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Sound Travels

Ernest Kaleihoku Kaai and the transmission of Hawaiian music in the early twentieth century

Andrea Eden Low

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology
The University of Auckland, 2016.
Abstract

*Sound Travels* constructs a biographical narrative of musician, musical director, showman and entrepreneur Ernest Kaleihoku Kaai (b. Honolulu 1881 – d. Florida 1962). It takes into account the extent of his musical practice and the scale of his touring in the Asia Pacific region at a time when colonialism was the defining cultural and political force. The narrative, while it looks at the context of his upbringing, broadly concerns a period between 1911 when he first visited Australasia to 1937 when he performed his final season in Singapore before returning briefly to Hawai‘i and then settling in Florida. The relational and situational possibilities of cosmopolitanism will be used as a means for interpreting Kaai’s travels, engagements and intercultural encounters and his ability and apparent ease in traversing distinct social, cultural and political realms in a time period when imperial power dominated and racialised indigenous subjects. Cosmopolitanism also provides a framework for the discussion of the particularities of Kaai’s relationship to multiple discourses of identity, agency and representation and how those elements are reflected in his own syncretic cultural practice. Integral to this is a discussion of the “constant de-territorialisation of music-makers” (Slobin 1992: 6) and the role of music in facilitating spaces of transcultural exchange and mobility.

Ernest Kaai and his Hawaiian Troubadours performed Kaai’s long running stage show *A Night in Honolulu* at the intersection of empire and entertainment in the early part of the twentieth century. Their travels through Australasia, India, the Dutch East Indies, Shanghai and Japan relied, for the most part, on imperial networks maintained by European and British powers. Kaai
also participated in a nascent Pacific entertainment circuit\(^1\) that accompanied American imperialism in the Pacific where global cultural flows saw culture industries enabled, in tandem with technological, commercial and colonial developments, increasing access to emerging and existing markets for colonial entrepreneurs.

This thesis locates Kaai at the forefront of performers who toured the South Pacific and Asia, opening the way for other Hawaiian musicians and popularising and localising Hawaiian music along the way. Kaai’s story constitutes a hidden history that has remained on the margins of popular music history because colonial historiographies have prevailed and overwritten non-European musical accounts. Kaai’s story and the collateral stories of musicians that travelled with him reveal understandings of Hawaiian music, the mobility of Hawaiian and other indigenous musicians in the early twentieth century, the cosmopolitan milieus in which they operated and the extent of their influence as musical stylists.

\(^1\) Maurice E. Bandmann’s Far Eastern Circuit – in the later 1910s Bandmann dropped an ‘n’. A description of The Bandmann Opera Company: “The name of Bandmann is a sort of guinea stamp among itinerant theatrical circles.” *The Eastern Daily Mail*, 16th February 1906 p2, Singapore.
For Karen
Acknowledgements

It takes a village and I have many people to thank who have helped me bring this project to fruition. Firstly I would like to thank my supervisor Dr Greg Booth for his support right from the beginning when I changed from a fine arts doctorate to one in ethnomusicology. He took a risk in accepting a student with a background in installation and sculpture, patiently allowing this newcomer to critique *everything*, often responding with “well whaddya gonna do?” Greg and his partner Alison opened their home and their pizza oven on more than one occasion and their hospitality was warm and generous. Wearing another hat, Dr Alison Booth also showed great kindness to me in a moment of academic crisis. Thanks also to my co-supervisor Dr Kirsten Zemke and to Dr Sunhee Koo. As a tutor on courses they each offered I witnessed their scholarship in action and it was a great way for me to find my feet in a topic area I was new to. Kirsten’s irreverence and humour were key to the relaxed atmosphere in our weekly meetings but her precision and eye for detail were also of great benefit to me.

Family have been a mainstay throughout my study. My sister Melanie Rands has been a constant source of inspiration and is someone who has truly shared the excitement of discoveries I have made in my research and I hope I can do the same for her as she embarks on her own doctoral journey. Melanie and her partner Malcolm together with their daughters Ahilapalapa and Keva have been interested and encouraging from the outset and the validation I have received from all of them has enabled me to continue in so many ways. Attending the induction of our kupuna Ernest Kaleihoku Kaai into the Hawai‘i Music Hall of Fame and meeting more members of the Kaai ‘ohana stand out as highlights that I was lucky enough to share with all of them. I also want to acknowledge the descendants of Ernest Kaai Junior and especially thank Robert Lono Ikuwa for his encouragement and support and I hope *Sound Travels* will assist in the continuing development of the stories of our ‘ohana.

Mahalo nui to Tui Blanchett who is the youngest child of Ernest Kaai and Tuavivi Greig Kaai. I thank her not only for being the first person to introduce me to Gabby Pahinui’s “The Brown Album” but also for letting me pore over her photo albums as we sat in the lounge of the old villa at Glen Road. Aunty Lolo, as we have always called her, shared materials and stories that have meant so much to the construction of this narrative and I am very grateful for the time we have been able to spend together reminiscing and recounting events.
To the Briggs sisters—Pat, Tua and Gay—thank you for the gift of so many wonderful photographs in 1989. The images started a chain of events that are still unfolding. Thanks to my sister Debbie Low for sharing her photographs that once belonged to our great-grandmother, Florence Edith Armstrong Greig. My cousins Hugh Blanchett and Tracey Healy have provided photographs, documentation, reminiscences and laughs and I thank the Blanchett family for passing on materials to me that have made a profound difference to my research. Tracey Healy is a goldmine of anecdotes and always brings a fresh perspective, reminding me of my situatedness in relation to this mass of material I have accrued. Also, I owe her an apology for making her join LinkedIn. I am very grateful to Jill Palmer and her support for our family, which has been invaluable over this long process. Thank you to Dulcie McNaughton for her early validation of my doctoral studies. Mahalo to Kumu Auli‘i Mitchell for his scholarship and aloha.

Late last year I made contact with the Kamau whānau through Laura Kamau at Victoria University. Laura put me in touch with Jerry Edwards who very generously shared stories and memorabilia with me about Sid Kamau who was married to my aunt, Thelma Kaai, and was one of the Hawaiian Troubadours. Sid is someone who deserves a biography of his own and I hope the information included in this thesis enables the Kamau whānau to tell more of the story of Papa Shanghai and his musical travels through Asia in the early twentieth century.

Only another PhD student can really understand the particulars of this work and I have been lucky to have the friendship and support of my colleague Michelle Williams. Michelle has been someone with whom I have not only been able to share my research journey with but also a lot of coffee! I could not have wished for a better travel companion to Shanghai for the ICTM conference in 2013 and I look forward to her forthcoming dissertation. Jared Mackley-Crump was one of the first people I met in the ethnomusicology field and he has been an amazing friend and advisor together with his wonderful partner, my kaiviti cuz Gareth Dyer. Although reading Jared’s thesis was like looking into the sun, it provided me with a research model that was so inspirational the ‘Table of Contents’ alone made a huge contribution to my project! I would also like to thank Daniel Hernandez and Olivia Barnett-Nagshineh for the stimulating and on-going decolonisation discussion (with more coffee). Nick Marsh = even more coffee and also wine, thank you. Thanks to Chrissy Sepulveda for inspiring me to write more, being such a great ‘roommate’ and introducing Chris, Lili and I to our guitar hero Mark Sepulveda. Thank you Mona-Lynn Courteau for being an invaluable ally and showing me that an em dash is useful for more than just Scrabble!
One of the nice things about research has been the opportunity to meet and network with researchers whose work intersects with mine in some way. Thanks to Fritz Schenker for his collegiality and for sharing material from his own research on jazz in 1920s colonial Asia and I look forward to reading his recently completed dissertation *Empire of Syncopation* (2016). I have enjoyed meeting and corresponding with Kevin Fellezs with whom I have shared many conversations on Hawaiian music topics. Likewise John Troutman has been a generous correspondent and his scholarship on the Hawaiian steel guitar is very impressive and inspiring. Chris Bourke’s important volume, *Blue Smoke* (2010), documenting the pioneers of popular music in New Zealand/Aotearoa has been an essential reference and I thank Chris for being so kind and willing to share his extensive knowledge and resources. Jim Tranquada, who along with the late John King has written the definitive works on the ‘ukulele, has been very kind particularly in the beginning when I was still figuring out how to approach my topic. I would also like to thank those who have shared key pieces of information that have helped me more than you know; Adria Imada, Naresh Fernandes, Susheel J. Kurien, Minako Waseda, Stacey Kamehiro, Peter Keppy, Bradley Shope, Malcolm Rockwell, Amy Stillman and lastly Charles Hiroshi Garrett who asked me to write the first Grove Online entry for Ernest Kaai. Thank you to Gary Le Gallant, an independent music researcher and archivist from Victoria, Australia, who provided me with an incredible array of useful materials on the Hawaiian Troubadours’ tour of Australia in 1925.

Thank you to my friends who have supported me in a myriad of ways such as childcare, dinners, homes away from home, translation and long conversations about writing and research; Stephanie Mills, Michael Szabo, Clair Mills, Zoe Booty, Ben Edgar, Erwin van Asbeck, Akke Tiemersma, Charlotte Fisher, and Tom Trnski. Thank you to Vani Sripathy who reminded me about the importance of grit. Thanks also to Cathryn Monro and Christian Penny who provided time, space and a spare laptop in the beautiful surrounds of Piha at a crucial point in my writing.

Tuavivi Greig Kaai has been an inspiration to me for as long as I can remember. When I was young I liked to ‘tidy’ her room, looking at the photographs and trying on her jewellery, bracelets and rings of topaz, emerald and sapphire that she had brought home from Sri Lanka. I would open and close her silver cigarette case and wear it, strung on delicate chain mail around my wrist and wonder about the fragrance in the black bottle inscribed with ‘La nuit de noel’. When I finished ‘tidying’ we would play a merciless game of poker using matches or coins from her jar and she always won. Tuavivi was not like other grandmothers; she enjoyed ‘black velvet’
cocktails and danced the hula and she was proud of her individuality. Her story was missing from larger narratives and I wanted to retell those narratives in a way that acknowledged her.

Looking for Tuavivi meant looking for Ernest Kaleihoku Kaai. At the start of this project I knew very little about him but the volume of material I discovered started to construct him in unexpected ways. I am grateful for the electronic paper trails I found partly because they revealed so much about Kaai and also so much about repertory, staging, players, and locations. To Kaai, Wehi, Keoki, Aiee, Sid, Thelma, Bobby, Queenie, David and all of the other Hawaiian Troubadours, mahalo nui.

Thank you to my parents Karen and Keva Low for encouraging me to love stories and music and for having such richly textured lives to write about. Thanks also to my niece Cassandra Gibbs-Low.

My partner Chris and daughter Liliʻuokalani have been unwavering in their support of my writing and research. I have missed family holidays and hardly pulled my weight in the cooking department but they have shown great understanding and patience. Their aloha has sustained me and affirmed my commitment to this project. Mahalo.

*The image on the dedication page is of Karen Tuavivi Kaai in the arms of her ama (nurse) with Uncle Sid David looking on. Simla, India 1929*
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<tr>
<td>ʻaina</td>
<td>Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bānai</td>
<td>To raise, to adopt, to feed. It may be used to refer to the adoptive parent or child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>haole</td>
<td>Originally this meant any foreign person from the nineteenth century on, specifically a white foreigner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawai‘i nei</td>
<td>Beloved Hawai‘i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ho'opa'a</td>
<td>Expert chanter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bnikau</td>
<td>Mixed, confused, haphazard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaona</td>
<td>Hidden meaning, concealed reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ki'i</td>
<td>Image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kīkā kīla</td>
<td>Hawaiian steel guitar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kanaka maoli</td>
<td>Real person or people, i.e., native. Kānaka is the plural form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kanaka ōiwi</td>
<td>Native person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>makaʻāina</td>
<td>Commoner, populace, people in general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>malo</td>
<td>Loincloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mele</td>
<td>Song, anthem, chant, poem, poetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moʻolelo</td>
<td>History, legend, story or narrative of any kind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʻohana</td>
<td>Family, relative, kin group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poʻe aloha ʻāina</td>
<td>The people who love the land</td>
</tr>
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</table>

All Hawaiian translations and definitions are sourced from the online dictionary by Pukui and Elbert (2003) at [http://wehewehe.org/](http://wehewehe.org/), which is part of the [http://ulukau.org](http://ulukau.org) site. Longer texts have been translated by Robert Lono Ikuwa or Auliʻi Mitchell.

Orthography

‘okina – marks the glottal stop, as in ki‘i
kahakō – or macron, marks the long vowel as in Kalākaua

Diacritic marks are not added to quoted historical material where the original source does not include them. While many contemporary commentators mark the glottal stop with a ‘okina in Kaai’s name, he did not use it in his signed documents or publications and Kanahele (1979) also does not use it when referring to Kaai. In other cases I have followed Noenoe K. Silva (2004) and have avoided using the marks except where their use has become standard eg: Kalākaua.

Hawaiian words are not italicised in the text in alignment with the resistance to making the indigenous language of Hawai‘i appear foreign in texts that are produced about the people and land of Hawai‘i (Silva 2004, Imada 2012).

Notes on the Use of “Hawaiian” and “Native Hawaiian”

The words “Hawaiian” and “Native Hawaiian” are used only for those of indigenous Hawaiian descent, wherever they live. Kanaka Maoli may also be used.

Notes on the Use of “Oceania”

Oceania is the preferred term in this thesis for the areas commonly defined as Micronesia, Melanesia and Polynesia (cf: Hauofa 1993, Tcherkézoff 2003).

Notes on the Images Contained in this Dissertation

Unless otherwise stated, all images are from my own private collection which incorporates the photograph albums of Wehi Greig and a collection of images inherited from Tuavivi Greig Kaai.
Notes on Newspaper References

While the referencing style used is APA, there are so many newspaper references that to avoid them interfering with a clear reading of the text, I have chosen to footnote them. These are the links to the archives I used:


English-language Hawaiian newspapers: http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/

California Digital Newspaper Collection: http://cdnc.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/cdnc


New Zealand newspapers: http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast


Dutch East Indies newspapers: http://www.delpher.nl/nl/kranten/

*The Times of India* archive is available on ProQuest for subscribers.

*The North China Daily News* and *North China Herald* and other historical English language newspapers pre-1949 are increasingly available online at subscriber sites like ProQuest and Brill but I conducted analogue searches at the Shanghai Library Bibliotheca Zi-Ka-Wei
Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Background

A few months before she died in 2007, my mother, Karen Tuavivi Low, received some information about her estranged father, Ernest Kaleihoku Kaai, that affected her deeply – that he had died in 1962. She was ten years old when she last saw him in Singapore in 1937 when she and her siblings, with their mother, boarded a ship for New Zealand. That he had died in 1962 was an obvious shock for her because she believed he had died earlier, and it raised the devastating thought that he had chosen not to make contact with her in the 25 years of his absence. I felt my mother’s heartbreak and I believe it had a severe impact on her illness, and she died within the next few months. I have hesitated to add personal detail of any kind to my thesis: it felt too exposing to write about my mother in that way and talk about her sense of betrayal and loss, as well as my own feelings of sadness that were tied up with her death. It did not occur to me at the time that this was something I could write about, but in retrospect it was a turning point and an important one for me in terms of context and motivation. Stacy Holman Jones, among others (Denzin 1989; Ellis 2004; Spry 2001; Neumann 1996), writes convincingly about not only the value of autoethnography, which she defines as “using our experience to engage ourselves, other(s), politics and social research” (2015: 1), but also the power of crisis and describing it as “a turning point, a moment when conflict must be dealt with even if we cannot resolve it” (2008: 209).

I had always been interested in Kaai and I had the luxury, unlike my mother, of not having been abandoned by him, so I was not emotionally invested in the same way, and a visit to the Bishop Museum in 1996, where I was able to look through his file, sparked further searches. After my mother’s death more and more information came to light as my sisters and I became familiar with the work of John King and Jim Tranquada, who both wrote extensively on the history of the ‘ukulele and our grandfather’s contribution to its use and popularity. Many websites, such as King’s Nalu Music and the Ukulele Hall of Fame, as well as Hawaiian music anthologies carried selected details of Kaai’s life and music and references to his travels to Australasia and Southeast Asia. We were familiar with some of them because our grandmother had travelled with Kaai, and she had shared many stories of their times together in Ceylon, India and Singapore. There was some freedom in exploring what seemed like a flood of information without our mother’s

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1 As Sri Lanka was known prior to independence in 1948.
dismissive remarks, whose pain always inflected discussions of Kaai with a cruel kind of humour where he was often referred to as “Ernest”, or worse, “the bigamist”. Occasionally and more fondly my mother had recalled memories of her father from when they lived in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), things like his homemade mango ice cream, or else the party nights playing the ‘ukulele with mum and her siblings, where the ease and playfulness of music making was infectious. They could each play and sing jazz-influenced hapa haole songs, and Karen especially had phenomenal ability to recall lyrics and, in our eyes (and ears), to play anything. Sometimes she would dance the hula, and her graceful ability, something that hinted at a whole other life, would astonish us.

Access to so many new biographical details of Kaai’s life meant that we knew more than we had ever known about him, but still the personal details were unclear. We had, as “the bigamist” implies, always known we were from the “wrong side of the blanket”, as my mother would say, and some of the biographies included minor details about Kaai’s wife and children in Hawai‘i. “Musicians!” people would say when they heard the story of two families in two hemispheres. But completely absent from all of the new sources of information were any reference to my mother Karen and her three younger siblings, Mana, Lani and Leo, and a person who had had a profound influence on me, my grandmother, Tuavivi Greig – mother to four of Kaai’s children.

At Tuavivi’s funeral in 1987 I was approached by three of her nieces Pat, Gay and Tua who gave me a bag of photographs, some loose and the rest collected in three albums. The loose photos were studio images of Tuavivi modelling, some in hula costumes, which were obviously publicity images, others in fashionable clothing of the time, and all stamped with the names of studios in Melbourne, Sydney and Honolulu. I often wondered why they picked me – they could have chosen any of my cousins or sisters or even my mother – but now I can see that the gift became central to this project.

Among the images were studio images of other people beside my grandmother: men and women in the three-quarter glamour portrait poses of the 1920s, lips and eyes delicately enhanced by the photographers’ hand-tinting. Some are wearing leis or holding ‘ukuleles and are of faces that I came to recognise as being part of Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours. The albums contained photographs of the entertainers on tour in New Zealand, Australia and India from

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2 Amy Hoolaikahiluohalanii Kaai née Sheldon (b. Honolulu 1876 – d. Honolulu 1946)
3 Tuavivi Greig (b.1901 – d.1987) and her siblings George, Annie and Agnes were born on Fanning Island.
4 Ruskin Studios, Melbourne; Broothorn Studio, Collins St, Melbourne; JJ Williams Studios, Honolulu; Sidney Riley Studios, Sydney
1926 to 1930, with a few tour images from Soerebaia, Hong Kong and Malacca. Tuavivi’s sister-in-law Wehi Corbett-Greig (Te Arawa, Ngāti Whakaue) was the photographer of most of the snapshot images and also compiled and annotated the albums. She and Tuavivi were both members of Kaai’s Troubadours from 1925 onwards; while Tuavivi mostly appeared as a hula dancer, Wehi sang and played the saxophone, guitar and ‘ukulele. Along with her husband George (Keoki) Greig, Wehi also performed as part of the Hilo Duo, a Hawaiian-themed act that travelled many of the same circuits performing musical and comedy routines, and some of the photographs relate to their specific travels.

After my mother died the photographs were easier to access. Out of loyalty to my mother I had not felt able to examine them before then because I did not think I could share my discoveries with her. What I found, however, when I did look, was an extraordinary story that I had only ever known as fragments of narrative that were attached to pieces of jewellery, remembered flavours and smells, recipe books, keepsakes and skills like how to make a curry or wear a sari or pronounce Himalaya. A few loose photographs of my grandmother showed her as a chic young woman in India in a snakeskin jacket, sometimes with a tall man who we knew as Kaai, never grandfather.

With the help of the photographs, my primary motivation at the start of my doctoral studies was to construct Kaai’s biography in order to re-introduce my grandmother, my mother and her siblings into a story from which I believed they had been erased. The more I discovered about Kaai, however, the more I realised that he too was subject to a type of ‘forgetting’. The eleven years of his life spent with Tuavivi coincided with his most intense period of touring and working in Asia and Australasia, yet even in George Kanahele’s entry on Kaai in Hawaiian Music and Musicians (1979), which is still the most comprehensive description of Kaai’s achievements, he only sketchily mentions Kaai’s “long musical odyssey…throughout the orient” (193). English- and Hawaiian-language newspapers have some contemporary reports about Kaai’s travels that he wrote and sent back about earlier tours to Australia and New Zealand, but tours on the eastern circuits are underreported in Kaai’s homeland. Further information will be revealed as more ephemera come to light or newspapers are digitised and translated, and over the years of my research, this is already noticeable.

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5 Māori tribal affiliations
It is said that the story of one musician is the story of many musicians. In the case of Kaai, his enterprises directly intersected with the lives of dozens of musicians, many of whom were from Hawai’i, but members of his troupes also came from Samoa, Aotearoa and Fanning Island. In constructing Kaai’s story the stories of others such as Wehi Greig, Edward Kinilau, Sid Kamau, Frank and Frances Luiz, Herbert Pahupu Byrnes, Lono Munson, Gertila Kinley and Tuavivi Greig are activated. They leave the faintest trace in archives and yet each one is a story of the twentieth century and earlier that is inscribed with the global flow of people, information, media, ideas, and music.

1.2. Mo‘olelo

_“No one could foresee our ability to unravel their History into our thousand stories”_  
Patrick Chamoiseau (Texaco, 1998)

According to Jonathan Friedman, “The construction of history is generated by, and is constitutive of, social identity” (1992: 203). Discontinuities have impacted on Hawaiian storytelling and history for a people who “all but vanished from the cultural face of the earth [and] were the subject of pessimistic acculturation studies during most of this [twentieth] century” (203). These discontinuities have had profoundly damaging effects on material culture, language, sovereignty and habitus. Partly in response to the power that dominant narratives still have in the framing of Native Hawaiian history and sovereignty, I have chosen to frame my narrative in terms of Hawaiian story telling. Mo‘olelo is a multivalent term, one that encompasses many notions:

n. Story, tale, myth, history, tradition, literature, legend, journal, log, yarn, fable, essay, chronicle, record, article; … (From moʻo ʻōlelo, succession of talk; all stories were oral, not written)…. (Pukui and Elbert 2003)

The multivalency is important and I harness that flexibility in my use of the terms history, theory, story and moʻolelo. Central to this project is an understanding that through moʻolelo is the transfer of knowledge, the honouring of kūpuna and the celebration of life, not as an exercise in hagiography but in such a way that affirms connectivity and builds and maintains relationships.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith says that indigenous stories are “ways of passing down the beliefs and values of a culture in the hope that the new generations will treasure them and pass them down further” (1999: 144), and that the storyteller functions “to connect the past with the future, one generation with the other, the land with the people and the people with the story” (144–145).
Recent examples (Cashman 2012; Goodyear-Kaʻōpua et al. 2014) of Native Hawaiian scholarship cite foundational stories of Hawaiian resistance and sovereignty movements such as the actions to stop the US bombing of Kahoʻolawe, the story of the Hōkūleʻa and the revitalisation of the Hawaiian language movement as stories that connect “the people with the story”. Kaai’s story and the stories of men and women like him (see for example Kini Kapahukulaokamāmulu, Jennie Napua Woodd, Betty Makia and other hula performers that author Adria Imada remembers in Aloha America (2012)) are also powerful reminders of Kanaka Maoli agency. This “passing down” provides ‘continuance’ which in the writing of Algonquin author Mallory Whiteduck (2013) is not a ‘temporal continuum’ but a way that includes a “collaboration with the past and present and future” (Howe 2008: 333). Okanagan author and activist Jeanette Armstrong says: “The purpose of my writing has always been to tell a better story than is being told about us. To give that to the people and to the next generations” (Armstrong & Grauer 2001: 106).

1.3. Kiʻi

Figure 1: Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours arriving in Auckland, New Zealand c1926. Left to right rear: Palmer Parker, G. Ferguson, Eddie Kinilan, Sid David, Ernest Kaai, Tuavivi Greig, Thelma Kaai, George Greig, Annie Greig, Jack Philips, Frances Luiz, Frank Luiz. Left-right foreground: Gertrude Byrne, Wehi Greig, Lea Palmer. Children in front left to right: Trudy Kinilan, Lei Greig, Lei Luiz. (Source: Collection of Wehi Greig)
Ki’i – defined as “1.n. Image, statue, picture, photograph, drawing, diagram, illustration, likeness…” (Pukui and Elbert 2003) – is a Hawaiian concept. While it translates as likeness or image, what I also take from it is that it does not suggest an exact copy, and that is important to this mo’olelo because I believe that that reflects my situatedness, that mine is a particular viewpoint. In adding ki’i to this thesis I am using a technique borrowed from Noelani Goodyear-Ka‘ōpua, Ikaika Hussey, and Erin Kahunawaika‘ala Wright’s A Nation Rising (2014), placing ki’i of Kaai and some of the longstanding performers who travelled with him between the chapters of my dissertation. The handful of entertainers I have portrayed are only a fraction of the many people Kaai employed, but this small group spent a considerable amount of time travelling and performing together in unique circumstances as part of A Night in Honolulu.

Narrative theory says that personal stories generate empowerment because they “tell us not only who we are but who we have been and who we can be … narratives create meaning, emotion, memory, and identity” (Rappaport 1995: 796), dovetailing with the values inherent in mo’olelo. Each of these ki’i is part of a mo’olelo that opens up realms of experience that have at best been overlooked and at worst erased in settler-colonial history telling. The stories do not just “clip on” to a corpus of the truth or what is commonly accepted about music, technology, media, global cultural flows, economies, race and identity; they rather change the way those components can be understood. They intervene, and not on the periphery; the movements of these agents around the world and the economies they participated in as travellers and musicians, reveal the lives of individuals who were at the nexus of global changes.

Confirming personal details, including birth and death dates of individuals, was possible through a number of genealogy sources such as that found on ulukau.org and familysearch.org, a service provided by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and ancestry.com, as well as governmental births, deaths and marriages sites accessing databases at the Department of Internal Affairs, New Zealand and various state registries in Australia.

The ki’i begin with Kaai. While the chapters focus on specific times and events and repertory in the touring life of Kaai’s Troubadours, the ki’i focus on the construction of biographical narratives, the family context and cultural setting from which each of the performers emerged. Apart from that of Kaai, the ki’i of each performer is not exhaustive, but in keeping with the notion of biographicity, they are essays in process, and I hope that other researchers or family

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6 http://wehewehe.org/gdl2.85/cgi-bin/hdict?q=11000-00---off-0hdict-00-1-1-1-0-10-0-0---0direct-10-ED-4--------0-11pm-11-haw-Zz-1-Zz-1-home-kii-00-3-1-00-0-4---0-0-11-00-0utfZz-8-00&a=d&d=D7938

7 The authors weave ki’i (p13) of individuals who have contributed to Hawaiian sovereignty movements throughout their book.
members will find the kiʻi useful images toward further research. Ethnomusicologist Helen Rees, in relation to her fieldwork area in the southwestern province of Yunnan in China, mentions that she has “good reason to appreciate the brief biographical information in many local scholarly publications, since it is invariably a useful jumping-off point for interviews and further research” (2009: 7). My hope is that these would provide the same kind of resource for other researchers interested in musicians and musics of Oceania.

With each of the performer’s stories that feature in the kiʻi I have found one or more macro elements that expanded their narratives in unexpected ways. Keoki Greig’s connections to so many parts of Oceania triggered a discussion of transnationalism and Oceanic kinship ties, while Sid David’s experiences of the early New Zealand jazz scene and his connection with composer and musician Walter Smith enabled me to illuminate cosmopolitan networks within the Church of Latter-day Saints communities here and in America. The musician’s multi-form cosmopolitanisms came from a number of sources: family, travel, transnational connections, musical interests, entrepreneurship and their own agency and worldliness. Intrinsic to these performers was also their indigeneity and the extended familial and social ties that flowed from this. Arriving in New Zealand, for example, Kaai and his musicians exclaimed in Hawaiian newspapers about their ability to communicate with the indigenous people of New Zealand in te reo Māori because of the similarity of their languages. These performers were tied into Oceania and its histories in complex ways that enabled a travelling community of musicians.

Kaai’s much more lengthy kiʻi attends to his life prior to 1921, which is when A Night in Honolulu first went on the road, and I will also briefly discuss his life after 1930, which is when the long-serving ensemble associated with the show disbanded.

1.4. Chapter Overview

In Chapter 2 the various approaches to theory and method are mapped out. Disciplinary border-crossing is inevitable in these stories because they move between on the one hand race, indigeneity, identity, gender and settler-colonialism and on the other biography, narrative, photography, performance, history and archives. Music underpins all of the narratives, however, so ethnomusicology, because of its inherent multi-disciplinary structure, albeit with caveats, provides a useful framework through which to organise the interlocking elements.
Following on from the concept of mo’olelo and kiʻi is an exploration of the value of story telling and narrative and the importance of reflexivity and the articulation of situatedness. I was encouraged in this by the writing of Lila Abu-Lughod and her advocacy of finding “ways to write that work against the typifications of communities” (2000: 262). Her emphasis in ethnography is on “individual differences and the contestatory nature of discourses and social life within all communities” (263). This resonated for me because one of the elements I wanted to bring to the narrative of Kaai and his Hawaiian Troubadours was, in a sense, their ordinariness, and that their travels and adventures were not anomalous but were indicative of each individual’s multiple subjectivities. Kaai and the performers of the Hawaiian Troubadours are unfamiliar figures – I know these stories but I have never read about peoples from Oceania who have lived the lives that they have, and I believe that many people of Oceania would conceptualise of themselves in other ways if the particularities of these and many more stories were available and familiar. My own listening to how we are described in New Zealand is as people who are all lumped together as ‘Pacific Islanders’ and whose learning, achievements and health are continually pathologised. We are to be feared and are celebrated only in the narrowest of contexts – all in ways that sometimes circuitously but mostly blatantly connect to our biology. I am resigned to descriptions on the radio, in the newspapers, on television, on academic networking sites and at academic conferences that function on the basis that no ‘Pacific Islander’ is reading, watching or listening to the exchanges about Oceania that are delivered with such certitude. We are a topic for research and analysis and a cause of handwringing.

The narratives of the Troubadours are in tension with these limitations that are characterised by “object-like, coherent, whole and separate” (262) understandings of “alien cultures” that have underpinned ethnography and which still confront Oceanic peoples in the legacy of colonialism. While Abu-Lughod (2002) frames her discussion in relation to ethnographies of “distant communities,” the community I am telling a story about is distant in another way, in that I am writing about the past and the community in this case is my family.

The connections of family to place are also examined as systems of power and structures of inequality are embedded in the locations of these stories, as are political changes whose ramifications were felt profoundly around the world in the first half of the twentieth century. The period 1898–1918 has been described as a “golden age of postcards” (Desmond 1999: 43), when many thousands of images of Oceanic women circulated. Depictions of the peoples of Oceania have been marked by dehistoricising or what Jane Desmond calls “decontemporising
practices” (1999: 44). My intention is to provide historical contexts for the lives of these entertainers that “re-historicises” them, situating them within time to show how they exceeded culturally prescribed norms and eschewed enforced subjectivities (Smith 1993).

While Ernest Kaleihoku Kaai is at the centre of this story, he is not the typical subject of traditional biography in which bourgeois individualism reinforces “dominant ideologies, official histories, and founding mythologies of the subject” (Smith 1993: 393). Generic biography has reproduced Euro-American notions of the self that is determined as white, male, bourgeois, and heterosexual. Just in the telling of the lives of Kaai and the members of his Hawaiian Troubadours, official histories are challenged, and through the ki’i I have sought to gather together as many details as possible of the musicians who travelled with Kaai so that the names of others can be added to the rich history of Hawaiian music and so that these individuals can be celebrated and these details lead to further stories being told.

The local and translocal dimensions of cosmopolitanism are also explored in relation to the life of the company on the road and the circuit as a space linking “particular social groups in dispersed locales” (Turino 2000: 7). The musicians and performers associated with Kaai were for the most part from Hawai’i, but he also over time engaged indigenous entertainers of other Oceanic origins including New Zealand. Unlike Kaai, these individuals are not well known outside of family contexts and leave only the faintest traces archivally. Recuperating their stories in addition to Kaai’s is revealing of the extent of Oceanic peoples’ participation in not only the transmission of Hawaiian music but also popular music and culture in the early twentieth century.

The question of what is Hawaiian music is addressed in Chapter 3. The writings of Dr Amy Ku’uleialoha Stillman and Dr George Kanahele are enlisted to help understand the history and developments of Hawaiian music, and this in turn provides a framework within which to view Kaai’s practice as a musician and entrepreneur. The impact of genre and ideology are also gauged in relation to the popularisation and codification of an Hawaiian imaginary within phenomenon such as the hugely successful stage play The Bird of Paradise, the first ‘ukulele craze and the Tin Pan Alley production of hapa haole songs.

Philip Deloria (2002) says that the “present interrogates the past in a variety of ways” (27) and one of the ways this can be accomplished is through photography. In Chapter 4, “Visualising
Difference”, Wehi Greig’s photograph albums and a smaller collection of Tuavivi Kaai’s photographs and the depiction they present of the Hawaiian Troubadours on tour are discussed in terms of “experientially based history” (hooks, 1989). Integral to this chapter is an examination of the tensions between the on- and off-stage depictions of the performers. The ‘unexpected’ appearances by Kaai and his Troubadours in well-known tourist locations, commemorating their own experiences with the latest camera gear, expresses tensions on many levels and disrupts historiographies that delimit the participation and experiences of indigenous peoples in the early twentieth century. A hidden history is revealed through these private photographs that usurps photography’s in-built biases and further underscores the inequalities and subjugations expressed in archival photographic collections. Disparities are highlighted between Western depictions of native peoples in commoditised texts such as postcards and their actual lived experience. The existence of Wehi and Tuavivi’s photographs is an implicit critique of accepted narratives and shows how effective the discourses of power are at erasing images that resist and perpetuating compliant images. The collection also suggests that there are many more of these photographic ‘texts’ in family archives.

In Chapter 5, “Locating Ernest Kaleihoku Kaai”, I review the literature that is currently available about Kaai and some of the issues that have arisen around past problems with his biography and the ‘silo-ing’ of interest in his work. Kaai has been subject to a diverse assortment of writing approaches – from scholarly research in books and academic papers to fun facts about the ‘ukulele – and although widely acknowledged in the history of Hawaiian music, there are still many gaps and errors that the literature review highlights. Kaai’s own publications and recordings are also brought together for the first time and extensive appendices have developed from the research for this chapter that include a discography and bibliography devoted to Kaai’s music and teaching.

Chapter 6 is framed as a ki‘i and discusses Kaai’s early influences and the development of his musical career in Honolulu, which I propose is a “global city” and one of the “spaces and places that challenge the logic of bounded culture and positively demand attention to multivalent and multi-directional kinds of musical circulation” (Stokes 2007: 4). Kaai’s deep connections within Hawai‘i’s music communities as a musician, teacher, publisher, agent and composer are shown alongside a discussion of Kaai’s agency and sense of subjectivity and what that meant regarding his forays into new economies. Kaai generated a chain migration of Hawaiian and other Pacific musicians, some of who travelled with him for many years while others joined his company en
route. Kaai’s musicians sometimes settled in the countries where the Troubadours performed, for example Alexander J Lazarus and Herbert Pahupu Byrnes, who continued to play music and tour in the Dutch East Indies after first travelling there in 1919 (Kanahele 1979: 167). Queenie and David Kai fled to India and Indonesia with Kaai as well as independently, eventually settling in Manila. From 1930 onwards there were subsequent tours by entertainers such as Tau Moe and his family, who toured India with Madame Riviere’s Royal Samoan Dancers among others and who were well known throughout the Eastern circuits as performers of Hawaiian music (Kanahele 1979).

What audiences heard and saw in Kaai’s revues varied in time and place. Chapter 7 focuses on Kaai’s 1911 first trip to Australia and then New Zealand with his company, The Royal Hawaiian Concert and Musical Organisation. The members of the party were all of Hawaiian descent, and the depiction of the performers through the eyes of reviewers is revealing of the development of islander tropes and cultural attitudes as well as unconscious biases in Australia and New Zealand at the time. Self-fashioning through repertory choices and production design, as well as publicity material, gives insight into the Hawaiian entertainer’s perspectives as well. The intersection of these elements provides a kind of template for the future tours that Kaai would embark on in the late 1910s.

The Hilo Duo was a stage partnership between Wehi and George Greig, and while they toured on their own, they also took part in a number of revues and were key participants in the later years of *A Night in Honolulu*. In Chapter 8 the relationship between the Hilo Duo and the Hawaiian Troubadours is explored, as is the extent to which they embodied transnationalism and cosmopolitanism. Their ki‘i are separate but the commonalities of their abilities as cultural translators are visible from the contexts they each grew up in. Both had extensive family networks in New Zealand and overseas that modelled the kinds of cross-border connections both would draw on in their travels. Chapters 9, 11, 13 and 15 are ki‘i of four of the performers in Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours: Eddie Kinilau, Thelma Kaai, Tuavivi Greig and Sid David. Each of these entertainers was also an adept intercultural traveller and brought unique skills and talents to the Hawaiian Troubadours.

The Hawaiian presence at World’s Fairs, in particular the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle in 1909, is examined in Chapter 10. Events are first contextualised within the overthrow of 1893 and the development of the Hawaiian imaginary, key to which was the persistent myths
of the coup as benign and the Hawaiian people as acquiescent. The erasure of Native Hawaiian art, culture and history and the radical transformation of Hawaiian society after the takeover are discussed in relation to the World’s Fairs and their influence over Americans’ understanding of their dominion over Hawai‘i. Kaai led the musical entertainment for the Hawaiian Pavilion in 1909 and music was integral to the ways in which Hawai‘i was conceptualised.

Kaai toured with his long running show *A Night in Honolulu* for over ten years. In Chapter 12 I will look at the ways that this vehicle for Hawaiian music, dance and jazz was performed on the Eastern circuits. Through diverse colonial contexts Kaai and his entertainers offer a discrepant view of the agency of indigenous actors in the mediation of Hawai‘i. The transgressive qualities of their repertory of contemporary jazz are seen in counterpoint to the Hawaiian content of the show and offer new readings for jazz historiography, which has previously neglected Asia and Oceania. Race and difference in the Dutch colonies is examined, as is cosmopolitanism, which, along with jazz, can be seen to blur not only class boundaries but racial ones as well.

Concentrating on stage and repertory design, Chapter 14 looks at the way the performance of *A Night in Honolulu* was constructed. Beginning with a reference to the cosmogonic genealogies of Hawai‘i, the show was split into two distinct acts, each with clear repertory and contextual realms. Analysis of the repertory and the changes that occurred over time shows how the performance was adapted to different locations. The increasing spectacularisation of the hula is discussed with reference to the particularities of costuming and stage design.
Initially my approach to the study of Hawaiian music in the colonial Asia-Pacific region was within a creative Doctorate of Fine Arts. I held long-term interests in alterity, race, identity and power and I planned to continue with modes of practice I had previously used, which included photography, moving image, installation and drawing. These were a continuation of methods and concerns I had explored through both art making and art teaching. At the outset my raw materials were the images and albums gifted to me, in which most of the musicians and entertainers depicted were connected to me and included my grandmother Tuavivi Greig, who was a dancer in the group along with my grandfather Ernest Kaleihoku Kaai, the musical director.

Music, travel and family were obvious links in the narrative elements, but there were also political, social and cultural dynamics at play within the images and it became increasingly clear to me in my first year that the methods I was working with in my art practice were not what I wanted to use to tell the story of the travelling entertainers. Some biographical information was already available about Kaai but there were errors and gaps within his material that I knew of even at the beginning of my research that I wanted to address. While there are a number of individuals in the troupe who I could visualise as the subject of biographical study, Kaai seemed to be the logical choice because his musical virtuosity, showmanship and entrepreneurship were at the heart of the performance project, and through his story, other narratives emerge that recuperate hidden histories and privilege the subject rather than culture.

2.1. Narrative and Power

[Stories are...] the method colonised people use to assert their own identity and the existence of their own history. The main battle in imperialism is over land, of course; but when it came to who owned the land, who had the right to settle and work on it, who kept it going, who won it back, and who now plans its future – these issues were reflected, contested, and even for a time, decided in narrative. As one critic has suggested, nations themselves are narrations.

Edward Said (Culture and Imperialism, 1993)

In Kaai’s homeland, the US imperialist discourses of encounter ensured that the subjectivities of people within the dominant settler-colonial class were constructed in relation to a culturally
different Other – Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians). Narrative was a crucial weapon in the overthrow of Hawaiian sovereignty, and dominant media of the time told a story of settler-colonial competence and Kanaka Maoli hopelessness. Through his performances and from his earliest stage productions in Hawai‘i Kaai told another story that asserted his identity as a Hawaiian and celebrated Hawaiinanness. That continued on the circuits he and the Troubadours travelled that wound mainly through British and Dutch colonial territories in Australasia, Southeast Asia and India, as well as Japan and parts of China, where Kaai’s Troubadours portrayed ‘real’ Hawaiians on stage. In these locations race was the signifier of power and status. Narratives intersected on these routes where indigenous populations were subject to colonial domination of one form or another and Kaai’s Troubadours had to negotiate those shifting registers with their own narratives.

