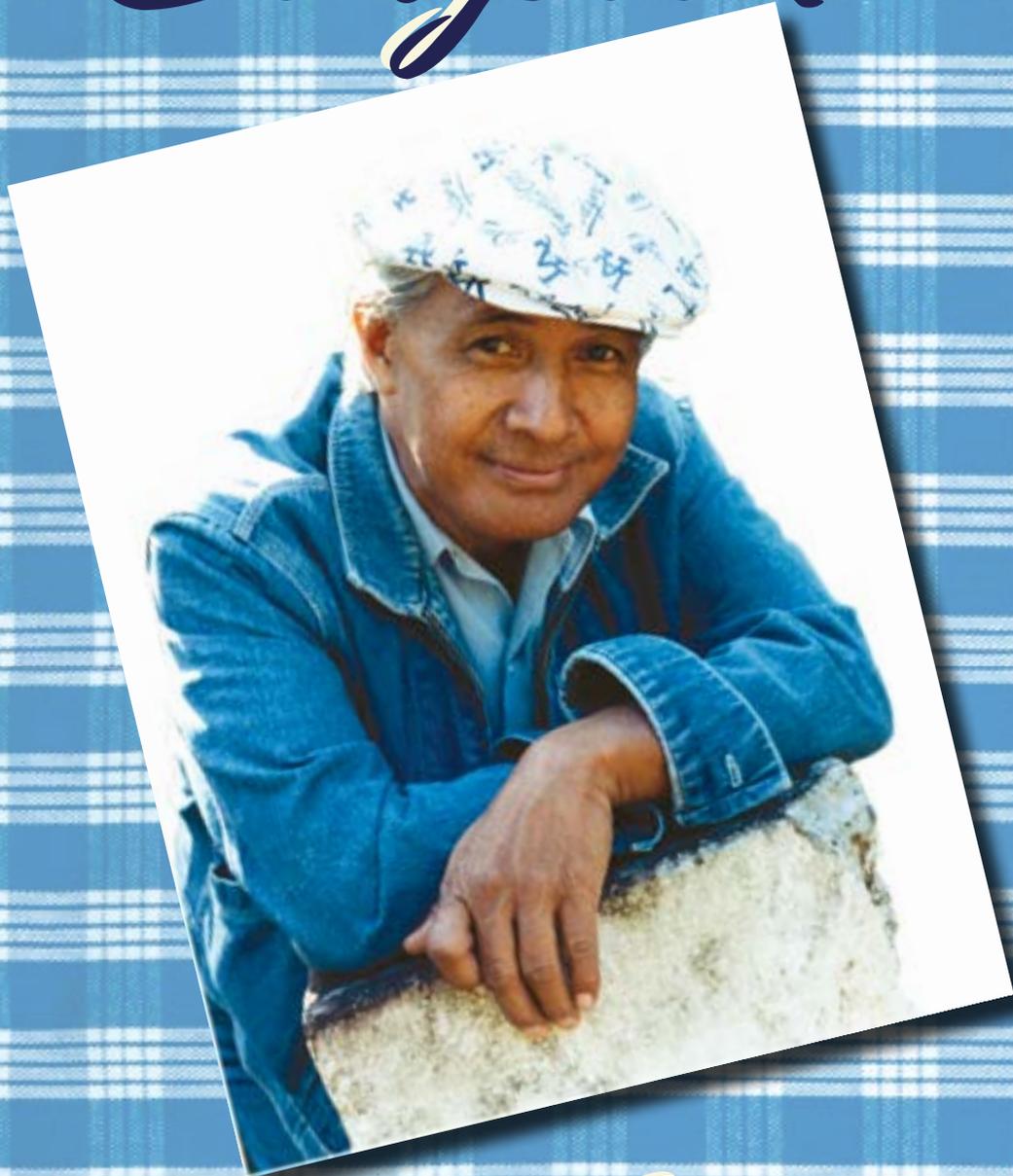


The Eddie Kamae Songbook



A Musical Journey

"KU'U PUA I PAOAKALANI" DIGITAL PŪ'OLO

The Hawaiian Legacy Foundation

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Ku‘u Pua I Paoakalani

Lyrics and music by Queen Lili‘uokalani
Arrangement by Eddie Kamae

1

E ka gentle breeze e waft mai nei
Ho‘ohāli‘ali‘a mai ana ia‘u
E ku‘u sweet never-fading flower
I bloom i ka uka o Paoakalani¹

O gentle breeze that blows softly here
Bringing cherished memories to me
O my sweet never-fading flower
That blooms inland of Paoakalani

