kananaka



Hymn-like = 104

Lyrics and music by Kauhailikua 'Ōpūnui

1: 'O ka pā ma-i a ka Ma-'a-'a Ha-li-ha-li ma-i a-na lā i ke 'a - la  
 2: 'O ka ma-hi-na hi-ki a-lo-a - lo Ho-'o-la-'i-la-'i a-na lā i nā pa - li

5 C F C G<sup>7</sup> G<sup>6</sup> G C  
 Ke 'a - la o-na-o-na o ka lī - po - a Ha-na 'o - e a ka-ni po - no  
 Pō - hi-na we-hi-we-hi i ke o-na-o - na Ko-ni mā-'e - 'e - le i ke ki - no

9 G<sup>7</sup> G<sup>6</sup> C  
 Ha-na 'o - e a ka - ni po - no  
 Ko - ni mā - 'e - 'e - le i ke ki - no

11 C F C G<sup>7</sup> G<sup>6</sup> G C  
 HUI: Na - ni wa - le i - a pu-'e o - ne I ka na-lu he-'e mai a -'o Ka-na-na - ka

15 C F C G<sup>6</sup> C  
 Ka-hi a mā-kou a e he-'e a - i I ka 'e - hu - e - hu o ke ka - - i

19 G<sup>6</sup> C  
 I ka 'e - hu - e - hu o ke ka - - i

Form sung in recording: 1st verse, Hui (sung twice), 2nd verse, Hui (sung once).

# About The Songbook

*The Eddie Kamae Songbook: A Musical Journey* is a compilation of thirty-four songs that played an important role in Eddie's life. Each song is presented in the form of a digital pū'olo (bundle): researched lyrics and translations, a story about the song and its importance, video and audio clips, a music sheet and multiple resources that range from important to fascinating. The goal of this work is to tell Eddie and Myrna's story of Eddie's musical journey and share some of what he learned along the way.

## **Eddie and Myrna Kamae**

For over fifty years Eddie and his wife, Myrna, were responsible for fifteen albums of genre-defining Hawaiian music, ten award-winning documentaries, and curriculum for K-12 learners. While Eddie created the music, led the Sons of Hawai'i, collected stories from kūpuna, and directed the documentaries, Myrna handled the business side of things, co-produced most of their projects and co-wrote several songs with Eddie. From the beginning, Myrna was a formidable notetaker and meticulously documented their work. Together they created the Hawaiian Legacy Foundation to document, preserve and perpetuate the cultural heritage of Hawai'i. Its archive consists of the raw footage from all documentaries, audio recordings, thousands of photographs, and papers ranging from original lyrics, scores, arrangements, notebooks, correspondence, and scribbled ideas on cocktail napkins.

## **This project**

The seed for this project was planted when U.H. West O'ahu chancellor Maenette K.P. Ah Nee-Benham talked with Myrna and found out she was busy pulling some of Eddie's songs to share with musicians. Maenette suggested a songbook and the curriculum to go with it. The majority of the work was done by the Hui Hana, the core project team comprised of Myrna, archivist Kapena Shim, and language and curriculum specialist Lilinoe Andrews. They divvied up the work then huddled together every week in person or on Zoom for two years to ensure, as Maenette promised Eddie days before his death in 2017, that his work would be made available to students in Hawai'i's classrooms.

Kapena began processing the Hawaiian Legacy Foundation archives in 2013. In 2015 digitization began on the ten documentaries, undertaken by 'Ulu'ulu: The Henry Ku'ualoha Giugni Moving Image Archive of Hawai'i located at U.H. West O'ahu. In June, 2018, Hui Hana started tackling the material for this collection with Myrna providing guidance, detail, accuracy, and alignment with the goals of the Hawaiian Legacy Foundation. Kapena served as project director and Lilinoe served as researcher and writer and updated the translations for all songs except for "Kalaupapa," "Kanaka Waiolina," "Kēlā Mea Whiffa," "Nānā Mai," and "Aloha Chant" which was worked on collectively by the group. Together the trio reviewed story drafts, lyrics, translations, original documents, and new research. The last six months were spent editing, rewriting, having the songs scored and thinking about the educational implications of each song.