Decolonisation literature authors such as Mallory Whiteduck ask of indigenous scholars, “Why do we write? Who are we writing for? What does our writing accomplish?” (2013: 75). In writing the story of her Algonquin grandfather, Whiteduck says she is “responsible to three ‘readers’: my family, my community, and the larger community of Native writers, thinkers, and activists” (74). Like Whiteduck, I intend for my writing to contribute to emerging (in the sense that it is a process) Hawaiian and South Pacific-authored narratives that seek to recuperate stories and disclose hidden histories. I find inspiration and parallels with Hawaiian academic Noenoe K Silva in her chronicle of Hawaiian resistance Aloha Betrayed (2004), in which she intends to “add the po‘e aloha ‘aina and their stories to the national narrative – in order to create national heroes from men and women formerly unknown” (9). While Kaai is not exactly unknown (see Chapter 5, “Locating Ernest Kaleihoku Kaai”), the story of his travels and the stories of those that travelled with him are vague and subject to colonial historiography which, as Lawrence Levine observed, is “narrative storytelling about those whose power, position and influence are palpable” (1993: 12) – and continues to influence power relations in Hawai‘i today. Colonial historiography, according to Silva:

does not simply rationalize the past and suppress the knowledge of the oppressed. Hawai‘i is not a postcolonial but a (neo?) colonial state, and historiography is one of the most powerful discourses that justifies the continued occupation of Hawai‘i by the United States today. (2004: 9)

While Whiteduck is able to relate the stories/history/theory as told to her by her grandfather, I have relied primarily on institutional sources, so there is some tension in my interpretation of materials that I have discovered through, for example, annexationist-owned newspapers or

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1 Po‘e aloha ‘aina refers to people who love the land.
census documents and draft cards, which can also tell a story beyond just the imperialist collection of data.

2.2. Every View is a View from Somewhere

In 2011 I shifted my research from the Elam School of Fine Arts to ethnomusicology in the Anthropology Department at the University of Auckland. I chose ethnomusicology as a framework because the people I was portraying were musicians and their travels were organised around a musical odyssey that was not well documented or interpreted within a musical and cultural studies framework. As well, as Gregory Barz and Timothy J. Cooley (2008) say:

> Ethnomusicology enjoys the advantages of being an inherently interdisciplinary discipline, seemingly in a perpetual state of experimentation that gains strength from a diversity and plurality of approaches … In this sense, ethnomusicologists are in a unique position to question established methods and goals of the social sciences, and to explore new perspectives. These new perspectives are not just for ethnomusicologists but also for all ethnographic disciplines. (2008: 3)

In this respect my work as an artist has proved useful because there are parallels with how I see an interdisciplinary fine arts practice: it incorporates multiple modes of practice and is research-based, process-oriented and critically self-reflexive. But while the adequacies and legitimacies of ethnomusicology have been thrashed out elsewhere (Stobart 2008; Solomon 2012; Bigenho 2008), it has not been without complications, and I have evaluated structural difficulties I have encountered within ethnomusicology particularly. These can be divided into two areas of concern, which will be examined in order:

i. The lack of analyses by indigenous scholars in the ethnomusicological canon and associated curricula. The Euro-American bias has been critiqued (for example Agawu 1992; Euba 2003; Loza 2006; Solomon 2012) but the inequality continues.

ii. The place of the individual biography, and more specifically historical biographies. Others have addressed issues surrounding the lack of attention to this area (Nettl 1983; Stock 2001, 2010; Cohen 2002; Rees 2009; Ruskin & Rice 2012), and Timothy Rice is notable for his encouragement of subject-centred ethnographies (2003: 152). There are still, however, very few examples (Nettl 1968; Frisbie & McAllester 1978; Stock 1996; Danielson 1998; Loza 1999; Harnish 2001; Rees 2001; Lam 2001; Garcia 2006; Davis 2015). Even in Rice’s recent Ethnomusicology: A Very Short Introduction (2013) there are over a hundred recommended titles for further reading, of which only four reference an individual musician.
2.3. Indigenous Analyses and Ethnomusicology

Travis Jackson has articulated difficulties with the lack of diversity in ethnomusicology in another way:

I wondered whether I wanted to ally with a field focused primarily on musics that were decidedly other, that is those produced primarily by people in small-scale societies outside the United States and Western Europe. It was difficult in fact for me to think of the field and its journal as anything other than musical analogues to *National Geographic* magazine: all were steeped in discursive practices fixed on “the other.” Indeed as a member of a group that had too often been subjected to exoticising scrutiny, I was reluctant to step outside, as it were, and turn a similar gaze on African-Americans or on any other group. (2006: 281)

His encouragement of acknowledging the inequities of the past and of working to eliminate them through restructuring and accepting the political nature of the research in order to attract underrepresented groups still resonates as something that needs attention ten years later in 2016.

In his critique of the “Euroamericentric ethnomusicological canon” Steven Loza (2006) asks “Where are ‘we’ in the history of ethnomusicology?” (363) and laments the lack of indigenous authors in ethnomusicological texts and questions what the impact of this intellectual chauvinism is on “the underrepresented [treated as] reading lists devoid of representatives of their own cultures” (361). Loza highlights an anthropological text in which the author says:

I have limited myself to anthropologists from the United States, Great Britain, and France and emphasise Anglo-American anthropology, which I assume is of most interest to my audience. (2004: xiv) [the excerpt is from *Visions of Culture*, Jerry D Moore]

Following the quote from Moore, Loza goes on to say:

At least half of the graduate students in the seminar that I taught were students whose backgrounds were neither Anglo-American, Euroamerican, nor European. The author’s point was not well taken, and I will not use the book again. (2006: 361)

Similarly Jonathan Stock’s statement that “local readers are rarely the primary audience of these books” (2001: 11) raises the issue of who the research is for or of benefit to. While Stock also states that “[m]any ethnomusicologists, possibly the majority worldwide, carry out fieldwork in their home societies” (2008: 108), the ethnomusicological canon is still dominated by researchers working in external situations. Following the example given by Loza, if non-Anglo authors are rarely included in course materials, non-Anglo students are not the intended audience and non-Anglo subjects are not expected to read the texts, then ethnomusicology is taking its time responding to the “Rushdie effect” (Abu-Lughod 1991: 389). Perhaps it is as Kofi Agawu has argued:
Notions of otherness and difference serve as the observer’s mirror, enabling the subject to see him or herself more clearly. In the war of pronouns [us/them], however, both sides are not comparably armed ... it seems important to at least acknowledge the self-serving nature of difference – the fact that, at the end of the day, the glance of the ethnomusicological enterprise is on itself – rather than to pretend to be engaged in a dialogue with the Other. (1992: 261)

It is not only in course materials that authors such as Loza, Agawu and Euba see exclusivity. They each describe submitting texts to ethnomusicology publications and, in the case of Agawu, either being assessed as not being African enough or subject to “absurd evaluations” (Euba 2008: 155–156), while Loza states: “I can testify from personal experience... that it can be very difficult for us to get our work published in Ethnomusicology, when that work does not correspond to hegemonic ways of knowing” (2006: 362). As recently as 2008 Akin Euba wrote:

To speak for the Other, when the Other has a voice, or to represent the Other in any form, when the Other is fully capable of representing itself, is to mute the Other’s voice, and perhaps even worse. This is not to say that scholars with a genuine (rather than merely paternalistic) interest cannot engage with cultures other than their own, but what I find reprehensible is the policy of representing exclusively the Other rather than oneself. To put it bluntly, scholars should represent themselves and leave the Others capable of doing so to represent themselves. Moreover, scholars should cultivate the humility of listening to what Others have to say about themselves, and not merely at the level of informant. I agree with Agawu’s suggestion that we “eschew the ‘soft’ strategies of dialogism and the solicitation of insider viewpoints and work toward the direct empowerment of postcolonial African subjects so that they can eventually represent themselves.” Agawu further develops this idea by advocating the disappearance of ethnomusicologists and the installation of local scholars in their place. (2008: 158–159)

Deborah Wong’s historicising of the “culture wars” (2006: 259) in ethnomusicology and the profound impact the Birmingham School and others (she cites, for example, Grossberg and Bhabha) had on humanities and the social sciences in the 1990s but which, Wong states, came late to music studies, presents a picture of her academic and personal encounters with gender, race, difference and identity within the discipline of ethnomusicology. Cultural theory and its inroads into ethnomusicology, which she sees as “ideologically threatening to most music departments” (275), are briefly documented with particular reference to Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology (Barz & Cooley 2008) and the relevance of reflexivity and “located position” (265) to ethnographic fieldwork. However, through an informal survey of a small catchment of eminent female ethnomusicologists, Wong examines the gendered and racialised negotiations of ethnomusicology departments that women scholars in “doubled or tripled minoritarian position[s]” (265) are forced to make. The “terms of authority” that impact these women scholars are a metonym for larger forces at work within institutions, but she believes “productive changes” are occurring, and “thinking about ethnomusicology as a
politicised project is the most important change I have seen since I joined SEM in 1985” (275).

Wong says that the valorisation of situated knowledges and subjectivity that began in the 1990s is key to the relevance of ethnomusicology and to the progressiveness and proactivity of the discipline in the future.

2.4. The Individual and Ethnomusicology

"The doer of all that doing: agent, actor, person, self, individual, subject"

Sherry Ortner (Theory in Anthropology Since the Sixties, 1984)

“[We are all] individual music cultures”, says Mark Slobin (2000: xiii), but as an individual Ernest Kaleihoku Kaai is in a contradictory position in ethnomusicology (Ruskin & Rice 2012; Stock 2001; Nettl 1983). The name of the discipline implies (problematically) ethnicity – ethnos, as well as the study of groups of people. These groups or communities:

- are assumed to share social behaviours and cultural concepts with respect to music, and the object is to understand how musical performance, composition, creativity, and musical works themselves are expressions of and contribute to these shared behaviours and concepts; music, in other words, is viewed as part of a social and cultural system. (Ruskin & Rice 2012: 299)

In parallel with social anthropology, it was much easier in the past “to deal with structures, with institutions, and to make inferences from them to people than to proceed in the reverse order” (Cohen 2002: 68, emphases in original). Within ethnomusicology there was also, partly, a reaction to the “great man” profiles of historical musicology and concurrently an effort to explain “social action as the result not of individual decisions made in historical situations, but of factors such as social and economic forces and cultural imperatives” (Blacking 1980: 64).

Interpreted as an effort to represent “the norm”, the “typical” and the “authentic”, such methods have been critiqued as creating, at their worst, “cultural-average accounts” (Stock 2001: 8). In spite of the fact that ethnomusicologists have engaged closely with individuals from the earliest days of the discipline they have only rarely featured as the main focus of study themselves (Stock 2001). With a few exceptions (Nettl 1968; Frisbie & McAllester 1978) a generalising tendency dominated ethnomusicology until the mid 1970s (Stock 2001; Rees 2009; Ruskin & Rice 2012) that has been attributed to “ethnomusicology’s heritage as a discipline that engages in cross-cultural comparison (and also… national folklore movements in which … representatives of “the people” were sought out for study)” (Stock 2001: 8).
From the 1980s on, however, more and more individually conscious writings emerged (Porter 1995; Stock 1996; Danielson 1998; Loza 1999; Lam 2001; Rees (Ed) 2009; Moisala 2009). Before outlining the factors contributing to this emergence it is worth noting Jonathan Stock’s point that while the notion of the individual is largely a Euro-American construct and a product of modernity, it still has relevance for individuals within societies where collectivity is a significant factor in determining the social order because “there is no reason why a strong sense of collective identity or responsibility should necessarily obviate a sense of self” (Stock 2001: 8). In addition, “Societies do not determine the selves of their members. They may construct models of personhood; they may… attempt to reconcile selfhood to personhood. But they have no absolute powers in this regard” (Cohen 2002: 71, emphases in original).

Writing in 1983 Bruno Nettl noted an inconsistency within ethnomusicology: “While ethnomusicologists experience a great deal of face-to-face contact with individual informants and teachers in the field… the literature… provides surprisingly little information about the individual in music” (278). He also noted the absence of what he refers to elsewhere as “the personal, the idiosynkratic… the exceptional” (Nettl 1983: 9). Tim Rice’s influential model for enquiry, which asks, “How do people historically construct, socially maintain and individually create and experience music?” (Rice 1987: 473), emphasises the trend toward more individually conscious analyses addressing the discrepancy Nettl identifies in ethnomusicology. A combination of factors have been identified as contributing to the increase:

1. Firstly (and most importantly) is a reappraisal of representational stances in ethnoographic writing.
2. Recognition of the reliance of ethnomusicologists on individuals who are often exceptional musicians within a musical community. (Rice & Ruskin 2012)
3. Shifts in the understanding of “culture” as a web of individual actions and interactions has led to a desire to highlight individual cultural agency.
4. Increases in self-reflexiveness on the part of ethnomusicologists have also led to greater awareness of agency and difference. (Barz & Cooley 2008, Rice and Ruskin 2012)
5. The impact of globalising and deterritorialising forces (Appadurai 1990) and their influence on individual musicians fashioning new identities and social formations.

The reappraisal of representational stances is highly significant not only because it took place across the social sciences in what was identified as a “crisis of representation” (Marcus & Fisher 1986: 70) but also because the reappraisal was part of an often-overlooked dialectic that Third World liberationist discourse was vital to. Post-colonial analysis is generally understood as
developing in the wake of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978), and while the theoretical debt to French post-structuralism is widely recognised and ethnomusicologists have acknowledged the changes and influences wrought by these developments, the dialectic at the heart of those changes and the impact of what for example Salman Rushdie identified in his essay “The Empire Writes Back with a Vengeance,” (*The Times* [London], 3rd July 1982: 8) are largely absent from analyses dominated by Euro-American voices.

2.5. Biography, History and Ethnomusicology

*History is the subjective understanding of the past from the perspective of the present. Events do not simply happen; they are interpreted and created.*

Anthony Seeger (*When Music Makes History*, 1993)

Reconstructing the biography of an historical individual without ethnographic techniques such as interviews or participant observation has some inherent difficulties. My research materials are drawn from personal recollections, memorabilia, annotated photograph albums, newspapers, playbills, programmes, song recordings and other ephemera. Assembling these fragments creates a gestalt in which the parts are collected and seen together but may be arranged into other forms by other researchers at other points in time. Constructing a narrative of the life of Ernest Kaai – and collaterally, the lives of others who travelled with him – to depict “the way it really was” is only ever going to be approximate, and while I connect the materials in ways that have not been done before, it is still a reconstruction from my particular point of view, with all of the partiality and subjectivity that that implies.

Historical context plays an important part in the structuring of my research materials because I see the participants in rapidly changing political, social and cultural environments. Colonialism, rising independence movements, cultural erasure, travel and diaspora are some elements of the fabric of experience in which these performers are implicated. Ethnomusicologists have made use of historical frameworks (Tatar 1982; Stillman 1998; Desmond 1999; Carr 2006) and historical biographies are increasing. Helen Rees describes her *Lives in Chinese Music* (2009) as riding a wave in which “the general trend in ethnomusicological scholarship [is] toward consideration of individual creation and interpretation of musical experience” (9). In *Worlds of Music* (1992), Mark Slobin and Jeff Titon advise undergrads that “asking what the life of a musician is like in different societies, and answering in life histories and autobiographies, is essential if we are to know music as a human activity, not just a sequence of organised sound” (xxiii).
Hawaiian music has long been the subject of research (for example Roberts 1926; Hausman 1968; Tatar 1981, 1982; Kaeppler 1972, 2010; Buck 1984; Lewis 1984, 1985, 1996; Stillman: 1987, 1993, 1998, 1999, 2005 see also Stoneburner (1986); Donaghy 2011; Clark 2012; Imada 2013; Carr 2006, 2014). Within the music frame there are anthologies of short biographies (Todaro 1974; Kanahele 1979) and instrument-centred works that include brief biographies (Hood 1983; Ruymara 1996; King 2010; King & Tranquada 2003; Tranquada & King 2012; Troutman 2013, 2016; and others, covered in Chapter 5). A few dedicated biographies of Hawaiian musicians exist and include an oral history interview with Benjamin Kapena Kalama 1986; Houston & Kamae 2004 (of Eddie Kamae); Carroll 2006 (of Israel Kamakawiwoʻole ), but individual Hawaiian musicians have rarely been the subjects of monographs, and extended historical biographies of Hawaiian musicians are also rare (but include Noble2 1948 (of Johnny Noble, not long after he had died in 1944); Bandy 1990 (of Henry Berger and the Royal Hawaiian Band). This dissertation addresses this gap in the literature of Hawaiian music and adds to a growing body of historical biographies of Hawaiian figures in general.

In *Theory and Method in Historical Ethnomusicology* (eds. McCollum & Hebert 2014) Keith Howard’s foreword opens with comments advocating the value of historical research in ethnomusicology. While he acknowledges that across disciplines, including ethnomusicology, history is a contested site, he advocates the shift indicated by Rice (1987, 2003) and others in ethnomusicology and anthropology (including Geertz 1973; Waterman 1993; Seeger 1993) “from attempts to objectify history to social histories in which musicians and the musics are contextualised” (2014: x).

Within the volume contributors illuminate the ways in which contemporary ethnomusicologists grapple with history in their research. Most relevant to my own research is Howard’s chapter (Chapter 10), which in part historicises the forces at work for ethnomusicology in the ‘historic turn’ but also examines the emergence of issues of equity and equality within ethnomusicology. Howard also advocates the particular over the comparative and the valuing of local scholarship and expertise from “within the cultural group” (350). The book is, however, dominated by Euro-American perspectives, and while I had expected to find more of relevance in Diana Thram’s chapter on “The Legacy of Music Archives in Historical Ethnomusicology” (Chapter 9), I was puzzled by the ‘non-discussion’ of archives and power, although she does address repatriation of some field recordings to archives in their countries of origin.

James Revell Carr’s (2006) thesis “In the Wake of John Kanaka”, and the follow-up publication *Hawaiian Music in Motion: Mariners, Missionaries and Minstrels* (2014), explore the musical

2 By Gurre Ploner Noble, no relation to Johnny Noble
interactions of Euro-American sailors and Pacific Islanders between 1600 and 1900. He acknowledges the difficulty of historical reconstruction and that “[e]thnomusicologists have been wary of using historical materials as the basis of research, preferring synchronic methods and approaches” (9). Like Carr, ethnographic techniques such as interviews and participant observation are not available to me, but we have historical materials in common: “quotes, songs, playbills, newspaper clippings, photographs and other ephemera” (12). Following Walter Benjamin’s notion of “historical materialism”, Carr emphasises the power of the anecdote, or what Benjamin termed the ‘kernel’ or ‘monad’, over narrative as a solution to the “interpretive dilemmas of historicism” (12), a method that sees history not as a process but as a “vast field of detritus” where “monads rise to the surface, but never for the purpose of establishing causal connections” (13). Carr states that ethnomusicologists have made uneven use of historical materials and neglected primary sources but that these materials have the power to disrupt “the historiographical status quo in the ethnomusicology of the Pacific” (13), a belief that we share.

2.6. Colonialism and Ethnomusicology

Colonialism is defined as the “direct political domination of one nation over another area, thus enabling the colonial power to control any and all aspects of the internal and external life of the colony” (Altbach 2001: 452). Historically, the phenomenon of colonialism is a “range of material practices and effects, such as transportation, slavery, displacement, emigration, and racial and cultural discrimination” (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2001: 7). According to Stephen Slemon colonialism is also not a fixed and undifferentiated entity. Slemon’s analysis of historical specificity asks, “Does discursive colonialism always look[s] structurally the same, or do the specifics of its textual or semiotic or representational manoeuvres shift registers at different historical times and in different kinds of colonial encounters?” (2001: 48), while Nicholas Thomas refers to the “dispersed and conflicted character” of colonialism that is expressed in diverse local practices (1994: 3).

Ethnomusicology’s “crisis of representation” (Stock 2001; Barz & Cooley 2008; Rees 2009; Mackinlay 2012), as it did in relation to other social disciplines, magnified the link between ethnomusicology and colonialism:

Conscious attempts by some ethnomusicologists to distinguish themselves from present and past colonial administrators, missionaries, tourists, and other ethnographers only serve to highlight our connection, for better or worse, with this legacy (Barz & Cooley 2008: 5).
Thomas Solomon (2012) argues that ethnomusicology is “built on colonial infrastructures” (216) and proposes methodologies for research that may shape a postcolonial ethnomusicology, key to which is revealing the impacts of colonialism on music, and cites one aspect, “the colonisation of the senses” (221n5), using the example of equal tempered scales and major/minor dualities to describe the dominance that Euro-American music has exercised in the prescription of music in colonial contexts, and through this the production of “colonial and colonised subjectivities through musical means” (221).

Solomon (2012) proposes recoveries of alternative histories and discusses, within the context of decolonising ethnomusicology, the emergence of “scholars from the south” and their “ethnomusicological interventions” (237), equating these with the literary notion of the ‘empire writes back.’ However his critique of authors such as Agawu, Said, Bhabha and Spivak and their use of formalist analyses and ‘high theory’ as ironic does not extend to the dual irony of continued Euro-American research of “pre-textual, embodied experience,” perpetuating Hall’s “definitional and theoretical paradigms” in so-called postcolonial contexts.

Solomon’s reliance on the postcolonial is highly problematic because, as Patrick Wolfe observes, “[t]he term ‘postcolonial’ does not have a good name among Indigenous scholars. The problem lies of course in the ‘post’” (2011: 272). Decolonisation scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith describes the difficulty inherent in research:

[I]t is surely difficult to discuss research methodology and indigenous peoples together, in the same breath, without having an analysis of imperialism, without understanding the complex ways in which the pursuit of knowledge is deeply embedded in the multiple layers of imperial and colonial practices. (1999: 2)

Indigenous analyses provide avenues for the continuing decolonisation of disciplines such as ethnomusicology from a space of resistance in order to, to paraphrase Smith, retrench, remake and retrieve “our stories local and global” (1999: 4).

2.7. Settler-Colonialism and Hawai‘i

Settler-colonialism and colonialism are inescapably intertwined (Veracini 2011, 2013; Wolfe 1999, 2006), but as Veracini categorically states, “colonialism is not settler colonialism” (2011: 1). For the purposes of this thesis I use both terms on the understanding that settler-colonialism is premised on the “elimination of native societies” (Wolfe 1999: 2) and is idiosyncratic in that it “[has] not manifested evenly across time and space” (Wolfe 2006: 387). Another important
differentiation is resilience: there is no neo- or post-settler-colonialism because, as Patrick Wolfe says, “settler colonisers come to stay: invasion is a structure not an event” (388). The motivation is primarily access to territory and all the indigenous population have to do to get in the way of settler-colonisation is “stay at home” (Rose 1991: 46).

Based on these interpretations Hawai‘i is a settler-colonial society and is still subject to American territorial expansionism. The longevity of the settler-colonial project can be seen in the endurance of many of the historical disputes over sovereignty and land. Continued contestation over blood quantum legislation and the current conflict over Na‘i Aupuni (see: Trask, Ho‘ohuli, & Kinilau-Cano 2015) are demonstrations of the ways in which American territorialism continues to manifest. Diaspora has been a response to settler-colonialism since its earliest realisation. As Hawaiian scholar John P. Rosa says in his mapping of the outmigration of Native Hawaiians from 1806 onwards, “It is important to see how migration into and out of Hawai‘i had definite political repercussions in Hawai‘i: it affected who was to keep sovereignty, who was to rule, and who was to be ruled” (2005: 232). The displacement of the indigenous population is inherent to settler-colonialism: “appropriation of land, the shortage of jobs, and the increasing presence of outsiders - a ‘traditional’ standpoint suddenly changes. ‘Tradition’ dialectically shifts as ‘home’ becomes the centre of modern business development and foreign control” (Halualani 2002: 212). From interviews with elderly Hawaiian residents in America³, Halualani (2002) describes Hawai‘i of the 1920s as “marked by significant changes: the eradication of spoken Hawaiian in communities, the loss of traditional all-Hawaiian communities… and increasing militarisation” (212). The breakdown of the ‘ohana system also impacted on an individual’s connection to the ‘āina. Jonathan Osorio (2006) also lists “the military occupation, the American school system, and the brutal evictions of our people from the public lands” (21) as contributing to a sense of alienation, provoking the search for opportunities elsewhere. Musicians were also subject to these “significant changes” and sought opportunities in the expanding economies for Hawaiian music outside of Hawai‘i.

This thesis is founded on the understanding that “[m]odern Hawai‘i, like its colonial parent the United States, is a settler society” (Trask 1993: 31) and that settler colonialism is defined as the displacement of indigenous peoples through the expropriation of land and institutions by foreign settlers. As Patrick Wolfe says, “Settler colonialism destroys to replace” (2006: 388).

³ I include migratory traffic to the American continent because “internal migration” masks immigration.
2.8. We Are Our Discourses

The emergence of the individual as the focus for research and the theoretical developments in interpretive biography across the social sciences (Denzin 1989; Smith & Watson 1992, 1998; Smith 1993, 1995) accompanied heightened concerns with the “politics of ethnographic representation” (Rees 2009: 2) and critiques of “the orientalist politics of representing other people in over-essentialising ways” (Stock 2001: 12). The postcolonial drive for narratives ‘from below’ – stories of the historyless (Thompson 1966; Bhattacharya 1983) by the historyless – steps over the largely unidirectional gaze of ethnomusicological writing, highlighting the absence of indigenous analyses. The persistence of an “us/them” dichotomy emphasises the difficulties of representation and also underscores the need for indigenous voices. As Kofi Agawu says, “[w]e are our discourses” (1992: 266).

2.9. Biography and Bricolage

Biographical narratives are penetrated by multiple discourses and these discourses are revealed and exceeded by biographical narratives. Contemporary conceptions of biography assert that biographical narratives are engaged in processes of “emergent construction,” an understanding that biography “is an act of ceaseless renewal: the story is never ‘told’ finally, exhaustively, completely” (Elbaz 1988 13). The story of a life is collaged from many sources and ‘truths’, but taken together, the fragments remain intrinsically unstable because meanings change as new pieces and patterns are found (Denzin 1989: 20). Within this methodology the biographer is likened to an “interpretive bricoleur … [who] pieces together a set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation”, and the resulting bricolage “changes and takes new forms as the bricoleur adds different tools, methods and techniques of representation and interpretation to the puzzle” (Denzin & Lincoln 2008: 5). Such an approach recognises the subject’s situation in multiple discourses of identity that “coalesce, disperse, reform and transform one another contextually” (Smith 1993: 395).

‘Biographicity’ is defined as the capacity to “redesign again and again, from scratch, the contours of our life within the specific contexts in which we (have to) spend it, and… we experience these contexts as shapeable and designable” (Alheit 2009: 125). Clearly Kaai’s biography is constructed and interpreted through a present-day perspective with an ability to network elements that would never have been conceived of as being able to be combined in the period to which the research refers. Understanding that a life narrative is never complete and that interpretations are
contingent is central to the biographical process. As Norman Denzin observes: “The intent of the biographical project is to uncover the social, economic, cultural, structural, and historical forces that shape, distort and otherwise alter problematic lived experiences” (2013: 58). In biographical terms, the existing material on Kaai can be seen as a scaffold that allows for reinterpretation and additional construction. The unique materials that have been made available to me as one of Kaai’s grandchildren add a significant dimension to existing material and to understanding the types of forces Bertaux refers to not only in relation to Kaai but also to the artists who travelled with him.

A biographical methodology assumes that I as the author will write myself into the life of my subject (Denzin 1989: 26). Being a granddaughter, albeit one that never met Kaai, has given me access to family records, collected items, photographs and oral histories. It also identifies me as an actor not only in a rhizomatic sense of moving between and connecting nodes of information but also in the sense that I have personal experiences and memories shaped by my kinship with Kaai and other members of the Hawaiian Troubadours. My relationships with interview subjects are also informed by a shared connection with Kaai, and how I contextualise and arrange the known and lesser known materials of his life has ramifications for his wider family, including his surviving daughter. Family members care deeply about how he is represented, in part because the effects of his behaviours towards his wives, children and grandchildren are still being felt today. I am speaking from subjectivities that inform and at times dictate the ‘biographicity’ I bring to the material, and reflexivity is key to negotiating a way through the demands of the narrative. My relatedness and the interconnectedness of the biographical materials add an embedded dimension to the notion of bricolage mentioned above. As with the combination of interpretive practices brought to bear on the subject of Kaai, I see the emic and etic positions of my situatedness – without privileging one or the other – as enabling a discursive analysis and synthesis that is distinct but contingent.

2.10. Subject-Centred Ethnography

Tim Rice’s proposal for “subject-centred musical ethnography” (2003: 152) extends the biographical process in terms of the way music shapes and informs understandings of Kaai and his company. Rice acknowledges that the subject’s experiences are “shaped by regional, areal, colonial and global economics, politics, social relations, and images” (160) and advocates for the subject, rather than culture, as the locus of musical practice, and for research that goes in two directions at once:
First, toward more atomized studies of individuals and small groups of individuals linked for perhaps just a moment in time and place by shared beliefs, social status, behaviours, tastes, and experiences of the world... and second, toward understanding these individual beliefs and actions as taking place within “a modern world system” of some sort, a system that at the least challenges and in some cases seems nearly to obliterate, cultures and societies as “traditionally understood.” (152)

Rice argues for differentiated subjectivities within cultures and against ethnographies that construct idealised, shared cultures, which has particular resonance for Kaai and his Hawaiian Troubadours: “[W]hile aspects of musical experience may be shared by a sociocultural or ethnic group, important differences will be observed that can be understood through a fine-grained analysis of the shifting temporal, social and cultural bases of that experience” (153). A musical ethnography of Kaai and his performers cannot be restricted to one shared culture or even one genre; rather, they were a small group linked by music, family and connections with Oceania, committed to performances founded on notions of Hawaianness. Amy Ku’uleialoha Stillman asserts that “Hawaiian music has enjoyed a longstanding presence in American popular consciousness” (2005: 74) – yet it is a presence that has extended into other popular musics as well, including those of Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Indonesia. The transmission of Hawaiian music to these locations by artists like Kaai underscores Rice’s “modern world system”, and the routes along which Kaai and his performers travelled materialise that system.

The atomised studies in this thesis show how each musician, not only Kaai, breaks down notions of Oceanic peoples as “traditionally understood”; their journeys were unexpected and their stories reveal and critique stereotypes. These musicians were participants in an increasingly globalised economic system, and the theatrical goods they traded in were localised in regions where their impact has never been properly gauged or described because it was not imagined. Their subjectivities multiply against a backdrop of colonialism and “deterritorialisation” (Appadurai 1996).

2.11. Vaudeville Circuits & the Hawaiian Diaspora

Some of the musical acts that left Hawai’i did so to escape the narrow range of work options open to indigenous Hawaiians in the plantation and growing service economies. John Troutman’s (2013, 2016) tracing of the history and influence of the kīkā kila or Hawaiian steel guitar traces the first generation of steel guitarists to leave the islands and includes David Kaili, a close associate of Kaai’s. Troutman describes these musicians as embarking on:

a series of extraordinary journeys throughout the world. Some musicians were from once elite families whose status was called into question after the overthrow; some left the islands in protest of the provisional government; some were maka’āinana who sought
better economic opportunity than what the islands afforded them; and some, perhaps most, sought adventure. (2013: 32)

Adria Imada (2012) contends: “the fin de siècle expositions were arguably the beginning of a Hawaiian cultural diaspora [where] performers launched entertainment careers and a host of cultural productions far and wide after the Omaha and Buffalo fairs” (150). Hawaiian musicians performed on the Keith-Albee and Orpheum vaudeville circuits outside of the fair structure; deals with larger agencies in America were brokered by agents such as Kaai in Honolulu who negotiated on behalf of ensembles like The Hawaiian Quinter⁴, who based themselves in San Francisco between 1899 and 1902.

Once in America, however, Hawaiian acts have been described as being in “constant negotiation with American impresarios, booking agents and recording studio executives – situations in which power was seldom theirs” (Garrett 2008: 170). Contemporaries of Kaai’s who chose to travel to America and work on the entertainment circuits there included Kaai’s close friend and collaborator Ray Kinney (b. Hilo 1900 – d. Honolulu 1972). Kinney had a four-year engagement at the Hawaiian Room in the Hotel Lexington in New York from 1938 and achieved numerous successes on Broadway (in Hellzapoppin 1938-1941) and elsewhere. However, Kinney also experienced American racism and segregation firsthand when he and his family members were mistaken for African Americans in a tour of the Jim Crow South. Adria Imada describes how Hawaiian entertainers faced “embodied realities as racial subordinates” (2012: 195) but asserted their Hawaiianess nonetheless because their racial ambiguity was susceptible to negative reactions from whites on a number of fronts. Members of Kinney’s troupe employed strategies such as always wearing flowers in their hair or painting the Hawaiian coat of arms on their touring car as ways of declaring their Hawaiian identity (196).

Kaai, however, strategically shifted registers by touring British and Dutch East Indies territories as well as working in Japan and Shanghai, where the nature of the business, social and performative encounters were dramatically altered. At the invitation of J C Williamson Ltd, Kaai’s decision to travel to New Zealand and Australia in 1911 with his troupe The Royal Hawaiians was a deviation from the American entertainment industry and the burgeoning Hawaiian presence on the vaudeville circuit. It was also a departure from a rapidly changing Honolulu, although Kaai continued to base himself in Hawai‘i until the mid-1920s as well as

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⁴ William Ellis, July Paka (Parker), William Kai, Thomas Hennessey and Thomas Kiliwa
generating work on American circuits until the focus of his entrepreneurship shifted to the South Pacific and Asia.

2.12. Cosmopolitanism and Race

The differential racial regimes of each of the locations Kaai and his ensemble visited accommodated the tour party in different ways. The situationally specific experiences of Kaai and his troupe in settler-colonial Australia were vastly different to their experiences of colonial India. Even within the same territory the shift of registers for a group of travellers like Kaai and his company, who were all of mixed Pacific heritage, would be a daily if not more frequent occurrence. Their alterity was recognisable, not only in their racial signification but also their metropolitan modernity. They were cultural actors who “negotiated with colonisation through their own ‘travelling cultures’ and consumer practices” (Imada 2012: 19), wearing the latest fashions, visiting tourist destinations and taking part in the social life of the towns and cities they toured to. They were agents in the economies they visited.

In her work on the migration of black American jazz musicians to Europe in the inter-war period, Rachel Gillett makes a distinction between the “practice” and “politics” of cosmopolitanism where a cosmopolitan in “practice” is described as a “member of a diasporic network that both reflects a local identity and yet connects many locales” (Gillett 2010: 478; Bhabha 2000; Breckenridge 2002). Gillett aims to circumvent the “politics” of cosmopolitanism which she describes as “triumphalist notions of cosmo-political existence” that posit each and every human as the bearer of universal rights (2010: 472). She states:

(Black) entertainers performed in large world cities and formed a loosely entwined diaspora. They definitely “practised” cosmopolitanism through travel and through socialising with a diverse range of fellow entertainers in a variety of locales. Whether they became “cosmopolitan” in that they felt like members of a wider world community that transcended class and race and linked men and women of various races into a common humanity is less certain. (473)

A comparison with African American jazz musicians and entertainers in Europe is useful in part because there are some parallels with the enforced subjectivities experienced by musicians leaving Hawai‘i. The period of 1917–1929 in which the “number of African American jazz musicians living in various European cities boomed” (474) overlaps Kaai’s Troubadours’ most active period in the Asia Pacific region. As well as the access to independent travel and mobility, Gillett cites “the search for a better life, for greater opportunities to work, support families and to enjoy a modicum of personal freedom” (474) as well as negotiating good contracts and
enjoying the freedom from American prohibition laws – laws that were also in effect in Hawai’i.
While I will draw on Gillett’s definition of the practice of cosmopolitanism because of what it shares with Bhabha’s (2000) and Appiah’s (1993) connections to place, I believe her separation and framing of the “politics” of cosmopolitanism is problematic and prefer to reflect on the relational and hybrid practices of Clifford’s discrepant (1998) and Hall’s cultural cosmopolitanism (2002).

2.13. Superculture

Mark Slobin (2000) discusses the complex and contradictory nature of hegemony and the difficulties that are raised when it is applied to an element of culture such as music. He identifies the strength of hegemony as an analytical tool in its core claim that power is distributed unequally in societies and that power distributions are continuously produced and challenged by everyone in intentional and intuitive ways (Slobin 2000: 28). Slobin posits the term superculture as a deliberately ambiguous term that takes into account the unwieldy, complex and contradictory nature of hegemony whilst enabling its application to a particular form of expression such as music. Slobin uses the metaphor of an umbrella as an overarching structure that can:

be present anywhere in the system – ideology or practice, concept or performance. The usual, the accepted, the statistically lopsided, the commercially successful, the statutory, the regulated, the most visible: these things all belong to the superculture. (29)

Slobin’s interest is in the ‘modes of reappropriation’ of individual music makers and their affinity groups – the subculture and how they ‘interplay’ with the larger social units of the superculture (35). Kaai’s early career in Hawai’i and his movements through British colonial territories such as Australia, New Zealand, India and the Straits settlements meant daily encounters with multiple variations of colonial imperialism as well as expressions of superculture in his day-to-day dealings with repertory, venues, booking agents, media, clients and audiences, for example. In Slobin’s terms it is a given that the superculture defines the subculture (50) and that Kaai’s Hawaiianness is deemed a part of a “non-Euro-American social formation” or an “involuntary” subculture based on “recognisability” (53). Kaai can be seen to “draw on available resources, reshape them for current needs (bricolage), re-evaluate and start over, building a culture day by day, following strategies, adapting to change” (85). This subculture strategising has parallels with cosmopolitanism and simultaneously offers useful tools for interpreting Kaai’s life on and off stage.
2.14. Global Cultural Flow

Slemon’s reference to ‘shifting registers’ is a recurrent thread in Kaai’s narrative. An increasing number of economies were available to musicians like Kaai and while many of his former collaborators sought work on the vaudeville circuits of America or travelled with stage shows to Europe, Kaai travelled on alternative circuits that were new for Hawaiian entertainers. The proliferation of routes available to Hawaiian musicians and performers can be seen in relation to the emergence of a system defined by Arjun Appadurai’s five dimensions of global cultural flow (Appadurai 1990: 296) – ethnoscapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, mediascapes and ideoscapes, in essence “people, machinery, money, images and ideas” (301). Kaai’s participation and initiatives in the transmission of Hawaiian popular music with its embedded images of fantasy and desire situate him as an early entry in Appadurai’s mediascape which constitutes “narratives of the ‘other’ and proto-narratives of possible lives, fantasies which could become prolegomena to the desire for acquisition and movement” (299). This, and Appadurai’s other -scapes, provide tools for analysing Kaai’s movements because:

[...] these are not objectively given relations which look the same from every angle of vision, but rather… are deeply perspectival constructs, inflected very much by the… situatedness of different sorts of actors… Indeed, the individual actor is the last locus of this perspectival set of landscapes, for these landscapes are eventually navigated by agents who both experience and constitute larger formations. (296)

The ‘practice’ of cosmopolitanism as proposed by Gillett is distinct from the musical cosmopolitanism reflected in the musical styles, repertory, stage design and performance genres the Troubadours exhibited on the road.

2.15. Islander Tropes

Kaai’s first travels in the region were tours of Australia and New Zealand in 1911 with his troupe The Royal Hawaiians. From the late 1910s Kaai’s engagements expanded from Australasia to include Singapore, India, Shanghai, Tokyo, Hong Kong and the Dutch East Indies. In 1919 he supplied musicians on contract in Batavia and Soerabaia and from 1921 he largely toured with Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours and what was to be his long-running stage show *A Night in Honolulu*. During Kaai’s lifetime stereotypes of the sexualised and racialised Hawaiian Islander came to dominate media depictions of indigenous Hawaiians in American and other popular cultures. I argue that many aspects of Kaai’s performances and professional behaviours, such as the marketing, repertory and performative choices within his stage show, particularly from 1920 onwards, participated in the generation and transmission of those representations.
Simultaneously Kaai’s agency in brokering his own ambitions and desires offers a discrepant view of the participation and self-awareness of indigenous actors in the mediation and commodification of Hawai’i as both a fantasy and tourist destination. Participation in the formation of Hawaiian Islander tropes is one dimension of a gamut of negotiations that add complexity to the relationship of performers such as Kaai to notions of identity and representation. Kaai’s ability to navigate across political, social and spatial realms is a reflection of many contingent forces: the rise of empire, modernity, diaspora and the global transfer of commodities, cultural materials and modes of behaviour. Kaai and his troupes of performers constituted a travelling culture of “vernacular cosmopolitans”:

translating between cultures, renegotiating traditions from a position where “locality” insists on its own terms, while entering into larger national and societal conversations. This is not a cosmopolitanism of the elite variety inspired by the universalist patterns of humanistic thought that run gloriously across cultures, establishing an enlightened unity. Vernacular cosmopolitans are compelled to make a tryst with cultural translation as an act of survival. Their specific and local histories, often threatened and repressed, are inserted “between the lines” of dominant cultural practices. (Bhabha 2000: 139)

While Bhabha’s reference is to the double life of British minorities in England, the comparison is useful because Kaai’s travels through the Asia Pacific region required the “cultural translation” of the vernacular cosmopolitan. “Dominant cultural practices” were not, even in the context of colonialism, uniform, and so in order for Kaai to be able to travel the circuit as often as he did means that he was adept at negotiating the demands of a number of locations. Similarly Mitchell Cohen’s term “rooted cosmopolitanism” (1992) links an individual to his or her own society acknowledging “the legitimacy of plural loyalties” (1992: 482) while being a universalist at the same time. Cohen and Bhabha’s terms contest the “very old idea of the cosmopolitan” derived from Kant by way of the Stoics “whose allegiance is to the worldwide community of human beings” (Nussbaum 1997: 4).