Hui

‘Ike mau i ka nani o nā pua
O ka uka o Uluhaimalama²
‘A‘ole na‘e ho‘i e like
Me ku‘u pua i ka la‘i o Paoakalani

I always see the beauty of the flowers
From the uplands of Uluhaimalama
But that cannot compare
With my flower in the peacefulness of Paoakalani

2

Lahilahi kona mau hi‘ona
With soft eyes as black as jet
Pink cheeks so delicate of hue
I ulu i ka uka o Paoakalani

Her features are delicate
With soft eyes as black as jet³
Pink cheeks so delicate of hue
That grows inland of Paoakalani

3

Nane ‘ia mai ana ku‘u aloha
E ka gentle breeze e waft mai nei
Oh come to me ka‘u mea e li‘a nei
I ulu i ka uka o Paoakalani

Riddle⁴ me the name of the one I love
O gentle breeze that blows softly here
Oh come to me the one I desire
That grows inland of Paoakalani

1. Paoakalani, in Hamohamo, Waikīkī, was one of Lili‘uokalani’s homes. It was inherited by her from her maternal grandfather ‘Aikanaka who was married to Kama‘eokalani. “Genealogy,” Lili‘uokalani Trust, “Genealogy,” Lili‘uokalani Trust, 2021, www.onipaa.org/pages/her-genealogy.

2. Uluhaimalama was a plant nursery organized by Lili‘uokalani and planted on October 11, 1894 in Pauoa to raise a variety of plants for use in celebrations and ceremonies that would require flowers and greenery. Ching, “Uluhaimalama and the Queen,” *Ka Wai Ola o OHA*, May, 1988; Historic Hawai‘i Foundation, “Uluhaimalama,” Historic Hawai‘i Foundation, 2021, www.historichawaii.org/2014/02/19/uluhaimalama/.

3. Jet is an organic gemstone that is fossilized wood. It was popular as mourning jewelry in late Victorian era. “Jet Value, Price, and Jewelry Information,” International Gem Society (IGS), “Jet Value, Price and Jewelry Information,” International Gem Society, 2021, www.gemsociety.org/article/jet-jewelry-gemstone-information/.

4. Riddling was a popular pastime among Hawaiian speakers with readers of Hawaiian newspapers frequently submitting ‘ōlelo nane (riddles) and/or challenging other readers to solve them. Ka Wai Ola Staff, “Riddle Me This—Again,” *Ka Wai Ola o OHA*, April 1, 2019, www.kawaiola.news/moolelo/riddle-me-this-again/.

Lyrics correspond to audio recording from the documentary *The History of the Sons of Hawaii*.

Ku‘u Pua I Paoakalani

My Flower At Paoakalani

*I would play this one song written by Queen Lili‘uokalani. I liked that one. I guess it was the first Hawaiian song I really wanted to play.*¹

Eddie was known as an ‘ukulele virtuoso even in his early days as a musician. He played Latin music, jazz tunes, and American pop standards and listened to musicians like Django Reinhardt, Charlie Christian, and Xavier Cugat. He developed a playing style that enhanced a single-string or double-string melody with simultaneous chords, bringing the ‘ukulele into the instrumental spotlight.²

Yet Hawaiian music was not part of his repertoire. Though it was certainly part of his household growing up and playing it was the only thing his father ever asked him to do, Eddie thought Hawaiian music was too simple (though he’d later admit that it was the most difficult music he ever played).

In the 1950s Eddie was teaching ‘ukulele in Waikīkī and heard Hawaiian music from many of the acts there. By 1958 he was a featured soloist in Haunani Kahalewai’s Top o’ the Isle show at the Waikīkī Biltmore Hotel³ and a small act of sharing one night changed his ambivalence toward Hawaiian music. Before he was set to go on, Haunani showed Eddie some sheet music she thought he’d enjoy, Queen Lili‘uokalani’s “Ku‘u Pua I Paoakalani.” Soon after, Eddie picked out the song on his ‘ukulele and played it over and over again. He liked the sweet and heartfelt melody and added it to his repertoire.

It was not uncommon at that time for musicians to finish their acts and drive out to Gabby’s home in Waimānalo for two- or three-day jam sessions. “Ku‘u Pua I Paoakalani” was Eddie’s song when he was asked to play something. “It intrigued me,” he said. “I didn’t know why. I wanted to know where such a song could come from.”⁴

Queen Lili‘uokalani’s prodigious musical talents must have been as much inherited as nurtured. Her great-great-grandmother Ululani was the most famous haku mele (composer) of her time, and her son, Naihe, was the chief orator for Kamehameha I’s court.⁵ As for western influences, Lili‘uokalani began boarding at the Chiefs’ Children’s School at age three where music was a core part of the curriculum.