## **Resources**

The result is a songbook grounded in the rich resources of the Hawaiian Legacy Foundation archive and Hui Hana's research. The primary sources were conversations and correspondence with Myrna and the materials from the HLF archive. Hui Hana relied heavily on James Houston's biography of Eddie, *Hawaiian Son: The Life and Music of Eddie Kamae*, and the ten documentaries as secondary resources. They allowed the team to hear Eddie voice his thoughts about his teachers, the many songs in the songbook, and what he learned about Hawaiian music and life. Extensive use of published resources including Hawaiian and English language archives of Hawai'i's newspapers added important information to the background stories of many of the songs. Additionally, the extensive cross-referencing of newspaper archives, online search engines and databases, and Hui Hana's network sometimes yielded new or updated information that occasionally shed new light on previously published stories.

## **Original lyrics, translations, orthography, and notes**

What is the right or correct version of a song? It is the prerogative of a composer to create different versions of their lyrics or scores let alone make changes during subsequent performances of them to reflect particular contexts,

audiences, or times. One of the most challenging tasks was presenting a standard set of lyrics for each song based on the original lyrics and sometimes several slight variations thereof. Careful effort was made to note where the standard lyrics deviated from what Eddie sang in the accompanying audio sample.

English translations were done as narrowly as possible with attention to specifics and nuance while avoiding clumsy word-for-word explanations. Broad translations that make for pretty phrases in English were avoided to keep the emphasis on the integrity of the Hawaiian lyrics. All Hawaiian words (with the exception of personal names where exact spellings were unknown) were spelled according to modern orthography using diacritical marks.

Footnotes include short-form citations of sources and point the reader to important additional information that did not quite fit in the main body of the text. Full citations are included in the bibliographies.

### ***Our hope***

Hui Hana shares this work with a deep desire to perpetuate the knowledge Eddie gained from kūpuna of his time. This is what his teachers urged him to do. It is hoped that by exploring these songs, some of their lessons, stories, kaona (hidden poetic meaning), and aloha will resonate with you. We also hope that by playing and singing them you will not only help this music live on but reflect on your own stories and tell them. For educators, this publication serves as a foundation to create curriculum across multiple disciplines.

While the greatest effort was made to create an accurate publication that honors Eddie and Myrna's stories, any shortcomings, mistakes or omissions that may appear are ours alone.

## About Eddie Kamae

*Ho ‘omau, Eddie, ho ‘omau*

For Edward Leilani Kamae music was the language of life. He said a song wasn’t finished until it brought tears to his eyes. He searched for forgotten songs and reinterpreted them in a style that was both traditional and new at the same time. He used music, and later, film, as a means of cultural preservation, seeking out and sharing the songs and stories of kūpuna as his teachers encouraged him to do. They told him to do it for the children, for the generations yet to come.

His talents and achievements are legendary. *The New York Times* called him one of the most important musicians of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A career that spanned five decades was marked by innovation and preservation, and his passing in 2017 left a mighty legacy in three parts: music, critically-acclaimed cultural documentaries, and an archive of rich materials.

Born in Honolulu on August 4, 1927 to Alice Ululani ‘Ōpūnui and Samuel Hoapili Kamae, Kamae was raised in a Hawaiian-speaking home in a mostly Chinese plantation camp near Chinatown and spent summers with his maternal grandmother in Lahaina. The musician who revolutionized ‘ukulele playing by bringing it out of the rhythmic background to the solo forefront had his first experience with the instrument when he played one his older brother brought home.

The only style of music the young Eddie wasn’t interested in was the one his father asked him to play: Hawaiian, because he thought it was too simple. Instead he picked out popular tunes, Latin music, even classical works on the ‘ukulele and became known for a unique way of playing both rhythm and melody at the same time. He played for tips at Charlie’s Cab Stand and then formed the ‘Ukulele Rascals with Shoi Ikemi. Together they joined bandleader Ray Kinney for a coast-to-coast tour on the continental U.S. in 1949.