_Cultural_ cosmopolitanism, as defined by Stuart Hall, does not propose a homogenised society but one that:

draws on the traces and residues of many cultural systems, of many ethical systems. … It means the ability to stand outside of having one’s life written and scripted by any one community … and to draw selectively on a variety of discursive meanings. (Hall 2002: 26)

In Hall’s system individuals are attitudinally open to divergent cultural influences and in practice navigate across cultural boundaries. Kwame Anthony Appiah’s (1997) “cosmopolitan patriot” correspondingly incorporates an array of cultural connections, but Appiah asserts that such a
perspective can only derive from a strongly felt sense of location and a shared commitment to
the political culture of the nation state. The “cosmopolitan ideal” Appiah proposes is one where
you “take your roots with you” and where “people are free to elect the local forms of human life
within which they will live” (95).

James Clifford’s discrepant cosmopolitanism “undermine[s] the ‘naturalness’ of ethnic
absolutisms, whether articulated at the nation-state, tribal or minority level’ (1998: 365), and he
makes the point that while economic and political equality are imperative, cultural similarity is
not. Pragmatism and resilience in the form of cultural inventiveness help to “rearticulate a sense
of who one is by appropriating, cutting, and mixing cultural forms” (367) in situations that arise
from “specific juxtapositions, selections, and overlays offered and imposed in limited historical
conjunctures” (366). Clifford describes an existing cosmopolitanism:

Colonial, postcolonial and neo-colonial histories … have produced a variety of elite and
subaltern experiences of movement among cultures, polities and economies. In these
contexts people have understood their fate, negotiated with difference, preserved a
dignity in confrontation, survived as cultural/political subjects through complex tactics
of separatism and accommodation. Some have moved or been moved physically; some
have stayed or been confined in a locale … In these diverse cosmopolitical encounters,
specific, hybrid accommodations with national and transnational forces are worked out.
(367)

Cosmopolitanism is a “travelling signifier” and accepts an array of definitions and “points in
ambiguous political directions” (Clifford 1998: 362), but the commonalities that can be traced
through the detours provided by each theorist’s position above are that cosmopolitanism is
plural, relational, subjective, contingent, and not free of asymmetrical power relationships. The
“cosmopolitan competences, the arts of crossing, translation, and hybridity” (368) are in the
embodied practice and cross-cultural encounters that Kaai and his performers engaged in in
hugely divergent contact zones. Kaai’s commercialisation of difference and staging of alterity are
revealed in repertory choices and performance modes that fused modernity in the form of
instrumentation, jazz and costuming with an ‘authentic’ Hawaiian experience. The particularities
of Kaai’s intercultural experiences inside and outside of the performance space point to
Rabinow’s (1996) lived ‘in-between’ balancing act and to negotiating the interstices as described
by Bhabha (1996).
2.16. Identity, Authenticity, and Agency

Identity and music are connecting threads in the travel and in the network of engagements and relationships that Kaai formed: identity because ‘Hawaiianess’ and notions of authenticity are a constant theme in Kaai’s promotional and stage material regardless of the ethnicity of the performers or the influences of modernity in the repertory, costuming, staging, vocalising, instrumentation or arrangements. The fusions represented in each of these instances:

- can be seen as situations where new identities are in fact emerging for various political and social reasons, rather than with situations, still rather common in the world, where someone or some social group or some government is positing a durable, essential identity. (Rice 2007: 24)

In line with this Simon Frith builds an argument for the mobility of identity, that it is “a process, not a thing, a becoming, not a being”, and that “our experience of music – of music making and music listening – is best understood as an experience of this self-in-process” (1996: 109). Like Cohen’s construction of the ‘rooted cosmopolitan’, Frith’s analysis of the aesthetics of popular music asks how a particular piece of music produces rather than reflects people, “how it creates and constructs an experience – a musical experience, an aesthetic experience – that we can only make sense of by taking on both a subjective and collective identity” (109). A facet of the subjective and collective is reflected in Clifford’s observation that in “claiming both autochthony and a specific, transregional worldliness”, Kaai and his troupes, for example, could “bypass an opposition between rootedness and displacement” (Clifford 1997: 254). Hawaiianess as conceptualised by Kaai and his musicians could be framed “not as a bounded entity with a fixed history and geography, but as shifting concepts and representations” (Cohen 1995: 61–67).

Authenticity for Kaai was a given, and while he traded on and produced etic translations of Hawaiianess, his choice of repertory also produced an identity that was in process. Music and musical enterprise allowed Kaai the possibility of “authoring the self” (Rice 2007: 23), a self in constructivist terms “whose expression is contingent on particular contexts and specific performances of the self in those contexts. Music … would seem to provide a particularly fruitful arena for the expression of multiple identities in context” (27). Within the vehicle of A Night in Honolulu, for example, Kaai could co-opt Hawaiian royal family compositions, Italian opera intermezzi, his own compositions, hapa haole and Tin Pan Alley songs using jazz and ragtime modes within the rubric of “as interpreted by Hawaiians”.

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Such repertory choices reveal Kaai’s construction of at least one sense of subjectification. In Lawrence Grossberg’s theorising of agency, he asks the question “who gets to make history?” Grossberg defines agency as “the possibilities of action as interventions into the processes by which reality is continually being transformed and power enacted” (1996: 99). Kaai’s ‘interventions’ – his agency, in other words – is configured in multiple ways, ways that at times complied with, negotiated, contested and eluded state apparatuses. Kaai multiplied his subject positions (98) in his early career in Honolulu, where power over education and “propaganda through literacy and the literate media” (Rice 2007: 31) was being concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. Through music, as a composer, performer and impresario Kaai could access “new and alternative forms of behaviour” outside of the allowable models of “governmental discourse and discipline” (29), the fabric of which was woven through with increasingly racialised legislation.

The notion of authenticity being a given for Kaai is addressed in some way by this statement from Kwame Appiah:

The problem of who I really am is raised by the facts of what I appear to be: and though it is essential to the mythology of authenticity that this fact should be obscured by its prophets, what I appear to be is fundamentally how I appear to others and only derivatively how I appear to myself. (1993: 121)

Kaai was not beholden to enforced subjectivities but rather displayed “bicultural dexterity” (Imada 2012: 140), and as a culture broker he was able to negotiate his media image both inside Hawai‘i and in foreign locations. Adept at utilising media, advance agents and publicity accompanied all of Kaai’s tours overseas, and favourable reviews and human-interest stories from New Zealand and Australia were sent back to both English- and Hawaiian-language newspapers, often with photographs.

Not all of the members of Kaai’s Night in Honolulu troupes in the 1920s were Hawaiian, but for the purposes of the performances their Pacific-ness sufficed because it was the appearance to others that mattered – others being the audiences that responded enthusiastically to “invented biologies, invented cultural affinities” (Appiah 1993: 174). What the audience hears is accompanied by: “the narrative of musical interaction in which the listeners place themselves”

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5 An example was the story of I. G Kaainoa, an elderly Hawaiian man that Kaai met in Australia who wished to return home. Kaai sought fundraising to help him and filed a story about it in English- and Hawaiian-language newspapers. Ka Nupepa Kuokoa [Hawai‘i] 5th March 1925: 1.
6 Ka Nupepa Kuokoa [Hawai‘i], 28th May 1925, Volume 064, Issue 022: 2.
Islands were represented as interchangeable in 1929 in travel publications by the Burns Philp\textsuperscript{7} mercantile and cruise ship company of Australia:\textsuperscript{8}

Isles of the Pacific, set like jewels in shimmering seas of blue and green that glisten like silk in the vivid sunshine; soft winds that gently stir the graceful palm trees; virgin beaches that gleam milk against a background of verdant tropical growth; and overall the quietude of Nature in restful mood. (as cited in Stephen 1993: 30)

At the time the Hawaiian Troubadours were touring, these were images that were circulating in the locations they visited, and the Hawaiian Troubadours were aware of these conflations: Kaai had already been described as “Samoan” in 1911 and casual racism informs many reviewers’ comments.

Kaai was in no doubt about his authenticity as a Native Hawaiian. There was no inconsistency for him in claiming authenticity in the advertisements for his concerts and he was also conscious of the value of authenticity for his audiences. The concerts were theatrical performances and took advantage of the transformative power of the theatrical space to recreate scenes or representations of Hawai‘i within which the entertainers performed Hawaiianness. According to Jonathan Culler:

The paradox, the dilemma of authenticity, is that to be experienced as authentic it must be marked as authentic, but when it is marked as authentic, it is mediated, a sign of itself and hence not authentic in the sense of unspoiled. (1981: 137)

Gestures and items of adornment such as lei and musical instruments and the unique sounds they make become theatrical signs.

2.17. Master Syncretisers

Christopher Waterman (1990) in his study of jùjù describes “an enactment of identity” that was:

a potentially constitutive factor in the patterning of social values and social interaction. Yoruba musicians … fashioned a mode of expression that enacted, in music, language, and behavior, a syncretic metaphoric image of an ideal social order, cosmopolitan yet firmly rooted in autochthonous tradition. (1993: 66)

This enactment suggests the notion of Kaai’s travelling companies as a social order since life on the road and life on stage were contiguous. The music they played together, sometimes three performances per day and frequent late-night improvisations in clubs, involved processes of identification “and the aesthetic response is, implicitly, an ethical agreement” (Frith 1996: 114).

\textsuperscript{7} The company also had a reputation as participating in “blackbirding” – the illegal transport of forced labour in the Pacific region.

\textsuperscript{8} The Burns Philp Magazine, one of several travel magazines published by the company, was first printed in 1929 and ran through to the start of World War II.
Waterman’s discussion of the “master syncretisers of modern Africa” (1990: 9) posits an intermediate level of urban wageworkers and entrepreneurs as cosmopolitan individuals adept at interpreting “multiple languages, cultural codes and value systems, skills which enable them to construct styles that express shifting patterns of urban identity” (9). He describes these musicians as “quintessential culture brokers, situated at interstices in the transforming colonial urban social structure” (1993: 66). Waterman emphasises that it is “people, not musics or cultures, [that] accept or reject new ideas and practices”, and this is where he grounds syncretism – in a human actor’s interpretation of similarity and difference (1990: 9). There are parallels in Waterman’s description of cosmopolitan musicians in Lagos with Kaai’s early years in the increasingly urbanised Honolulu which saw him involved from high-school age in a wide range of musical and cultural activities, from hoʻopā’a to glee clubs, to agent and broker for acts performing on passenger ships and in the growing hotel and club scene. By 1911 Kaai had participated in Hawaiian delegations to two World’s Fairs, self-published the first of a number of method books and started an ‘ukulele manufacturing company and a teaching academy. Kaai’s choices reveal something of his phenomenological field, and what his subjectivity ‘authorised’ and enabled him, in Grossberg’s terms, to articulate and defend (Grossberg 1996: 99).

2.18. Research Process

Most students of the colonial, who now work with archives in a reflective mode, treat “the archive” as something in between a set of documents, their institutions, and a repository of memory – both a place and a cultural space that encompass official documents but are not confined to them. (Stoler 2009: 49)

Stoler’s description of a place and a space resonated because while much of the material I have sourced has been drawn from institutional collections and databases, my searches have been entangled with family records, photographs and reminiscences. The newspaper advertisements and reviews of a series of performances in Singapore, for example, are enmeshed through other sources with the personal such as the birth of a child, a court case or a romance. Social and political fluidities frame and leak into the same narratives that corroborate received material via blogs, chat rooms, online enquiry services and email connections. Repertoire forms another overlapping source, not just in textual form but also in the form of reviews, advertisements and programmes.
2.19. Newspapers as Source Material

In reviewing Noenoe K Silva’s *Aloha Betrayed* (2004) Sally Engle Merry says: “In writing the history of Hawai‘i, Hawaiian-language sources should take a prominent place” (Carter, Merry & Friedman 2006: 162). It is an affirmation that I take seriously and Hawaiian-language newspapers have been crucial to my research. Access was possible because of the Papakilo database – “The Database of Databases”9 which enables even non-speakers of Hawaiian like me to navigate and find original material. I have relied on the assistance of very able scholars, Robert Lono Ikuwa and Auli‘i Mitchell, who translated the information I was able to source. The majority of my research, though, has come from English-language newspaper sources in Hawai‘i, much of it accessible through the Library of Congress historical newspapers site Chronicling America, and most of the material I made use of from this service is in the ki‘i dedicated to Kaai. Chronicling America is an exceptional resource, but Hawaiian sovereignty was in part fought out in the pages of local papers and the site only provides English-language sources from the state of Hawai‘i (even though they provide links to databases and short histories of Hawaiian language papers). This is perpetuating a situation where settler-colonial narratives outweigh kānaka maoli narratives. In 1917 over sixty different newspapers were published in Hawai‘i:

Papers were published in a wide variety of languages, including several that were bilingual. The largest number were printed in English, slightly over one third… Hawaiian language papers accounted for almost 20 percent [sic] of the total. (Askman 2015: 95)

The white oligarchy was politically dominant even though non-Hispanic white residents constituted less than eight per cent of the population in 1920, and the political domination is reflected in newspaper ownership. Powerful annexationist interests who were the descendants of American missionaries were behind the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* (renamed the *Honolulu Star Advertiser* in 1921), and the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, which was an amalgamation of the *Evening Bulletin* (pre-1895 the *Daily Bulletin*) and the *Hawaiian Star* in 1912. Searches in other national databases were all in English although I was able to make limited use of the Delpher site to source material in the Dutch language.

Initially I began my research with microform and digital newspaper searches in the National Library of New Zealand, PapersPast from which I have compiled a collection of reviews, advertisements, advertorial articles, press releases and short notices of Kaai and his performers’ tours within New Zealand between 1911 and 1927. I extended on these records through digital access to newspapers at Trove’s digitised newspapers and articles at the National Library of

Australia, NewspapersSG of the National Library Singapore, The Times of India and the Historische Kranten collection on Delpher, the online newspaper resource of the National Library of the Netherlands. Aside from the materials I located in the Papakilo Database I also searched Hoʻolaupaʻi, the Hawaiian Nūpepa Collection in the Hawaiian Electronic Library; Ulukau.org, which brings a number of websites together including MELE, the Hawaiian music archive, which holds the Haʻilono Mole newsletters of the Hawaiian Music Foundation 1975–1979. Two other important sources have been Bob Krauss’ Early Hawaiʻi Newspaper Research Index and The Paradise of the Pacific magazine archive in the Hawaiian and Pacific Collection at Hamilton Library, University of Hawai‘i at Manoa. Within this collection of media references I have gathered over five hundred significant mentions of Kaai and his performers that appeared in news publications between 1911 and 1937.

In addition I was able to make analogue searches of The North China Daily News and North China Herald archives in Shanghai. Non-digitised collections at the National Library of Australia were also useful, as was the Ephemera collection at the National Library of New Zealand in Wellington, where I sourced ephemera such as playbills, programmes, advertisements and postcards. These materials often provide repertory and personnel details as well as insights into changes in the production of popular music imagery and advertorial strategies. The Bishop Museum archives in Honolulu contain publicity images of Kaai, and I was also able to identify an album of photographs by entertainer Queenie Kaili that contained many images of Kaai and other musicians on tour. Isolating this material suggests research opportunities within the Bishop Museum archive for future work on Hawaiian popular entertainers from this era. Archived periodicals such as Stage and Society – A Book of Entertainment held by Libraries Australia are excellent sources for less formal, magazine-style interviews and photographs that contextualise the entertainers within a focus on lifestyle topics.

2.20. Textual and Discourse Analysis

I have utilised textual analysis as a way of interrogating the content of newspaper narratives to look for such information as the numbers of mentions Kaai receives in the papers, what can be detected about his social milieu through the types of events and the people he was associated with, repertory details, locations, and how he was represented in those views. What are discernible differences in those categories between Hawaiian-language sources and English-

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10 Published by Camden Pratt, 1921–1926
language Hawaiian papers? Through my analysis I also seek to discover what Kaai reveals about himself in each of those dimensions: what does his own advertising say about his business, skills and understanding of advertorial practice, and ultimately what it reveals, aside from physically locating him in time and space, about his sense of subjectivity.

Media bias and slant are inevitably revealed when relying so heavily on newspaper sources. Polarised and polarising agendas (Hawaiian-language papers, in advocating for the concerns of Native Hawaiians, “expressed both pro- and anti-establishment opinions” (Askman 2015: 96)) are visible in the Pacific Commercial Advertiser (PCA), which forms the bulk of my newspaper source material. The opinions of the white oligarchy were reflected in its pages and the PCA was a highly influential segment of the press in Hawai’i (96). An example is the way a public performance by Kaai’s Royal Hawaiians was reviewed on their return from New Zealand and Australia (analysed on p. 140), which is reflective of a history of suppression and dominant political and religious standards and which exposes the audience for the newspaper and the power and racial bias inherent in the publication. The PCA, the Hawaiian Star and the Evening Bulletin, in my opinion:

meet the standards for bias at a more fundamental level: consistent framing in favour of capitalism, patriarchy, heterosexism, individualism, consumerism and White privilege, among other deeply entrenched values that certainly help allocate power in American politics. (Entman 2007: 170)

And as Entman (2007) goes on to say: “When news clearly slants, those … favoured by the slant become more powerful, freer to do what they want … And those who lose the framing contest become weaker, less free to do (or say) what they want” (170). The PCA and similar newspapers were instruments of settler-colonial power, and ultimately, as was discussed earlier, territoriality is the endgame. Kaai, even as a consumer of the media’s “goods” (he made use of marketing and promotion material), could not compete with the political agenda embedded in the oligarchy’s newspaper establishment.

2.21. Genres of Documentation

American passport documentation, draft registrations, passenger manifests and census documents have also been invaluable in terms of historiography and because of what they inadvertently reveal about the dominant narratives of race and gender underpinning American imperialism in Hawai’i. Details of contracts, payments, letters of support, occupations, marital status, referees, sponsors and travelling companions are catalogued alongside racial
characteristics, languages spoken, literacy and racial and colour designations. Inconsistency between government departments, in the racial categories particularly, underscores the conflicted and situational nature of the categories themselves and the unstable ideological basis for collecting such data.

As Stoler points out, “colonial archives were both transparencies on which power relations were inscribed and intricate technologies of rule in themselves” (2009: 20). These “genres of documentation” (20) depicting Kaai and those who travelled with him reveal archival content and also allude to the social imaginaries of colonial rule and the codes and practices of power embedded within archival forms. Many of these records are available online through digitisation partnerships with the US National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), electoral rolls and passenger lists that have been made available through national institutions such as the National Archives of Australia. Mormon databases have been invaluable because they offer free family searches on sites such as familysearch.org, with access to scanned documentation as well.

Hawaiian citizens\(^1\) became American citizens\(^2\) with the passage of the Organic Act on April 30\(^{th}\), 1900\(^3\). Passports were recommended but not required for US citizens travelling abroad until 1941 (they were briefly required during the years of the American Civil War and also temporarily between 1918 and 1921). From 1916 to 1924 Hawaiians applied to the Department of State for “insular” passport applications since Hawai‘i, like the Philippines and Puerto Rico, was an insular possession or territory. I have made extensive use of the NARA digital passport archive (dating 1795–1925) because it provides scanned originals of passport applications as well as affidavits in support of passports to go abroad on commercial business. The files are highly searchable in that users can turn to pages either side of the originally identified file and in this way I have discovered many more relevant passport applications for those travelling with Kaai, affidavits, and contractual agreements than I otherwise would have.

2.22. The Surname Act

Primarily relying on archival sources creates a sense of approximation in constructing the life of another person, particularly one that is no longer alive. It means trying to corroborate Kaai’s

\(^{1}\) After the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893, the Provisional Government of Hawai‘i, led by Sanford B. Dole, controlled Hawai‘i. From 1894 to 1898 Hawai‘i was governed as a republic until the adoption of the Newlands Resolution on July 7\(^{th}\), 1898 in the United States Congress when Hawai‘i was annexed to the United States as a territory. The Territory of Hawai‘i was established on June 14\(^{th}\), 1900.

\(^{2}\) The legality of the underlying legislation was, and still is, highly contested.

\(^{3}\) Signed by President McKinley, the Organic Act established a Territorial government in the Hawaiian Islands.
mother's or father's identity when his father, for example, can be identified as Simon, Kimona or Himona, and his mother as Rebecca, Ribeka, Becky or Beke. Names “are the tangible chart of a life history” and the shifts between Anglicised and Hawaiianised names are “as thoroughly political as they are personal” (Schachter 2013: 27). The Hawaiian male members of the Troubadours each used a single name within the group – Kaai, Kinilau and Kaili – and that is how I generally refer to them, in keeping with pre-European Hawaiian naming practices. The Surname Act of 1857 outlawed the traditional method requiring all citizens to have two names, but in practice, the custom continued. As Jane Desmond says, “names phenotypically embody the social complexities of Hawaiian history” (1999: 26), and the same issues can be seen in other male members such as Sid Kamau and Keoki Greig retaining their Christian names. Both are examples of people who used multiple names and multiple spellings which they switched between depending on the occasion – Sid was an abbreviation of Sidney or Hirini in te reo Māori while his middle name was David or Rawiri. He sometimes used the stage name Syd David, Sid Kamau or Rawiri Kamau. Keoki is a Hawaiian transliteration of George. All of the members used their full names on stage and in publicity material.

The shifting names can mean triangulating with uncertainties, interrogating sources and sometimes just accepting those records that appear most often. Administrative mis-hearings (Ernest is sometimes Edward or Earnest), invented spellings and casual racism have been preserved in newspapers, passport applications, draft documents, ships’ manifests and census papers, signalling a settler-colonial administrative collision with Kanaka Maoli customary practice. Possibilities are multiplied with stage names, nicknames, abbreviations, aliases, mother’s names and anglicised names which are endemic not only in the lives of Hawaiian performers but also in the lives of people accustomed to a colonial administration that exercises power in one sense through language and bureaucracy. Racial categories are similarly fluid and Hawaiian identities become contingent: the same person across a number of documentation genres and in a variety of colonial locations can be American, Part Hawaiian, Brown, White or Black running into and around institutional forms, sometimes finding a fit, sometimes not. Sid Kamau, who was Māori from New Zealand, encountered a wide variety of racial interpretations including Malayan.14

14 Eugenic racial taxonomies developed by Johann Blumenbach grouped ‘brown races’ or ‘Austronesians’ and designated them as ‘Malay’ or ‘Malayan’ as a subcategory of his main categorisations, which were devised through skin colour (see Bhopal 2007).
2.23. Strangers to Modernity

In the late nineteenth century the rise of the ethnographic gaze followed developments in the sciences (anthropology, psychiatry, sociology), the tourism industry and the commodification of colonial territories. Social Darwinism and the construction of societies within a pyramidal model situated “only the large-brained, white-skinned races” (Stocking 1982: 119) at the top, while others, like Hawaiians, were evaluated as being in the earlier stages of Caucasian development, thus explaining their “primitivism.”

Commoditised photography played an important part in the constitution of the twin ideologies of “modernism and primitivism” (Desmond 1999: 38), representing Hawaiians as “pre-urban, pre-industrial, [a] pastoral vision of harmony with nature” (40) and simultaneously producing nostalgia for an Edenic past. At the turn of the nineteenth century there was a proliferation of images of Hawaiians in a variety of mediums – *cartes-de-visite*, daguerreotypes, collotypes, stereoscopic pictures, photographs, postcards – capturing “the real” with documentary effect (43); that is, they were believed to offer an accurate depiction. Hawaiian women and girls dominated the subject matter in contexts that emphasised the autochthonous (e.g. ferns, streams) or else with indistinct backdrops where social context was erased.

Jane Desmond (1999) discusses the “decontemporising representational practices that continually, implicitly situated Hawaiians in the past. Photos from the 1880s often circulated as postcards with their original date unmarked” (1999: 44–45). The same photographs of unidentified women and girls circulated within a number of different discourses – “pornographic, educational/scientific, and commercial/touristic” (45) – some of which can still be found today on collector and auction sites. Desmond describes an image from 1905 still in circulation in 1941 as:

> providing an example of the time-lag practice in representing Native Hawaiians. As primitive people were supposedly without history and hence unchanging, these iconographic representations could circulate among Euro-Americans, unquestioned, as documentation, perpetuating images a century out of date. (46)

Commercial images of Hawaiian men were much less common and depicted them within the same autochthonic domain (e.g. fishing, dressed in a malo standing on the beach). The predominance of images of women and the fact that women and girls were rarely photographed with men means the relative absence of male Native Hawaiians is constitutive. The feminised Hawaiian Islander is made available for visual consumption by white males – a mirror of the
territorial discourse essential to settler-colonialism: “As gender provides a model and precedent for the dominated, so, by the same logic, does it construct the dominator as male” (Wolfe 1999: 164n167).

Trapped in a constructed and eternal past, Hawaiians were subject to familiar assumptions based on the power of such imagery and “broad cultural expectations” (Deloria 2004: 4) that alienated them from concepts such as ‘travel’, ‘modern’, ‘technology’. Philip Deloria (2004) says “it is critical, then, that we question expectations and explore their origins, for they created – and they continue to reproduce – social, political, legal, and economic relations that are asymmetrical, sometimes grossly so” (4). The proliferation, extensive circulation and endurance of the images described above continue to feed into the construction of a Hawaiian imaginary and what constitutes Hawaiianess and the meaning of Hawai‘i. The stereotype of the hula dancer (always female), for example, alone on the beach, is still a potent symbol in contemporary marketing of the islands and reinforces a long history of “Polynesia” as a feminised and sexualised space even as land rights and sovereignty15 (Trask 2001; Kauanui 2008; Goodyear-Kaʻōpua et al. 2014) continue to be contested.

In his exploration of anomaly and expectation, Deloria (2004) recommends rethinking histories of expectation about Native Americans, and even though “representations of non-white populations and their perceptions by whites… carries a specific historical charge based in part on historical relations between the representers and the represented” (Desmond 1999: 68), Deloria’s comments resonate for Native Hawaiians, that we need to track the secret histories of Hawaiian life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and create a dialogue between settler-colonial expectations of Hawaiians and the lived experiences of Native Hawaiians “whose actions were, at that very moment, being defined as unexpected” (Deloria 2004: 7).

The studio portraits of Kaai and his musicians in the early 1900s or the self-authored images of Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours in Wehi Greig’s albums in the mid 1920s are dialectical to the types of images of Hawaiians discussed above. I argue that the images of Kaai and his ensembles were not anomalous and that Hawaiians participated in all aspects of contemporary life in Hawai‘i at this time, but that “certain kinds of telling” (7) dominated and favoured particular framings over others. The counter-discourses of urbanity, cosmopolitanism and technology that are visually manifested in the locations, dress and pursuits of Kaai and his musicians were not

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15 For example, current protests over the installation of the TMT (Thirty Metre Telescope) on Mauna Kea on the island of Hawai‘i have become a lightning rod for sovereignty and settler-colonial land issues.
unusual, but the prevalence of the stereotypes over the reality underscores the power of ideology and discourse.

A stereotype has been defined as “a simplified and generalised expectation… that comes to rest in an image, text or utterance. It is a sound bite, a crudely descriptive connection between power, expectation, and representation” (9). Stereotypes do some of the work of ideology which “always works to favour some and disadvantage others” (Purvis & Hunt 1993: 478) and, like hegemony, makes its effects appear natural. Ideologies framing Hawaiians are manifold but include Edenic, primitive, child-like, lazy and feminised.

The idiosyncratic colonialisms the performers encountered presented different challenges and accommodations, and some of these are discernible in the collection of photographs I was given. The touristic and cosmopolitan settings pictured in the photographs, the modernity of the performers’ off-stage style, plus the value of Wehi’s narrations of name, place and date and the lightness of her descriptions are an insight into not only of the worldview of a young Māori woman in the 1920s but also of life on the road for musicians who travelled vast distances on well-established entertainment circuits.

A dialectic is established between the photographs Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours took of themselves and the popular images of Hawaiians that proliferated at the turn of the century which “actively constructed an image of Native Hawaiians as primitives living in the past” (Desmond 1999: 40). Susan Stewart (1993) has described the power of postcards as a guarantee that the sender is actually there. In the same way that a postcard becomes “both a specimen and a trophy” (137–138), the photographs of the Troubadours on tour “authenticate the acts of travel and of witnessing” and in turn “position the viewer as witness to the sender’s experience. In this way a public act (seeing a sight) is transformed into a private history (what I saw) with social meaning (look at what I saw)” (Desmond 1999: 43).

A group of Hawaiian entertainers are unexpected tourists who are meant to be “strangers to modernity” (Imada 2012: 92). Depictions of Oceania at this time were dominated by images of autochthonic “Natives” and subject to racialised narratives and stereotypes that constitute both ideology and discourse. “Natives” and “tourists” are thought to be incommensurable categories and seem to be consigned to their own separate spaces and times – the tourist with modernity and the Native with the pre-modern and primitive. Imada quotes Teresia K. Teaiwa (2001): “A
tourist is assumed to be travelling. A Native is assumed to dwell, but Natives may also travel, and a tourist may also be a Native” (92). Imada describes the Hawaiian entertainers travelling in the fin-de-siècle period as possessing: “a modern sensibility, immersing themselves in urban and global worlds” (92). Off-duty photographs reveal the performers commemorating their experiences but also indicate “category confusion” (Deloria 2004: 177) and are in tension with the entertainers’ images of ethnographic performance of the same period.

2.24. Against the Grain

Three photo albums that I was given at my grandmother’s funeral in 1989 are now close to 90 years old. They originally belonged to Wehi Corbett Greig, who was half of the Hilo Duo, the other half being her husband, Keoki/George Greig. Multi-instrumentalists, the Greigs travelled through colonial territories with Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours from c.1926 to 1930. Corbett Greig compiled and annotated the albums, but she also took some of the photographs as well as appearing in many of them. Covered with faux leather, the albums are fragile. Pages are stiff with hardened glue and ageing sepia snapshots that bulk out the thick paper leaves. Gaps, left where photographs have either fallen out or been removed, disrupt the surface of the pages, leaving ghostly tears and empty photo corners.

All in all there are 535 photographs contained in three albums that have remained in the private domain until now. Borrowing from Allan Sekula’s work on photography and Lila Abu-Lughod’s *Writing Against Culture* (1991), I read this collection “against the grain” (Sekula 1984: ix) because while the photographs are enmeshed in many different scopic regimes they simultaneously resist genre coding, whether it be as a travel album, family album, snapshot, portrait or documentary or as tourist or vintage photography. They also contest photography’s “characteristically [white] petit-bourgeois” subject (Sekula 1986: 10). In essence they counter generalisation and offer an ethnography “of the particular” (Abu-Lughod 1991: 474) but are simultaneously a fragment of “the shadow archive” (Sekula 1986: 10), where, along with the criminal subject of Sekula’s study, are “the subordinate… the nonwhite, the female and all other embodiments of the unworthy” (10). The photo albums intersect with narratives that situate the subjects in historically specific locations but distort other contents such as class and race. This distortion is because they are

16 There is only one image of Corbett Greig with a camera and it appears to be a Kodak Autographic model (a folding pocket), which were in production from 1914 to 1934. [http://www.kodak.com/global/en/consumer/products/techInfo/aa13/aa13.shtml](http://www.kodak.com/global/en/consumer/products/techInfo/aa13/aa13.shtml)
17 Album 1=190, 2=120, 3=205 (+19 loose images) =535 images.
unfamiliar subjects; their stories have until now remained private and they do not fit the expectations of the archive, which is “at once *institutive* and *conservative*” (Derrida 1995:12) in that:

One doesn’t have to scratch the surface very deeply to find that class, race, and gender have a lot to do with whose experiences are on top – that is, with whose lives traditionally have gotten written and read, with whose experiences have been seen as “real.” (Probyn, 1990: 184)

As Christopher Pinney (2003) states, photography lives in many cultural contexts, but in photographic writing “a unitary subject is assumed rather than demonstrated, and this subject is then overlain with artifact-mobilised identities” (12). As a counter to this Pinney examines heterodox photographic practices in Mombasa, Cusco and India, which he frames as resisting photography’s “totalizing schemata and imprisoning referentiality” (13). What he defines as *vernacular modernism* “relocates the historical agency and centrality of Western representational practice” (12) in which the typical subject is presupposed. Corbett Greig’s albums are locatable within this arena, but they occupy an interstitial space in that they operate within some Western representational practices but simultaneously open up a space that unsettles and critiques Western models not only of selfhood but also of modernity and travel, and inevitably the colonial archive itself.

Family photographs are not a privileged mode of photography, and family photographs by indigenous and subaltern social groups are even less so and seem in fact to be ‘unimagined’ by Euro-American ethnographers and historians. Michael Aird’s comparison of Australian institutional archival photographs of aboriginality with his own indigenous family photographs reveals a huge disparity between self-fashioning and the institutional construction of aboriginality. Depictions of unnamed indigenous subjects as poverty-stricken, savage, exotic or the last of a dying race (Aird 2003: 25) or images characterised by “enumeration and humiliation” (Pinney 2003: 5) in contexts of so-called scientific assessment are routine. As Sekula (1986) says elsewhere in relation to the depiction of the bourgeois self, photography is a “double system: a system of representation capable of functioning both *honorifically* and *repressively*” (6): it came to establish and delimit the terrain of the other, to define both the *generalized look* – the typology – and the *contingent instance* of deviance. As Pinney reminds us, “We must not lose sight of the extraordinary circumstances of inequality (encompassing the range from cultural, political and economic hierarchy to systematic genocide) that gave rise to the vast majority of images inhabiting the colonial archive” (2003: 8). It is also important, however, to keep in mind that there is an assumption, in Homi Bhabha’s words, that “colonial power is possessed entirely by the colonizer” (1983: 25) and that no image is one of simple dominance. The agency of the
subject is stressed, and that “[h]owever hard the photographer tries to exclude the camera lens always includes. The photographer can never fully control the resulting photograph, and it is that lack of control and the resulting excess that permits recoding” (Pinney 2003: 7).

A small number of writers and artists (most writing in Pinney & Peterson’s 2003 edited volume (Driessens, Tsinhnahjinnie, Pinney, Wright, Behrend, Poole, and Aird), but also Smith 2004; Imada 2012; Lydon 2014), indigenous or otherwise, have examined the particularities of indigenous peoples’ experience with photography not as the objectified other but as the photographer. Christopher Wright’s The Echo of Things (2013) examines the ways in which Roviana people of the Solomon Islands “have been, and are, entangled with photography in various ways: through being the subjects of colonial photography” but also, since the 1950s, through their own uses of photographic technology and collecting practices (2013: 2). Calling the Shots (2014), edited by Judy Lydon, unpacks institutional photographs partly as a recuperative practice but also as a recoding of the archive from the perspective of Indigenous Australians rather than “what the white photographer saw”. This is one of very few works that theorises photographic practice in this arena, and yet it also does not include images produced by Indigenous practitioners in the domestic sphere. The absence of ‘other’ domestic photographies from official archives is a widespread phenomenon, even though from the late 1920s the Kodak Box Brownie was specifically marketed to black men, for example in colonial Rhodesia (Ranger 2001: 210). The absence is not an indication that there were no indigenous or marginalised domestic photographers or photographs; it is, rather, a signifier of institutional archival bias:

Families living in the black townships of Namibia have kept their own photographic collections: studio portraits, townscapes, and informal family shots… No such images have ever found their way into the National Archives of Namibia, but from their unofficial sites they begin to challenge the assumption of a colonial monopoly of photography. (Horne 1986: 5)

Photography on the Color Line by Shawn Michelle Smith (2004) re-examines W E B Du Bois’s 1900 American Negro Exhibit as “competing visual evidence” and a “counterarchive” (2). Smith’s intention is to read archives against one another in an exercise of “visual cultural analysis… that seeks to make the photographic archive resonate with all its cultural and historical significance” (3). Her contention is that race is fundamental to and defined by visual culture. Certainly for the construction of a Hawaiian cultural imaginary, photography and music are both fundamental.

In Hawai‘i, the personal albums of hula performer Kini Kapahukulamākāmālulu (1872–1962) are in the Hawai‘i State Archives, but the collection was not meant to be public, according to Adria
Imada (2012). Similar to the Corbett Greig collection, her “counterarchive” gathers photographic souvenirs of her and her fellow performers’ off-stage lives while on tour in the US and Europe (90). Kapahukulaokamāmalu’s photographs within the official archive are unusual. Similarly an album belonging to Queenie Kaili, who toured for many years with Kaai’s Troubadours alongside her husband David Kaili, has found its way into the Bishop Museum collection through a rare-book appraiser. The album contains many images of the Hawaiian Troubadours that are not yet identified and so are not searchable. De Soto Brown showed me the album on a visit to the archives in 2011 but it remains insufficiently catalogued. Neither of these collections was intended to be in the public domain, but like the Namibian example above, they challenge the assumption of imperial and colonial monopolies of photography.

This is an occurrence repeated in other colonial locations, New Zealand included. If photography is understood as a “globally disseminated and locally appropriated medium” (Pinney 2003: 1) then there are local uses that are subject to repressions. In the following comments Rachel Snow is referring to the [white] American middle class, but reading against the grain of the text makes it meaningful for the domestic photographers and subjects in Michael Aird, Christopher Wright and Corbett Greig’s examples:

These instances of individualization through photography are themselves reflections of … a time period when inexpensive mass produced and marketed goods had a levelling effect, allowing more people to afford at least the appearance of material well-being and upward mobility. Inexpensive cameras stood out among other mass marketed goods, because cameras had the potential to be used in ways that counteracted the model of mass production that made their existence and popularity possible. Owning a camera was not necessarily the most important part of the prestige equation – it was what one did with the camera that held the promise of class distinction. Inexpensive cameras made available to … consumers the possibility of controlling their own images, providing them with the means to construct their own stories and craft their own identities. Camera wielding consumers could now control their own images in two ways: in the manner in which they recorded their own likeness and through their ability to document whatever they wished. The technology allowing them to do so was mass-produced, but its power resided in its capacity to itself produce individualized and personalized products: the photographs themselves. (Snow 2012: 2015)

The non-white subordinates of Allan Sekula’s shadow archive are not presumed to have owned or had access to cameras. According to Ron Brownson (Senior Curator, Pacific and New Zealand Art), who has a special interest in snapshot photography, as a young Māori woman Corbett’s authorship of the photographs is atypical (Brownson, in conversation, 2011) in that

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18 As her husband John “Johnny” Henry Wilson (1871–1956) was mayor of Honolulu three times, the albums are in the collection as part of the Wilson family papers.

19 Gaye Slavsky
Māori, especially Māori women, as with Indigenous Australians or black township families, did not commonly own cameras in the early 1920s and 30s. The image of the Hawaiian Troubadours at the Lahore Fort (Chapter 4, Figure 2) shows at least four members of the Hawaiian Troubadours carrying cameras, three of whom are women. Race and gender issues arising from camera ownership and the photographs that may have resulted from it is clearly an under-researched field of study.

Corbett Greig’s albums offer the “possibility of meaning”, as mentioned by Allan Sekula in the opening quotation of this section, contingent on an intertext of discourses. Annette Kuhn says family photographs and by extension family albums “can mean only culturally” (Kuhn 2002: 14), and while I subscribe to that in the public domain, which is where this discussion takes place, I can also “look past” (Pinney 2003: 5) the cultural dimension and see the people that I know and love pictured in the pages of the albums enjoying their lives and looking young and healthy when I knew them as elderly and increasingly frail. I piece together the oral histories I remember with the images and try to reconstruct the events and search for evidence (of anything). Family likenesses seem to jump out of the pages and, as once unknown faces and identities become familiar, more and more fragments seem to coalesce. What emerges most powerfully, however, is the sense of agency not just in the depictions but also in the construction of the images, and this will be discussed further in Chapter 4 “Visualising Difference”. Corbett Greig’s sense of humour and play emerge in the narration of events, and her affinity with her fellow performers is evident in the subjects’ poses and the directness of their engagement with the camera. Each time I introduce the albums to another family member, I am aware that by looking through them a slightly different version of a continuously unfolding oral history is told (Langford 2001).

Additional material comes from family sources such as oral histories, photographs from extended family, diary entries and conversations with my aunt, Tui Blanchett, who is Kaai’s youngest child (of four children he fathered with Tuavivi Greig) and the only one who is still alive.

2.25. An Experientially Based History

Corbett Greig is indivisible from her albums as she was the author and their primary referent. Her construction of the photo albums is an “experientially based history” (hooks, 1989) in which she created herself and those around her as subjects and her albums constitute an autobiographical act:
…all kinds of subjects excluded from the status of bourgeois individual have also engaged in autobiographical acts; colonized and enslaved people, working-class men and women, bourgeois women, members of variously oppressed groups. (Smith 1993: 398)

An atomised study of Corbett Greig’s life and the individuals connected with her in her photographic collection locates her in a “modern world system” (Rice 2003: 152) and reveals the complexity of lives whose stories have been suppressed or overpowered by stereotyped understandings about the culture and society she was a part of.

Of the three albums of photographs, the one that is most intact is a chronicle of the Hawaiian Troubadours on tour in New Zealand and Australia. Corbett Greig’s front-page handwritten title reads “WITH KAAI’S HAWAIIAN TROUBADOURS 1927 1928”. The spine of the album is laced, allowing pages to be added, and ‘Wehi Greig’ is written in pencil on the inside front cover as well as her daughter’s married name, ‘Leitu Greig Upton’. The photographs are for the most part doubly anchored with corner mounts and glue or occasionally just glued with the edges of the snapshots cut to make more room for text and inventive displays. Photographs in this album are not chronological and jump between Australian and New Zealand locations, but the album gives the suggestion of a narrative arc firstly by the title page and then by the two final pages, in which some of the Troubadours are pictured boarding the S.S. Gascoyne,20 which sailed a regular route from Fremantle to Singapore. The last page features at its centre a snapshot of the Troubadours outside the Oranje Hotel in Soerebaia.