Lili‘u Loloku Walania Kamaka‘eha⁶ was born into a musical family. She and her three siblings⁷, David Kalākaua, Miriam Likelike, and William Pitt Leleiōhoku, were known as Nā Lani ‘Ehā or The Royal Four in honor of their extraordinary musical and composition skills. It was Likelike who composed the chant, “He Inoa No Kamae” in 1868 in Lahaina for their maternal grandmother Kama‘eokalani, the wife of ‘Aikanaka who bequeathed the property named Paoakalani (‘the royal perfume’) to Lili‘uokalani.

Among the four siblings, it was “Lili‘u,” or “Lydia” as she was known, who would become the most prolific of them all. She could sight-read at a young age and played the piano, ‘ukulele, guitar, organ, and zither. Her music was popular even in America due to two factors: she composed a large number of songs (at least one hundred fifty are known) and she was enthusiastic about having them published and made available for the public to enjoy. In fact, Lili‘uokalani may have been the first Hawaiian composer to have a song published on the continental U.S. In 1869 “Nani Nā Pua” was printed and distributed by the Oliver Ditson Company in Boston, Massachusetts.

“Ku‘u Pua I Paoakalani” is one of the Queen’s best known compositions and one of seven songs she composed under house arrest. The song was written in 1895 during her eight-month imprisonment at ‘Iolani Palace for her alleged knowledge of a counterrevolution by Robert Wilcox and others.

During this time she was allotted a minimum of possessions, including writing paper and pencils, and even fewer privileges. However, she was allowed to receive flowers⁸ from her different properties and especially from Uluhaimalama in Pauoa Valley. Established a year earlier on October 11, 1894 by the Queen, the garden served as a plant nursery to supply flowers

and greenery for celebrations and special events. Uluhaimalama was also a place for her supporters to gather out of earshot of the Provisional Government.⁹

According to the narrative that accompanies the music for “Ku‘u Pua I Paoakalani” in *The Queen’s Songbook*, Lili‘uokalani received flowers on March 20, 1895 that included a species she recognized as coming from her home, Paoakalani, in Hamohamo, Waikīkī.¹⁰ This was the inspiration for the song that she dedicated to Johnny Wilson,¹¹ the son of her jailors, Charles and Evaline Wilson. In it, Lili‘uokalani asks the listener to guess the flower she describes and answer in the form of a riddle, a favorite tradition of Hawaiian speakers of the time.

The Queen was a masterful composer and talented musician who was the greatest inspiration to a young musician, who decades later, would consider her music a guiding force in his life. Whatever teachers might yet appear in Eddie’s path, Lili‘uokalani’s work held a special reverence to him and it was ultimately reflected in his arrangements, music, recordings, and films, all of which helped her music to live on.

1. Houston and Kamae, *Hawaiian Son: The Life and Music of Eddie Kamae*, 22.

2. Houston and Kamae, *Hawaiian Son: The Life and Music of Eddie Kamae*, 13.

3. The Waikīkī Biltmore Hotel on Kalākaua Avenue was built in 1955 and was one of the first 4 high-rise hotels to be constructed in Hawai‘i. 19 years later in 1974 it was demolished to make way for the Hyatt Regency. Hawaii Living, “History of Waikīkī’s Hotels,” *Hawaii Living* (blog), April 24, 2018, www.hawaiiliving.com/blog/history-waikiki-hotels/.

4. Houston and Kamae, *Hawaiian Son: The Life and Music of Eddie Kamae*, 220.

5. Smith, *The Queen’s Songbook*, 1.

6. Lili‘uokalani’s name was lengthened to its present form by her brother King David Kalākaua when she was named as his heir apparent. There are variations as to how her childhood name is listed depending on the source. Smith, *The Queen’s Songbook*, 2.

7. Lili‘uokalani had 6 siblings all together but three did not live into adulthood. Lili‘uokalani Trust, “Genealogy,” Lili‘uokalani Trust, 2021, www.onipaa.org/pages/her-genealogy.

8. Any item the Queen received while imprisoned was thoroughly searched by those guarding her and newspapers especially were scrutinized and stripped of any government news. Even when she read bits of stories from sheets of newspapers used to wrap flowers brought to her, any mention she made thereof was passed on to those overseeing her imprisonment so it is unclear whether she actually kept abreast of political news via this method. See Lili‘uokalani, *Hawaii’s Story by Hawaii’s Queen*, chapter XLVI “Sentenced—My Prison Life.”