Eddie taught ‘ukulele and played various engagements to support himself. By 1958 he was a featured soloist in Haunani Kahalewai’s Top o’ the Isle show at the Waikīkī Biltmore hotel. One night Haunani shared some sheet music with him that would change his ambivalence toward Hawaiian music. “Ku‘u Pua I Paoakalani” by Queen Lili‘uokalani touched something deep inside of him and gently set him on a lifelong path of studying, researching, reviving, and playing Hawaiian music.

In 1959, Eddie drove to Waimānalo to visit friends and found an ailing Gabby Pahinui. Gabby asked him to stay awhile and play music with him. Thanks to Gabby’s gifted and deeply Hawaiian style of playing, the impromptu request led to a month-long musical immersion and an epiphany for Eddie: “I heard the soul speaking and in almost an instant I understood what my father had tried to tell me about Hawaiian music. There in Waimānalo, just the two of us, Gabby is pouring out his heart and the whole history of Hawai‘i is in his voice.” That day would determine the rest of Eddie’s life journey.

Their collaboration reinvigorated Gabby and led to the founding of one of the most famous musical groups in Hawai‘i’s history that still, after many iterations, continues today: the Sons of Hawai‘i. Eddie and Gabby were joined by two accomplished musicians: steel guitar player David “Feet” Rogers and bassist Joe Marshall. Together they made hugely popular albums in the 1960s and ‘70s featuring songs that drew from traditional Hawaiian chant and music but were played in a distinctive and rhythmically assertive style. Their music became part of the soundtrack to the Hawaiian cultural revival movement, a call to pay attention to the traditional values that form the bedrock of life in Hawai‘i—including that of aloha ‘āina—values that were slipping away. In 1970 Eddie bought blue palaka shirts—a print popular during the plantation era and one that spoke to working-class pride—for the band members to wear when they played at the Hana Ho‘olaulea Music Festival. From then on the Sons of Hawai‘i wore

palaka shirts whenever they played. Often the group introduced themselves with: “We are the Sons of Hawai‘i and we are Hawaiian.”

### ***Ho‘omau, Eddie, ho‘omau***

During their first gig at the Sand Box in Honolulu’s Sand Island industrial area, one of their regular audience members befriended Eddie. Kurt Johnson loved the Sons’ music and invited Eddie to meet a friend of his mother’s who could help him learn more about the music he was playing. “The most knowledgeable person I know is Kawena Pukui. If you’re serious I’d like to take you to meet her,” Kurt told Eddie.

Mary Kawena Pukui was Hawai‘i’s foremost scholar of Hawaiian culture, a living treasure of cultural knowledge. A linguist, translator, genealogist, composer, kumu hula, and storyteller, she had an encyclopedic mind. She was author of over 150 songs and chants and author or co-author of fifty-two books and articles. From their first meeting Kawena would become one of the most important teachers and song collaborators in Eddie’s life. She encouraged his library and archive research but told him those alone would not take him to the heart of Hawaiian music. “It’s out there. In the valleys and small towns, in the back country. All those places where we have come from.” She told him to go there to find the songs and ‘ike (knowledge) usually shared among families, something she knew was in danger of disappearing.

Kawena was generous in both mind and spirit. Eddie said, “She told me, ‘The next time you come to visit me, bring your wife for I want to meet her.’ I called one day and asked if I could see her and she said ‘hiki’ and ‘bring your wife.’ And my wife and I visited Kawena the next day. We discussed my research, translated my work. After an hour I told Kawena, ‘I’m going.’ I leaned over to kiss her and thank her. She looked at me and said, ‘If you have any pilikia with your wife Myrna you’re wrong. For your wife will be helping you in your life’s work.’”

According to Eddie, “I’d never heard a harsh word mentioned by Kawena of anyone, all the years I’d known her. Always love & respect. She would say, ‘there’s always room in your heart for forgiveness.’” He added, “my first visit to Ka‘ū I would say, ‘Kawena Pukui sends her aloha.’ At that moment love was shown to me, with great affection and love for Kawena.”

“Kawena is aloha.”

“Over the years I visited Kawena at her home and shared my research. When I’m in the doorway, saying ‘mahalo’ Kawena would always tell me, ‘Ho‘omau, Eddie, ho‘omau.’”