Missing the front cover and an unknown number of pages, the second album is in a style similar to that of a carte de visite album in that it has pre-cut frames, some oval or round, that glue down over arrangements of photographs. One peeled page of frames reveals the combination of guesswork and design that fits the snapshots to the template. As with the first album, Wehi Corbett Greig’s handwriting is on every page, a paratext, in white ink, all caps and underlined. People, dates and places are named and the frequent use of quotation marks emphasises her often-humorous commentary, although at times the ruled line is all that remains of her narrative. The partial album contains many photographs of Corbett Greig’s daughter Leitu as a small child, who travelled with the Troubadours along with the young children of troupe members Frances and Frank Luiz and Eddie and Gertila Kinilau.21 Like the first album, it combines snapshots of

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20 The ship was operated by the West Australian Steam Navigation Company Ltd. See http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/58044867
21 Eddie and Gert Kinley’s daughter Trudy Kinley; Frank and Frances Luiz’s daughter Lei Luiz.
New Zealand and Australia and occasionally postcards collaged and framed to resemble photographs. Mixed in with the snapshots is a single image of the Taj Mahal.

The third and largest album is in the worst condition – the spine is perforated with silverfish damage and the heavy card pages have come away from the binding. Contained within it are images of the Hawaiian Troubadours in colonial India, Jakarta and Malacca and on board the SS Glasgow and the SS Nam Sang. Corbett Greig chose not to consistently double fix the snapshots so there are many empty photo mounts where photographs have perhaps fallen out or were easily removed. All of the images are sepia-toned, standard-size contact prints measuring 2½ x 4¼ inches. A metallic compound in the photo corners has caused damage where the photo corners have come into contact with images on facing pages. Accompanying this album inside the front cover is a loose collection of images, some of which have handwritten place names on the back – Agra, Madras, Poona, India. Inside the album two snapshots have place names written in pencil on the front (Madras Arts and Culture, Madras Museum), but Corbett Greig’s buoyant narrative, so much a feature of the other two albums, is absent.

In describing them my intention is to evoke something of the materiality of the collection and that the means of display, including the worsening condition of the albums, sets up cognitive approaches to the collection of images because the state of the albums is always coming between me and what I am trying to see. It is as though the deteriorating snapshots and fading text underscore the partiality of the lives they represent. The collection of albums and loose images is a haptic as well as visual experience because in opening and closing the albums or looking for a particular image I am always reminded of their age and object-ness through their fragility and unwieldiness. There are gaps where photographs have either fallen out or been removed, neatly cut out from one side of the page with no thought at all for the mayhem that causes on the other side of the page. The missing and torn pages accentuate the narrative structure of albums as types of books while the smell of the almost 90-year-old albums is a further sign of their deterioration. Idiosyncrasies, such as photographs placed at angles around a central image or collaged figures from postcards or programmes, are an indication of Corbett Greig’s creativity and a prompt that the albums are part of a history of highly gendered collecting practices. Narrated images that make jokes or assume a familiarity between the viewer and the figures depicted are reminders of Corbett Greig’s authorship and subjectivity and implicate her in the chronicled events.

22 From Kodak 116 roll film. Most of the images are printed on Velox paper, a thin contact paper.
I examine the albums in their entirety, scrutinising every page, and not just the images, with a magnifying glass, reading the paratext and the backdrop text that appears in some of the images where figures are posing under the signs of hotels or road markers or train stations or borders. The construction of narrative from such resources is a process and the results are a bricolage of fragments stitched together. The materiality of the albums and the display of the images function not only to make the thing itself visible but also to make it more visible in certain ways so as to function as statements of both locality and alterity (Maynard 1997: 31–32). Furthermore, as Geoffrey Batchen observes:

Morphology is another of those issues that most histories of photography ignore… the invisibility of the photograph, its transparency to its referent, has long been one of its most cherished features. All of us tend to look at photographs as if we are looking through a two-dimensional window onto some outside world. This is almost a perceptual necessity; in order to see what the photograph is of, we must first repress our consciousness of what the photograph is. (2002: 60)

While studies have concentrated on images contained within photo albums and the way they produce meaning and how they form discourses (see for example Hirsch 1997, 1999, 2008; Kuhn 2002), recent work has focused on the albums themselves (Di Bello 2007, Langford 2001, Batchen 2002, Dahlgren 2010). Batchen refers to the “thingness of the visual” (61), the hapticity of the image which is also an object, and that the albums are a compilation of image, text and mass – “a chronotope – a fictional fusion of time and space” (Langford 2001: 44) as well as a device that stores and transmits information (Dahlberg 2010: 177). Paraphrasing Annette Kuhn’s statement about memory, I suggest meaning rather than memory does not spring out of the photo itself but is:

generated in a network, an intertext, of discourses that shift between past and present, spectator and image [reader and text], and between all these and cultural contexts, historical moments… Cultural theory tells us there is little that is really personal or private about either family photographs or the memories they evoke: they can mean only culturally. (2002: 14)

In Batchen’s discussion of what he terms vernacular photographies he gathers abject photographies with “idiosyncratic morphologies” (2002: 57) that disrupt photography’s:

smooth European-American prejudice. In short vernaculars are photography’s parergon, the part of its history that has been pushed to the margins (or beyond them to oblivion) precisely in order to delimit what is and is not proper to this history’s enterprise. (58)

This ‘repression’ is the absent presence that decides what proper photography is not. Batchen’s catalogueing of vernacular genres is not an attempt to expand the canon. What he advocates is an appropriation of the ‘formalist art-historical narrative’ to more accurately reflect the mass and diversity of popular practices and to insist on the vernacularity of the art photograph itself,
disrupting oppositional structures. However, Batchen groups ‘neglected indigenous genres’ with Western genres such as “formal portraits of the family dog… coffee mugs emblazoned with pictures of the kids”, which he acknowledges creates “a troublesome field” (57). But his initial indexing of all parerga in relation to high-art criteria neglects to distinguish that repressions occur for multiple reasons. Gilt Indian albumen prints and Mexican fotoesculturas are relegated not only because they may (or may not) be formally abject but also because the art-historical narrative operates in tandem with class, racial and gender discourses that situationally determine where the centre and the margins lie. Historical narratives serve ideological purposes and the field of representations that is photography is a primary means of naturalising structural inequalities.

Overarching these vernacular forms is the wider practice of photography as a technology and the ways in which its consumption informs the work of the imagination and what Appadurai calls “experiments with self-making” (1996: 3). The increasing flow of ideas, technologies and media combined with movements of people such as those of the Hawaiian Troubadours on the entertainment circuits creates, as Appadurai goes on to say, “a new order of instability in the production of modern subjectivities” (4):

Thus, to put it summarily, electronic mediation and mass migration mark the world of the present not as technically new forces but as ones that seem to impel (and sometimes compel) the work of the imagination. Together they create specific irregularities because both viewers and images are in constant circulation. Neither images nor viewers fit into circuits or audiences that are easily bound within local, national or regional spaces. (4, my emphasis)

While Appadurai refers to ‘images and viewers’ I am interpreting his position in relation to the production of images by the Hawaiian Troubadours on the road and how “specific irregularities” were produced in localised contexts and how these can be interpreted through close reading of the images generated and collated by Corbett Greig. The period covered by the albums is from approximately 1925 to 1930, when Kaai and the Hawaiian Troubadours were most active in the Asia-Pacific region, and offer a unique insight into life on the road for a professional company of performers who also happen to be from diverse Pacific and European heritages.
Chapter 3. Hawaiian Music, Genre and Ideology

Historical antecedents for Honolulu’s unique, musically cosmopolitan environment can be framed by Marshall Sahlins’ description of pre-contact Hawaiian culture as “performatively assimilative” (1985: xii), that is, ready to change rules and signs in response to an altered cultural situation (Balme 2007: 107). Music can be seen, in this way, as “less an index of colonial power… [and more] a sign of indigenous strategies to harness foreign elements for their own devices” (107). Rather than seeing foreign elements strictly as imperialist impositions, Stacey Kamehiro, who has written extensively on Hawaiian participation in World’s Fairs, says:

Since early contact with European visitors, Native Hawaiians appropriated and modified various alien cultural practices, concepts, and technologies. They adapted a range of forms to their own aesthetic and social values, a process also motivated by desires to engage international trade and cultivate respect among foreign nations. (2011)

Kamehiro uses the example of Kamehameha I (c. 1753–1819), who was:

the first ruler of the unified Hawaiian archipelago [and] perhaps the first Native Hawaiian chief to adopt, on a striking scale, European weapons, architecture, furnishings, cloth, and clothing. For instance, the famous “red vest” portrait of Kamehameha painted by Louis Choris, an artist aboard the Russian warship Rurik, in November 1816 represents a double engagement with Western representational practices as it demonstrates the chief’s curiosity about painting and his insistence on presenting himself in appropriate European garb to a foreign audience. As the nineteenth century unfolded, Hawaiian chiefs incorporated other cultural forms such as Western-styled literature and poetry, music, architecture, painting, photography, theater, monuments, museums, and scientific organizations to further their own cultural and intellectual interests and curiosities. In so doing, they also cultivated means by which to resist colonial pressures exerted by the prosperous and increasingly influential haole (Euro-American) settlers in the Hawaiian Islands. (2011)

So from early on ali‘i modelled these engagements, and none more so than David Kalākaua (reign: 1874–1891). Kalākaua exemplified the symbolic nation-making that Kamehiro describes, asserting the Hawaiian state’s political legitimacy and Hawaiian modernity simultaneously in the social, political and cultural arenas. Kalākaua’s succession to the throne had been met with a strong surge of nationalism, and his motto “Ho‘oulu lahui” – to increase the race – was announced at his first public speech accompanied by a promise to “endeavour to preserve and increase the people that they shall multiply and fill the land with chiefs and commoners” (quoted in Zambucka 2003: 21). Celebrated for his commitment to Hawaiian cultural revitalisation, Kalākaua’s advocacy of the hula, for example, had a powerful impact on Hawaiian and settler-colonial society. Kaai was ten years old when Kalākaua died, but the cultural milieu he had
inhabited as a result of his parent’s roles within the royal household and administration would have made a profound impression on the musically gifted young man.

The influence of the ali‘i in musical terms was significant and remains so. Kalākaua and his sister Liliʻuokalani, along with their siblings Miriam Likelike and William Pitt Leleiohoku, were together known as Na Lani ʻEha (The Four Chiefs) because of their musical ability, which was reflected in the number of well-known compositions they each created and in their extensive catalogues. Individual musical compositions by Na Lani ʻEha were a significant element of Kaai’s repertory and even in his jazz-dominated later shows, the first half of the performances continued to reflect the authority of the ali‘i and Kaai’s connection to them. In 1907 Kaai published the *Royal Collection of Hawaiian Songs*, with a revised edition published in 1915 (for further details see Appendix 2).

Kalākaua also popularised the ʻukulele, playing and even manufacturing his own (Imada 2012: 287n92). For Kaai, as a young mandolin prodigy and an equally talented ʻukulele musician, the legitimacy this instrument received as a result of the king’s endorsement was significant. The ʻukulele became hugely popular not just within the life of the court but in wider Hawaiian society as well and became conceived of as a Hawaiian invention in spite of its Portuguese roots. Kaai himself was a committed advocate, encouraging students through his series of ʻukulele method books to expand their understanding of the instrument and think of it as capable of producing any kind of music. Kaai’s championing of the ʻukulele never lessened and an article in the *Honolulu Star Bulletin* declared the “difficulty of getting any real music out of the tiny stringed instrument” but that Kaai will attempt, almost as though it were an impossible challenge, a vocal performance of “The Rosary” accompanied only by ʻukulele in concert at the Honolulu Opera House.

3.1. Contextualising Kaai’s Practice

Building on and expanding upon “performative assimilation”, Margaret Kartomi’s notion of “intercultural musical synthesis” (1981: 233), which she articulates in part as a rejection of “acculturation,” can also be usefully employed in understanding Hawaiian music and in contextualising Kaai’s practice:

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1 *Honolulu Star Bulletin* [Honolulu], 11th February 1913: 5.
2 Composed by Ethelbert Nevin.
The process of intercultural musical synthesis, as opposed to the borrowing of single, discrete elements (such as a musical instrument), is not a matter of the addition of single elements of one culture to another. It is a matter of setting into motion an essentially creative process, that is the transformation of complexes of interacting and extramusical ideas. (Kartomi 1981: 233)

While Kartomi also adds that “[i]t serves no useful purpose to try and disentangle the musical elements from their new cultural matrix and trace them backwards, because they are intermeshed and reorganized on entirely new and specific lines” (233), she was writing against the “ethnocentric or racist-supremacist overtones” (232) of musicological writing in which “Eurocentric prejudices were rife” (227). By contrast, George Kanahele, for example, did seek to disentangle and enunciate the “deep structure” of Hawaiian music and describe its processual characteristics, in part to guard against its erasure in successive forms. Erasure came in many ways and my use of words like synthesis, assimilation or intersection, while intended to recognise indigenous agency, should not simultaneously mask the ideological domination of Hawaiian culture by settler-colonial power.

Elizabeth Tatar (1982) identifies the mele or chanted poetry from pre-European-contact Hawai‘i as the unique or distinctive characteristic from which Hawaiian music is derived, but that rather than textuality it was vocalisation, voice quality, melodic ornamentation, rhythmic pattern and melodic form that were the determinants of early Hawaiian forms and provide the “deep structure” for the continuing definition of Hawaiian music (Kanahele 1979: xxiv). Kanahele (1979) identified seven periods in post-European-contact Hawaiian music from 1820 to the mid 1970s that have been tabulated (see Table 1) in order to firstly provide a chronology and secondly show the intersection of Hawaiian and Western musical traits.

Kanahele was writing in 1979 and subsequent scholarship (see Carr 2006) has explored musical exchanges between whalers, for example, and Hawaiian seafarers pre-Period I (see Table 1), but Kanahele’s notion of the “deep structure” of Hawaiian music and his periodisation still offer a backdrop for contemporary approaches and help to inform the dialogue in what is still a site of contestation. This study also draws on two distinctions of “Hawaiian music”, one very succinctly made by Charles Hiroshi Garrett that the term encompasses “music created by Hawaiian musicians, regardless of its degree of connection to indigenous practices” (2008: 169) and also as defined by Hawaiian music scholar Amy K Stillman:

It is important to distinguish Hawaiian music – a discrete ethnic tradition – from music in Hawai‘i – musical life that includes the traditions of various ethnic groups, among them Hawaiian, Japanese, Chinese and Western peoples. Hawaiian music, then, is not
simply any music we may encounter in Hawai‘i, but rather the music tradition of one particular ethnic group, the Hawaiians. (1987: 222)

There are further distinctions to be made which rely on understanding the intersection of Western musical traditions and Hawaiian indigenous practices. *Table 1* lays these out in a broad manner while *Table 2* draws on Dr Stillman’s four song type categories of Westernised Hawaiian traditional music (1987: 223) that specifically identify the popular forms and the degree of synthesis reflected in them. As mentioned earlier, indigenous practice encompassed unique vocal styles. These can be classified by “text function, recitation style and phonetic vocal techniques” (Stillman 1987: 222). Rhythmic instruments were also used but as an accompaniment for dance. Western modes combining with Hawaiian forms date from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and show indigenous responses to introduced materials. In the nineteenth century these were primarily a response to American Protestant hymnody whereas in the twentieth century it was primarily American popular music. Influences are reflected in melody, harmony and instrumentation while performance practices like recitation styles and vocal techniques were carried over from indigenous styles. Kaai incorporated all of these song styles at one time or another within his performances, arrangements and compositions. He had an extensive knowledge of mele and classical Hawaiian vocalisation and percussion techniques and was well acquainted with the revitalised hula performance traditions of Kalākaua’s reign. Kaai combined these skills with a wide-ranging understanding of Western musical forms.
Table 1: Seven major periods in Hawaiian music, 1820–1974. The coloured area indicates the periods in which Kaai was working, but the influence of Period I & II were powerful as these are the periods that informed his musical education in both Western and Hawaiian realms. (Source: Kanabele 1979: xxx-xxx, identified by Elizabeth Tatar in “Introduction: What is Hawaiian Music”)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Musical Styles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Period I</td>
<td>1820–1872</td>
<td>Spans the arrival of missionaries and the establishment of the Royal Hawaiian Band by Henry Berger. Introduction of stringed instruments.</td>
<td>Hymns and secular music. Ships’ bands introduce popular music including the waltz, which made a big impact. Secular music influences from a wide range of ethnic and cultural sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period II</td>
<td>1872–c.1900</td>
<td>Henry Berger and the Royal Hawaiian Band; royal music clubs, which included glee clubs. Musical notation of singing styles. Hymn harmony embedded in Hawaiian music and melody.</td>
<td>Prolific royal compositions including Aloha ‘Oe. Appearance of the hula ku’i.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period V</td>
<td>c.1930–1960</td>
<td>Popularly identified as a “golden age”; radio, movie and television coverage at a peak.</td>
<td>Full orchestras; hotel showrooms across the North American continent featured Hawaiian revues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period VI</td>
<td>1960–1970</td>
<td>Hawaiian music drops to 5% of radio airtime in Hawai‘i.</td>
<td>Rock ‘n’ roll dominant; Don Ho and Kui Lee very popular in Hawai‘i and the North American continent.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Four major traditional Hawaiian song types that date from European contact (source: Stillman 1987).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song Style</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Himeni</td>
<td>Hawaiian transliteration of the word “hymn”. Consists of hymns translated into Hawaiian from European and American sources. Printed formats were issued by Protestant (1823), followed by Catholic (1852), Anglican (1874) and Mormon (1924) missionaries. Important because 1) they were often performed in secular contexts utilising Hawaiian performance styles, and 2) they provided models for Hawaiian songwriters who began writing and composing secular songs in the 1860s. It was a common practice for early missionaries to write Hawaiian lyrics to the tunes of well-known hymns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Himeni-type</td>
<td>Secular songs, but in their form (alternation of verse and chorus) and melodic style, are indistinguishable from himeni. Often in 2/4 or waltz time. Mostly love songs utilising imagery and poetic devices from indigenous poetry. The verse and chorus usually contain sixteen bars each.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hula Ku‘i</td>
<td>Acculturated hula that emerged out of the late-nineteenth-century revival of indigenous performing traditions by Kalākaua. Hula practitioners sought to combine (ku‘i) older Hawaiian music and dance with newer Western traditions. Western melodic styles and accompaniment became more prominent in hula songs from the late nineteenth century, but Hawaiian vocal performance techniques are still clearly heard. Hula ku‘i songs are strophic, often in 2/4 time, with stanzas of two lines alternating with a brief instrumental interlude popularly referred to as a vamp or turnaround. A key identifying feature in the final strophe/stanza is a first line signalling the end of the song, “Ha‘ina ‘ia mai ana ka puana”, which translates as “The story is told”. Unlike the previous two categories, Hula Ku‘i are choreographed and are strongly identified with Hawaiian practices. There is a low incidence of publication of hula songs until well into the twentieth century, something Stillman attributes to their being regarded by Christian and Western segments of the community as an &quot;outcast genre&quot; (p226).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hapa Haole</td>
<td>Structurally quite stable, most hapa haole songs are in a 32-bar “popular” song form: AA’BA, with the B section being the bridge or chorus. However, this form has more provisional properties than the other categories and so benefits from further examination of both Garrett and Stillman’s definitions (see above).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In “Published Hawaiian Songbooks” (1987) Amy Stillman conducts a survey of songbooks published between 1898 and 1985. She identifies 16 songs that Kaai, with his collaborator William Hodges, either wrote, composed or arranged and then published in 1917¹ and divides

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them according to three of the categories in the table above – himeni-type (5), hula ku’i (6) and hapa haole (5). As a publication for the Hawai’i Promotion Committee, the even distribution across the major secular modes no doubt takes the type of audience into account and the exclusion of himeni suggests a popular music approach.

3.2. Tin Pan Alley

The intersection of Western forms and traditional Hawaiian music can then be seen as resulting in a spectrum of responses under the rubric of “Hawaiian music”. Closely related to this framework, however, are the many Hawaiian-themed songs that were composed by non-Hawaiian songwriters and marketed by Tin Pan Alley publishers (Garrett 2008: 169). These songs, of which there are many hundreds, were instrumental in constructing perceptions of Hawai’i not just in America where they were generated but anywhere the songs gained popularity. Their misleading cultural and musical representations promoted many stereotypes based on race, gender or difference and made an overwhelming contribution to the signification of Hawai’i in Western society and the construction of Hawaiian music as a genre. Following Garrett (2008), the two terms – Hawaiian music and Hawaiian-themed music – are in conflict, but both need to be kept in view in order to distinguish one from the other when appropriate (Garrett, 2008) and seen in perspective with the periods laid out in Table 1.

An understanding of genre provides additional tools to interpret the meanings generated outside of stylistic and technical properties. According to Jim Samson, “A genre is dependent for its definition on context, function and community validation and not simply on formal and technical regulations” (1989: 213). Genre then can be seen as inherently unstable because it is provisional and produced through an array of interactions. Viewed this way, Hawaiian music is constructed by not only the association of at least two distinct fields of musical practice as defined by Garrett (2008) above but also many approaches, contexts, functions, communities, histories and “fields of conflicting interests, institutions and memories” (Walser 1993: 29). As Frederic Jameson argues, “pure textual exemplifications do not exist”; music (the text in this case) manifests at the “intersection of several genres and emerge from the tensions in the latter’s multiple force fields” (1982: 322). The fixity with which the genre “Hawaiian music” is popularly understood, however, does not take into account the mobility of these socio-cultural factors and reflects a further statement from Walser that “the purpose of a genre is to organize the reproduction of a particular ideology” (109). Ideology or discourse penetrates all aspects of the traditional Hawaiian song types outlined in Table 2 and the prevailing discourses are most
powerfully exemplified when representations of Hawaiian music conform to colonialist expectations. Hapa haole and Tin Pan Alley songs intersect at a point in time when American imperial might was being consolidated in Hawai‘i.

The differential power dynamics between the Hawaiian people and American imperial interests are potently expressed in the realm of Hawaiian musical culture. But dominant power portrayals of Hawaiian stereotypes in music as well as other popular modes of representation emerged from a cultural collision that produced complex dynamics:

Various overlaps between the worlds of popular music and indigenous Hawaiian music have created even more complications, as a result of the circulation throughout the Hawaiian Islands of westernized performance practices and repertory as well as the participation of numerous Hawaiian musicians who created, recorded and popularized these songs. (Garrett 2008: 169)

One outcome of this collision was that the term hapa haole as a musical style definition came into circulation. The phrase translates as “half-foreign” but in common usage implies “half-white”. It originally referred to someone who was of mixed native Hawaiian and foreign descent, but as musicians in Hawai‘i were exposed to musical forms from Europe and America in the late nineteenth century the same term was applied to those “various overlaps” which produced music that combined English and Hawaiian lyrics or reworked indigenous songs with English lyrics or took indigenous forms and combined those with styles derived from popular music, especially American forms like ragtime, blues and jazz. At its broadest the term is also applied to English-language songs that address Hawaiian themes (Garrett 2008: 173).

The construction of Hawaiian music as a “genre”, however, is contingent and takes elements from across the musical spectrum of meanings described above. If, as Stillman observes, Hawaiian style can be applied to non-Hawaiian songs and such songs can be co-opted into Hawaiian songbooks, but a Hawaiian song “performed by someone not familiar with the salient features of Hawaiian music performance cannot be classified as Hawaiian music” (1987: 223), then the authenticating, style-making properties of the song are delivered in the performance and Hawaiian performance practices can be said to be independent of the repertory. The conditional practices referred to here help create the paradox whereby Hawaiian-themed music and also non-Hawaiian music were often performed by Hawaiian musicians in the Hawaiian style, meaning instrumental accompaniment patterns and arrangements, as well as vocal techniques and particular Western songs, have become closely identified with individual Hawaiian musicians. Conversely, Hawaiian instruments or accompaniment patterns have also become
identified with Western traditions and their Hawaiian antecedents have been obscured, leading listeners to believe that what they are hearing are Western elements – the steel guitar and its incorporation into blues or country modes, for example. John Troutman’s “Steelin’ the Slide” (2013) explores the influence of Hawaiian slide technique on the development of the blues.

Stereotypes commonly associated with the Hawai‘i of popular culture were generated by a number of media and the genre-ification of Hawaiian music began to emerge. However, early attempts at songs that invoked Hawaiian culture, like “My Hula Lula Girl” (1903) by the songwriting team William Jerome and Jean Schwartz, delivered an excess of signs that combed orientalist depictions with island associations (on the sheet music cover) featuring a woman’s face partly obscured by a veil. The object of desire dances the “bungalow” and her father is “King Mataboola”. There is a surplus of primitive and exotic identifiers that wildly gesture at the “oriental pearl” and her exotic beauty but neglect to mention Hawai‘i, “hula hula”, grass skirts, grass huts or any of the icons that have come to be associated with the Tin Pan Alley Hawaiian-themed tradition, indicating perhaps that the “visual and musical shorthand for Hawaiian culture had not yet been codified by American songwriters at the beginning of the twentieth century” (Garrett 2008: 165). Several key events led to the codifying of Hawaiian culture in the American, and by extension Western, imagination, not least of which was the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy by a small group of American businessmen and the subsequent formal annexation of the Hawaiian Islands as a United States territory in the Newlands Resolution passed by Congress in 1898.

3.3. The Western Hawaiian Music Phenomenon

After annexation, travel between Hawai‘i and San Francisco increased and Hawaiian musicians travelled to the mainland, particularly the West Coast, where they joined vaudeville circuits, played small theatres and appeared in expositions. American audiences received their introduction to talented Hawaiian musicians like Sonny Cunha, Ernest Kaai and Joseph Kekuku, the Hawaiian man credited with the invention of the kīkā kilā and also Hawaiian vocal techniques and instruments like the ‘ukulele. The earliest photographic evidence of an ‘ukulele in America was taken in 1895, with a member of a Hawaiian company, the Kanaka Band, who toured San Francisco, St Louis, Des Moines and Chicago (Kanahele 1979: 398). Groups like the Kanaka Band, Toots Paka’s Hawaiians, the Royal Hawaiian Band, and the Hawaiian Glee Club were touring on the east and west coasts; tourists were returning from holidays in the islands with the instrument and the Hawai‘i Promotion Committee (established in 1903) actively
promoted the ‘ukulele on the American continent in travel campaigns (399). By 1910 the ‘ukulele had achieved massive popularity in the United States. Hawai‘i-based manufacturers multiplied and were kept busy meeting the demand. Kaai, although primarily a musician and teacher, also established his own ‘ukulele manufacturing business in 1909 in Honolulu. Kaai travelled to the mainland a number of times in this period teaching and performing and along with others made a huge impact in the Hawaiian pavilions at the world expositions, particularly the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific (A-Y-P) Exposition of 1909 in Seattle. The event that had the biggest influence on the perception of Hawaiian culture, however, not just in America but also Canada, Australia and Europe, was a play that combined a familiar storyline with music provided by indigenous Hawaiian musicians.

3.4. The Bird of Paradise

On the 11th of September 1911 The Bird of Paradise premiered in Los Angeles at the Belasco Theatre. Written by Richard Walton Tully, the play tells the story of a doomed affair between Luana, a Hawaiian girl, and Paul Wilson, a young American. The folly of miscegenation is played out against a backdrop of modernity versus superstition culminating in the tragic self-sacrifice of the heroine. It was a familiar story, perhaps because Tully had collaborated on other projects with playwright David Belasco and there are parallels with Belasco’s play Madame Butterfly: A Tragedy of Japan (1900), which also inspired Puccini’s opera. Over the next decade The Bird of Paradise was hugely successful in North America, Canada and Australia and on the West End in London.

Although the play itself is now largely forgotten, it had an enormous impact on the perception of Hawai‘i as it thematically and literally introduced indigenous Hawaiians “to the New York stage and thus into the centre of US media attention” (Balme 2005: 6). The story unfolds during the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy, and although Tully’s script expresses concerns for the social and political forces affecting Hawaiians at the time and was against annexation, the play is still closely associated with ideological imperatives:

A mixture of orientalism, colonialism, and a particularly American variation of the Pacific imaginary, that tropical locus amoenus of free love and carefree existence celebrated by explorers, writers and painters from Bougainville and Rousseau to Melville and Gauguin. (Balme 2005: 2)

Non-Hawaiians regularly performed the Hawaiian characters. The actress who first performed the character of Luana, Laurette Taylor, confessed:
I hate to disabuse the public, but I don’t know anything at all about Hawai‘i. I have never been there; I never met any Hawaiians until I began to study the role of Luana, and I’m sure I don’t know whether the dialect I used in the play is real or not.²

Regardless of the veracity, or lack of it, of her performance, she was convincing enough for many in the audience, including critics who had little or no frame of reference despite the Hawaiian touring companies, who tended to play smaller theatres or vaudeville venues. The character of Luana was the female embodiment of exoticism, erotic appeal and island charm and also helped generate a national craze for the hula. The Broadway version of Hawaiian female dress involved many beaded necklaces, a floral headband and a low-slung grass skirt that, like the song sheet cover for “My Hula Lula Girl,” conflated hints of orientalist exoticism; the grass skirt resembles harem pants, with aspects of flapper style, the long low profile perhaps adding a sense of modernity and popular consciousness to the appeal of the music and associated practices.

Five indigenous Hawaiian musicians – W. K. Kolomoku, B. Waiwaiiole, S. M. Kaiawe, who also gave Laurette Taylor hula instruction, A. Kiwaia and W. B. Aeko – were employed to play the 26 songs that accompanied the initial staging of the play. The songs were for the most part Hawaiian compositions. An early review in the New York Times commented on “the introduction of the weirdly sensuous music of the island people” (cited in Kanahele 1979: 45), while in Los Angeles a reviewer praised “the native musicians who make the haunting musical interpolations of their own land” and later admired “the threnody of the ukulele and the haunting, yearning cry of steel pressed against the strings of the guitar.”³ The play was hugely influential and generated many stock company productions and two feature films. However, its influence was not restricted to the audiences that paid to see it as undoubtedly “[t]he many spin-offs from a production may extend many years beyond its own life-cycle. They may also, with the help of other media, reach places where the actual production was never seen” (Balme 2005: 4). Kaai’s later stagings of A Night in Honolulu (1922–1937) certainly reveal the influence of the stage play on the repertory content of his performances.

Thematically the play deals with a number of issues, including the annexation of the Hawaiian Islands and miscegenation along with “popular nineteenth century South Seas themes – human sacrifice and witchcraft” (Balme 2007: 148). Tully articulated the premises that he sought to present in the play:

The disappearance of the so-called inferior races before the advancement of the Anglo-Saxon race. …Degeneracy and death is the penalty that has always been paid by the higher race that seeks to raise the lower by amalgamating with it. The Play…thoroughly dramatizes the well-known fact that though we dress, educate and polish the members of a lower race to the superficial religious and social equality with the Caucasian, at heart he is still the fetish-worshipping savage who will become atavistic in every moment of stress. (Fendler v Morosco, Court of Appeals of the State of New York, 1930)

The influence of the play on Western public opinion and on the reception of Hawaiian music as popular music was significant, and all the more so considering Simon Frith’s statement:

My point is not that a social group has beliefs which it then articulates in its music, but that music, an aesthetic practice, articulates in itself an understanding of both group relations and individuality, on the basis of which ethical codes and social ideologies are understood… in other words… social groups agree on values which are then expressed in their cultural activities (the assumption of the homology models) but… they only get to know themselves as groups (as a particular organisation of individual and social interests, of sameness and difference) through cultural activity, through aesthetic judgement. Making music isn’t a way of expressing ideas; it is a way of living them. (Frith 1996: 110–111)

The affective, “weirdly sensuous music” combined with the audience’s “act of participation” (Frith 1996: 110) means the music’s deep associations with Tully’s themes of miscegenation, “fetish-worshipping savagery” and “lower” races communicated and reinforced a very strong message about the cultures of the characters they depicted. Paraphrasing Frith: “the meaning of [Hawaiian music], as an experience, is not to be found in the text, but in the performance of the text, in the process in which it is realised” – the process that this music was realised in was one of profound racism and one the musicians were cogniscent of, criticising the production for the unfair depiction of Native Hawaiians (Troutman 2016: 91)

Photographs, then, are a source that needs to be interpreted and supplemented by other evidence. They are incomplete, as historical sources always are. They have been collected and filtered through other hands, as historical sources always have been. They are filled with contradictions and paradoxes, as the most valuable historical sources frequently are. In short, they behave much like other sources historians depend on. What differs is less the uniqueness of photographic materials than our tendency to see photographs as more “real” than other sources and our relative inexperience in using them historically. We have to learn the truth of Allan Sekula’s observation that “the photograph, as it stands alone, presents merely the possibility of meaning.” Lawrence Levine (1993: 24)

The colonial archive is a catalogue of inequality. Anthropometry, surveillance, control, hierarchy and genocide are some of the instruments of power that are not only documented photographically but also enacted through picture taking where the camera itself is the weapon: “the surveillance of the gaze was one of the chief instruments of domination, whether of the criminal, the insane, or the subject peoples of the empire” (Pinney 1990: 260). Wehi Greig’s collection of photographs, which numbers in the 500s, constitutes an alternative discourse in relation to the official archive. The accompanying annotations narrate the images sometimes just
with brief details of names, dates and places, but there are also jokes, puns and nicknames of subjects within the photographs. The text and layout of the photographs is diaristic in that it is mostly chronological, and it is also singular in that the composition has been authored by one person: Wehi Te Paea Corbett Greig, a musician and member of the Hawaiian Troubadours and also the main photographer. Within the album framework Wehi is not just narrating – she is producing, organising, naming and interiorising the experiences represented by the images through her text. The period covered by the albums is from approximately 1924 to 1930, when Kaai and the Hawaiian Troubadours were most active in the Asia-Pacific region. The albums offer a unique insight into life on the road for a professional company of performers who also happen to be from diverse Pacific and European heritages. Wehi’s photographs offer many entry points for dialogic engagement and are illustrative of Christopher Pinney’s notion whereby “[t]he photograph ceases to be a univocal, flat, and uncontestable indexical trace of what was, and becomes instead a complexly textured artefact (concealing many different depths) inviting the viewer to assume many possible different standpoints – both spatial and temporal – in respect to it” (Pinney 2003: 5).

In the image in Fig. 2, eight members of the Hawaiian Troubadours stand in archways of the Dewan-e-khas, a pavilion within the Lahore Fort, Lahore, India, circa 1928.1 Several members, besides the photographer, are carrying cameras that look to be versions of the Kodak folding pocket camera. Other photographs taken of the group on the same day suggest there was an exchange of cameras between members of the party where they took turns photographing each other; with so many cameras there is also the prospect of many more photographs in existence documenting the same event, perhaps in other family collections. All of the photographs at the Lahore Fort and many other locations show the entertainers at ease with one another and in front of the camera. The poses are not stiff and faces unsmiling or overly formal; they show a range of expressions and at times playful poses. A process of elimination means the camera operator in the above photograph is Ernest Kaai. Kaai enjoyed filmmaking and was known to have made moving images documenting his visits in many different locations2. The photograph is well composed on a diagonal line with no feet or heads cut off. There is a sense that the performers are used to having their photographs taken as they appear relaxed and there is no expectation that everyone should be looking at the photographer.

1 Before the India/Pakistan partition on August 14th 1947.
2 South Western Times [Bunbury], 23rd August 1928: 4.
The Lahore Fort provides a backdrop. The figures in the background are not wearing Western dress and appear to be occupied but not in a touristic way – they appear to be part of the backdrop. Backdrops are, according to Arjun Appadurai, “a discourse of the modern”:

Though backdrops may be described as props… They introduce partial and sometimes contradictory ideas about the context and location of the subject. Backdrops blur the boundary between subject and context; they provide occasions for rehearsing new positions for social subalterns; they bring domestic and official space into the same visual order; they combine the power of the official with the pleasures of the ludic. For all these reasons, backdrops allow photographers (and their clients) to interrogate the different realisms (scientific, official, everyday) that the medium appears to arrogate to itself, thus claiming a privileged place as a discourse of the modern. Backdrops promote the fantastic, the arbitrary, the ludic and the utopian as accessories for the subjectivity of the persons in photographs and the persons who view and circulate photographs. Backdrops, thus, remain a place where the meanings of modernity can be contested and where experiments with the means of modernity can be conducted, even by those not well-placed in relation to class and state power. (1997: 8)

The backdrop extends beyond the frame and surrounds the subjects, establishing a scene that is allegorical because it is at once localising, highly stylised and partial. Inevitably then, within the structure of colonial photography it becomes a _type_ of location that in turn attempts to typify the subject (Appadurai 1997). Colonial photographic practice involving human subjects “allowed the documentary realism of the token (the particular person or group being photographed) to be absorbed into the fiction of the general ‘type’, most often an ethnological type” (4). Backdrops can be construed as spaces of ambiguity. The production of a type or cultural imaginary in the space of the backdrop expresses the tension between the modern technology of photography and the cultural environment it enters into. Furthermore the backdrop is indexical to multiple backdrops:

In Orientalising or colonializing settings, there are two kinds of “backdrops” that imply two sorts of contexts for photographs produced… One may distinguish these as the visible and the invisible backdrop, respectively. The significance of the visible backdrop (actually represented in the photograph) cannot be assessed without reference to the invisible backdrop (the discourses and images that inform the eye of the photographer). (8)

A second, invisible, but still visual order of references also shapes the reading of the photographs, an intertextual realm that consists of:

other photographs, visual texts and verbal discourses – ethnological, touristic, bureaucratic and missionary – which in various combinations, chains and packages, shape the reading competence of particular groups of intended viewers of these photographs. Thus the photographically rendered backdrop is one part of a double frame in which the photographic subject, as well as photography itself, is contained. The second frame is the wider visual order of colonial Orientalism. (8)
What W J T Mitchell describes as “the whole field of representations and representational activity” (1994: 6), which is the interlayering of various forms of representation – self-presentation, factual and fictional, textual and pictorial. Wehi’s collection offers an expansion of the field of representations of Oceanic peoples in this period and in fact continues to do so because contemporary depictions of Oceanic peoples are still affected by stereotypes that are in effect orientalising – imagined, exaggerated, emphasised, and distorted, simultaneously backward, exotic and violent.

Following Appadurai’s sequence of frames, the visible backdrops in the case of Wehi’s photographs are “inevitably metaphoric” (1997: 5) symbols of the colonial dialectic that inform the invisible frame. The second frame or wider visual order is impacted by competing discourses, including the colonial stereotype and racialised other as described above. Appadurai’s concept of “the subaltern backdrop” (5) expresses the inclusion of human subjects within the setting.

The Hawaiian Troubadours are once again “discrepant.” Vicente Rafael, in writing about photographic portraits of bourgeois Filipinos under US rule, describes the photographs as compelling because:

they seem to escape instrumentalisation and reduction into either colonialist or anti-colonial narratives… The richness of their details, the expressiveness of their faces, and the intricate precision of their surfaces give each photograph a particularity that exceeds generalisation. (2000: 100)

The Troubadours portrayed modernity and identity in a variety of ways: clothing, hairstyles, technology (cameras), leisure. In this photograph, for example, the men are wearing pith helmets, which were also known as topi or sola topi. There were two main designs of these helmets, and the men of the Hawaiian Troubadours wore a style known as the “Bombay bowler”:

The topi was a fetish; it was a tribal symbol. If you did not wear a topi you were not merely silly, you were a cad. You were a traitor… You had gone native. (a former missionary quoted in de Caro and Jordan 1984: 237)

The topi was, and continues to be, heavily identified with the British Raj. By the 1870s and 1880s they were worn universally by both Englishmen and women in India. It was seen as indispensable and a badge of Anglo-Indian’ identity that, while an assertion of Britishness, also had an insider connotation identifying the wearer’s enculturation into a colonial grouping that had been conditioned by a unique Indian experience (de Caro and Jordan 1984). Based on

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3 “This term, once used to designate an English person who lived in India or to describe English society in India (‘Anglo-India’), had by the 1920s come to mean a person of mixed Indian and British ancestry, a ‘Eurasian.’ We have retained the older use of the word as a convenience” (de Caro and Jordan 1984: 236).
informants’ accounts from the 1920s and 1930s, de Caro and Jordan (1984) describe Anglo-Indian perceptions of Eurasians wearing the headgear “with even greater zeal than the English themselves, as a badge of the European identity that they preferred to emphasise” (241). The helmets, of which only specific kinds were socially sanctioned⁴, helped to forge an identity that had an implicit authenticity attached to it.

In India, none of the women of the Troubadours wore a pith helmet (except Wehi – but it was usually in a joking manner, implying that she had a sense of irony about the helmets), but all of the men did. How then did the men of the Hawaiian Troubadours picture themselves? Did they need to distinguish themselves from subaltern classes and simultaneously assert a type of masculinity as well as their connections to Great Britain (see George Greig Chapter 8: 8.2)? Or were the helmets a type of camouflage, as Homi Bhabha (1984) describes in his exploration of Lacanian mimicry: “not a harmonisation or repression of difference, but a form of resemblance that differs/defends presence by displaying it in part, metonymically” (131)? The helmets bring to mind Bhabha’s vernacular cosmopolitans mentioned above who are compelled to make a tryst with cultural translation as an act of survival. Bhabha also describes mimicry as deeply ambivalent – on the one hand a sign of conformity and self-regulation and on the other of resistance and potentially of subversion creating a sense of parody and irony in the distortion of the image of the coloniser: “The ambivalence of colonial authority repeatedly turns from mimicry – a difference that is almost nothing but not quite – to menace – a difference that is almost total but not quite” (Bhabha 1984: 91), which Bhabha rephrases as “almost but not white.” In another iteration of the almost but not quite, George Leywood, the Hawaiian Troubadours’ manager, who was a Liverpudlian of Scottish descent, wore his helmet at an angle, giving the headgear an insouciance not generally associated with it and adding an element of British class subversion to the profusion of signs. And yet, simultaneously, their alterity are all portrayed in the photographs.