9. Ching, “Uluhaimalama and the Queen,” *Ka Wai Ola o OHA*, 1988, 22.

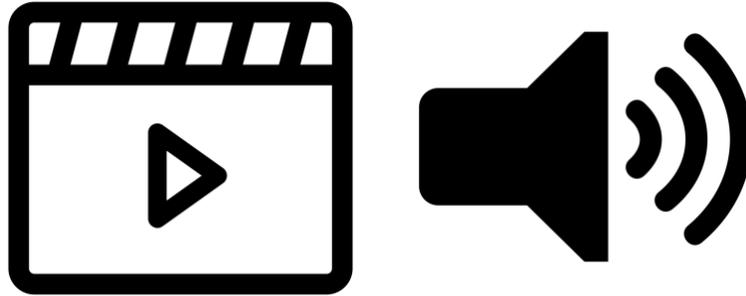
10. Smith, *The Queen’s Songbook*, 65.

11. Johnny Wilson would later serve as mayor of Honolulu three times, in 1920, 1929, and 1946. “John Wilson Dies; Leader in Hawaii,” *New York Times*, July 4, 1956.

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Video and Audio Resources for “Ku‘u Pua I Paoakalani”



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



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 "Ku'u Pua I Paoakalani"

Sheet music cover for "Ku'u Pua I Paoakalani," 1895.

Now Sung With Great
Success
By The
ROYAL
HAWAIIAN
GLEE CLUB
ON ITS TOUR THROUGH
AMERICA

QUEEN LILIUOKALANI

KU'U PUA I PAOKALANI

(MY FLOWER AT PAOKALANI)
- BY -
QUEEN LILIUOKALANI

DURING HER IMPRISONMENT IN THE IOLANI PALACE BY THE
REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT OF HAWAII

PUBLISHED BY
JNO. H. WILSON
HONOLULU - H. I.

HARRINGTON

Resource material for “Ku‘u Pua I Paoakalani”

Queen Lili‘uokalani, circa 1890.



Photo credit: unknown
Hawai‘i State Archives

Resource material for “Ku‘u Pua I Paoakalani”

Eddie with the Martin “Standard” ‘ukulele he played in the 1950s.



Photo credit: Unknown
Hawaiian Legacy Foundation archives

Educational questions for “Ku‘u Pua I Paoakalani”

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 and listen to audio recording of the song; and 4) try to play and sing along with Eddie Kamae using the included sheet music.

1. Who is the composer of this song and what role did she play in Hawai‘i’s history?
2. What is this song about?
3. Where is Paoakalani?
4. Where is Uluhaimalama located and what was its purpose?
5. Why was Queen Lili‘uokalani such a talented composer and musician?
6. What did Eddie like about the song “Ku‘u Pua I Paoakalani”?
7. Have you ever heard this song before? Go online and search for someone singing it.
8. Why did Eddie not want to play Hawaiian music at first?
9. This is the first Hawaiian song Eddie Kamae played. Can you play or sing a Hawaiian song?
10. Are there any composers that you have a special reverence for, like how Eddie had for Queen Lili‘uokalani’s music?
11. What is traditional Hawaiian riddling? Do you know of a riddle in either Hawaiian or English?

For additional resources and information, visit The Hawaiian Legacy Foundation’s website, 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.



Music Scores for "Ku‘u Pua I Paoakalani"

There are no music scores provided for "Ku‘u Pua I Paoakalani" as Eddie Kamae played his version of this song as an instrumental.

A music score for this song can be found in the *Queen's Songbook* published by Hui Hānai in 1999.

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'ualoa 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 20th 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 Kukuihaele 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 Pahi 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 Whiffā” 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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He Ho'oheno No Hawai'i Aloha
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Hui Waiānuhea
Ka 'Elele I Wakinekona
Kananaka
Sweet Hāhā 'Ai A Ka Manu
Waipi'o Valley Song

Michael Foumai

Ke Ala A Ka Jeep
Kēlā Mea Whiffa
Lā Kalikimaka
Nānā Mai
Punalu'u Nani
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Hawai'i Kai
He Mele Aloha No Waipi'o
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Ka Pua O Ka Lehua
Komo Mai
Morning Dew/E Ku'u Morning Dew
Nani Waipi'o Kāhela I Ka La'i
'Ūlili Ē

Ocean Kaowili

'Ukulele chord charts

Aaron J. Salā

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