A life-changing trip for Eddie was one he took with Kawena when she asked both Eddie and Myrna to join her in Ka‘ū. They would visit the places where she grew up and learned from her grandmother. At the end of the long day, at Uncle Willie Meinecke’s home in Nā‘ālehu, Kawena said to Eddie, “I would like you to meet the songwriter of Waipi‘o Valley, Sam Li‘a.” Eddie knew nothing about Sam. Kawena said, “He is the one. He is like no one else. This man writes in the old way, Eddie. No one knows how many songs, or where they all are. He writes in Hawaiian and he gives it away, with his aloha. In our time there is no one else like him.”

### ***Play it simple, play it sweet***

On Eddie’s first trip to visit Sam Li‘a he drove from Hilo to Kukuihale and made his way to a wooden house right by the old social hall. There he found the elderly gentleman on his porch, sitting straight in his chair with a dignified air. Wearing a white shirt, tie and black suit, the man with tinted glasses, white hair and mustache said, “I’ve been expecting you.”

Samuel Li‘aokeaumoe Kalāinaina was born in 1881 in Waipi‘o Valley to Malaka and Samuel Kalāinaina, one of eleven children. In 1913 he married Sarah Kapela Kaiwipoepoe Pupulenui and had two children. In his life he had been a taro farmer, a typesetter, a wagon driver, a plasterer, a road repairer and a supervisor. But music defined him. He played the ‘ukulele, guitar, banjo, piano and organ until late in life. He was the organ player for his church

and taught choir with a reputation as a kind and patient teacher. He was part of, or led, several traveling serenader groups, and when asked how he managed his musicians, he said, “Let each and every one of them share their mana‘o, their intention and feeling, the way they want to play their song, and share the way they want to strum along with you. I let them do that and all I tell them is, ‘play it simple, play it sweet, don’t forget the rhythm, and don’t forget the melody line.’”

Li‘a wrote dozens and dozens of songs and gave many of them away as gifts: nāu kēia mele, this mele is for you. With a natural facility in Hawaiian as his first language and the eyes of a poet, he took in the places around him, from pristine Waipi‘o to the urban landscape of Hawai‘i Kai and composed beautiful, thoughtful songs full of aloha for the recipient he had in mind. Sam shared many of his songs of Waipi‘o Valley with Eddie as he did in the old Hawaiian way. Eddie wrote the music for some of them and arrangements for all of them. Eddie felt privileged to sing and perform Sam’s songs.

Sam and Eddie shared a close relationship of four years during which they composed together, recorded songs and chants on audiotape, roamed through Waipi‘o Valley, and shared stories. Mostly Eddie listened. They spent many hours together on Sam’s porch or in his sitting room among his song sheets, books, violin and keyboard. During one of these visits, Eddie asked him how he seemed to be expecting him. Sam explained that Kawena had written to him saying that Eddie would come to visit. If Eddie had found a spiritual father, Sam had recognized in him someone he’d been looking for and waiting to meet. Sam said, “People tend to wait for the right people to come along.”

According to Eddie, on one of the days he visited Sam, he saw a notepad in Sam’s lap. “He was working on a song. He’d written some lyrics on some pages and he tore them off, looked at me, and said, ‘These are for you.’ I said, ‘You give this to your family’ and he said, ‘No, I give this to you with my aloha.’” To Eddie, Sam was a man of aloha.

#### ***Do it now, for there will be no more***

Like Mary Kawena Pukui, Pilahi Paki helped guide Eddie on his journey. Hawaiian poet, philosopher, author, and teacher, she was born on Maui and was a contemporary of Kawena’s and other Hawaiians engaged in scholarly work. She was best known for her profound message about aloha at the 1970 Governor’s Conference on the Year 2000 which became a bill signed into law by then governor George Ariyoshi who said it expressed “aloha as the essence of the law in the State of Hawai‘i.”