Two of the women in Figure 2, Tuavivi and Thelma, are both hatless and wear contemporary hairstyles. In 1927 all of the women of the Troubadours wore their hair this way: bobbed in an A-line, asymmetrical style that was shorter or “shingled” at the back and longer in the front. The haircut was a sign of modernity that has been interpreted post-World War I as “a visual fantasy of female liberation” (Roberts 1993: 683). Wehi’s hair is covered by her cloche hat, but she can be seen wearing a look made popular by Coco Chanel who had, in her dress designs, “removed

⁴ De Caro and Jordan’s (1984) article is titled “The Wrong Topi” and describes rituals with the buying, wearing and discarding of the headgear.
the waistline altogether and radically shortened the skirt to well above the ankle” and had also incorporated male fashions – “short hair, ties, collars, long tailor-cut jackets… to create a boyish look” (667). Roberts interprets these elements as a “political language of signs… in short, as a visual analogue of female liberation” (665). However, just as “Natives” and “tourists” were discussed earlier as: “incommensurable categories”, fashion, modern, liberation, and “Natives” are also in tension. The “naturalness” of the mismatch of these classifications highlights the radical way in which the women of the Troubadours expressed their subjectivity and agency through their clothing choices – they were undeterred by, or perhaps determinedly incognisant of, racist disciplining, but either way, their dress is a bold statement in the face of colonial and patriarchal power. In other photographs (such as Figure 3), Wehi’s houndstooth suit, Tuavivi’s neckties and dropped waist dresses, their hairstyles, hats and high-collar coats – all are declarations of youth, modernity and cosmopolitanism demonstrated through their consumption of international urban style.

The women’s portrayal of exoticised females on stage was in tension with what the critics of the new style of dress found most offensive: “their effect of reversing or blurring the boundaries of sexual difference, enabling women not only to look like but to act like men” (669). In 1927 a French commentator wrote, “Women want to walk, run, do sports” (quoted in Roberts 1993: 675), and as an advertorial tactic, Tuavivi Greig is portrayed in the Singapore press as not only the “Hawaiian Pavlova” but also as “a most cultured girl and brilliant tennis player. Her latest craze is to take up golf”,5 articulating a “modern woman” who was athletic as well as urbane, an image designed to appeal to colonial Singaporean audiences. Such an emancipated persona was by no means uncontested in this time period, even in solely Euro-American contexts, so the depiction of a hula dancer, one of the “children of the sun” as the Troubadours were called on more than one occasion, reveals self-authoring that is contingent on modernity. The women’s short hairstyles and clothing were implicitly oppositional on multiple levels. With such a mixture of signs and categories in their dress and style, the young women of A Night in Honolulu – Tuavivi, Thelma, Lucy, Frances, Wehi and Queenie – assert an unexpected and idiosyncratic collective identity. As Adria Imada says: “Colonialism falters when people refuse to see themselves through the eyes of the coloniser” (2012: 88).

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The men of the Hawaiian Troubadours had fewer chances available to them than the women in terms of gendered expressions of emancipated selfhood, but they made the most of their opportunities. Outside of the theatre in a variety of contexts and locations the men always wore the same Euro-American modes of dress that dominated in the settler-colonial societies that they came from, New Zealand and Hawai‘i – suits, ties, hats, overcoats and so on – that reflected a sense of awareness of fashionable style – Sid David and Kaai in particular. On stage, while Kaai wore a suit, vest and bow tie, the other men usually wore white shirts and white trousers with a wide sash (often purple) tied on the left side, a mode (not necessarily with a sash) that can still be seen amongst professional entertainers in Hawai‘i today.

Another item of clothing that implies the same sort of negotiation was the striped blazer. While in India, Kaai and George Leywood wore the blazers with open-necked shirts – rather than a collar and tie – and light-coloured trousers. Local Britons appear in some of Wehi’s photographs wearing the same ensemble and class connotations are unavoidable. Associated with sporting
and boating clubs, schools and regiments in England and just as fetishised as the pith helmet, blazers were (and are still) customised with badges and button details as well as colour, fabric, piping and are often associated with ritual practices. Kaai and Leywood both appear to be wearing a costume. The difference between Kaai’s wearing of the helmet and blazer can be seen in a comparison with an image where Kaai is fishing in a stream in New Zealand and has removed his jacket. Around his waist is a tāniko belt. Tāniko is a “uniquely Māori variation of whatu (twining) and is used to weave the colourful, intricate borders of cloaks… Tāniko is also used to make pari (bodices), ūpare (headbands), tāpeka (sashes), tātua (belts).” Kaai has integrated the tātua, a gift, into his everyday dress; there is no sense of the mimicry or camouflage that is present with the wearing of the helmets and blazers, suggesting a closer identification with the notion of the tātua and perhaps the people who gave it to him.

![Figure 4: Kaai fishing wearing a tātua. With Tuavivi Greig (l) and Wehi Greig (r) at Monre, near Mahia Peninsula, New Zealand, 1926. (Source: Collection of Wehi Greig)](image)

4.1. Seeing Machine

Like any other camera-wielding travellers, the Hawaiian Troubadours memorialised their experiences with photographs, whether that was fishing in a stream in New Zealand, boiling the billy on the side of the road in Australia or standing amongst the ruins of The Residency in

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Locnnow – images that seemingly conflict with the ethnographic display the performers presented on stage and in their marketing but which for the performers are clearly demarcated.

Photographs provide specific and concrete instances of interpretive material and can offer a counter discourse to the “seeing machine” of empire (Foucault 1995: 207) that racialised and controlled subjects in colonial contexts (Imada 2008: 398). The effacement of marginalised subjects from historical narratives has been described as an amnesia that truncates the already contested and unfinished stories of empire (Hall 2008: 5). Responses to this ‘historylessness’ (Gilroy 2008: 23) can be found in archives of personal photographs. In the case of Kaai, photographs by members of his troupes comprise such an archive, one that provides, amongst many other qualities, “evidentiary value” (Wexler 2000: 7). The photographic collections documenting Kaai and his musicians travels signal presence in geographically and socially diverse locales and are a simultaneous signifier of the absence of indigenous Hawaiian and Pacific subjects from the colonial canon, except in the most narrow of interpretations that rely on the perception of Hawaiians as solely autochthonous.

The ‘self-fashioning’ of the musicians in the Kaai collection (Pinney 2003: 5) is an interconstitutive act participated in by the photographers who were part of the troupes and subjects within the images. Pinney writes: “Photography’s mimetic doubling becomes a prism through which to consider questions of cultural and self-identity, historical consciousness, and the nature of photographic affirmation and revelation” (2003: 6). The intimacy and equivalency between the main subjects of the photographs and the photographers are a departure from the encodings of the official archive.

Figure 5: Kaai, Hawaiian Troubadours, boatmen and guide at the Marble Rocks, Jubulpur 1928
5.1. “A Giant in Hawaiian Music”

A review of the literature concerning Kaai reveals many disparate sources, each with their own specific interest, as the tendency has been for silos to develop around an instrument Kaai was identified with. Nonetheless, there has until now only been limited linking of these materials and attempts to understand Kaai within the context of world events or to derive cultural meaning from his achievements. The work that comes closest to this aim and is crucial to any discussion of Hawaiian music is the writing of Hawaiian cultural historian Dr George Kanahele. Writing in
a period considered as the Hawaiian cultural renaissance,¹ Kanahele described a reversal of years of cultural decline:

Like a dormant volcano coming to life again, the Hawaiians are erupting with all the pent-up energy and frustrations of a people on the “make.” This great happening has been called a “psychological renewal,” a “reaffirmation,” a “revival” or “resurgence” and a “renaissance.” No matter what you call it, it is the most significant chapter in 20th century Hawaiian history. (1979)²

The Hawaiian Music Foundation developed, in the absence of any scholarship on Hawaiian music since Helen Roberts’ 1926 study Ancient Hawaiian Music, the Hawaiian Music and Musicians project with Kanahele as editor and author, along with 22 principal contributors. The project mapped the known body of knowledge on Hawaiian music and also sought to address important questions around the emergence of the Hawaiian ensemble, the internationalisation of Hawaiian music and, for example, how chants and contemporary songs related to one another. The question of “What is Hawaiian music?” was pivotal and is addressed in the introduction, but in another way the question is answered through the many biographies that form the main body of the text. Kanahele understood the relevance of music in perpetuating: “cultural integrity and uniqueness”, in this case Hawaianness:

In a culture that has been subverted by cataclysmic changes over the past 200 years, the one thing that has retained a dynamic identity is Hawaiian music. Its relevance should be clear to anyone who has observed closely and who appreciates the struggles that Hawaiians have made and continue to make in affirming and revitalising their ties with Hawai‘i’s past and present. (1979: xi)

In an article in the Hawaiian Music Foundation’s periodical Ha‘ilono Mele, Kanahele had already identified Kaai as ‘A Giant in Hawaiian Music’ (1977: 3), and that article forms the foundation of the entry on Kaai in Hawaiian Music and Musicians: An Illustrated History (ed. Kanahele 1979). Kanahele provides a rudimentary biography of Kaai and shows how far he travelled with his ensembles of performers, and with a broad brush indicates the magnitude of his influence within Hawai‘i, Japan and the territories now known as Indonesia. There are inevitably discrepancies and gaps given the entry’s brevity and the limitations of research practice in 1979, although the contributors were able to speak firsthand with some of the artists whose careers overlapped with Kaai. There are also, of course, the limitations of biography itself, which is always partial (and being partial is inevitably a feature of this thesis too). However, the errors in Kanahele’s (1979) volume have been repeated and compounded over time in different forums. The edition is held in such high esteem, is so thoroughly researched and accomplished so much in describing the

¹ Also regarded as the Second Hawaiian Renaissance, the first having taken place during King Kalākaua’s reign, 1874–1891.
genealogy of Hawaiian music that nothing has come close to approaching the depth of Kanahele’s scholarship in this area meaning that the accuracy of relatively extensive entries like Kaai’s have not been questioned. Kanahele’s book has had an enduring and deserved influence that has been strengthened by the recently revised and updated Hawaiian Music and Musicians: An Encyclopedic History (2012), with updates and revisions by John Berger, which took ten years to come to fruition. The change in subtitle from An Illustrated History to An Encyclopedic History is significant because it emphasises the authority and place the original edition has come to occupy in the taxonomy and interpretation of Hawaiian music. However, much of the commentary regarding Kaai remains the same and so inaccuracies have been perpetuated and areas that were imprecise in 1979 remain imprecise in 2012. My intention is to correct the errors I have identified and to expand on Kaai’s biographical material with previously unavailable family material. This chapter reviews the literature currently available about Kaai that is in addition to Kanahele/Berger.

5.2. Academic Sources

Academic articles also include specific instances of Kaai’s musical contributions. In Rebecca and Jackie Coyle’s “Aloha Australia: Hawaiian Music in Australia 1920–1955” (1995) the authors address the critical neglect of Hawaiian music – as a significant form of popular music – in Australia. Kaai’s introduction of Hawaiian music to Australia in 1911 and his subsequent tours there between the wars are contextualised within a complex framework of social, cultural, musicological, industrial and technological factors.

In his article “East of Honolulu: Hawaiian Music in Japan from the 1920s to the 1940s”, Shuhei Hosokawa (1994) analysed the adoption, popularisation, localisation and naturalisation (contrasting Japanese entertainers with the “spontaneous feel” of nisei singers: 57) of Hawaiian music in Japan and the “Japanising” of Hawaiian instrumentation (58). He identifies Kaai as a major influence in the diffusion of Hawaiian music and jazz and the development of both scenes in the 1920s. Hosokawa claims that until the end of World War II there was no foreign musician in Japan with more influence than Kaai who organised, taught and toured with Japanese groups, teaching instrumental techniques as well as showmanship as he went. Refuting Toshihiko Hayatsu’s (1986: 180) assertion, Hosokawa states that it was Ernest Kaai Snr, not Ernest Kaai Jnr, who “organised a jazz orchestra with some of the best Japanese jazz musicians” (65n4).

According to Hosokawa (1994), Kaai joined Shigeya Kikuchi and the college band the Red and Blue Club and the collaboration produced major hits with recordings of “Watashi no Aozora”
(My Blue Heaven) and “Arabia no Uta” (Song of Arabia) for Columbia records with the “hot” sound of featured vocalists Teiichi Futamura and Kikuyo Amano (55). Hosokawa goes on to say:

Kaai made a triumphant concert debut with the Red and Blue Club on June 23 at the Nihon Seinen Kaikan Hall in Tokyo. They played dance numbers such as If I Can’t Have You and The More We Are Together, and Hawaiian songs such as Kalima Waltz, Hilo March and Ukulele Baby. Members also danced the Charleston and the show included a presentation of the 1927 Clara Bow film It. …The success of the Nihon Seinen Kaikan Hall event encouraged the band to organise other concerts in Tokyo and finally undertake a national tour. This tour was unsuccessful due to the unpopularity of jazz outside big cities and Kaai and Kikuchi broke up around 1930. Kaai continued to record (dozens) of songs. (1994: 55) (See Appendix 2 for details)

Hosokawa stresses the importance of the ‘Jazz Age’ effect and the significance of not only the sonic qualities but also in how the sound was transmitted – “records, radio broadcasts, printed music and live performance” (1994: 52) – and the simultaneity of the various transmissions, all of which Kaai participated in.

Kaai’s contribution to the naturalisation and syncretism of Hawaiian music in Japan is examined in the context of the “frequent and sustained interchange of individuals” (Hosokawa 1994: 64) rather than what Hosokawa describes as a tendency in Japan to “privilege information and artefact over person-to-person communication” (64), identifying the Pacific as a “a cultural passage” and situating Kaai, along with David Pokipala and a small group Japanese musicians, at an intersection of “musical frontiers” (64) to which ‘jazz’ was foundational. In contrast to Hosokawa, and as an example of the kind of erasure of Native Hawaiian history that occurs even in contemporary sources, Bill Kirchner overlooks the Hawaiian jazz influence in Japan and in the Oxford Companion to Jazz (2000) states that very few ‘American’ (Western music anthologies are unpredictable in their inclusion or exclusion of Hawai‘i as part of ‘America’, which means Hawaiian musicians can be absent from both Pacific and Euro-American musical histories) jazz musicians visited Japan and left behind minimal recordings, the earliest being 1933 by vocalist Midge Williams. According to Kirchner hers are “the historic first recordings of Japanese jazz musicians with American artists” (2000: 567).

George H. Lewis (1996) examines the “invention”, appropriation and commodification of the musical culture of Hawai‘i and implicates Hawaiian music in a cultural shift within Australia away from Great Britain and towards the United States. Kaai’s role in popularising jazz influenced Hawaiian music in Australia and Japan is framed within this discussion.

> By the beginning of the 1930s, Ka’ai’s [sic] influence had reached every niche of the Japanese popular music market. Prior to Ka’ai’s time, very few Japanese had seen the steel guitar or heard musicians playing it. The presence of Ka’ai’s troupe in Japan for seven years made it possible for Japanese musicians to learn the basics of both jazz and Hawaiian music, not merely by listening to records but by observing and listening to living musicians. Ka’ai’s frequent stage appearances, his recordings for Victor and Columbia, and his close interaction with Japanese popular music acts helped the Japanese understand the technical and aesthetic aspects of the acoustic steel guitar and also stimulated their interest in playing it themselves. (2004: 26)

She also states that Kaai learned to play the shamisen (a Japanese three-stringed plucked lute) and that he would dance while playing it, calling his performance the “Shamisen Burlesque” (25).


More recently Peter Keppy (2013) locates Kaai within a discussion of a new cultural era that dawned in the 1920s metropolitan areas of colonial Indonesia, a period associated with “inter-ethnic urbanites” (2013: 444) and the formation of vernacular interpretations of literature, theatre and music and how those were consumed via technologies such as cinema, radio and broadcasting. Minor mentions of Kaai occur in writings that deal with music as a site of contested identity within the United States (Garrett 2008), the examination of United States imperial interests in Hawai‘i through the popular tours of hula performers on circuits that crossed both the Atlantic and Pacific (Imada 2012) and an examination of entextualising processes that mark repertoires and their performances as Hawaiian (Stillman 2005).

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3 Kurokawa does not differentiate between Ernest Kaai Snr and Ernest Kaai Jnr, both of whom were performing in the area. Kaai Snr did not spend an uninterrupted seven-year stretch in Japan although he may have toured there regularly. There may be some confusion between the two musicians and this requires more research. Hosokawa states that Kaai Snr settled in Japan for two years 1927–1928 after regularly visiting in 1919–1923 (1994: 55).

4 Hayatsu was one of the key contributors to Hawaiian Music and Musicians (Kanehele 1979).
5.3. “The Father of the ‘Ukulele”

John King (1953–2009) and James Tranquada’s “A New History of the Origins and Development of the ‘Ukulele, 1938–1915” (2003) details the effect Kaai’s musicianship had on the popularity of the ‘ukulele and the influence of his ‘ukulele method books. Their co-authored book, The ‘Ukulele: A History (Tranquada & King 2012), offers more information on Kaai’s stature in the development and history of the instrument and the importance of key events like the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle in 1909, where Kaai and his band played for hundreds of thousands of people over the course of five months. John King’s website is still accessible even though he has passed away (http://nalu-music.com), with pages dedicated to Kaai that go beyond the standard information usually drawn from George Kanahele’s research (1977, 1979) and includes anecdotes and historical research on the ‘ukulele as well as a 1910 recording of the Kaai Glee Club to ‘ukulele accompaniment demonstrating Kaai’s ‘roll stroke’.

Meanwhile the Ukulele Hall of Fame (http://www.ukulele.org) describes Kaai as “The Father of the ‘Ukulele” and “arguably the most influential musical figure in Hawai’i in the first quarter of the 20th century.”5 The website offers a short biography plus scanned original documents (such as a programme from a show in Calcutta in 1922) and instrument analysis. Regarding Kaai’s The Ukulele, A Hawaiian Guitar and How to Play It (1910, see Appendix 3), the authors refer to the notation conventions “including chord frames, rudimentary tablature, and a hierarchical chord nomenclature that has since become associated with Hawaiian music. It is probable that Kaai invented these notational styles for ukulele.”6

The post-1990s revival of the ‘ukulele has involved a discovery of Kaai by many enthusiasts. His virtuosity and innovations are catalogued with varying degrees of complexity, from John King’s Famous Solos and Duets for the ‘Ukulele (2004) to Jim Beloff’s The Ukulele: A Visual History (2003) and Ukulele: The World’s Friendliest Instrument (Dixon & MacKay 2011). Fans such as YouTube users “UkeVal,” “Ukulele Poltergeist” and “Harald Boxtart” upload their performances of Kaai’s arrangements (“El Recuerdo”, “Banjo Schottische” and “Ka Wehi”, for example) on YouTube and demonstrate his various stroke instructions for the ‘ukulele. Some of John King’s videos are still available on YouTube and he demonstrates Kaai’s double roll stroke beautifully on “The Maile Waltz”7 (Kaai, c1906), affirming Kaai’s comments that:

Some would call the Ukulele an insignificant instrument, and yet we have all there is necessary to make and cover an accompaniment for the most difficult opera written, the

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6 ibid.
7 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pb-owEOQXRo.
harmony is all there, if one would give it a complete and thorough study. (Kaai 1910: 3 see Appendix 3)

In 2001 King’s company, Nalu Music\(^8\), published a facsimile copy of Kaai’s 1910 revised edition of *The Ukulele: A Hawaiian Guitar and How to Play It*. John King’s analysis of Kaai’s ‘ukulele methods is well documented in the Mel Bay publication *Famous Solos and Duets for the ‘Ukulele* (2004). In it King praisies Kaai’s vernacular, links his playing and teaching styles to early European techniques and clearly locates him in relation to Western art music as well as Hawaiian practices:

Composing within the framework of a traditional European harmonic language, Ka’ai combined popular forms of the 19th century like the waltz and polka with the artistic and poetic sensibilities of a native Hawaiian. Typical subjects memorialized in Hawaiian song were people, places, events, and flowers. *Loke Lani* (the small red rose) was originally entitled *Maile Waltz* (*maile* is a leafy vine used for *lei*, particularly on important occasions) and was published in both the 1910 and 1916 Ka’ai methods. Written in a sparse type of tablature similar to Baroque *alfabeto*, Ka’ai expected the performer to provide the musical interest by improvising different strumming patterns which he more or less outlined in the method: “There are no set rules as to when such and such a stroke are to be used, for that is left entirely to the performer, and it is not compulsory to use one set stroke throughout a selection, a little of this and that inserted in the proper place makes an exquisitely pleasing effect.” *Haele* (to and fro) is the descriptive title of a piece whose melodic line is distributed between the top and bottom strings of the ‘ukulele, a style of playing known to Baroque guitarists as *campanella*. *Leilani* is a languid tango infused with *saudade*, *Hone A Ka Waí* is a lilting waltz that includes the earliest documented use of natural harmonics on the ‘ukulele. (King 2004: 11–12)

While King doubts that “Ka’ai and his contemporaries had access to rare baroque guitar tablature books” (2004: 13), given the intersection of musical influences in Hawai‘i and Kaai’s own level of engagement and expertise it is conceivable that he encountered such texts. Musical schooling was heavily weighted in favour of Western art music and Kaai also performed regularly with Captain Henry Berger, the influential Prussian *Kapellmeister*, composer and bandleader who brought European traditions to bear on the preservation and promotion of Hawaiian music and whose contribution was so significant that Queen Lili‘uokalani referred to him as the ‘Father of Hawaiian music’. King goes on to say that:

Nevertheless, the solutions they arrived at for notating the vagaries of plucked and strummed techniques are remarkably similar to those of their European predecessors. Perhaps due to a similarity in purpose, the need to ornament or embellish otherwise plain, simple tunes and harmonies with *trillo* (tremolo) and other effects, it is not a complete surprise that Ka’ai would write “Notwithstanding the fact that with the ordinary Common Stroke, the accompaniments for any piece of music could be thoroughly satisfied, yet with slight variations in the movements, the tendency to beautifying certain selections are exceedingly in harmony and most sympathetic.” Also of

remarkable similarity is the vagueness inherent in the early guitarist’s notation of the strummed style and correspondingly, the manner in which it is treated in the first ‘ukulele methods. (13)

Kaai gave this instruction for the “Common Ordinary Stroke”:

This stroke is made with the forefinger of the right hand running it rapidly across all the strings with a down and up movement of the wrist, which must be perfectly free, and keeping all the other fingers out for one position and under the palm for another position. Make the down stroke squarely on the nail of the finger and the upstroke with the fleshy part of the finger, and not on the side of the finger. There are two strokes to a beat, the down and up. (Kaai 1910: 4)

King compares this with “the description of the trillo by Giovanni Battista Abbatessa (Venice, 1627): ‘The trillo is made with the finger called the index, touching all the strings downwards and upwards with rapidity’” (King 2004: 13). Kaai’s descriptions of other strums or strokes include the “Waltz Stroke”, “All-The-Finger Stroke”, “Roll Stroke”, “Triple Stroke”, “Pick Stroke” and “Rag-Time Stroke” and are accompanied by tablature. King describes Kaai’s playing methods as indicative of the quality of his music and the simple elegance of his arrangements.

A plethora of ‘ukulele method blogs have emerged where discussions can be found as to whether or not Kaai was the first to publish the GCEA standard re-entrant tuning for the ‘ukulele – he was – in 1906 (King & Tranquada 2003: 10). Kaai now has a fan-generated Facebook page and Wikipedia entry (which relies on Kanahele’s entry), and ‘ukuleles manufactured by Kaai and the Knutsen harp ‘ukuleles that carry his label are sought after on eBay, as are his method books and original music sheets, which collectors also purchase on Amazon and music sheet specialist sites.

5.4. Kīkā Kīla

Kaai’s contribution to the steel guitar is partly documented in Lorene Ruymar’s The Hawaiian Steel Guitar and Its Great Hawaiian Musicians (1996). Ruymar quotes from Charles E. King’s (1874–1950) unpublished notes from c.1930 on the history of Hawaiian music where he discusses the influence of a steel guitarist called Ka‘ai Kaleikoa, with a suggestion that this might be Kaai:

Joe Kekuku learned the method of playing and left for the Mainland. …Ka‘ai Kaleikoa was the next leading exponent who departed from Honolulu and went East. He, instead of being contented with playing on one string, devised a certain kind of tuning which

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10 Sobriquets such as the “Father of…” or “Dean of…” are often applied to Hawaiian musicians. King was known as “The Father of Hawaiian Composers” and the “Dean of Hawaiian Music”, a title he shares with Johnny Alameida.
enabled him to produce chords which enriched the musical effects. (King as quoted in Ruymar 1996: 8)

A baffling discussion follows, but my reading is that the artist in question is Sol Ho’opi’i Ka’ai’ai (known as Sol Ho’opi’i) and the “East” referred to is America and not the “Far East”. More recently R. Guy Cundell’s master’s thesis “Across the Pacific: The Transformation of the Steel Guitar from Hawaiian Folk Instrument to Popular Music Mainstay” (2014) mentions Kaai within the context of a history of Hawaiian music in America rather than as a steel guitar practitioner.

Kaai published methods for the steel guitar (1919, 1926, 1936 see Appendix 3) and continued to be engaged with contemporary developments and popular instruments. In 1941 he updated an earlier method for the steel guitar with a songbook in E7th tunings publishing a collection of Songs of Old Hawaii: E7th Tuning for Hawaiian and Electric Guitars (see Appendix 3). John Troutman’s Kīkā Kila: How the Hawaiian Steel Guitar Changed the Sound of Modern Music (2016) builds on his already extensive research into the steel guitar. It clearly locates the genesis of the instrument in Hawaiʻi and provides an overview of the many Native Hawaiian steel guitarist specialists, including Kaai and his daughter Thelma.

5.5. The Mandolin

A surprising gap in Kaai’s publishing history and biography is the absence of his own methods for the mandolin and any significant biographical material (apart from Kanahele 1979) that deals with him as a mandolinist. The largest body of work in this respect is found in newspaper reviews and articles, with the earliest review so far appearing in 1898 when Kaai was still a high school student. Kaai performed in San Francisco in 1894 in a mandolin recital but there is so far no publicly available record of this. According to Hawaiian musician Johnny Almeida he was a better mandolinist than ‘ukulele musician (Kanahele 1979), which is saying something! Bloggers on the popular mandolin site mandolincafe.com are familiar with Kaai and impressed with his 1915 Gibson F3 (see Figure 6) but seem surprised that the mandolin was used by Hawaiian musicians, with a suggestion that perhaps the musicians used it like a “double-strung uke (or would that be wire strung taro patches?)”11 denying the musicianship and classical training of the Hawaiian mandolinists of Kaai’s generation.

11 The discussion refers to a photograph of Kaai from the Bishop Museum collection in which he is posing with a mandolin, but the author of that comment agrees that Kaai’s dress “aesthetic” contradicts his own ‘ukulele suggestion. http://www.mandolincafe.com/forum/archive/index.php/t-21961.html
Around 1905 a typical Hawaiian orchestra consisted of “violin, flute, mandolin, ‘ukulele, and guitars” (Kanahele 1979: 277). Images of Kaai’s orchestras from the early 1900s feature a wide variety of chordophones including mandocellos, octave mandolins and mandolas. Given the significance of the mandolin in his performance and teaching repertoire further research may still reveal publications of one form or another by Kaai. One rare publication that did come to light is a 21-page folio printed by Bergstrom Music Company of Honolulu called Hawaiian melodies arranged ... for first and second mandolines, etc (1917). Two library holdings exist, one at Brown University and another at Helen Plum Memorial Library in Illinois. So far this is the only known (and extant) mandolin-specific work by Kaai (see Appendix 3 for a list of publications by Kaai).

5.6. Popular History

A work from the same period as Kanahele (1979), and which is now a collector’s item in itself, is Tony Todaro’s The Golden Years of Hawaiian Entertainment 1874–1974 (1974). Todaro, who was also the composer of some well-known hapa haole standards including “Keep Your Eyes on the Hands” (with Mary Johnston III), catalogues leading Hawaiian entertainers up until the early 1970s. The volume includes a profile of Kaai in the main body of the text and also places him in a portrait section titled the “Hawaiian Entertainment Hall of Fame” along with other 32 other prominent Hawaiians beginning with King Kalākaua and Queen Lili‘uokalani.

Chris Bourke’s comprehensive history of New Zealand popular music Blue Smoke: The Lost Dawn of New Zealand Popular Music 1918–1964 (2010) provides an entry on Kaai and some of the members of his later troupe, particularly Sid Kamau, that briefly contextualises his tours in New Zealand and Australia within the commercialisation of Tin Pan Alley and the considerable impact of the stage play The Bird of Paradise (Richard Walton Tully, 1911).

A few contemporary accounts by Kaai’s peers of his musicianship can be found in Kanahele (1979), and there are many newspaper reviews and a number of interviews in various newspapers describing “Hawai‘i’s Music Man.” A late interview with Kaai in 1944, “Long Fingers, Much Success”, (Paradise of the Pacific 1944: 28) suffers from exaggeration and erasure. The same year a nostalgia-laden article by Johnny Noble appeared in Paradise of the Pacific magazine in which he describes the music scene in Honolulu in the early 1920s and a controversy over style:

as to whether local dance orchestras should stick to straight Hawaiian music, or should be influenced by the mainland jazz bands of men such as Paul Whiteman, Isham Jones, Ted Lewis and Art Hickman. Dude Miller, for instance, kept strictly within the Hawaiian style of music and his music did not change from the day it was organised. Most of his
boys came from the ranks of Ernest Kaai’s quintette and they were Hawaii’s best musicians. (*Paradise of the Pacific* 1944: 30)

In 2011 Kaai was inducted into The Hawaiian Music Hall of Fame with a Lei of Stars ceremony at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. In 2012 I authored the first entry for Kaai in the Grove Music Online resource.

5.7. A Discography

Malcolm Rockwell has compiled an impressive discography, *Hawaiian and Hawaiian Guitar Records 1891–1960* (2007), and Kaai’s (see Discography, Appendix 2) recordings made in Hawai‘i from as early as 1911 are included in it (see below for information regarding possible earlier recordings). Many are on Columbia and feature a specific coding feature identified by Finnish discographer Pekka Gronow who was a principal contributor to *Hawaiian Music and Musicians* (Kanahele 1979) and described in the Hawaiian Music Foundation newsletter *Ha‘ilono Mele*:

> The “A” Series was Columbia’s main catalogue series which included all kinds of popular recordings, and most Columbia Hawaiian records were in this series. However, Columbia also had a special “Y” series which was used exclusively for Hawaiian artists and not at all listed in the main catalogue. Records in this series which seems to have started in the late 1910’s are so rare that it seems probable that they were only produced for sale on the islands and possibly also recorded there. Artists known include Madame Alapai, Harry and Henry Clark, Henry Kaeo and Kaai Glee Club. (*Ha‘ilono Mele* 1976: 1)

All of these artists were associated closely with Kaai, and Rockwell’s discography confirms Gronow’s comments with many songs by the Kaai Glee Club. Rockwell provides more names: Keala Kaai, Robert Kaawa and Henry Kailimai. All of these performers appear in Columbia “Y” series recordings circa June 1911.

Early Hawaiian recordings are examined in Andersen and Rockwell’s article “Hawaiian Recordings: The Early Years.” They state that in 1905 the “American Record Company” (of Springfield, Massachusetts and New York City) had issued 29 blue, single-sided “Indian label” discs that were the first major release of Hawaiian repertoire and were all by the Royal Hawaiian Troubadours, who were billed as ‘“an orchestra and double quartette of Native Hawaiians.’” Recording matrix numbers run from 030935 through 030950 and 030965 through at least 030977. However, the following have not been found: 030949, 030970, 030978, and 030979” (1-2). Andersen and Rockwell go on to say that the “only clue to the Royal Hawaiian Troubadours’ identity lies in the use of that name in 1919 by Ernest Kaai’s group in a performance of Hawaiian

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12 [www.78data.com](http://www.78data.com)
music, possibly the first in modern times, in Batavia” (1996: 2). Kaai’s tour group that travelled to Australia and New Zealand was called the Royal Hawaiians as well. Referring to the collector Frank Andrews:

[He] reports that thanks to the connection (via the Prescott brothers) between American, Odeon, and American Odeon with its “Blue Odeon Duplex Records” issued in England, four American sides of the Troubadours were issued in England on two double-sided 27.

(10-5/8 inch) discs: 030944 coupled with 030975, and 030976 coupled with 030977… American also supplied matrices to Busy Bee and possibly Odeon… One can only imagine the incarnations in which the Troubadours might be found though they were probably all limited to the oversize format. Frank Andrews does not believe any were issued in the 10 inch size which appeared in November of 1905. (1996: 2)

It is possible the Kaai released material even earlier as Andersen and Rockwell (1996) describe Edison cylinders with Hawaiian material appearing in England as early as 1901. Andersen states that these were likely to have been produced in San Francisco sessions and were recorded by close collaborators of Kaai’s, Sonny Cunha and the Ellis brothers – when John “Jack” Ellis died in 1914, Kaai organised a concert fundraiser for his widow. Referring to Kenneth Lorenz’s Pioneer Discography Series (Vol II), Columbia released two Hawaiian selections in 1901, but Andersen says, “typically for Columbia, no artists’ names are given” (1996: 1).

Rockwell (2007) catalogues Ernest Kaai Jazz Band recordings made in Tokyo in 1928–1931 that are all on the Victor (Japan) label in the 50000 and 51000 series, with possibly more on other series not yet discovered. Japanese personnel include Teiichi Futamura, Jouichi Nimura and Chicke Tateishi. Columbia records of Japan also issued “five LPs (Nippon no Jazz Song is the name of the album) of jazz songs recorded in Japan before World War II, reissued from old 78s, which includes some numbers by Ernest Kaai recorded in Japan in the 1930s” (Kanahele 1977: 3). Hosokawa (1994) mentions “doubling” a practice in Japan in which artists recorded the same song on different labels (eg. Victor as well as Columbia) until exclusive contracts stopped the practice in the late 1920s (55). Kaai’s Japanese listings in the discography in Appendix 2 are primarily Victor with two sides for Nipponophone (1910–1931), but finding the details for Kaai’s Japanese Columbia recordings requires more research and may reveal examples of “doubling” (see Appendix 2).

_Aloha Oe: Hawaiian Music in Japan 1928–1939_ (Victor Entertainment Inc., 2000, VICG-60407) contains recordings by The Ernest Kaai Jazz Band, Ernest Kaai Trio and Ernest Kaai Quartet from 1928 to 1931. The collection includes Kaai’s “Hawai‘i no Uta” (“Song of Old Hawai‘i”),

13 These are listed as “Aloha Oe” (30200) and “Kuu Pua I Paoakalani” (30201) (Andersen & Rockwell 1996: 1).
14 Thanks to Dr. Minako Waseda for providing me with this information.
which Yoko Kurokawa believes is one of the earliest recordings of “Japanese mainstream popular songs with steel guitar accompaniment” (2004: 26). A portrait of Kaai features on the liner notes accompanied by another image purporting to be Ernest Kaai’s Jazz Band, but after comparing images of personnel, the band is more likely the Moana Glee Club\textsuperscript{15}. The caption under the band image lists the musicians in Kaai’s band as “Fernandez (Filipino musician?), Nanajo, Kaai, Ichiji, Kikuchi, and Sakai” (translated from Japanese in personal correspondence from Dr Minako Waseda, 1/8/2013). In her thesis Kurokawa (2004) says between 1928 and 1931 Kaai recorded more than a dozen songs with Columbia and Victor Japan.

5.8. Compiling a Bibliography

Kaai’s compositions and songbooks can be found at a number of different sites. In Appendix 3 I have collected details from many sources including my own collection of music sheets, song folios and methods. The sites that have proved most useful for song or mele data are, first, Huapala.org, curated by Kaiulani Kanoa-Martin. The site is a Hawaiian lyric and hula archive and cultural library that is an incredible resource for confirming song titles or identifying alternative titles for songs, lyrics and composer and composition dates. Another song site is squareone.org curated by Sylvia Stoddard, who has collected lyrics and composition data for hapa haole songs, which she describes as “Hawaiian songs with English lyrics, 1916–1978”. However, the most comprehensive databases are curated by Amy Kuʻuleialoha Stillman. These are accessible through the special collections at the University of Hawaiʻi library site, which provides searchable song and chant indexes as well as songbook indexes –
http://www2.hawaii.edu/~speccoll/chants/chantsong.html and
http://www.useapencil.org/aks/songs_search.php – but also through Stillman’s own website Hawaiian Music for Listening Pleasure (https://amykstillman.wordpress.com/). Song lyrics can also be found in Hoʻolaupaʻi if they are related to an article.

\textsuperscript{15} Thanks to Dr Kevin Fellezs for his sharp observation.
Chapter 6. Kiʻi – Ernest Kaleihoku Kaai: keiki hanau o ka ʻaina

Ernest Kaleihoku Kaai was born in Honolulu in 1881. His mother, Beke (who is known also as Peke, Rebecca, Becky, Ribeka) Kekoa Kaai (1862–1903), was a member of Kalākaua’s court and his father Simon (Himona) Kalao Kaai (1835–1884) was a Minister of Finance and Minister for the Interior (1878–1883) in the Gibson cabinet during the Kalākaua reign. Prior to that Kaai senior had been land agent and attorney for the Royal Governor of Hawai‘i, Princess Ruth Keʻelikōlani (1826–1883), who was a direct descendant of Kamehameha I and widow of Prince William Pitt Leleiohoku I (1821–1848) and was considered a staunch adherent of Hawaiian customary practices. Kaai senior had also been a messenger in the House of Nobles legislature as a young man and turnkey at the prison and his difficulties with temperance are alluded to in more than one article. Part of a lengthy death notice reads:

The deceased was at one time a powerful factor in the make-up of the legislature of Hawaii, his influence among the natives, on account of his business relations with the late Princess Ruth being of great extent, and the defeat or passage of many political measures were due to the influences wielded by him... at the time of his death Hon. Mr. Kaai was a Privy Councillor and a member of the House of Nobles.

There are only very brief details of Kaai senior’s first wife who died suddenly in July 1883 just prior to him marrying the much younger Beke Kekoa in September of the same year, when Ernest Kaai was two years old. Very little public information is available concerning Beke apart from incidental reports of her accompanying Kaai senior in the year before he died. After his death she appears in probate court documents concerning Kaai’s will, on ship’s passenger lists around the Hawaiian Islands, as a society wedding guest and as a plaintiff in a court case contesting land ownership at Waikiki, and lastly in her death notice where she is described as “a well known resident” of Honolulu and “prominent in court circles during the reign of Kalākaua.” Ulukau.org lists her marriage to Kaai. Census records from 1900 reveal that she owned her own home at 16 School Street, part of the Kapalama property Simon left in his will when he died, and that she lived there with Ernest Kaai. The ledger entry states that mother and son can read, write and speak English as well as Hawaiian and that Becky identified as “Full

1 “A child born of the land”
2 S. K. Kaai is frequently described in annexationist media as suffering from “chronic inebriety” and as having been forced to resign from his ministerial posting. Pacific Commercial Advertiser [Honolulu], 13th January 1894: 1.
3 Pacific Commercial Advertiser [Honolulu], 11th November 1882: 5.
4 Hawaiian Gazette [Honolulu], 20th June 1877: 3 – Notice establishing S.K. Kaai’s authority.
5 The Polynesian [Hawai‘i], 12th April 1856: 194.
6 The Hawaiian Gazette [Honolulu], 26th March 1884: 9.
7 First wife’s death, “Mrs A. K. Kaai” reported in Pacific Commercial Advertiser [Honolulu], 14th July 1883: 5.
8 http://ulukau.org/algene/cgi-bin/algene.fcgi?q=0.01&f=algene--00CL1--2---0--010--4-----0-11--10en-Zz.1--20-about-Simon+K+Kaai--00-1--0-0-00nZz-8-000a=a&=algene&srp=0&srn=0&d=09-000116
9 Death notice for Becky K. Kaai: The Independent [Honolulu], 4th March 1903: 3.
Hawaiian”, while Ernest’s entry is “Part Hawaiian” and his occupation is “Music Teacher”. Becky has adjusted the date of her marriage to Simon to 1879 (rather than 1883) with a suggestion that the earlier date is more consistent with Ernest’s birth.

Becky’s parents were William L. Kaholokahiki, aka William L. Holokahiki, a lawyer, and his first wife Rahera Kuamoo. Kaai’s grandfather appears with King Kalākaua’s party travelling between the islands, and is mentioned as a member of the bar and as a pallbearer at Judge Benjamin Hale Austin’s funeral alongside the Chief Justice and Attorney General, among others. Becky’s younger brother was William Hokuloa Holokahiki who, like Kaai was a musician. He travelled with Kaai’s band to Kaua‘i and performed as a guitarist and an orchestral bassist and travelled to the San Diego Fair in 1915 as part of Kaai’s retinue. Closer to Kaai’s age than Kaai’s mother Becky, William was born in 1874 and on his draft card he lists Kaai as his nearest relative. William appears to have struggled in his later life as an itinerant musician in San Francisco and Alaska.

6.1. Hawai'i’s Music Man

Kaai attended Oahu College (known as Punahou School since 1934) and Honolulu High School (known as President McKinley High School since 1907), where his musicianship was encouraged and where there were many opportunities to perform. Recognised at an early age as musically talented, Kaai travelled to San Francisco where he performed in mandolin recitals as a 13-year-old. Newspaper articles praise his performances at student concerts given by the High School (as it was known), where he featured on the mandolin playing music by European composers such as Yradier and Tipaldi, reflecting the music curriculum of the day. Kaai often returned to the High School to provide music for school productions or as a teacher of glee and mandolin. He also composed the “Honolulu High School March” for guitar and performed it in school recitals, and after he graduated it became part of the repertory for his own music school students.

10 Appears on “List of lawyers who are approved to conduct business in the Supreme Court and below, and who are living in this nation”, Ka Nupepa Kuokoa, Buke XXIV, Helu 52, Aoao 2. 26th December 1885 (Admitted to the bar 30th August 1876)
11 Ane Holokahiki was his second wife and she is listed in probate documents after Holokahiki Snr’s death.
12 The Daily Bulletin [Honolulu], 7th July 1885: 3.
14 Pacific Commercial Advertiser [Honolulu], 4th March 1906: 2.
16 An article on Kaai in Paradise of the Pacific May 1944: 28 states that Kaai had irregular schooling until he was twelve years old and that in five years he had graduated from high school and entered Oahu College.
17 New Zealand Herald [Auckland, NZ], 17th June 1911: 4.
18 Evening Bulletin [Honolulu], 15th June 1898: 1.
Kaai presented music from Euro-American classical and popular contexts throughout his career, and Western music idioms were integral to his own compositions and arrangements. While Kaai was at home in many different mediums, his repertory was founded in Hawaiian music in all of its manifestations including hula (see Chapter 3). Even in the expanding cosmopolitanism and modernity of Honolulu and amidst persistent settler-colonial disapproval of the hula (and also some Native Hawaiian disapproval, partly Christian-based but also from those who believed hula should not be publicly performed – see Imada 2012: 145–146), Kaai produced performances such as “A Night in Hawaii of Old” at the Opera House with “Songs and Meles of Ancient Hawaii, Hula Dancers, Realistic Stage setting, Unequaled Music”19 and was committed to not only sustaining Hawaiian musical practice but reminding audiences of the history and relevance of Hawaiian culture. Even in his ‘Jazz Age’ touring shows the first half of the programme was constructed around notions of Hawai‘i nei.

The following is an example of a typical evening’s performance20 of all Hawaiian vocal and instrumental numbers by the Kaai Quintet Club, performed for a haole audience (a conference of editors) assisted by “Mme Alapai and Mlle Kaai”: Nani Alapai was a soprano lead vocalist for the Royal Hawaiian Band under Capt. Henry Berger and Elizabeth Keala Kaai – also known as Keala Kaai (who was related to Ernest Kaai and generally referred to as his niece but sometimes as a sister or cousin) – was a mezzo soprano (see Table 3).

Table 3: An evening of all Hawaiian vocal and instrumental music at The Royal Hawaiian Hotel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mele</th>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Performer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ninipo</td>
<td>“Kaula” - Kalākaua (has also been attributed to Lili‘uokalani)</td>
<td>Mme. Alapai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ua Like No A Like</td>
<td>Alice Everett</td>
<td>Mme. Alapai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akele Ka Manaō</td>
<td>Hukia</td>
<td>Miss Elizabeth Kaai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ke Aloha I Hiki Mai</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ka Mawae</td>
<td>Kaiewe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Plantation (Kuu Home)</td>
<td>David Nape</td>
<td>Mme. Alapai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honolulu Hulahula Heigh</td>
<td>Joseph K. A’ea</td>
<td>Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ke Hone A’e Nei</td>
<td>Robert Waialeale</td>
<td>Duet: Mme Alapai and Miss Elizabeth Kaai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He Manaō He Aloha (Ka Ipo Lei Manu)</td>
<td>Kapiolani</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Lei Lehua</td>
<td>Kalākaua</td>
<td>Duet: Mme Alapai and Mlle. Kaai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aloha Oe</td>
<td>“Lilu” – Lili‘uokalani</td>
<td>Company</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19 Honolulu Star-Bulletin [Honolulu], 22nd January 1913: 5.
20 Pacific Commercial Advertiser [Honolulu], 6th September 1906: 2.
Kaai’s repertory design and performing style was honed in Honolulu, where a survey of articles and advertisements from English and Hawaiian language newspapers in the early 1900s reveals a wide range of types of engagements: religious concerts, private parties and hotel and club engagements as well as evening recitals and social events for Freemason’s, Engineer’s, Shriner’s and Seafarer’s associations amongst many others. Kaai organised and performed at benefit concerts, including one for the widow of John “Jack” Ellis, a well-known singer and popular performer in Hawai’i and America, and was part of several church restoration benefits, for the Brothers of Ekalesia Huila O Kalihi Me Moanalua,21 Kawaiahao Church, and Kamehameha Schools Kaumakapili Church. Kaai also performed at many Kamehameha Alumni Association fundraisers, one of which was for the leper colony on Molokai during which Kaai’s Mandolin Club “brought the house down each time it appeared and had to give several encores, of which one, the ‘Toreador Song’ from Carmen, was especially successful.”22 Kaai also often led the Kamehameha Glee Club.

6.2. Cultural Preservation

ʻAhahui Kaʻahumanu23 was one of a number of royal societies established in the late 19th century. Along with pastoral care for sick and dying members, cultural preservation was one of their goals. In conjunction with Kaai’s Glee Club and orchestra the society performed historical tableaux or “living pictures” of Hawaiian royalty, including Queen Kaʻahumanu (1768–1832) who the society was named for, and presented narratives of Kiwalao (c.1760–1819) and Kamehameha I (c.1736–c.1819), and also Boki (c.1785–c.1829) and Liliha (c.1802–c.1839):

The tableau representing Queen Kaahumanu, the regent, shows her surrounded by the high chiefesses of her court, a chief of lower rank, warriors, servants and commoners. The court of Queen Keopuolani, wife of Kamehameha I, is exceedingly picturesque. Her retinue consists of the usual kahili-bearers, spittoon bearer, carrier of the water container, a massage performer, hair dresser and the person to light the royal pipe, all of whom are chiefs of high rank.24

Kaʻahumanu were also known for the production: Song of the Eight Islands (1912) in which young women “represent each one of the islands, the group including various goddesses. Hiiaka, a sister of Pele, a flower goddess of Hawaii, appears in this scene”25.

21 Ke Aloha Aina, 11th May 1901 (Volume VII, Number 19) and again in 1908 (Evening Bulletin, November 12th 1908: 4).  
22 The Honolulu Republican [Honolulu], 19th January 1902: 8.  
23 http://www.kaahumanu.org/.  
24 Pacific Commercial Advertiser [Honolulu], 17th March 1910: 5.  
Cultural preservation is a strong thread in Kaai’s performance history. Casually derided in English language papers as “the palmy and barbaric days of the kings, queens and chiefs,” “Old Hawaii” and “Ancient Hawaii” were the subject of many of his concerts. In January 1913 the Kaai Glee Club performed “A Night in Hawaii of Old,” a series of three acts in which narratives were played out with musical accompaniment. The scenes recalled Hawaiian history from the time when Kapu was destroyed and included the development of the Hawaiian alphabet, a battle scene portraying the first shot fired by whites and, throughout the performance, “the most ancient of dances,” which even after Kalākaua’s recuperation of the hula was still a radical act for some audiences.26

Although Kaai was not selected to contract the musicians for the San Francisco Panama-Pacific Exposition, losing out to Jonah Kumalae, he still intended to present an exhibition of musical instruments. A headline in the San Francisco Call announced that an “Object History of Hawaiian Melody Will Be Presented at 1915 Exposition”:

...according to Ernest Kaai, a young musician of Honolulu, who arrived on the Sierra yesterday to make the preliminary steps. Mr Kaai is well known in the islands as an organiser of glee clubs, many of his organisations having participated in eastern and foreign expositions. “It is my intention to enter a complete display of Hawaiian instruments which will typify the musical history of the Hawaiian race,” declared Mr Kaai.27

Given his position within the culture industry in Hawai‘i, Kaai was able to see the subjugation of Hawaiian traditional practices and the efforts that others, like the royal societies, made to keep Hawaiian narratives alive. In 1912 Kaai was mentioned in the context of a discussion of authenticity – “Foreign singers come to Hawaii, learn the words and music of a Hawaiian song and venture forth on an amateur stage, or even as professionals – and fail”28 – which signposts the incursions being made into what constituted Hawaiian music and, just as profoundly, who was Hawaiian.

An interview with Kaai in Adelaide in 1928 is revealing of his attitude to the commoditisation of Hawaiian culture and his keenness to stress the authenticity of his own show:

Speaking of Hawaiian festivals, Mr. Kaai said that most of the tourists who visited Honolulu got a very strange idea of the natives. They were invited to carefully stage manage [sic] “feasts,” and they saw nothing of the real life people at all. To do that they

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26 Hawaii Star-Bulletin [Honolulu], 20th January 1913: 12.
would have to go many miles off the beaten track. Mr. Kaai said that although there had been a great deal of racial admixture those with the old island blood in their veins were proud of it, and side by side with American culture they kept alive the memory of the great deeds of their own race. 

Mr. Kaai pointed out that Hawaiian Music, though it differed from every other known form, was a distinct culture of its own handed down for generations… The Hula dances, which will be shown in Adelaide, he guarantees as the original native dances which have not been mixed with physical culture for the benefit of a European audience anxious to be shocked.  

6.3. Honolulu’s First Modern Dance Band

While Kaai performed at many civic events, he also, according to Kanahele (1979: 193), established Hawai’i’s first modern dance band in 1904 and played regular engagements at the Moana Hotel, the first Royal Hawaiian Hotel (1872–1926), the Honolulu Seaside Hotel, the Davenport Hotel and the Alexander Young Café, amongst others. He played social functions for “Honolulu’s elite”30 such as the Hawaii’i Yacht Club’s Grand Ball31 at the Moana Hotel, where Kaai’s orchestra provided the music in one of two ballrooms with Sonny Cunha (b.1879–d.1933), who was known as the father of hapa haole music32 (Garrett 2008: 174), leading his orchestra in the other.

Hawaiian heiress Thelma Parker celebrated her majority in March 1912 with a luau that was described in the San Francisco Call33 as the last of the old-fashioned luaus. Held at the Parker Ranch on the island of Hawai’i, there were over 500 guests, including 250 paniola (Hawaiian cowboys).34 Kaai’s double quintette provided the music for the weekend of festivities that were ultimately a celebration of ranch life and cowboy culture, with displays of expertise in roping and bronco busting presented by the paniolas and a similar “gentlemen’s” challenge that included Prince Kalanianaole among the contestants.

Kaai also played many engagements for Hawaiian royalty including luaus for Princess Kawanakoa35 and Prince and Princess Kuhio Kalanianaole.36 One performance was part of a

30 Pacific Commercial Advertiser [Honolulu], 15 July 1910: 3.
31 Ibid. This event was put on to welcome the Transpacific Yacht Race.
32 Composer of hapa haole hits and the earliest known hapa haole song, “My Waikiki Mermaid” (1903), and others such as “My Honolulu Tomboy” (1905) and “My Honolulu Hula Girl” (1909).
33 San Francisco Call [San Francisco], 24 March 1912: 31. Vol III, Number 115
34 Not “paniolo”. See https://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2003/Sep/05/ln/in52a.html
35 1910, 1912.
36 1912, 1918.
large tableau called “Night in Hawaii,” based on Kaai’s stage productions of the same name, and was performed at the Kalanianaole’s Waikiki home “Pualeilani” with over a thousand guests, including Queen Liliʻuokalani. An account in the Hawaiian Gazette described a scene where “seldom has such a wealth of entertainment savouring entirely [sic] of Hawaii nei been given in Honolulu since the days of Kalakaua Rex”:

From dusk until almost midnight the guests of honour reviewed a kaleidoscopic presentation of hulas, not of the type which are commonly supposed to be the national dance, but interpretive dances during which the octette of yellow and green clad dancers sat upon a great lauhala mat, and with gourds, small stone castanets and bamboos, interpreted ancient dances, chanting throughout each set and receiving applause not only from Mr Lane [US Secretary for the Interior] and his party but from the thousands of others who formed a wide circle beneath the great electrically lighted tree and into the background of shrubbery.

The reporter, however, is unfamiliar with aspects of what he or she is describing, which is indicative of the legacy of suppression of the hula. Even though it had been re-emerging since Kalākaua’s time, it was subject to orientalising changes wrought by settler-colonial dominance in the archipelago (Kamehiro 2011; Imada 2012). Rather than “an interpretation,” what is being presented is a noho hula or seated hula, and the list of Hawaiian instruments is puʻili (bamboo), ʻuliʻuli and ipu (gourds), and ʻiliʻili (stone castanets). A seated hula was said to be more “decorous” than a standing hula and may represent a concession on the part of Kaai and his employer to non-Hawaiian or anti-hula sensibilities that were still discernible in the settler-colonial-dominated media. Even so, the vivid depiction of Kaai’s stagecraft along with other features such as Prince Kuhio’s wearing of the Order of Kalākaua “upon his breast and attired in white with the red sash so much affected during the monarchy and again being revived” reveals a scene which is highly assertive of Hawaiian identity and history, not just on the stage but in the manner and bearing of the prince and his entourage. One of Kaai’s signature stage performance techniques was the use of a darkened auditorium to introduce the programme with voices chanting and singing as the lights rose, and Kaai can be seen to reinterpret this for the outdoor setting:

One of the most characteristic of the songs was one in which singers in the foreground suddenly broke the melody off, and the refrain was brought to the ears of the guests from afar off in the night, eerie, plaintive and expressive of the musical soul of Hawaii, for the notes were ear-haunting and came ripping across the sylvan stretches on the sweet tinkle of the ukulele and the deep strum of the guitar.

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38 Under President Woodrow Wilson.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
Kaai, along with one of his quartettes, also entertained in the latter part of the evening, performing a song composed by Kaai’s wife, Amy Hoola Kaai, which was the election campaign song for Prince Kuhio. The reporter refers to the “relics” on display in the Kalanianaole household, objects inherited from the Prince’s aunt and uncle, Queen Kapi‘olani and King Kalākaua: “feather capes and ornaments and the historic relics of a monarchy now but a memory.” For Kaai and the Prince and Princess however, the evening demonstrated much more than just an historical re-enactment and serves as a political, social and cultural declaration.

Kaai’s groups ran the gamut from stringed bands to a variety of glee combinations and dance orchestras while Kaai himself also performed solo mandolin and ‘ukulele recitals. The musicians Kaai gathered around him largely came from every part of Kanaka Maoli society, but many of the young men, such as the group he would contract to Surabaya in 1919, were the sons of working-class families who often combined immigrant heritage – for example haole, Portuguese or Mexican – with Kanaka Maoli parentage. While some concerts featured Hawaiian music exclusively – meaning composed by Hawaiians and/or in the Hawaiian language – others, like the Hawaiian Yacht Club engagement, provided popular dance music. The two were not mutually exclusive, as one of Kaai’s future by-lines would say about jazz: “as interpreted by Hawaiians.”

Kaai’s contemporary bands were comprised invariably of individuals who played Hawaiian-identified stringed instruments like the ‘ukulele and steel guitar as well as Western-identified instruments. Their repertory incorporated popular American jazz/ragtime, waltz and foxtrot modes. Kaai’s own compositions were included as well as those of his contemporaries and collaborators such as Sonny Cunha, William Hodges and Johnny Noble. Gles, however, were a primary performance mode (glee clubs were hugely popular in Hawai‘i and it is a phenomenon that requires more research) for Kaai and he directed many clubs, orchestras, quintettes (he took a double quintette to New Zealand and Australia in 1911) and quartets as well as performing in them himself. Groups included the Kaai Quintet and the Pongee Quartet, in which Kaai performed along with the Clark Brothers: J. Harrison, Charlie and Henry. Kaai was also a member of the Hui Himeni Pupukanioe (The Singing Land Shells) and the St Louis Alumni Quartet with Henry Clark, Dr John Cowes, William Kerr and Kaai, while the Kaai Quartet was well known for a comic number in which the singers imitated a locomotive leaving the station

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42 Ibid.
43 The Pacific Commercial Advertiser [Hoolulu], 18th November 1908: 3.
(see Appendix 2 for Kaai’s discography and Appendix 3 for Kaai’s compositions and publications).

6.4. A Hawaiian Talent Agency

As entrepreneurial as ever, Kaai took advantage of the expanding tourist market and the growing Waikiki entertainment scene; at one time Kaai had up to twelve bands performing in Honolulu and on visiting ships (Kanahele 1979). Described as “the first major Hawaiian talent agency” (193), Kaai gave a lot of musicians in Honolulu their break within Hawai‘i and also within the larger American market. Under the headline “Ukuleles Invade Gotham”44 twelve dozen ukuleles were exported to New York in 1915 and Kaai’s singers appeared at the same time at the New Amsterdam Theatre on Broadway. The vogue for all things Hawaiian had been on the rise with numerous events: the A-Y-P in 1909, the success of the Bird of Paradise musical that premiered in 1912 and the PPIE (1915) had further generated interest in the music of the archipelago. In 1916 Kaai had bookings for six groups comprising 30 musicians to appear on the “morally respectable vaudeville”45 “Amalgamated Chautauqua”46 circuit, known colloquially as Tent Chatauquas, amidst controversy over “Italians, negroes and other nationalities” posing as Hawaiian performers. As a result the Chautauqua booking agency47 “refused to employ any other musicians but real Hawaiians”,48 and Kaai was well placed to take advantage of their commitment.

Many of the musicians Kaai employed went on to have successful careers in their own right, including Dan Pokipala, who “barnstormed” Japan in the 1920. Henry Kailimai, who travelled to New Zealand and Australia with Kaai, wrote “On the Beach at Waikiki”, which was a huge hit when it was released at the PPIE in San Francisco in 1915 (Kanahele 1979). Two particularly successful performers were Ray Kinney (b.1900–d.1972), who led his own orchestra in the “Hawaiian Room” of the Hotel Lexington in New York from 1938 to 1942 amongst many other achievements, and Johnny Noble (b.1892-d.1944), Kaai’s protégé, a man who became known as “the Irving Berlin of Hawai‘i”. Noble, who began his career as a whistler in one of Kaai’s bands in 1917, was also mentored by Sonny Cunha and established himself as a composer of hapa haole songs, many of which are standards that helped to define the genre: “My Little Grass

44 Hawaiian Gazette [Honolulu], 16th November 1915.
45 http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/sc/tc/.
46 Refers to the “Circuit Chautauqua” (Tapia 1997; Canning 2005; see also the digital collection Traveling Culture: Circuit Chautauqua in the Twentieth Century http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/tc/).
47 The Redpath Lyceum Bureau.
48 Honolulu Star-Bulletin [Honolulu], 18th Dec 1916: 1.
“Pu‘uwa‘awa’a” (n.d., but it was publicly performed in 1917) is another well-known mele of Kaai’s that is still included in contemporary Hawaiian song collections. Kaai composed the music in conjunction with Mary E. Low, who wrote the lyrics in both English and Hawaiian. Mary was the daughter of Eben “Rawhide Ben” Low who established a ranch at Pu‘uwa‘awa’a (which translates as “many furrowed hills”), a cinder cone on the slopes of Mauna Kea on the island of Hawai‘i.

Mary and her sister Clara Low were frequently mentioned in the social pages, and were associated with Jack and Charmian London when they lived in Honolulu. A short entry in Charmian London’s *Our Hawaii* (1917) describes a celebration before the Londons left Hawai‘i. Prince 51 and Princess Kalanianaole attended and Kaai provided the music (c. 1907):

just before our departure, under our own roof and hau tree for our own Hawaiian friends, with a night of dancing and music and cards to follow. The only haoles to be bidden were their close connections. Forty they sat at the great board that was entirely covered with deep layers first of ti-leaves and then ferns, strewn with flowers and fruit of every description… To Mary Low must be given the praise for the success of the occasion… for under her superintendence it was produced. And upon her unerring knowledge and tact the place-cards, bearing embossed the royal coat-of-arms of Hawaii were laid” (343).

…we had assembled our friends for the christening of the Jack London Hula, chanted stanza by stanza, each repeated by the celebrated Ernest Kaai and his perfect Hawaiian singers with their instruments. Mary was the mother of this mêlé [sic], for in her fertile brain was conceived the idea of immortalising, for Hawaii, Jack London himself and more specifically his progress around the Big Isle of Mounts, as was done for the chiefs of old by their bards and minstrels.

…Lokalia’s voice rose intoning above the gentle wash of reef waters against the sea wall thirty feet away, followed by the succession of Kaai’s lovely music to the mêlé [sic]. Each long stanza, carrying an incident of the progress around Hawaii and those who welcomed Jack, closed with two lines:

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49 The original composers were Bill Cogswell and Tommy Harrison.
50 Noble took the melody from a song written by one of Na Lani Ehā, Prince Leleiōhoku (c.1860), and according to Kanahele it is probably “one of the specific examples Charles E. King had in mind when he criticised Noble (and others) for ‘murdering’ Hawaiian music” (Kanahele 1979: 123).
51 The prince was nicknamed Prince Cupid and Charmian London refers to him as such throughout the passage.
Hainaia mai an aka puana,
No keaka Lakana neia inoa
This song is then echoed,
‘Tis in honor of Jack London (344)

There is a suggestion, based on a handwritten note that I read in Kaai’s Bishop Museum file (in 1996), that Jack London also drew on his acquaintance with Kaai in his collection of short stories, The House of Pride and Other Tales of Hawaii (1912). In the title story London tells a tale of ‘tainted blood’ when it is revealed that a prominent member of the haole elite has an illegitimate half brother in musician Joe Garland, whose character is said to be based on Ernest Kaai. London’s story is a crude portrayal of settler-colonial racial and class anxieties that relies on broad stereotypes of the white, self-righteous “spiritual aristocrat” (2) and the “kanaka” musician who “sings and dances through life, genial, unselfish, childlike, everybody’s friend” and whose wages from life are “singing, and love…” (5). While London depicts the growing hegemony based on land and sugar wealth, the islander tropes are essentialising representations fundamental to the Hawaiian imaginary already prevalent in popular Western culture at that time.

6.5. And a Free ‘Ukulele

Kaai was advertising his services as a teacher of stringed instruments as early as 189952 through Wall, Nichols Company Ltd. Later he ran his own school from Suite 69 in the Young Building, then in 1917 from his own premises in the Wolters Building on Union St in downtown Honolulu. Kaai’s music school offered lessons in “guitar, ukulele, mandolin, banjo, zither, violin, cello and vocal” (Husted 1905: 177) for many years. Kaai was someone who understood the power of the media and his marketing approach demonstrates an ability to sell: two for the price of one, free lessons with an instrument purchase, advertorials, personal lessons with the famous musician (Kaai), an instrument purchase that included an instruction manual and “Kaai-Method private lessons with any instrument – and at any hours that suit you.”53 Lessons were also targeted at steam ship tourists through the YMCA, where $7.50 bought 10 classes with a free ‘ukulele. Kaai knew that exposure and visibility were key: some newspapers contain up to three of his classified advertisements, each with a different emphasis – glee or band hire, lessons, instrument sales – while on the entertainment pages there are often advance articles for upcoming shows and the society pages may cover a private function Kaai performed for. It is likely that he got editorial coverage in exchange for buying advertising, a practice that still occurs. In 1910, for example, Kaai has over 150 mentions in the English-language newspapers alone.

52 Evening Bulletin [Honolulu], 8th July 1899: 2.
Appearances are also frequent in the Hawaiian-language papers, but these tend to focus on community and church events. Advertising is more prominent in the English papers, showing Kaai’s understanding of his market. When he was overseas the music school advertisements continued, but Kaai also maintained his profile through stories, reviews and photographs that he sent back to Hawai‘i from other parts of the world in both Hawaiian\textsuperscript{54} and English.

Kaai cultivated and enjoyed a popular profile. He travelled frequently between the West Coast of the United States and Honolulu and there are numerous stories of him entertaining shipboard in formal concerts\textsuperscript{55} as well as spontaneous performances\textsuperscript{56} with or without his corps of singers and musicians. Returning from the A-Y-P in Seattle on board the SS \textit{Alameda}, “Ernest Kaai and his band of Hawaiian musicians… played all the way down, and took a large part in the concert given before the liner arrived at Honolulu.”\textsuperscript{57} Kaai provided specially tailored shows in Honolulu for tourists on visiting liners, so his spur-of-the-moment recitals were advantageous. Passengers from the SS \textit{Alameda} and the SS \textit{President Cleveland}, for example, were entertained in big theatres like the Opera House and the Bijou Theatre, but also in more intimate settings, such as the original Royal Hawaiian Hotel. Often the shows in the larger venues took as their subject matter Hawai‘i nei interspersed with modern Hawaiian airs.

A regular in the early Floral Parades in Honolulu, Kaai won the wagon section in a horse-drawn float titled “Music” in the fourth annual parade in 1909. A grainy photograph\textsuperscript{58} shows Kaai and many of his musicians, including Keala Kaai and Madame Alapai, seated around the float, which is drawn by four horses and described as “an exquisite creation of violet and white paper flowers, surmounted by a lyre of the same colours”, with further decorations made from a mass of real ‘ukuleles. According to the paper they “sang as they proceeded,” stopping to perform in front of the malihini\textsuperscript{59} judges.

Kaai was confident and self-assured in his business dealings; when it was suggested to him that he include Duke Kahanamoku, who had won a gold medal at the Stockholm Olympics the year before and who was a member of his glee club, as an attraction on the bill for a show at the

\textsuperscript{54} Ka \textit{Nupepa Kuokoa} [Honolulu] Vol 64, No.10, 5th March 1925: 1 and Vol 64, No.22, 28th May 1925: 2 are two long articles, written in Hawaiian, sent by Kaai from Australia and New Zealand respectively.

\textsuperscript{55} Ka \textit{Nupepa Kuokoa} [Honolulu] Vol LI, No 28, 18th July 1913.

\textsuperscript{56} With the Shriners on board the SS \textit{China}. \textit{Pacific Commercial Advertiser} [Honolulu], 24th May 1907: 7.

\textsuperscript{57} \textit{The Sunday Advertiser} [Honolulu], 7th November 1909: 3.

\textsuperscript{58} \textit{The Hawaiian Gazette} [Honolulu], 23rd February 1909: 5

\textsuperscript{59} Meaning newcomers or strangers – the judges had come from America.
Opera House, “Ernest said it would not be necessary, the house would be filled anyhow.”60 But Kaai did leverage other associations such as endorsements by Richard Strauss: “Their singing is quite apart in tone and colour from any other singers I have heard” and John Philip Sousa: “Their songs, music and rhythmic swing of the dances are incomparable and create an atmosphere that gives glimpses of a world beyond.”61 This particular article appears with a large studio portrait of the company who had travelled to Australia and New Zealand under a banner “Strauss and Sousa Applaud Kaai Singing and Dancing”. The company were about to commence a season at the Opera House and in an atmosphere dominated by settler-colonial dismissal of the hula in particular, the headline and Kaai’s quotation of Strauss and Sousa as “great judges and critics” appears particularly pointed and demonstrates Kaai’s awareness of the importance of Hawaiian music and the impact of political changes on Hawaiian music.

6.6. The Musicale

Through Kaai’s Music School, Kaai also generated his own events, one of which was the ‘Musicale’, a regular concert that was often held in the makai (seaward) pavilion of the Alexander Young Building roof garden, one of Honolulu’s most fashionable social venues. Showcasing his students’ talents and his own talents as a teacher, Kaai directed their performances in mandolin quartets and orchestras, banjo trios, zither quintets and guitar quartets as well as vocalists, all performing arrangements by Kaai.

Repertory for the concerts was selected from a largely European catalogue of mandolin and zither specialist music such as “Parademarsch” (Baumgarten, n.d.) and “Selige Gedanken” (L. Freytag, n.d.), but also included contemporary compositions such as A J Weidt’s “Northern Lights” (c1906) and Hawaiian ‘airs’ like “Lei Poni Mohi” (W J Coelho, n.d.).62 The structure of the musicales was designed to demonstrate skill and that a broad musical knowledge was fostered among his students but these events also functioned as successful marketing campaigns for the music school. Keeping the repertory up to date, Kaai also encouraged his young students to play ragtime, waltzes, two-steps and even a cakewalk.63 Kaai regularly performed alongside his students, who were as young as six, in The Children’s Mandolin Club (6–13 years), and teens in the Juvenile Mandolin Club, but he also taught young adults and had many private, mostly female clients. Students were drawn from across Honolulu’s class and racial spectrum. One of

60 The Maui News [Maui], 25th January 1913: 8.
61 The Hawaiian Star [Honolulu], 19th January 1912: 6.
62 The Sunday Advertiser [Honolulu], 26th June 1904: 2.
63 The Pacific Commercial Advertiser [Honolulu], 16th April 1904: 7.
his clubs, the Chinese Mandolin and Guitar Club, featured a young boy of seven that Kaai considered a zither prodigy\textsuperscript{64}.

6.7. The Aloha Temple

A Shriner, Kaai\textsuperscript{65} was also necessarily a Freemason\textsuperscript{66} as Shriner affiliation is contingent on Freemasonry membership. Known as “the playground of Freemasonry”, the Shriners in Honolulu belonged to the Aloha Temple and members participated in Aloha Patrol events. Kaai was a regular performer at Shriner occasions\textsuperscript{67} and numerous stories exist of his exploits with the Shriners, including an evening in Oakland, California in 1907. Kaai was with a group of Shriners who attended a performance by a touring Hawaiian quintet. The group of Shriners:

sent them a bottle of wine with a note stating who they were and asking them to play “Old Plantation” and that one of the members of the party would sing it from the audience. The quintet responded immediately and Kaai sang. The applause was deafening and encore after encore was called for…\textsuperscript{68}

In 1912 the Shriners presented \textit{The Land of Harmony}, directed by Sonny Cunha, at the Bijou Theatre\textsuperscript{69} in Honolulu. The production had returned from a run in Los Angeles and was highly popular, performing for audiences of 1,600 people at the Bijou. The show was largely comical in the Shriner manner and followed a vaudeville production style. “Aloha Land” was a skit performed against a painted background of Diamond Head, clearly locating the sketch, and “King Koko,” a “jolly old potentate:”

was revealed asleep on a throne several steps high, with kahili bearers waving their fly-chasers over his head. On both sides in front squatted a score of brown courtiers. After the king stirred and made an address of awful pomp and ludicrous persiflage, mostly about his huge appetite for a cannibal feast…\textsuperscript{70}

Cannibal tropes and the “savage pagan” were often applied to Hawaiians and also to prominent Hawaiian politicians and royals, most notably Queen Lili‘uokalani,\textsuperscript{71} in American newspaper cartoons around the time of the coup d'État. Such depictions were obviously underpinned by racist, settler-colonial discourses, and the same could be said for the orientalist construction of

\textsuperscript{64} The Pacific Commercial Advertiser [Honolulu], 14\textsuperscript{th} June 1905: 6.
\textsuperscript{65} See Karpiel 2000a and b and Cumming 1998 for research concerning the integrative role of Freemasonry in the Pacific and Hawaii's specifically
\textsuperscript{66} Prince Lot Kamehameha and King Kalākaua were also Freemasons, and according to Karpiel “the approbation of the order by the highest ranks of the Hawaiian royalty had an immediate effect” (2000b: 145) of increasing membership and fostering acceptance of the Freemasons. Karpiel also notes that missionaries and sons of missionaries had few ties to Masonry in the late 18th century (Ibid: 146).
\textsuperscript{67} Honolulu Star-Bulletin [Honolulu], 20\textsuperscript{th} June 1913: 4.
\textsuperscript{68} Sunday Advertiser [Oakland, California], 26\textsuperscript{th} May 1907: 4.
\textsuperscript{69} The Hawaiian Star [Honolulu], 11\textsuperscript{th} April 1912: 6.
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{71} Examples from the Daily Globe: \url{http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn90039522/1893-02-03/ed-1/seq-1/} and The Evening World: \url{http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030193/1893-11-14/ed-3/seq-1/}. 
the Shriner persona and ritual elements. “Ernest Kaai and Quartet” were a discreet part of the evening programme, but the content of parts of the production like “Aloha Land” seem to be an unusual choice for Kaai, and it is likely that such characterisations were not an uncommon phenomenon amongst the largely haole membership of the Shriners. In any case, the association with such blatantly racist depictions appears as an anomaly in Kaai’s performance history, and King Koko exaggerations or “brown face” portrayals did not figure in Kaai’s own productions.

A contrasting image is conjured by Kaai’s participation in a production of Umi and Piikea as part of the 1914 Mid-Pacific Carnival, performed on the beach at Waikiki. Kaai was to play the part of Umi:

the Chieftain of Hawaii, who sends one of his chiefs to Maui to woo for him the beautiful Princess Piikea. “Kaai can look the part,” said John Wise, and those familiar with the stalwart form and handsome features of the well known orchestra leader can well imagine how Kaai, attired in all the glory of past days will uphold the dignity of ancient Polynesian royalty.72

Prince Kuhio provided royal canoes for the recreation of a fleet arriving on the beach which was to “present a fine sight for the moving picture men.”73 While William Emo eventually played the role of Umi, Kaai’s orchestra still played “songs and music of Old Hawaii” when the motion picture reels by R. K. Bonine were shown at the Opera House after the Carnival.74

6.8. Moving Pictures

Robert Kates Bonine (1861–1923) was a photographer and cinematographer from Pennsylvania who took many hours of footage of life in Hawai‘i. The images he filmed and photographed of Hawaiian volcanoes taken from out at sea were among his most powerful. Kaai and Bonine had featured together at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle and Kaai’s orchestra frequently accompanied Bonine’s “moving picture exhibitions”. The pair presented one of their shows on the roof garden of the Alexander Young Building in the makai pavilion to hundreds of guests75 and Kaai performed An Evening in Hawaii alongside Bonine’s “VOLCANO: Kilauea in all her glory” at the Opera House in Honolulu76.

72 Honolulu Star-Bulletin [Honolulu], 19th January 1914: 2.
73 Ibid.
75 Pacific Commercial Advertiser [Honolulu], 29th January 1909: 8.
76 The Hawaiian Star [Honolulu], 16th January 1912: 3.
Bonine also made a film of the Hui Nalu beach boys “at home” surfing and canoeing at Waikiki. The Hui Nalu was a swimming club that included two members of Kaai glee clubs, Olympic medallist Duke Kahanamoku and champion swimmer Robert Kaawa, who had travelled to New Zealand with Kaai in 1911. Kaai accompanied the moving pictures at a fundraising event for a Hui Nalu clubhouse on Waikiki beach:

Ernest Kaai led the group with a song and chorus and a rapid and kaleidoscopic dance in the café was staged with great effect, some new “rags” being introduced to the audience… and a well staged “radium dance”… the radium dance was given with grotesque pierrot figures on a darkened stage and with darkened house, the phosphorescent effect of the costumes being striking and the dance well done.77

At the same time as Kaai was performing in Sydney, Australia, in 1911, Bonine presented an exhibition of “1,600 feet of [his] Hawaiian films”.78 It was their association that no doubt generated Kaai’s own interest in film; he is described as having “his own moving picture camera with him and takes moving pictures of all the interesting places he visits”.79 At the Wintergarden in Rockhampton he screened, as part of the stage show:

a series of dramatic incidents attending Mauna Loa’s great outbreak. Mauna Loa is literally ablaze with fire. The view afforded from the sea was awe inspiring and magnificent beyond description, with three rivers of gleaming red lava zig-zagging in the form of dragons down the mountain. Fountains leaping, clouds lined with red glow, and maroon smoke, the spectacle presented a scene never to be forgotten.80

Kaai collaborated with other visiting artists as well, including Ellen Beach Yaw (1869–1947), a coloratura soprano originally from Boston who had performed with the D’Oyly Carte Opera Company in London and made many recordings for Victor (Victor Talking Machine Company). Visiting Hawai’i in 1917 she did a series of concerts in Honolulu with “Hawai’i’s Music Man”81 in an eclectic programme that combined “song classics for the ukulele” (mostly composed by Kaai) with Verdi, Brahms and Massenet items by Beach Yaw.82 Maud Powell (1867–1920), the well-known American violinist, also visited Hawai’i in 1912 for a series of concerts and was entertained by the Kaai Quintet on numerous occasions. Powell and Kaai performed together at the Malihini Christmas Tree, an annual children’s charity event: “and while moving pictures were being taken, Miss Maud Powell, the violinist, and Mr. Ernest Kaai stood and played ukuleles.”83

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77 Honolulu Star Bulletin [Honolulu], 12th February 1914: 5.
78 Hawaiian Gazette [Honolulu], 10th March 1911: 1.
79 South Western Times [Bunbury, WA], 23rd August 1928: 4.
80 Morning Bulletin [Rockhampton, Queensland], 5th July 1926: 7.
81 Honolulu Star Bulletin [Honolulu], 22nd November 1917: 5.
82 Honolulu Star Bulletin [Honolulu], 7th December 1917: 5.
83 Honolulu Star Bulletin [Honolulu], 28th 1912: 12.
Described as “The Coolest Theatre in Town”, The Art Theatre on Fort St offered moving pictures and illustrated songs. Occasionally the Kaai Quintet Club provided the music, and Kaai also sang solo with the “beautifully coloured” illustrations for “Here’s to Our Absent Brothers”; “Just a Little Rocking Chair and You.” Moving image technology was obviously interesting to Kaai and he made frequent appearances with photography as well as moving pictures, and not just for Bonine’s work; as early as 1906 Kaai’s Mandolin Orchestra accompanied Dr Emily Noble’s illustrated travel talk.

6.9. Kaai and the “Hawaiian Guitar”

While Johnny Almeida (1897–1985), “the Dean of Hawaiian music”, believed Kaai was “better as a mandolinist … [and] was the only Hawaiian who could play both the leading and obbligato parts on the mandolin simultaneously” (as cited in Kanahele 1979: 195), Johnny Noble described Kaai as “Hawai’i’s greatest ‘ukulele player” (as cited in Kanahele 1979: 194). Kaai was undoubtedly a virtuoso, but he was also an author and publisher, according to a story that appeared in the magazine Paradise of the Pacific:

> Although promised $1,000 for his first volume of songs, all he was able to collect was $25.00. The songs sold. People liked them, sang them and played them. But somehow the young composer was never able to collect anymore of the promised $1,000. Without more ado, he began to publish his own. In a small way, at first. But gradually growing until soon he found himself the owner of a thriving publishing business.

The “Hawaiian Guitar”, as Kaai referred to the ‘ukulele in his first instruction book, provided an expansion on Kaai’s teaching business when in 1906 he published the first ever ‘ukulele method book, titled The Ukulele: A Hawaiian Guitar and How to Play It (Honolulu 1906), published by Wall, Nichols Ltd., followed by a revised edition in 1910, also published by Wall, Nichols Ltd. Kaai went on to publish another edition in 1916 retitled The Ukulele and How Its [sic] Played (Honolulu: The Hawaiian News Company, 1916). Kaai also published a steel guitar method book, Kaai’s Hawaiian Guitar Method (see Appendix 3), which includes numerical notation and instructions on the slide (or slur), glide, tremolo and staccato, as well as the significance of the grace note:

> The grace note lends itself almost constantly in Steel playing particularly of pieces of slow time. Its character is almost always yearning, sorrowful and tender. The placidity of Hawaii’s music demands the extravagant use of the Grace Note, and hence its application is of great importance. Its effect is similar to slurred notes, only it has no distinct value, the time being borrowed from the principal note. (Kaai’s Method for Hawaiian Guitar 1926: 18)

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84 Hawaiian Star [Honolulu], 21st August 1908: 1.
85 The Pacific Commercial Advertiser [Honolulu], 30th March 1906: 3.
86 Paradise of the Pacific [Honolulu], May 1944: 28
Kaai’s Method and Solos for Ukulele and Tiple (c1926) was advertised at the same time, and the design of the cover\(^87\) suggests the methods are part of a set. The tiple of the title probably refers to the American version that C. F. Martin & Co. developed, similar in size to a baritone ‘ukulele but with ten steel strings, and also like a baritone, tuned to DGBE, the same as the top four strings of a guitar. A revealing element of all of the books is the repertory, which includes many of Kaai’s own compositions and arrangements, and the dedications in Kaai’s Hawaiian Guitar Method (1926), such as “Java Love Song”, which is “Dedicated to Mr Herbert P. Byrnes, Soerabaia, Java.” Byrnes was the manager of the five-man ensemble Kaai contracted to Stam & Weijns cafés in 1919.

Hawaiian melodies and hulas dominate, but Euro-American standards such as “Auld Land Syne” and “Swanee River” are included. The ‘ukulele method promises simple explanations of:

Such fascinating Strokes, as roll, Shuffle, double shuffle, jazz, syncopated triple…
Contains such numbers as My Bonnie, Repining, Maunakea, Sweet Lei Lehua, Mai Poina Oe I’au, Akahi Hoi, Maui Girl, Aloha Oe, Moonlight Hawaii and You, Vista Mista Kista, On the Beach at Waikiki, Rotorua Waltz, Roselani Waltz, Onehunga Waltz, Hoki Hoki, Tofa Ma Feleni (Samoan Song), Aloha Baby Boy… (1926: 51)

The song list reflects Kaai’s visits to New Zealand in 1911 and 1925 and his connection with New Zealand Māori entertainers such as Walter Smith, who also receives a dedication in the steel guitar method (48).