Eddie was also introduced to Pilahi through Kurt Johnson. Pilahi would often visit Kurt’s mother, Rachel, at her home in Hakipu‘u on Kāne‘ohe Bay to discuss wide-ranging topics of Hawaiian knowledge. At their meeting, Pilahi asked Eddie, “What have you been doing?” Eddie said, “So I showed her some of my work that I’d been doing research on and she gave me her phone number and said, ‘You call me. I live in Kailua. Anytime you want to see me, talk to me, you call me.’”

Eddie and Pilahi would meet up when Eddie had questions about his research or music. He said, “I found her very stern. When she talks to you, she doesn’t smile at all. She just tells you what it’s all about. I like that. She was very generous, very caring, always reminding me, ‘You call me if you need me.’”

Eventually the two would put Pilahi’s thoughts about aloha to music, creating the song “Aloha Chant.” Eddie remembers that Pilahi shared her vision that the spirit of aloha would one day guide a troubled world toward peace. Eddie said, “I liked that. So I did the music for “Aloha Chant.” The two would also compose one of the Sons’ most popular songs, “Kēlā Mea Whiffa” which describes a formerly foul odor at Launiupoko on Maui.

In 1979 Eddie was recognized as a Living Treasure of Hawai‘i by the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawai‘i. At the award luncheon at the Willows restaurant, Pilahi turned to Eddie and said, “Where are you with this work you have been doing for so many years?” Eddie answered, “I am still working on it.” Pilahi then looked at Eddie and said in a stern voice he never forgot, “Do it now, for there will be no more.” At home, Eddie told Myrna what she had said.



Both recognized the urgent truth of her message. It was, in fact, the catalyst that would help launch a second career for Eddie—as a filmmaker.

#### ***A treasure trove into the worldview of kūpuna***

It began as a small thought, growing over time into an eighteen-year-long puzzle that Eddie wrestled with: how to best tell Sam’s story. Print? Audio recordings? New music? Once he discovered filmmaking he said, “I thought I was just going to make one film. But along the way I met so many people and learned so many stories that I had to keep on making more films.”

Collaborating with his wife of fifty years, Myrna, the pair directed and produced ten award-winning documentaries beginning with *Li ‘a: The Legacy of a Hawaiian Man* in 1986. Their goal was Hawaiian cultural continuity: to preserve and share the firsthand accounts of kūpuna who were passing away and are mostly gone. In each, their voices, gestures, faces, songs, and memories are highlighted against music performed by the Sons of Hawai‘i, narration by Ka‘upena Wong, and an introduction by Eddie expressing what he learned about these stories and himself.

The documentaries about Hawaiian music, culture, language, and history are a treasure trove that takes us into the worldview of our kūpuna with the hope that future generations can learn from them, remember their history, respect their cultural identity, and in turn, learn and tell their own stories. The documentaries are, through arts and cultural education, a means to recover and stabilize the loss of language and cultural identity that occurs with each passing generation.

Eddie and Myrna took the documentaries to schools across Hawai‘i and created learning materials to accompany them. Eddie said, “I try to tell the children, ‘ask your grandparents what life was like, what the sound of music was. What was the lifestyle like?’ That’s what I want them to do to keep this music alive.”

#### ***Ka ipukukui pio ‘ole i ke Kaua‘ula/the inextinguishable light in the Kaua‘ula wind***

Yet to Eddie, the body of work he and Myrna produced was not measured by accomplishments but by how much was left to be done. Eddie Kamae’s work with Hawaiian culture served as a bridge between kūpuna who shared songs, stories and traditions with him. All of his teachers and most of the kūpuna whose stories he recorded told him to “do it for the children.” So Eddie and Myrna established the Hawaiian Legacy Foundation to “continue the work” of passing on Hawai‘i’s deep culture to future generations of learners.

This collection of songs is part of the ongoing focus of finishing Eddie and Myrna’s work so that the music can live on. In addition, efforts are ongoing to ensure that the irreplaceable materials they collected and created are archived and accessible for educational purposes.

In his search for a deeper source of understanding Hawaiian music and culture, Eddie felt like he was always guided. From locating songs at Bishop Museum’s library to finding old songwriters living in Hawai‘i’s tiniest towns, Eddie listened to and followed the signs that were shown to him. We hope that the stories of his life in music inspire you, and when your signs appear, that you, too, will follow them.

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