Alongside his publications Kaai established the Kaai Ukulele Manufacturing Co. in 1912 with the by-line “Ukuleles made only in Hawaii by Expert Hawaiians”\(^88\). However, different makes of ‘ukulele carried Kaai’s label, so there may be no typical Kaai design (although enthusiasts search for a “Nunes-ish, Martin style-3-ish inlay”\(^89\) that could signify a Kaai ‘ukulele), but his name has been associated with Larson Brothers ‘ukuleles and Knutsen harp ‘ukuleles, which carried his inner label, and Jonah Kumalae’s brand, where the headstock reads Kumalae but the inner label is Kaai’s. Kaai’s involvement in the production of ‘ukuleles was prescient as the Hawaiian presence at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) in San Francisco in 1915 launched a craze for Hawaiian music and the ‘ukulele (for a detailed history of the ‘ukulele see King & Tranquada 2003 and Tranquada & King 2012); “‘Ukulele production among Hawaiian manufacturers soared from an estimated 500 to 600 per month in August 1915 to 1,600 one year later” (King & Tranquada 2003: 25), a mixed blessing for manufacturers in Hawai‘i as American

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\(^{87}\) There is an image of the book on the last page of Kaai’s steel guitar method book. I have not yet found a copy.

\(^{88}\) Offices were based at the Alexander Young Building, Suites 51–52.

companies began competing even before the PPIE was over “and fraudulently passing off their ‘ukuleles as island-made” (25). In 1917 Kaai sold his company to Paradise Ukulele and Guitar Works that eventually became the Aloha Ukulele Manufacturing Co., which Kaai continued to have shares in. Seemingly always looking for business opportunities, in 1910 Kaai became an original stockholder in the Honolulu Music Company Ltd, along with Albert R. “Sonny” Cunha.

6.10. Demokalaka or Repubalika?

Kaai’s political affinities are hard to discern. Democratic and Republican parties quickly emerged after annexation in 1898 and the Independent Home Rule Party was established in 1900 (see Silva 2004). He performed at Democratic rallies in support of candidates, providing celebratory music for wins in the 1906 elections by Senator-elect Charles McCarthy and the newly elected Sheriff of Honolulu, Col. Curtis Piehu Iaukea, who like Kaai had a close connection to the court of Kalākaua. Kaai had composed at least two mele for Iaukea. One, in the form of an acrostic was first printed in 1904 in the Hawaiian-language newspaper Aloha Aina (see Figure 7 and Figure 8).

Perhaps McCarthy’s stance on the sale of liquor and its impact on Honolulu nightlife influenced Kaai’s support for him as Kaai was also known to perform at anti-prohibition demonstrations, but speeches at the rally, some in the Hawaiian language, focused on uplifting the Hawaiian people and rebuked the Republican opposition for discriminatory rhetoric directed at the Hawaiian delegates during the campaign. Music punctuated the speeches and “the songs of the campaign and several new ones with triumphal words and music were rendered by Ernest Kaai’s orchestra or sung by Madame Alapai and Miss Kaai.”

In 1910 Kaai was appearing at both anti-prohibition rallies and at prohibition rallies where he entertained audiences for the Republican delegate to Congress (1902–1922), Prince Kuhio Kalanianaole (1871–1922). Prince Kuhio had been a member of the Wilcox rebellion and was

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91 The Hawaiian Star [Honolulu], 20th June 1910: 5.
93 The Pacific Commercial Advertiser [Honolulu], 13th November 1906: 1 & 7.
94 For an account of anti-prohibition rally speeches see The Hawaiian Gazette [Honolulu], 26th July 1910: 4.
95 A controversial and prominent figure, he does not yet have an extensive biography. The Centre for Biographical Research has, however, published a series of brief biographies that include Prince Kuhio (by Noenoe K. Silva and Davianna Pōmaika‘i McGregor) and Princess Ruth Ke‘elikōlani. http://www.hawaii.edu/biograph/pdf/kuhioguide.pdf.
initially a member of the Home Rule Party before being elected as the Delegate to Congress for the Republican Party. He had stated: “in the suppression of the liquor traffic in Hawaii lies the salvation of the Hawaiians”.96 From 1906 onwards Prince Kuhio appears to be the politician Kaai is most associated with and Kaai wrote a song in 1917 in honour of Prince Kuhio (see “Kalanianaole” in Appendix 3). Kaai entertained at the launch of Prince Kuhio’s campaigns in 1906 and 1910 and performed at Republican events in support of Kuhio in 1911 and 1912. In Kaai’s backing of these political figures—Kuhio and Iaukea—it is possible to interpret his actions as neither Republican nor Democratic but rather Hawaiian.

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96 Pacific Commercial Advertiser [Honolulu], 25th July 1910: 1.
“Lanakila Iaukea”¹ (Aloha Aina (5/11/1904: 4)

P - Piha hauoli na mokupuni, [The islands are filled with joy,
I - ke Alakai hou o Hawaii, In the new Leader of Hawaii,
E - Eia mai ka Elele Lahui, Here is the Representative,
H - Hanohano ai oe e Hawaii, In whom you, O Hawaii, will be proud,
U - Ua kohu pono ma ia kulana. He will be right for the position.

I - Imua kakou e ka lahui, Let us move forward, O Lahui,
A - A welo hou e ka Hae Hawaii, And let the Hawaiian flag flutter once more,
U - Ua lokahi na makaainana, The citizens are unified,
K - Kakoo like i ka Moho Lahui, And support together the Candidate of the
E - E ola ka Elele Demokalaka, People,
A - A au i ke kai me ka lanakila. Long live the Democratic Representative,

The islands are filled with joy,
In the new Leader of Hawaii,
Here is the Representative,
In whom you, O Hawaii, will be proud,
He will be right for the position.
Let us move forward, O Lahui,
And let the Hawaiian flag flutter once more,
The citizens are unified,
And support together the Candidate of the
People,
Long live the Democratic Representative,
And travel the sea in victory.]

Figure 7: “Lanakila Iaukea” (1904).

“Lanakila Iaukea”² (Ka Nupepa Kuokoa, Vol XLV, #43, 26 October 1906)

He aloha aina, [The land is the love of my heart
Puuwai o ka onipaa Together let us move to build
Kuklakila no ka lahui, A proud nation and
Na ewe o Hawaii, Stimulate the birth of Hawaii
A kau i ka lanakila Your victory is with
E ka moho lauhea The candidate, lauhea

Na ka I me ka Mahi Belonging to the I and Mahi family
Nei lei mamo like This young man has
Oiwi ponoi no ka iwi kuamoo A strong native background
A imua e ka alo Go forward with the favourite
Me na mana koho And powerful candidate
A lanakila oi lauhea Victory is best with lauhea

Lalau i ka lhe Don’t make a mistake
Me ka Mahiole Cast your ballot for this valiant warrior
Ke kahua mokomoko pahu paloka, With the platform that is much better
I nui e ka aho, Young voters
A e na pokii lauhea will fight vigorously for your ancestral
A welo e ka hae lauhea rights

Hui:
Kuila, e ka lei, lei hiwahiwa, Weave a lei, precious esteemed lei
Wiliia ke aloha me ka lokahi Woven with love and unity
I hoku alaka i lauhea Your outstanding leader is lauhea
(Haku ia e E. Kaai) (Composed by E. Kaai)

Figure 8: “Lanakila Iaukea” (1906).

² http://papakilodatabase.com/pdnupepa/cgi-bin/pdnupepa?a=d&d=KNK19061026-01.2.17&srpos=1&dliv=none&cc=
6.11. Love and Marriage

While Kaai negotiated many facets of the music business with dexterity and moved in influential circles, his private life was often under pressure. In 1900 he was sued for divorce by his wife of six months, Carrie Kamaiopili. Kaai and she were married on 26th February 1900, but in suing for divorce his wife charged that:

immediately after the marriage was performed by Rev. E.S. Timoteo, the groom forsook his bride at the altar steps, and has since neglected to act the part of a husband. When the marriage was performed young Kaai declared he was forced into wedlock and that if he and Carrie Maiopili [sic] were joined in wedlock he would not live with her. The scene was a dramatic one, but despite his assertions that he would leave his bride the instant the last words of the ceremony were pronounced, the two were made one by the minister. According to his wife’s allegations, the husband’s threat was carried into execution and he has since failed to provide for his wife and the child that was born to her.\(^3\)

Their child, Edna Kekapuohiwaikalani Kaupena Kaai, was born on 4th May 1900\(^4\) but died just over one year later on 16th May 1901. On the 25th August 1902, Kaai’s first child with Amy Hoolaikahilulo Halani Jackson\(^5\) (néé Sheldon) was born: Thelma Keonaona Kaai. Kaai and Amy Jackson were married on the 4th February 1907 following the birth of their second child, Ernest Kaleihoku Kaai\(^6\)Junior. Amy\(^7\) Jackson was previously married to another entertainer, Toyo Jackson, who had performed alongside Kaai at high school, but Jackson was killed in May 1900 outside a bar in a fatal knife attack, the details of which preoccupied the Honolulu press for some weeks and included a vivid description of Jackson’s heart in a jar.

Kaai was to have four more children after he began a relationship with Tuavivi Marion Greig (1901–1989) in 1925 while on tour in New Zealand. Their first child, Karen Tuavivi Kaai (1929–2003), was born in Singapore while Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours were on tour. After the pair settled for a period in Colombo, Sri Lanka, another three children were born: Mana Leata Monica Kaai (1931–1964), Mahealani Greig Kaai (1932–1995) and Tui (Leo) Florence Kaai (b.1935).  

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\(^3\) Pacific Commercial Advertiser [Honolulu], 15th August 1900: 6.
\(^4\) Kaai described himself as single on the 1900 census form, which is dated June.
\(^5\) Amy already had two children to Vincent Pangelina, Rita (b.1892) and Amy (b.1895).
\(^7\) Mrs Annie Jackson on the marriage certificate (www.ulukau.org).
Kaai’s popularity and success as an agent and entertainer derived from a number of factors: his social capital accrued from his connections with the ali’i, politicians, wealthy haole social circles and extensive musical networks. He was deeply connected to the community through his teaching, church fundraising, glee clubs and Royal Hawaiian Band affiliations. Kaai developed extensive entrepreneurial operations and simultaneously negotiated his own aspirations, building on his social and cultural capital, which were substantial given the depth of his musical knowledge and abilities. Kaai was able to move across Hawai’i’s social boundaries. Through his repertory he reflects a version of the late monarchy’s intention to build on the past and also be recognised as modern and progressive (Williams Jr 2015).

Kaai’s ability to broker his own ambitions, constructing the kind of entrepreneurial domain he did, is indicative of someone whose agency is configured in multiple ways. Kaai multiplied his subject positions (Grossberg 1996: 98) in his early career in Honolulu, where power over education and “propaganda through literacy and the literate media” (Rice 2007: 31) was being concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. Through music, as a composer, performer and impresario Kaai could access “new and alternative forms of behaviour outside of the allowable models of governmental discourse and discipline” (Rice 2007: 23), the fabric of which was woven through with legislation that discriminated against Kanaka Maoli. Music and musical enterprise, however, allowed Kaai the possibility of “authoring the self” (23), a self, in constructivist terms, “whose expression is contingent on particular contexts and specific performances of the self in those contexts. Music … would seem to provide a particularly fruitful arena for the expression of multiple identities in context” (Rice 2007: 27). Timothy Rice’s inquiry into the role of music-making in how identity is created seems particularly relevant, but so too is Jonathan Osorio’s (2006) contention that Kanaka Maoli such as Kaai came of age in an era when there was no huikau (confusion) about Hawaiian identity. Six months prior to the annexation Queen Lili’uokalani published Hawaii’s Story by Hawaii’s Queen affirming Hawaiian sovereignty and denouncing American colonialism. She condemned annexation and colonial efforts to “reconstitute ‘Hawaiian’ subjectivity” (Kualapai 2005: 32) and “recast the word ‘Hawaiian’ in geographical, rather than cultural, terms” (56).

As Osorio (2006) says about Hawaiians in the 1890s, “We read, we wrote, and we had opinions that we were not at all afraid to share about the provisional government, about annexation, and about our own native political leadership” (2006: 21). Citizens like Kaai were fully aware of the
changes Hawaiian society was undergoing as a result of the annexation and this can be interpreted from his song lyrics. The following is a typical example of the consistent themes in Kaai’s song writing:

Aloha, Aloha, I love you
Hawaii my queen of the sea
Those fairy isles, where nature smiles,
Are dearer than Eden to me.
Though far, far away I may wander
My thoughts, where’er I roam,
Of you ever grow fonder.
Blessed land which my heart calls home.

Performed at the World’s Fair in Seattle in 1909 by Elizabeth Keala Kaai, the song “Aloha, Aloha” can be seen on the one hand to represent a nostalgic view of Hawai’i that is a common trope, but it can also be seen to demonstrate kaona: “Used extensively in Hawaiian poetry and song, including the Queen’s compositions, kaona denotes veiled or indirect meaning” (Kualapai 2005: 54). In her article “Kaona as a decolonial aesthetic practice”, Brandy Nālani McDougall defines the term as:

an intellectual practice (one that is literary, rhetorical, pedagogical, and compositional) in Hawaiian Literature …[that] refers to meaning hidden out in the open, with a range of both the hiddenness and openness of meaning engaged. That is, the practice of kaona allows for meaning to be hidden in such a way as to seem ornamental, trivial or merely imagistic – with seemingly innocent meaning – to those unfamiliar with what George Kanahele (1986) calls “the language of symbols” with which, as cultural practice, Hawaiians ’spoke’ alongside our “native tongue” (p.47). Inclusive of allusion, symbolism, punning, and metaphor, kaona draws on the collective knowledges and experiences of Hawaiians, recognising these knowledges and experiences as unique, while also recognising the range and contexts within which we must inhabit, learn and access knowledge in its many forms. (2014: 3)

The performers were a long way from “home”, but the spirit or kaona of the song suggests a double meaning and that the loss of the Hawaiian nation is profoundly felt. As Kualapai says: “Textual interpretation of kaona is necessarily conjectural… but speaks to textual operations beyond the literal” (2005: 55). Kaai’s “Hawaii My Queen” can be seen as affirming the interconnectedness of the deposed monarch to the ʻāina (land) and its lāhui (nation). The “symbolic and discursive terrain” (Imada 2012: 137) could not be fully controlled by hegemonic suppression, and as performers “they intervened in the objectification of their… cultural practices, projecting alternate visions of their history, land, and future. They were not static objects receiving instruction on becoming …charming performers, and infantilized colonial subjects” (Imada 2012: 137).

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6.13. Culture Broker

Like Waterman’s “master syncretisers” (1990: 9), Kaai was a cosmopolitan individual adept at interpreting “multiple languages, cultural codes and value systems, skills which enable them to construct styles that express shifting patterns of urban identity” (9). Waterman describes these musicians as “quintessential culture brokers, situated at interstices in the transforming colonial urban social structure” (1993: 66). Waterman emphasises that “people, not musics or cultures, accept or reject new practices”, and this is where he grounds syncretism – in a human actor’s interpretation of similarity and difference (1990: 9). Kaai, however, also maintained his foundational commitment to Hawaiiness and Hawaiian culture playing, orchestrating and teaching music to hugely diverse audiences, but interpreted similarity and difference depending on the audience. His vast repertoire was founded in Hawai‘i nei but he negotiated the social, cultural and political complexities of Honolulu and created musical opportunities for himself and others so that by 1900, when he was nineteen years old, his estimated earnings were already 100 USD⁹ per month.¹⁰

Kaai’s cosmopolitanism allowed him access to any form of music, but he simultaneously asserted a Hawaiian identity that is discernable in the persistence with which he staged the hula, in itself a radical act, in his employment, in Hawai‘i particularly, of Native Hawaiian musicians and singers and in his integration of repertories. Native Hawaiian mo‘olelo and instrumentation underpin the design of his stage productions, and as an innovator and entrepreneur he leveraged those qualities in a contemporary environment where his music was “as interpreted by Hawaiians.” Keppy’s (2013) notion of the inter-ethnic urbanites of “Manila, Cebu, Batavia, Surabaya and Singapore” (444) could include Honolulu and Kaai in a space where transnational connections and cultural flows collided. Benedict Anderson’s statement resonates for Kaai, that “the contrast between cosmopolitanism and nationalism is mistaken; it’s actually conjoined” (see Foo 2009: 4-21). Kaai was a product of an era of hou‘oulu i ka lāhui¹¹, when support for the revival of the rich heritage of Kanaka Maoli was mandated by the king. In a period sometimes referred to as the first Hawaiian renaissance, these were Kaai’s formative years during which his resilient Hawaianness was established.

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⁹ Kaai was sued for divorce by his first wife Carrie Kamaioepili, with whom he had a child and to whom he was briefly married in 1900. Alimony was assessed on his income.
¹⁰ The average income in the 1900 US census was $450 per annum.
¹¹ King Kalākaua’s policy: to make the nation grow.
Figure 9: Ernest Kaleihoku Kaai (Source: Courtesy Bishop Museum)
Kaai’s great friend and collaborator, the filmmaker R. K. Bonine, was displaying his moving image works at an exhibition in Sydney in 1911 at the same time Kaai and his ensemble were on tour in Australasia. Bonine’s footage included the first film of surfers at Waikiki that Bonine had taken in 1906 and featured one of Kaai’s vocalists, Robert Kaawa, who was a member of the Hui Nalu surf club at Waikiki. As Kaai was also a surfer it is possible that he featured in the same footage. It is a biographer’s dream to think that Bonine may have also made moving images of Kaai and his entertainers, even without sound, that would provide some concrete trace of the ‘non reproducible knowledge,’ the actual performances, gestures, orality, movements, dances and singing. In the absence of such imagery, however, this chapter relies on published texts – Australian and New Zealand press reports and ephemera of Kaai’s first tour of Australasia with his Royal Hawaiian Musical Organisation. There are many reviews, and while they are indicative of the reception the performers received, there is a marked absence of the performers’ voice, apart from a few short quotes from Kaai, in the narration of the entertainments. The accounts of the various reviewers and the fact of their preservation in archives are a reminder that as Derrida says, “writing is unthinkable without repression” (1995: 226). The materials are revealing of the performances not only as encounters AND recognitions, sometimes simultaneously, but also as the products “of economic, political and social structures that they, in turn, tend to reproduce” (Taylor 2003: 28). The predominance of reviewers’ responses and audience reactions constitute to some extent ‘an unreturnable gaze’.

Ephemera materials in the National Library of New Zealand from the 1911 tour, which began in the southernmost town of New Zealand, Invercargill, include programmes and memorabilia, while the National Library Papers Past service provides access to a increasing catalogue (as more historic papers are digitised) of newspapers where reviews, advertisements, press releases and interviews can be found. The ephemera provide more insight into the thinking behind the musical direction and come closest to representing Kaai through the structure of the repertory. The programmes list the items and the performers while the newspaper advertisements often record the songs that will be played in the performances as well. Reviews, however, reveal that the programmes were contingent on the number of encores: “15 out of 20 songs encored!” and occasionally listed the extra items performed by the troupe. Commentary on audience reactions

1 The company arrived in Invercargill on the Mokoia from Auckland 17th May 1911.
to the performances show enthusiastic demands for repeat performances of items as well as “insistent encores that doubled the programme.”

7.1. The Royal Hawaiians

Kaai’s 1911 tour company was called the Royal Hawaiian Musical Organisation or the Royal Hawaiians. They were a double quintette of singers who performed in a variety of combinations: a male octette, quartets, quintettes, duets and soloists. Two of the female members were also dancers and each member was an instrumentalist, if not a multi-instrumentalist. All of the troupe members (see Table 4) were associated with Kaai’s Hawaiian Glee Club. The “Royal” designation was a common moniker for Hawaiian bands at the time and conjures both a sense of nostalgia and resistance in the persistence of both the concepts “Hawaiian” and “Royal” in the face of settler-colonial power. Kaai dropped the term when he returned to the southern hemisphere in 1919 in favour of the more contemporary sounding Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours, but the performance of compositions by members of the royal family continued.

Table 4: The Royal Hawaiian Musical Organisation, 1911 (from an original programme, Ephemera Collection, National Library of New Zealand)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members of the Royal Hawaiians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soprano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mezzos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baritones</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bassos</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In their article *Aloha Australia* (1995), Jackie Coyle and Rebecca Coyle identify Kaai as the person responsible for the introduction and popularisation of Hawaiian music in Australia. Although they concentrate on his time on the Australian Tivoli circuit in the mid to late 1920s, they also

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2 *Evening Post* [Wellington], 6th June 1911: 2.
mention that he was the first Hawaiian act to tour Australia and that the variety performance included a Māori haka (34). While they do not mention a New Zealand leg of the tour, reviews and promotional material appear in New Zealand newspapers and reveal the extent of their travels as far north as Auckland and as far south as Gore and Invercargill. Hawaiian (both English language and Hawaiian language) newspapers also feature articles that have details of the proposed tour of Australasia as well as coverage of the tours while they were in progress and celebratory return concerts in Honolulu.

New Zealand reviewers of Kaai’s shows are unfamiliar with many aspects of the performances – instruments, imagery, dance, language and features of the music of Hawai‘i, such as falsetto, which could be confirmation of Kaai’s advertising line that they were the first Hawaiians to perform in New Zealand. Comments in the Australian press suggest travel to Honolulu was familiar for a few members of the audience, but in contrast with Australia, segments of the New Zealand audience may have been very familiar with Hawaiian music. The kiʻi of Wehi and Keoki Greig, Tuavivi Greig Kaai and Sid David (Chapters 8, 13 & 15) illustrate some of the ways in which alternative circuits of music making and transmission functioned within Māori and Oceanic networks and outside of the established music management routes. One of the things this is indicative of is the shift in registers between New Zealand and Australian expressions of colonialism.

Encounters with antipodean colonialisms presented new challenges and negotiations for Kaai’s Royal Hawaiians. The reception of their indigeneity was influenced by a perception of them as “cultured islanders” and their exoticism as Hawaiians. They were viewed by more than one Pākehā newspaper reviewer as superior to Māori, the indigenous people of New Zealand, in temperament at least, and another reviewer admires the “kindly” facial features of the Hawaiians, comparing them favourably with the “more strife-loving peoples of the South-Sea islands”.

Comments such as these followed a long history of racial “reading” that designated Melanesians, for example, as more threatening than other Oceanic island groups. A Hawaiian newspaper report of the tour offers a discrepant view in its description of Kaai’s party as being able to converse freely with Māori native speakers in New Zealand because of the language similarities. The article, which was based on a letter Kaai sent to H.P. Wood of the Hawaiian Promotion Committee, describes the troupe being welcomed:

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3 Pākehā in te reo Māori is defined as: non-Māori, European.
4 The Dominion [Wellington], 5th June 1911: 6.
at a Maori meeting in the traditional way of rubbing noses. Kaai, Carter and others had to pass down a line rubbing noses with about a hundred of the Southern cousins… The Maoris [sic] gave them a great welcome, in which a tribal dance figured prominently. The dance is called the Haka, and in the course of it the Maoris roll their eyes, stick out their tongues and otherwise contort their features horribly but the effect is striking.5

A version of the same story appeared in the Hawaiian language newspaper Ka Nupepa Kuokoa6 and has been translated on the nupepa-hawaii.com site. It appears to describe a Māori ceremony of welcome onto a marae known as a powhiri:

Kaai said when they went to some villages, they were hosted by Maori people, where one of them said words of welcome and friendship in their mother tongue. But the Hawaiians understood what was being said. From the side of the musicians, Mr Kaai stood and gave… (the text is unclear from here on but as manuhiri (visitors) Kaai is standing on behalf of his troupe and obviously about to reply to the whaikōrero (speech) of the tāngata whenua (the local people – hosts)).7

In 1911 the performers, including Kaai, were all under 35 years old, the youngest being Robert Kaawa, a champion swimmer, who was just 20 at the time of the tour. Henry Kailimai, the comic of the ensemble and one of the bass vocalists in Kaai’s Royal Hawaiians, was noted for his performance of Hughie Cannon’s popular ‘coon’ song “Bill Bailey” (1902):

Mr H. Kailimai’s native drollery was so piquant in the comic song, “Brudder Sylvest” that he was brought back four times. He has one song about Bill Bailey, and to hear him drone in assumed sorrow: “Bill, you done me Rorng” (wrong) is calculated to move the most pessimistic.8

Kailimai was to have a big hit in 1915 at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco with his own composition “On the Beach at Waikiki.” Thomas J Carter, “the silvery tenor of the party”,9 was known as the Hawaiian Caruso, and he and Keala Kaai were married shortly after their return to Honolulu. Henry Alexander Peelau Bishaw stayed on after the tour offering music and singing lessons in Australia and New Zealand, specialising in “Hawaiian ukulele and steel guitar… in six simple lessons”10 and including a “postal course” for country residents. He described himself in adverts as a “Kreisler of the steel guitar” (after Fritz Kreisler, the Austrian violin virtuoso) and toured on the Fuller’s circuit with the Honolulu Four (1922) and his own Hawaiian Serenaders (1926), whose repertory ran from “Jazz to Grand Opera”11. While in New Zealand he worked from Lewis Eady’s store on Queen St in Auckland, which he

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5 Evening Bulletin [Honolulu], 21st July 1911: 10.
6 Ka Nupepa Kuokoa [Hawaiʻi], 30th June 1911: 8.
7 Ka Nupepa Kuokoa [Hawaiʻi], 30th June 1911: 8
8 Evening Post [Wellington], 5th June 1911: 2.
9 Otago Daily Times [Dunedin], 17th May 1911: 8.
10 NZ Herald [Auckland], 11th December 1926: 22.
11 Otago Daily Times [Dunedin], 20th May 1926: 1
advertised as “Hawaiian Headquarters.”" James Kamakani, with a voice “full of music”, was known as the only true “basso profundo” in the islands of Hawai‘i, and had a voice that for one New Zealand reviewer was “reminiscent of some of the choruses of the Fisk Jubilee Singers.” Kamakani had a long association with Kaai and was a member of the band that performed with Kaai at the A-Y-P in Seattle. Henry Kaeo was a busy soloist who also performed with the Hawaiian Band; he was a member of the Kamehameha Alumni Association and was the music teacher for the Kawaiahao Church Sunday School. Performing with the Kaai Glee Club, he made recordings on the Columbia “Y” series and went on to travel with Ray Kinney in the late 1920s. Like Akana he didn’t receive as much media attention as the other performers. L. Akana was the eighth male member of the band and is largely absent from reviews: while he has a presence in the programme material, it is not significant.

Of the women in the troupe, Keala Kaai, who was also known as Elizabeth Kaai, was a popular soprano in Hawai‘i and had been part of the team of musicians to accompany Kaai to Seattle for the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific (A-Y-P) Exposition in 1909. She appeared regularly with Kaai in Honolulu along with Mme Nani Alapai of the Royal Hawaiian Band and recorded multiple sides with the Kaai Glee Club and Lemon Glee Club on the Columbia “Y” Series. It is more difficult to find information about dancers and vocalists Mme. Anehila and Mme. Etela (Esther), although they, especially Anehila, were reviewed extensively for their hula performances. Anehila is described as having “a decided turn for bright comedy… a telling contralto voice and an infectious laugh”, and her “amorous by-play” is given as a reason why a rendition of “Sweet Lei Lehua” with Keala Kaai was given multiple encores. Etela receives much less attention in the Australasian press. Both women had performed hula on the American vaudeville circuits prior to coming to Australasia, but with the increasing focus on “part Hawaiian girls,” in Hawai‘i, an emphasis that would be reflected in Kaai’s later tours to Australasia, details about Native Hawaiian hula performers like Anehila and Etela, who are doubly impacted by race and gendered inequalities, are harder to trace:

Where all are so good it is hardly fair to discriminate, but the work of Mr Ernest Kaai calls for special recognition. He possesses the half-voice – between baritone and tenor, which is peculiar to these people – of tender sympathetic tone and good even quality… Mr Kaai is also the master of the violin and to hear him twang an accompaniment to his own air and vice versa is to hear art.

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12 NZ Herald [Auckland], 30th July 1927: 3.
13 Dominion [Wellington], 5th June 1911: 6
14 Loyd Childs, Special Agent and Disbursing Officer, AYPE, Seattle, to WF Frear, Honolulu, 22nd Nov. 1908: (6683–84).
Kaai regularly received such reviews about his own performance on the tour. He is described by a reviewer in the *Evening Post* as a veritable musical Admirable Crichton – no doubt relating to his many abilities – but the metaphor is a troubled one in that it is also embedded with an understanding of the temporary inversion of class hierarchies and someone seemingly achieving above their station. Unsettling expectations was the subtext of another article on Kaai. The Australasian Press’s fascination with the skin tones, facial features and physicality of the Royal Hawaiians culminated in a curious article on Kaai that included eugenic data in the midst of a discussion of his skills as a surfer:

**MUSCULAR MUSICAL DIRECTOR – TALKS OF SURF-SHOOTING**

Hawaiian will give exhibition.

…Mr Kaai does not look like a musical director. He does not wear his hair long, nor is he plagued with a temperament which causes him to break out into violent fits of temper bordering on hysteria. Rather he looks like a successful heavyweight pugilist, or an international Rugby forward. Mr Kaai weighs 207 lb., is 46 in. round the chest (normal measurement), and he has a 17\(\frac{1}{2}\) in. calf.

Mr Kaai’s specialty outside of music is surf-board shooting. He can stand on his head on a board which comes in ahead of a wave at express-train speed… Mr Kaai is going to give an exhibition on one of the Sydney beaches before he leaves Sydney, and it should prove of interest, for the reason that while local swimmers surf shoot in a fashion that arouses admiration wherever it is seen, they know nothing of board shooting.\(^{15}\)

In an interview in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Kaai was reported as “speaking with animation of the charm and variety of social life in Honolulu. He states that the population is now about 45,000, of whom the Hawaiian race represents exactly one-third”.\(^ {16}\) The Hawaiian Promotion Committee as well as the Hawaiian Progress Association endorsed the Royal Hawaiian Musical Organisation, and the office of Governor of Hawai‘i, Walter Frear, provided the musicians with Aloha buttons to distribute to audience members at their concerts. Charles Hiroshi Garrett’s comments that “it is no surprise that in light of its central position as part of indigenous Hawaiian culture, that the dissemination of music became a key channel through which […] consumers were introduced to Hawai‘i” (2008: 171). Most of the performers, including Kaai, had participated in World’s Fairs\(^ {17}\) already, where the discourse of Hawaiian success was predicated on increased exports, tourism and the needs of the military. In these contexts racialised discourses dominated Hawaiian cultural practices and simultaneously exploited them for marketable commodities.

\(^{15}\) *Sun* [Sydney], 15th April 1911: 10. Duke Kahanamoku is credited with introducing surfing to Australia at Sydney’s Freshwater Beach in December 1914, but Bonine’s film was shown in 1911 and it is likely that Kaai and Robert Kaawa demonstrated the sport in 1911 as well.

\(^{16}\) *Sydney Morning Herald* [Sydney], 10th April, 1911: 4.

\(^{17}\) Pan-American Exposition, Buffalo, New York, 1901; Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, Seattle 1909.
The focus on World’s Fairs engendered in the Hawaiian performers who participated a belief in the value of tourism for the Hawaiian economy, and music provided employment outside of the plantation and service economies.

7.2. Race and Advertising

Kaai was to have a long association with Australasia’s foremost theatrical management companies, J C Williamson and E J Carroll. Initially engaged by Williamson, the 1911 tour proceeded under the direction of the Australasian Amusement Company and George Marlow Ltd. Promotional strategies varied – for example, the following advertisement contains no direct references to Hawaiian content and emphasises an English programme:

THE HAWAIIAN GLEE PARTY
Glorious Singers of Exquisite Songs
Recognised throughout two Continents as the Finest Body of Male Harmonists and Solo Singers that Sing Part Songs, Glee and Ballads,
Latest English Concert Successes.
Newest English Ballads. A programme containing all that is Musically-Rarest! Sweetest! Best!18

Other adverts accentuated the troupe’s origins in “the Paradise of the Pacific” and that they were the “Finest Native Musical Organisation in the World.”19 There was some competition in this regard as the Fisk Jubilee Singers had been touring Australasia since the 1880s (and would continue to do so until the mid 1930s), and had inspired local groups in New Zealand, such as the Rarotongan Native Group, who styled themselves after the African Americans with the addition of “native dances”20 and troupes of Māori performers such as the Taumutu Native Jubilee Singers,21 who were from Southland,22 the Kahungunu Theatrical Company, The Puhara Dancers and the Mahina troupe of musical artists23. Tour companies from other islands in Oceania, such as the Fijian War Dancers, who were “dancers and action singers”, visited New Zealand in 1907.24 Orpheus McAdoo, an ex-Fisk singer, was also touring with his own company up until 1900.

18 [North Otago Daily Times [Dunedin]], 22nd May 1911: 3.
20 [Thames Advertiser [Thames]], 17th January 1890: 2.
21 [Ellesmere Guardian [Leeston, South Canterbury], Vol XVI, 22nd June 1895: 3.
22 The “native singers” phenomenon from 1880 onwards and the influence of the Jubilee Fisk Singers in New Zealand is an area that would benefit from more research.
24 [Southland Times [Invercargill]], 18th January 1907: 2.
A 13-member group known as the Maori Entertainers25 also travelled to America in 1909 and played at the New York Hippodrome for nine months; some of the members stayed on to play in music halls in San Francisco26. The Fisk singers had strongly influenced Māori audiences with their performance style and entrepreneurship and were welcomed and celebrated in Māori communities such as Papawai Pā27 near Greytown, a visit that is vividly described in the local newspaper, the Wairarapa Standard28. Invitations to Kaa’s Royal Hawaiians to visit marae29 suggest that strong connections were also made between Māori and the Hawaiian entertainers, but so far no reports in New Zealand papers have come to light. The Royal Hawaiians’ visit (quoted below) was only reported in Honolulu newspapers, and these did not refer to the marae by name.

Kaai’s advertisements appear to be positioning the Royal Hawaiians in the market looking for the location-appropriate approach and testing advertorial strategies. One approach that was decided on can be summarised in the following: “The whole show is off the beaten track and may be recommended as a refreshing change.”30 It was an aspect that was picked up on by many New Zealand reviewers, who marvelled over the strangeness and novelty of the performances, calling them “unique and even bizarre.”31 Some of the instruments were seen for the first time. The ‘ukulele was described variously as “a little baby guitar in appearance”32 and like the guitar but “a smaller instrument of the same species (said to be a product of their own beloved Honolulu).”33

Superlatives (and capitalised words) were the mainstay of classified advertising at this time, and the language of the Royal Hawaiians’ advertisements makes heavy use of adjectives: “Thrilling, Passionate Hawaiian Harmonies”, “Exquisite Rapturous Love Songs”, along with “Sensuous”, “Haunting” “Enchanting”, “Softly Mellifluous”, “Sonorous” and “Exceedingly tender” are words that appear repeatedly in advertisements: “UNIQUE, BRILLIANT, DELIGHTFUL, ENCHANTING, EXQUISITE PROGRAMME”33. Embedded in this adjective overuse are traces of the ongoing construction of the Hawaiian music genre and the accompanying Hawaiian

25 Originally from Rotorua, Rev. F Bennett trained the troupe, who were managed by Mr Farmer Whyte with tour management by Schubert and Anderson (Marlborough Express [Blenheim], 28th June 1909: 8). The performers entertained their community at Ohinemutu marae before leaving.
26 Whanganui Chronicle [Whanganui], 30th July 1910: 5.
27 Defined in te reo Māori as a fortified refuge or settlement – contemporary spelling is pā.
29 Defined in te reo Māori as an open space or courtyard where people gather.
30 Otago Daily Times [Dunedin], 13th May 1911: 1.
31 NZ Herald [Auckland], 20th June 1911: 4.
32 NZ Truth [Auckland], 3rd June 1911: 1.
33 Sydney Morning Herald [Sydney], 12th April 1911: 2.
imaginary that was occurring in this era (Garrett 2008), and these types of embodied, ‘sensation’ words – mellifluous, haunting, sensuous – are integral to the way the sound was heard and interpreted.

One Auckland reviewer was confused by the sounds, suggesting that the Royal Hawaiians had “borrowed a cue” from the Maori Entertainers who had just returned from America and the Georgia Minstrels and the Fisk Singers:

[I]t is somewhat curious that their entertainment last evening partook both of the characteristics of Maori music-making, and of that of the American Negro … the troupe seems to be very fond of American marches and coon songs, and these they give with such spirit that their abandon is contagious, and the audience could not refrain from loud expressions of approval.31

The same reviewer found the repertory lacking in the spontaneity of true “native-born music” and believed that:

the music of the Maori has been largely coloured by the hymns of the missionaries, and that it is extremely difficult to gather even a semblance of original native melody. Similarly the American negro… and with the Hawaiians, judging from last evening’s concert, there is a strong suggestion of similar adaptation.

The writer may have preferred to see what one Sydney reviewer suggested: “They would probably be a bigger success if a little sensationalism was added. Let them perform in a big cage with rings through their noses, and garbed in strings of beads etc.”34 Although the reception of the Royal Hawaiians was generally enthusiastic in both New Zealand and Australia, racialised discourses were entrenched in the reviewers’ responses. One excited reviewer in the The Dominion describes the performers as having “varying shades of complexion, possessing the happy soft-featured faces of the people of the far-famed islands of the Sea of Kiwa” where “centuries of peace… have made these charming people, in their contentment, turn to song as the natural expression of feelings in such charmed surroundings”.35 The expression of colonial ambivalence was marked through expressions of ‘not native enough’, as in the comments above, through to ‘too native’, that is, they possessed natural ability but had not been sufficiently trained to achieve true vocal expertise. For some reviewers in New Zealand and Australia, the Hawaiians were not as good as Māori and for other commentators they far exceeded them. Some reviewers brought a dimension of musical knowledge to the critique of the performances, and in one in particular from the The Dominion newspaper in Wellington, although the review is penetrated by multiple

34 The Newsletter: An Australian Paper For Australian People [Sydney], 29th April 1911: 2.
35 The Dominion [Wellington], 5th June 1911: 6.
instances of racially based assessments, the syncretic elements of the Kaai’s song selection and arrangements are appreciated:

As with the Maoris and Cook Islanders, rhythm is instinctive to the Hawaiians, and the effect of adapting this extremely perfect sense of time to modern musical ideas, lends a swaying, swinging force to their choral singing which is simply irresistible.  

In New Zealand, a much smaller market than Australia, the Royal Hawaiians were competing in the same amusements columns with Fuller’s Vaudeville Company and the Fullers’ moving picture business, which operated its own theatre chains there and in Australia. The audience appetite for travelling shows was extensive, though; writing a few years after the Royal Hawaiians had appeared in Dunedin, a writer in the Otago Daily Times complains that only 18 visiting theatre acts had visited Dunedin in 1918, citing the Spanish flu as a reason the numbers were down (rather than the war) – showing that even in times of severe hardship there was a market for visiting entertainers. Australia’s larger population is reflected in the range of choice in Australian newspapers for city and regional theatregoers: pantomimes, circus acts, Scottish dancers (who were not considered ‘native’ by white audiences), classical concerts, picture theatres and plays, as well as travelling vaudeville troupes. Other ‘native’ performers who were touring at the same time as Kaai’s troupe were the “‘Redskins in Sydney’, which featured Sioux, Apaches, Iroquois, Blackfeet, Delawares” who performed with “Champion American Cowboys” and delivered the “realistic portrayals” that some reviewers would have preferred of the Royal Hawaiians.

The materials reveal something of the extent to which Hawai‘i and Hawaiian music was known in Australasia in 1911. They provide a comparative source for the musical changes that affected Hawaiian contemporary performance practices between the 1910s to 1930s and show the adaptations of the performances for different colonial locations and contexts that Kaai and his performers experienced and negotiated.

7.3. Repertory: Surf Chants and Love Songs

Repertory itself is a product “of economic, political and social structures” (Taylor 2003: 28), and also:

Performances, even those with almost purely aesthetic pretensions, move in all sorts of circuits, including national and transnational spaces and economies. Every performance enacts a theory, and every theory performs in the public sphere. (27)

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36 *The Dominion* [Wellington], 5th June 1911: 6.
37 *Sydney Morning Herald* [Sydney], 8th April 1911: 3.
Kaai began each performance with a composition of his own, the “Aloha Chorus”, which had been popular in Seattle at the A-Y-P. While the repertory combined ‘new’- and old-world compositions there is, embedded within the set list, political action. Kaona, already mentioned above, is a property of Hawaiian poetry and song and connotes “veiled or indirect meaning” (Kualapai 2005: 54).

Australian and New Zealand newspaper files offer a limited inventory of the stage shows as elements of the repertoire are sometimes included in advertisements and press releases or reviewers list some of the songs or mention encore items from the shows. While it is possible to reconstruct a sense of the repertory from these fragments, a significant supplement to this material is a surviving programme held in the Ephemera Collection of the National Library of New Zealand. Dated June 3, 1911, and opening at the Wellington Town Hall in New Zealand, the programme provides enough cross-references with the newspaper material to suggest that the content is the basic set list for the New Zealand and Australia shows. Twenty-one items are listed in the programme and New Zealand and Australian audiences responded to the “generosity” of the Royal Hawaiian’s stage show, whereas in Honolulu a similar-sized set list of 24 numbers by the company was considered “rather appalling” because it was seen at the time as too long. Encores expanded the shows further, and unlike the present day where encores occur at the end of a concert, encores in this period were often called for after each item, sometimes up to four or five times, so that the programme was essentially fluid and contingent and the particularities of the item, performance, audience, time and place determined the length of the programme. In a piece of advance publicity in New Zealand the Royal Hawaiians are described as having “over 200 songs and musical sketches” in their repertoire and reviewers have remarked on the number of encores called for, as in this review from the Evening Post: “The programme as set contained twenty-one items, but when the delighted auditors had their demands met this novel organisation had contributed over half a hundred numbers, vocal and instrumental”, and this from the Sydney Morning Herald: “Throughout the long programme encores were frequent, … and as each additional item was short about 85 were run through in two and a quarter hours.”

Constructing a list of the contingent content is based on reading through reviews and sifting for song titles, and at this point there are the contents of a programme given in Wellington in June

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38 The Hawaiian Star [Honolulu], 7th August 1911: 3.
39 Evening Post [Wellington], 3rd June 1911: 2.
40 Evening Post [Wellington], 5th June 1911: 2.
41 Sydney Morning Herald [Sydney], 10th April 1911: 4.
1911 (20 items) and then, culled from newspaper reports, another 17 items. Programme pieces included ‘coon’ songs such as “Bill Bailey, Won’t You Please Come Home” (Cannon, 1902) and “A Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight” (Metz, 1896). The Royal Hawaiians retained the typical characteristics of the songs, including ‘comic’ African American dialect and ragtime rhythms (Garrett 2008).

The set programme therefore represents one version of the performances by the Royal Hawaiians. It is a syncretic blend that contains “all the very latest English and American song successes; also Hawaiian folk songs”\(^42\) – compositions by the Hawaiian Royal Family, Captain Henry Berger of the Royal Hawaiian Band and Kaai himself. The indigenous Hawaiian repertoire was summarised by reviewers as being concerned with love, birds and flowers. In their work Na Mele O Hawaii Nei: 101 Hawaiian Songs, Elbert and Mahoe (1970) describe Hawaiian lyrical content:

The love songs are perhaps unique in the world in several respects: their constant reference to nature, their nearly constant happiness, and their anonymity and indirection. The most gifted composer of songs, especially love songs, was probably Queen Lili’u-o-ka-lani. Her “Puia ka Nahele,” written in 1868, exemplifies the qualities named above. She sings of the distant uplands, the forest imbued with fragrance, wafted sweetness, infatuated birds, the sweet-eyed honey-eater, mist, rain creeping along a cliff, and ferns – no mention of a loved one, only a companion in the wet and misty forest, but we know that the fragrance and beauty are tributes to an unnamed love. (1970: 4)

The Royal Hawaiians included surf mele as well; reviewers referred to “rollicking surf tunes” and surf chants. Chants were performed during the hula performances with the ho’opa’a seated offstage with a minimal set restricted to the performance of the hula.

The programme reflects the influence of hapa haole forms. The term originally referred to people of mixed native-Hawaiian and foreign descent and translates as half-white or half-foreign. It has been applied to musical forms and defined as follows:

Hybrid musical combinations that intermingled island traditions with outside elements, especially those taken from American popular music… *hapa haole* has been used to refer to various cross-cultural encounters: songs that incorporate Hawaiian and English lyrics; indigenous songs recast with English lyrics; pieces that mix elements of Hawaiian music with non-Hawaiian genres, such as ragtime… and according to the broadest definition, English-language songs with lyrics that address Hawaiian themes. (Garrett 2008: 173)

*Table 5* presents a transcription of the Wellington programme. It is followed by *Table 6*, which is list of encore and alternative items.

\(^42\) *Evening Post* [Wellington], 3\(^{rd}\) June 1911: 2.
### Table 5: Programme – The Royal Hawaiians, June 1911, Wellington, New Zealand

The Royal Hawaiians
Wellington, NZ, Sat 3 June 1911 – Direction: The Australasian Amusement Co.¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme Item</th>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Performer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chorus</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Aloha Aloha</td>
<td>Kaai</td>
<td>Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Pili Mahamaha</td>
<td>Pixley</td>
<td>Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baritone Solo</strong></td>
<td>Uina Loko</td>
<td>Peters Mr R. Kaawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guitar Quartet</strong></td>
<td>Hilo March (played with steel)</td>
<td>Kaili Bishaw, Kailimai, Akana, Kaawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Double Quartette</strong></td>
<td>Annie Laurie</td>
<td>Arr. Kaai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bass Solo and Chorus</strong></td>
<td>Kokohi</td>
<td>Berger Mr J. Kamakani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instrumental</strong></td>
<td>Dill Pickles</td>
<td>Taite Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mezzo Soprano Solo</strong></td>
<td>Daisies</td>
<td>Killore Miss Keala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tenor Solo</strong></td>
<td>Punalau</td>
<td>Kaai Mr T.J. Carter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mandolin Solo</strong></td>
<td>Kentucky Home</td>
<td>Arr. Kaai Mr E. Kaai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duet (Vocal)</strong></td>
<td>Sweet Lei Lehua (Love Song)</td>
<td>Kalākaua Miss Keala &amp; Miss Anehila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baritone Solo</strong></td>
<td>Onaona</td>
<td>Kaai Mr E. Kaai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instrumental</strong></td>
<td>La Tipika</td>
<td>Mazado Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Double Quartette</strong></td>
<td>Medley</td>
<td>Kapi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tenor Solo</strong></td>
<td>Last Rose of Summer</td>
<td>Sarmer Mr T.J. Carter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comic Song</strong></td>
<td>Brudder Sylvest</td>
<td>Mr H. Kailimai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recitation</strong></td>
<td>The One Tune Band &quot;A hot time in the old town tonight&quot;</td>
<td>Kaai Mr E. Kaai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bass Solo</strong></td>
<td>Wili Wili Wai</td>
<td>Kalani Mr J. Kamakani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quartette</strong></td>
<td>a) The Rosary</td>
<td>Nevin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ancient Hula Dance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Madame Anehila and Madame Etela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instrumental Medley</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kaai Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>God Save the King</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Transcribed from original programme – National Library, Ephemera Collection.
Table 6: Alternative programme and encore items. All of these songs have been sourced from reviews that have mentioned additional songs not included in the programme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God’s Garden</td>
<td>Gurney (Lambert)</td>
<td>1902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Worker</td>
<td>Gounod</td>
<td>c.1872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heartbeats and Tears</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foolish Moon</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathleen Mavourneen</td>
<td>Crouch</td>
<td>1837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Dear Old Honolulu</td>
<td>Cunha</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Until We Meet Again</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill Bailey</td>
<td>Cannon</td>
<td>1902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Lyall Bay</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead Kindly Light</td>
<td>Newman</td>
<td>1833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adios Kealoha</td>
<td>Prince Leleiohoku</td>
<td>c.1870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uluhua Wale Au</td>
<td>Princess Theresa Laanui</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver Threads Among The Gold</td>
<td>Rexford and Danks</td>
<td>1873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May Time</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Link of Love</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaiian Lullaby</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saviour, When Night Involves</td>
<td>Harry Rowe Shelley</td>
<td>1902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Sky</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thora</td>
<td>Weatherly and Adams</td>
<td>1905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden of Roses</td>
<td>Dempsey and Schmid</td>
<td>1909</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.4. Costumes and Set Design

A description of the opening number is given in the *New Zealand Herald* and pictures a scene that Kaai had used on many previous occasions in indoor and outdoor settings and was to form the basis for Kaai’s future Australasian performances:

The Royal Hawaiians have a novel way of opening their performance. When the cue is given to be ready the whole theatre is sunk in darkness, and as the curtain rises the “Aloha Aloha” chorus is sung and the lights are gradually raised to their brightest.¹

In the 1911 tour the modesty of the company’s stage presence was remarked upon and is reflected in the costuming. All of the performers wore white. The women’s dresses were full-length and Edwardian while the men’s shirts are described as fashionable with black ties and purple or maroon waist sashes. The leis are of yellow ilima-like flowers, described in many reviews² as the sign of royal favour, but the thick coils of the flowers were likened to “ladies boas of orange chiffon” by one reviewer. Not many stage descriptions survive, although one writer describes the set as “an appropriate setting of palms”³ and another described the “Pacific atmosphere” and “tropic temperament… supplemented by palms in the surrounding scenery”.

¹ *NZ Herald* [Auckland], 17th June 1911: 4.
² *Manawatu Standard* [Palmerston North], 13th June 1911: 6.
³ *Evening Post* [Wellington], 5th June 1911: 2.
stating: “the South Seas seemed distinctly nearer.” The hula costumes were described on the New Zealand tour as “short piu puis over skirts, [with] loose white bodices bestrung with pretty necklets of the yellow ilima flower.” In Sydney, well-known Australian scenic designer and painter Harry Whaite was credited with providing a backdrop of a picturesque setting of tropical scenery. The elaborate scenographic constructions of the later tours were not yet part of the performance.

7.5. Reviews

Hawaiianess was performed on stage, but exactly what it was continued to elude most reviewers because it was not what it should have been and what it should have been for reviewers was always imagined. To Diane Taylor’s comments above on repertory I would substitute the word reviews.

The earliest review of Kaai’s Australasian tour appears in the Sydney Morning Herald and is grudgingly positive, but the reviewer is also casually discriminatory and patronising in their assessment of the ‘light-hearted people’ and uses Samoan as an interchangeable term for Hawaiian, the reviewer making the comment that “the Samoan tongue, with its liquid sounds and avoidance of the explosive consonants, is well adapted for berceuse or serenade music”. The ‘ancient hula’, meanwhile, is dismissed as a curiosity and derided for its lack of ‘nimble footwork’. The reviewer describes Madame Anehila’s dancing as “to the accompaniment at first of a monotone chant by two of the men who beat a gourd and rattled some seeds in a pretty little purse”, arguing that the only aspect that will be of interest to Sydney-siders are the “waist and hip movements which impart a curious kick to the reed skirt worn by the dancer”. The vocal ability of the Royal Hawaiian troupe is admired but the reviewer believes that Australian choral singing is superior.

In New Zealand, reviews of the same tour were impressed with the group’s virtuosity and their ability to keep ‘excellent time’, but puzzled by them nonetheless. The hula is described in the The Press as being “barbaric, unusual and strange to the eyes”, and there are comments on the unusual instrument adaptations such as those in a guitar quartet “in which the instruments were laid on the knees of the performers and the usual finger work done with a steel”, while the tenor

4 *The Star* [Lyttleton], 5th May 1911: 3.
5 *Dominion* [Wellington], 5th June 1911: 9.
6 *Referee* [Sydney], 12th April 1911: 15.
7 *Sydney Morning Herald* [Sydney], 10th April 1911: 4.
of the party, Mr T J Carter, received much applause for a folk song in which he “made strange use of falsetto notes”\(^8\).

Reviewing the Royal Hawaiians, one critic stated that “the whole performance is redolent of the sunny isles of the Pacific” and that “the memory of it lingers in the mind when most things are forgotten”\(^9\). The appearance of tropes such as these and “the wind in the palm groves and the silken thresh of summer breakers”\(^10\) in the review material are part of the codification of Hawaiian culture that was occurring in this period. Charles Hiroshi Garrett (2008) discusses this phenomenon in relation to Hawaiʻi and describes the codification of Hawaiian music and imagery as increasing in this period, and while there are some false starts in their construction, what we can witness in this tour is an introduction and consistent use of many of the tropes that were already in use in the United States and would become commonplace in Australasia as well.

An example of the codification in process appears in the \textit{Wairarapa Daily Times} and other regional papers in New Zealand who ran this press release that describes the skills of the double quartet of male vocalists:

The names of the principal male members of the glee party are Tamali Kata, tenor, a Harvard student; Kamikani, basso, with a European reputation; Robert Kaawa, baritone, gold medallist; Mr Ernest Kaai, leader; and Mr Thos. Kata, the tenor of the party, who has a splendid reputation for singing ballads.\(^11\)

The press release reveals a ‘self-fashioning’ devoid of the Pacific tropes that were to come in Kaai’s future publicity materials. The media that accompanied the 1911 tour has a variety of strategies to provide narratives to engage the audience through identity – ‘Harvard student’, ‘gold medallist’ – but the codes for what constituted Hawaiianess are not yet agreed on.

A programme for a concert at the Town Hall in Wellington offers a syncretic blend of ‘songs of Hawaii’ and what were described as “concert platform successes of the Old World”,\(^12\) such as Charles Gounod’s “The Worker” (1873) and Ethelbert Nevin’s “My Rosary” (1898). The ‘songs of Hawaii’ include Hawaiian Royal Family compositions such as “Wili wili wai” as well as music by Henry Berger and Kaai’s own compositions. Encores often drew upon ragtime favourites and popular music compositions such as “Bill Bailey”, “Won’t You Please Come Home” (1902) and

\(^{8}\) \textit{Press} [Christchurch], 26th May 1911: 10.
\(^{9}\) \textit{Wanganui Chronicle} [Wanganui], 28\textsuperscript{th} June 1911: 5.
\(^{10}\) \textit{Evening Post} [Wellington], 19\textsuperscript{th} May 1911: 2.
\(^{11}\) \textit{Wairarapa Daily Times} [Greytown], 8th June 1911: 2.
\(^{12}\) \textit{Otago Daily Times} [Dunedin], 17\textsuperscript{th} May 1911: 8.
“It’s a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight” (1896). The modesty and rectitude portrayed in the advertorial imagery has to be offset with these ragtime inclusions in the programme.

Advertisements by Kaai’s management made use of the racial category as a marketing tool and included lines such as ‘A Native Concert Party of Artistic Singers and Instrumentalists’, ‘A select body of 12 Native Ladies and Gentlemen’ and ‘A High-class Native Concert Party’, which were repeated on both sides of the Tasman. The programme for the Wellington shows claimed they were the “Absolutely the Finest Native Musical Organisation in the World” and were compared several times with the Fisk Jubilee Singers, an African American vocal ensemble that had toured Australasia frequently and as recently as 1905.

Interviews with Kaai reveal the demands of the marketplace and the benefit of distance in meeting those demands. In the New Zealand Truth he is described as the inventor of a native instrument that is like a little baby guitar. In another article Kaai tells a story of sitting outside a room and overhearing Queen Lili’uokalani compose “Aloha Oe” – an apocryphal story as the song was composed before Kaai was born, but the song is emblematic of the deposed Queen. An advertisement in the Sydney Morning Herald promotes a ‘sacred concert’ by the Royal Hawaiians and lists the repertoire for the performance, which opens with Queen Lil’uokalani’s “Aloha Oe” and closes with the Hawaiian national anthem “Hawaii Pono”, composed by King Kalākaua and Henry Berger. Hawai’i’s recent political and social upheaval is immediately invoked, and in terms of repertory choices, bookending the sacred performances with these songs transcends the notion of vernacular entertainment. According to Diane Taylor:

Performances, even those with almost purely aesthetic pretensions, move in all sorts of circuits, including national and transnational spaces and economies. Every performance enacts a theory, and every theory performs in the public sphere. (2003: 27)

My inclination is to read this as an act of resistance that further complicates an easy invention of Kaai. He was certainly someone who was adept at moving between and connecting milieus, and his agency configured itself in multiple ways. Whether it was campaigning on behalf of political candidates, performing at the Waikiki Inn or publishing method books, Kaai accessed alternative and at times even counterhegemonic options for his troupes of performers, who constituted a travelling culture of what Homi Bhabha calls ‘vernacular cosmopolitans’, which he defines as “translating between cultures, renegotiating traditions from a position where ‘locality’ insists on its own terms, while entering into larger national and societal conversations” (2000: 139).

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13 Sydney Morning Herald [Sydney], 8th April 1911: 3.
14 NZ Truth [Auckland], 3rd June 1911: 1.
Kaai’s tour to Australasia was at that time a deviation from the major route taken by other Hawaiian acts that played on the vaudeville circuits in America. In this Kaai strategically shifted registers, and it was the beginning of what would become a 25-year period touring the Asia Pacific region including the Straits Settlements, India, Sri Lanka, Japan, Hong Kong and Shanghai, where the nature of the business, political, social and performative encounters were dramatically altered. By the time Kaai returned to New Zealand and Australia in 1925 and 1927 with his long-running stage show *A Night in Honolulu*, there was more agreement between the media, the audience and the performers about what constituted Hawaiian culture.

7.6. “I saw a queer dance on Thursday night”\(^{15}\)

The hula was one of the main platforms on which the Royal Hawaiians marketed themselves. The dance received a range of responses from review writers and a gap appears between what are generally offhand remarks and the number of encores the dance receives from the common theatregoers both in New Zealand and Australia. A typical review of this sort is shown in the following from the *Evening News*:

> Those who are acquainted with this dance as it is executed in Hawaii evinced a good deal of interest in the present performance but ‘ere came a disappointment as the daring suggestiveness of it was considerably modified. Still there was sufficient of it to show the real character of the measure. The native danseuse [Mme Anehila] was furnished with the necessary music, both vocal and instrumental and her disappearance in the wings was followed by such overwhelming enthusiasm that the lady was induced to repeat the dance.\(^{16}\)

Another article announced, “Features of the Hawaiian performance will be the “Hula” dance, which is said to be weird in the extreme.”\(^{17}\) The hula had long been a contested site in Hawai‘i by the time Kaai first arrived in Australia and New Zealand. Its inclusion as the ‘Ancient Hula Dance’ in the programme is significant because hula had been strictly regulated in Hawai‘i by civil codes passed in 1851 and 1859 and costly licenses were required to perform it in public. Dancers were threatened with imprisonment or fines if they performed without licences, which were in any case only valid in Honolulu, all but erasing the practice, in public at least, in urban areas (Imada 2012: 33). Hula had undergone a revival during the reign of King Kalākaua (1874–1891), who believed that the lāhui (Hawaiian nation) would flourish with the reintroduction of Hawaiian cultural practices. Hula performed at the king’s coronation and birthday celebrations had been met with hostility and condemnation by annexationists, eager to prove the inherent

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\(^{15}\) *Truth* [Sydney], 23rd April 1911: 6.

\(^{16}\) *Evening News* [Sydney], 10th April 1911: 2.

\(^{17}\) *The Sun* [Sydney], 7th April 1911: 2.
deficiencies and political failures of Hawaiians (Imada 2012: 30). While Noenoe K. Silva argues that Kalākaua’s actions “forever ended the missionary prohibition of such activities and the degradation of Hawaiian epistemologies” (Silva 2004: 89), when the Royal Hawaiians returned to Honolulu and performed their Australasian show at the Opera House one reviewer commented:

Madame Anehila was the hula dancer. This must have been a revelation to those who had never seen any kind of hula before, and it must have started many thinking what the hula would be like when the objectionable features are left in. Madame Anehila is certainly a wonderful dancer, and the manner in which she moved around showed that she was an extremely supple woman. But there seemed to be an air of disapproval in the house at the conclusion of the dance, and the applause was not so hearty as it was for many of the other items.  

This reveals that in 1911 Honolulu the hula was still not commonly publicly performed and was in transition, and that perceptions of the practice as improper remained. A report on the meeting of the Civic Federation in Honolulu in September 1911 involves a discussion of the appropriateness of the hula. It clearly states:

The point was brought out that a hula if done in seemly manner is harmless and indeed an attractive promotion feature for the Islands. So the federationists talked over the proposition of denaturing the hula and making it serviceable as a Hawaiian attraction.  

More than one reviewer in Australasia had criticised the Royal Hawaiians’ hula performances for not being what they used to be, or at the least, not what was promised, but a female writer, “John Smith’s Sister”, in her column “Sheisms” offered an alternative, if somewhat arch, viewpoint that seems to re-saturate the hula with disreputable claims:

Anehila wore yellow frillies under her straw skirt, while Etela sported scarlet. It was a queer primitive sort of dance, all contortions and hip movements – much more so than the poi dance of the Maoris – Still it was something like a haka in spots – the contortion spots. The men present admired it extremely – should not wonder if the extraordinary wriggles of the item made the fortune of the show later on. The Hawaiians are cultured singers and their voices are pure music… but with the giddy hula dance – I’d like to know the origin and meaning of that series of squirms.

The same performance is seen by a Wellington Evening Post review as follows:

The ancient hula dance by Mesdames Anehila and Etela, in quaint native costume to a picturesquely monotonous chorus, is a series of simple quiet movements and gestures, concluding with a suggestion of a Maori dance. It is quaintly effective.  

In Australia and New Zealand the hula was advertised as being performed “for the first time ever” (1911 programme) and it was promoted in newspaper advertisements and advance notices

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18 The Hawaiian Star [Honolulu], 7th August 1911: 3.
19 Evening Bulletin [Honolulu], 14th September 1911: 8.
20 Truth [Sydney], 23rd April 1911: 6.
21 Evening Post [Wellington], 5th June 1911: 2.
in both countries. Responses to its performance were mixed but differentiated from the Hawaiian review. *The Dominion* the reviewer describes the hula as follows:

> It is a sort of watered down hula, which has been robbed of all of the characteristics which gave the ancient dance a somewhat notorious interest in days of old. It is now merely an inconsequential prance around in native costume – indeed the dress and accompaniment alone separate it from being a very ordinary music hall dance.\(^{22}\)

Similarly another reviewer stated that without the vocal and instrumental differences “one might easily mistake the dance for a mild version of one seen any night at the Theatre Royal.”\(^{23}\)

Kaai was in New Zealand under the auspices of the Hawaiian Promotion Committee, but he was well known in Honolulu as an advocate of the hula and of cultural preservation, which radicalises him in the settler-colonial context of Hawai‘i. The “watered-down hula” is clearly his response to the strictures facing hula, but there is resistance in his persistence. Adria Imada makes the point that hula is not “merely ‘aesthetic’ or epiphenomenal to political life or labour; it and other cultural and religious performances ground Hawaiian political activity” (2012: 18). In 1911, hula, in spite of Kalākaua’s revival and others advocacy of it, was still under threat. A few months after the Royal Hawaiians return to Honolulu, at a meeting of the Civic Federationists it was called a “disgusting spectacle” and members debated “the wickedness of the hula-hula in all of its phases”,\(^{24}\) encouraging its purification in order to use it to bring more tourists to Hawai‘i. How much influence the federationists had is uncertain; in any case, they did not achieve their dream of a “purified” and solely seated hula (hula noho):

> making it such an attraction that the fame of this native and once national dance would extend to the farthest corners of the earth and tourists would flock to see the graceful manipulations of the arms and eyelids of the dancers as they sit in a row on coloured mats in all of their pristine innocence.\(^{25}\)

In this period of transition and with highly influential phenomena like jazz, the stage play *The Bird of Paradise* and the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco still to come – or, in the case of jazz, be fully felt – the hula was to undergo further changes in the next few years. The many descriptions of hula performed in the antipodes Australasia and their reception are stand in marked difference to the depiction of hula by the Federationists or the discomfort felt by the reviewer of Kaai’s Royal Hawaiians when they returned to Honolulu. The hula in New Zealand, for instance, is generally perceived as innocuous and regularly compared to the Māori

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\(^{22}\) *The Dominion* [Wellington], 5th June 1911: 6.

\(^{23}\) *The Dominion* [Wellington], 5th June 1911: 9.

\(^{24}\) *The Hawaiian Gazette* [Honolulu], 15th September 1911: 5.

\(^{25}\) *Evening News* [Sydney], 10th April 1911: 2.
haka and poi. Hints of a more prurient interest in the various audiences are detectable, and it seems that Anehila in particular may have taken a leaf from hula dancer Jenny Wilson who performed on the Midway Plaisance in Chicago and “pepped it up a little.” However, it must have been surprising to Kaai and the other members of his troupe to see the range of idiosyncratic responses. There is an absence of ‘moral panic’ that marks settler-colonial comments on the hula in Hawai‘i and underscores Deborah Bird Rose’s earlier comment that all an indigenous population have to do to get in the way of settler-colonisation is “stay at home” (1991: 46).
Multi-instrumentalists and singers who were known for their humourous by-play, Wehi and Keoki Greig began their life on the road together when they were both in their early twenties as part of Keoki’s family ensemble, the Waikiki Hawaiians. For most of their professional career together, the pair were based in Adelaide and Melbourne, Australia. Advertised as “Hawaiian Specialists” the pair performed as the Hilo Duo. Public archives have scant records of their performances but there are ephemera from stage shows in the National Library of New Zealand, and a rare recording of the pair performing “One Little Smile,” a steel guitar favourite from the 1920s, is held in the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington, New Zealand. Mentions of the duo can be found in newspaper collections from New Zealand, Australia and Singapore, and no doubt more will be revealed as digitisation of historic newspapers and periodicals continues.
Keoki and Wehi were adept cultural translators. They each came from contexts where travel and entertainment featured strongly and engendered a cosmopolitan engagement with the world. Rachel Gillett (2010) cites travel as a precondition for cosmopolitanism but also for belonging to a network that reflects “a local identity and yet connects many locales” (478).

In the following ki’i the two performers can be seen to negotiate and maintain connections in a way that describes a phenomenon closely linked to cosmopolitanism: transnationalism, defined here in relation to diaspora:

A particular population or community is transnational when there are significant links, or networks, between members in a place of origin and in the various places of residence, however distant, that comprise the diaspora. The concept of a diaspora emerged from a particular history of expulsion or involuntary exile, although it has also been used to refer to the dispersal of populations as a result of various means, including as victims, for labour, trade or imperial reasons, or as part of a cultural diaspora. While the imagery of the diaspora is a powerful one… the notion of transnationalism shifts attention to the nature and content of linkages between communities. (Spoonley, Bedford, & Macpherson 2003: 28)

The linkages that Spoonley et al. (2003) describe were already articulated in Epeli Hau‘ofa’s famous distinction:

between viewing the Pacific as “islands in a far sea” and as “a sea of islands.” The first emphasises dry surfaces in a vast ocean far from the centers of power. The second is a more holistic perspective in which things are seen in the totality of their relationships. (1993: 152–153)

This resonates with the notion of teu le va, “the maintenance of good relations”, a Samoan expression but a concept prevalent across Oceania. Wehi and Keoki were cosmopolitans in the Clifford (1998) sense of being ‘discrepant’ in that they negotiated with “ethnic absolutisms” (365) and can be seen to rearticulate a sense of self by “appropriating, cutting, and mixing cultural forms” (367). They were non-Hawaiian “Hawaiian Specialists” who focussed on the linkages of Oceania.
8.1. Ki’i – Wehi Greig

Born in Whakarewarewa, New Zealand in 1903, Te Paea Te Wehi O Te Rangi Corbett Greig (Te Arawa, Ngāti Whakaue) was the daughter of Kahoki Piatarihi Kaha (elsewhere known as Mahoki Kaka Te Ngaherehere¹) and Levuka Corbett². Her father, Levuka, was more commonly known as “Buka” and was born in Newton, Auckland. He was the son of English immigrants who had spent time in Fiji, and his first name comes from the Fijian capital at the time. On her mother’s side, Corbett Greig was also the granddaughter of Paora Te Amohau, a rangatira³ of the Te Arawa tribe with links to an extraordinary whānau: “Remarkably, a single family produced a large percentage of all the guides and concert performers. This family is known as Te Whānau-o-Te Rangi” (Cresswell 2008: 161). Te Amohau was a supporter of Te Komiti Nui o Rotorua, the “Great Committee of Rotorua” established in 1879, which sought autonomy and advocated for

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³ Chief.
native land rights for the Te Arawa people with the intention of limiting the Government’s Native Land Court powers within Te Arawa territory (O’Malley 1998: 111). Tribal lands were, and still are, fundamental to identity and belonging for Wehi’s iwi⁴, Ngāti Whakaue⁵.

Whakarewarewa is a small settlement three kilometres from the urban centre of Rotorua and is where Wehi was born and raised. The settlement, built on a volcanic plateau with geysers, mud pools and hot springs, was marketed in the 1920s as a ‘Māori Wonderland’. “Geothermal tourism” had been a major economic contributor to Rotorua and New Zealand since the early 1800s, and ‘the village experience’ offered by Whakarewarewa was where visitors could participate in a “living” culture and tradition (Neilson et al., 2010: 1).

Wehi’s father was a Pākehā entrepreneur in Whakarewarewa who had married into a prominent whānau. As well as the depth of relationship Wehi had for her tūrangawaewae⁶, her environment was also shaped by her father’s social and business acumen. A local identity in the Rotorua district, Buka owned a store in Whakarewarewa and he and his family lived in rooms out the back. As well as a taxi service and billiard room, he and his sons ran a fishing boat, The Selma, out of Maketu and another boat, Kia Ora, which took tourists to Mokoia Island (family correspondence, 2011). A good dancer, Buka also operated a school where locals and tourists could learn contemporary dance steps. Wehi had four brothers, all of whom were involved in their father’s enterprises, plus one sister, Minnie Waitohi Corbett (Te Arawa, Ngāti Whakaue), who was a guide, Guide Minnie, at Whakarewarewa and a contemporary of the well-known cultural ambassador Rangitiaria Dennan, better known as Guide Rangi. Minnie was well known in Whakarewarewa for more than her work as a guide: Many guides became renowned as ‘characters’, either because of their sense of humour or for their eccentricity. The greatest of these was undoubtedly Minnie Waitohi Eparaima. For more than half a century she was engaged in guiding, souvenir selling and tickets. Her particular forte was the organisation of concerts and in this she was Rangi’s chief aide. Before World War II she had her own concert party which performed not only for tourists in Rotorua, but also in the competitions at the Ngaruawahia Regatta. …Minnie was completely without dress sense, a state of affairs which produced light intervals at solemn occasions and sometimes disasters when they were least expected. (Cresswell 2008: 161)

The Corbetts went back and forth between Fiji and New Zealand, suggesting that Wehi may have travelled outside of New Zealand before she met and married Keoki/George Greig in

⁴ Defined in te reo Māori as tribe, bone, people.
⁵ http://ngatiwhakaue.iwi.nz/
⁶ Defined in te reo Māori as follows: tūranga: to stand; waewae: feet, literally, a place to stand, home.
1922. Wehi was a dancer and undoubtedly assisted at her father’s dance school. She was also a musician and is pictured in several images in her photo albums playing various instruments: saxophone, guitar, and ‘ukulele. In addition Wehi was a contralto, and many reviewers also admired the comedic ability she brought to her stage partnership with Keoki Greig.

The fragments of Wehi’s early life in Rotorua suggest someone who grew up in an entrepreneurial environment that all family members participated in, a life that was cosmopolitan due to the increasing numbers of tourists visiting Rotorua and the cultural developments in the district that the Corbetts were a part of. Her life moved seamlessly between indigenous and settler-colonial worlds and her whakapapa extended in many directions – to her Ngāti Whakaue iwi at Ōhinemutu, connecting her with many Te Arawa tribal affiliations, and the Pākehā world and connections of her father. She had awareness of travel through the family business, but she also had extended family in England and Sydney, Australia, and not just through her paternal connection. In 1910 a cultural group led by Makeriti Papakura (Guide Maggie) had travelled from Whakarewarewa to England for the Festival of Empire celebrations. Several members of the group had chosen to stay on in England and Papakura returned to live there in 1911, studying anthropology at Oxford. A group known as the Maori Entertainers have already been mentioned. They performed at Ōhinemutu in 1909 before they left for a long engagement at the New York Hippodrome. With such examples and family performance networks that extended across the world, and given her own musical and performing background, it is not surprising that Wehi herself would one day travel as an entertainer.

At the age of 18 in 1921, Wehi was performing and touring New Zealand with the Waikiki Hawaiians on the Fuller’s Vaudeville circuit, along with her future husband Keoki Greig and his sisters Tuavivi and Annie performing “island melodies and up to date ragtime”. Her stage name at that time was Wehi Suila (sometimes misspelled as Siula). Her first child, Leitu (the eldest of five), was born in 1923, and accompanied her parents on the road travelling many thousands of kilometres through Australasia, South East Asia and India.

The fact that neither Wehi nor Keoki was Hawaiian seems to have been no impediment to the success of their act. The pair appeared with Sir Harry Lauder’s Australasian variety tour for three years as the Hilo Duo, where a reviewer in New Zealand had this to say:

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7 Although family conversations reveal tensions between Levuka and his parents and that he and Kahoki may have been ostracised because she was Māori.
9 Hawera and Normanby Star [New Plymouth], 17th June 1922: 6.
The graceful Hilo Duo gave a dainty guitar entertainment. The aid of the stage electrician produced sympathetic effects. The lady, besides being equally as expert as her partner, is a fascinating exponent of the quaint hulu [sic] dances and peculiar melodies usually associated with her island home. In what he describes as a “double syncopation” piece, the male member shows that the ukeleli [sic] is as useful and attractive in solo work as in accompaniment.10

The pair travelled on the Eastern Circuit (E J Carroll & Madan Theatres Ltd) with Lauder on his “Farewell Tour” of India and the Far East, appearing in Bombay (Mumbai) in November 1924 at the Excelsior Theatre as part of Lauder’s Vaudeville Stars lineup11.

Along with George’s siblings, Tuavivi and Annie, who performed as the Greig Sisters, the Hilo Duo went on to join Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours in 1926 and was on the road with Kaai for four years. While the Hilo Duo were integral to the Troubadours in this time, they also continued to perform and record separately, and gaps in their performance schedule with Kaai were taken up with Lauder in the mid 1920s or their own engagements. After the Troubadours disbanded in 1930 the duo went on to guest with vaudeville companies such as Stanley Mackay’s Gaieties Vaudeville Company in the late 1930s.12 The pair were described as “magnetic” and of them it was said that “rhythm exudes from them as naturally as ‘breath’ from their nostrils.”13

The Hilo Duo made phonograph recordings, toured in the stage revues “Fantasy in Gold” with the ABC Radio Serenaders14 and “The Frolics of 1940” as well as many others. The Hilo Duo appeared regularly in New Zealand up until 1938 in vaudeville revues but focussed solely on Australian opportunities after that. Along the way Wehi, an enthusiastic and creative photographer, kept a unique photographic and diaristic record of the world that she encountered.

10 *The Press* [Christchurch], 21st May 1925: 14.
11 *The Times of India* [Bombay], 21st October 1924: 3.
12 *Cairns Post* [Cairns], 22nd July 1937: 3.
13 *Morning Bulletin* [Rockhampton, Qld], 16th June 1937: 14.
14 *Cairns Post* [Cairns], 22nd October 1938: 3.
…In our variety company we had a handsome young man called George Greig. He and his wife played Hawaiian melodies on ukuleles and also sang duets of life and love in the South Seas. Greig’s grandfather had been a rover in his boyhood, after running away from school in Aberdeen. Latterly he settled down on Fanning Island and became the accepted King of that lonely sea-girt spot of land. He married a full-blooded Hawaiian girl1 and they had six sons, on all of whom the father bestowed good Scottish Christian names. When the British Government wanted to take over Fanning Island for a cable

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1 William Greig (1821–1892) was married in 1857 to Te Anau A-Tu (1842-1917) of Tongareva (Pemhyn Island). Together the pair had five sons and five daughters. Keoki Greig’s father, George Bicknell Greig (1863–1940), was the eldest. The cable station began operating in 1902.
the Greig family sold out their rights and they all retired to New Zealand. How George came to join our company as an assisting artiste I don’t know, but there he was, and speaking good “Scotch” all the time with a slight American accent.

At Shanghai we had to get our passports viséd for Manila. When Tom Vallance went up to the American Consulate for his, Lady Lauder’s, and mine, he took George Greig with him. Tom had no trouble, naturally, but when the official came to deal with the copper-coloured Greig certain slight difficulties developed.

“What nationality?” snaps out the official.

“Scottish,” promptly responds George.

“Guess you’re the first coloured Scot I’ve met!” comments the Consul’s clerk. “Where do you hail from?”

“Fanning Island”, says Greig.

“Never heard of it! Where the hell’s that?”

“South Pacific!”

“A copper-coloured Scot from Fannin’ Island in the South Pacific! Wal, now, can you beat it?” But Greig gets his passport and in it his nationality is described as Scottish, much to his satisfaction!

8.3 Tropical Life

George Bicknell John Greig, also known as Keoki Greig, was born on Washington Island in 1901, a grandson of the self-styled King of Fanning Island, Scotsman William Greig, who had made his money dealing in “guano, pearlshell and copra.” After William’s death in 1892, the estate, including the holdings of his company Greig and Bicknell Ltd, was disputed through the courts in Suva and Honolulu and the islands were sold around 1907. By 1911, William and his wife Te Anau’s eldest son George Bicknell William Greig had left Fanning and had brought his family, with his second wife Florence, to settle in Auckland, New Zealand. Many of the Greigs remained on Fanning, including Te Anau. Keoki was the eldest of Bicknell Greig’s four children with Florence Edith Armstrong and the only son. The family lived in the central city area of Ponsonby, and according to census records they shifted frequently but stayed within the

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2 Fanning and Washington Islands were subject to a dispute over inheritance initially between members of the Greig family and then the heir of George Bicknell’s estate, his brother James Bicknell of Honolulu. The case was decided in Suva in favour of Bicknell (c1906) and a sale of the islands was forced because a compromise could not be reached. Subsequently Father Emmanuel Rougier purchased the islands.

3 (Sir Harry Lauder 1928, Ch XXIV para.18, http://www.electricscotland.com/history/lauder/roamin24.htm)

4 Washington Island and Fanning Island were governed by the Greig family. They also had interests in Christmas Island.

5 Today it is part of Kiribati territory and is known as Tabuaeran. It was also known as Tapuaerangi by people from Manihiki. In Greig’s time the island was one of the Northern Line Islands, which included Washington, Palmyra and Christmas.

6 San Francisco Call [San Francisco], Volume 72, Number 59, 29 July 1892: 2, http://cdnc.ucr.edu/, “The King of Fanning Island Breathes His Last.” Te Anau A-Tu died in 1917 and is buried on Fanning Island.

7 For papers relating to the litigation see http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/data/mss/WPHC2.html#ref139.

8 Florence Edith Armstrong was born in Levuka, Fiji in 1880 and she and Bicknell Greig were married in Apia, Samoa in 1900. Bicknell Greig was at the same time, still married to Temu Te Tipa from Rakahanga (also reported as Manihiki – family correspondence), with whom he had seven children. The pair were married in Marin County in 1898. The marriage notice is an example of Blumenbach’s “Malayan” designation for the ‘brown race’: “Marin Co. Marriage Book D, page 597: George B. GREIG, age 35, and Temu TIPA, age 35, both past residents of Fanning Island; license issued 27 April 1898; married same day in San Rafael by Edward E. Dodge; he is Scotch and Malay; she is Malayan; This marriage to remove doubts as to validity of a former ceremony.”
Ponsonby area probably, as they were Catholics, to be in the vicinity of the Catholic Centre. Keoki went to Ponsonby School and he and his sisters Tuavivi, Annie and Agnes started a group in their late teens known as The Waikiki Hawaiians, a party of 12 performers with “Keoke” as their producer and lead musician. The company of “Native Players” travelled rural and small-town New Zealand as well as and the smaller city venues of the Fullers’ vaudeville circuit:

The Famous
WAIKIKI HAWAIIANS
A powerful cast of all Native Players.
KEOKE [sic] GREIG, Steel Guitar Soloist.
MISS LILLOKALANI [sic], the only genuine Hula Dancer in Australasia.
MISS ANE LEATA, A Sweet-voiced Singer of the World-famous Hawaiian Songs

Calling their show “Night in Hawaii,”\(^9\) as well as “A Night in Honolulu,”\(^10\) it was staged in three parts. The first part opened with “Hawaiian Nights”, which represented “tropical life”, depicting “Hawaiian natives’ surroundings, customs, making poi and brewing ‘kava,’ the native beer.”\(^11\)

One description of “Luau Hula” by Miss Lilliokalani [sic] read as follows:

With a suggestion of the Maori dances in it, the Luau Hula is something different – something with more grace, more poetry and with all ugly features eliminated. Miss L’s performance was a revelation and she was given an ovation.\(^12\)

In Part 2 the performers appeared in immaculate evening dress and Keoki featured on steel guitar playing popular music items, some of which became enduring elements of his career: “Coming Home”, “Home Sweet Home”, “A Perfect Day” and a song that would come to be particularly associated with him in his Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadour days: “The Rosary” by Ethelbert Nevin (c1898), a popular composition that the inventor of the Hawaiian steel guitar, Joseph Kekuku, had had great success with and one that virtuoso steel guitar musicians Pale K. Lua and David Kaili had made a very popular recording of around 1915 (Troutman 2016: 10). Hawaiian guitar music outsold all other genres in America in 1916 so Keoki is showing the influence of this phenomenon and the influence of Hawaiian steel ‘guitar heroes’ of the day, one of whom he would play with on the same stage in the near future – David Kaili. Troutman

\(^9\) Alton, Hawera, Rotorua, Tuakau, Pukekohe, Warkworth, Matakana, Port Albert, Maungaturoto, Paparoa, Wellsford, Dargaville, Whangarei, Kaihohe, Onerahi.
\(^11\) Northern Advocate [Whangarei], 28th Feb 1922: 4.
\(^12\) Hawera and Normanby Star [Taranaki], 2nd June 1922: 1.
\(^13\) Pukekohe and Waiuku Times [Pukekohe], Vol 9, Issue 690, 6th Dec 1921: 5.
\(^14\) Northern Advocate [Whangarei], 4th March 1922: 5.
discusses the appeal of Hawaiian guitar music in the 1910s, stating: “steel guitars were among the newest, most cutting edge instruments available” and describes the “incredible reach and popularity of recorded Hawaiian guitar music” (2016: 97).

Solos, trios, instrumental trios and company numbers on the ‘ukulele, guitar, mandolin and steel guitar, including jazz, were presented in Part 3. The Hilo Quartette appeared playing “up-to-date ragtime” including the song “Hawaiian Ragtime” with Al Royce performing as “the famous Hawaiian Shimmy dancer” and “The Hawaiian Shimmy King”. The shimmy was a dance that was banned numerous times during the late 1910s and 20s as it was considered ‘vulgar’. Widely popular since 1917 when it emerged from black nightclubs in America, it reached audiences in New Zealand and was routinely condemned along with jazz. The latter repertory of the Waikiki Hawaiians reflects contemporary music and modern dances that were a challenge to social mores of the day, locating the troupe with their “cutting edge instruments” and “weird” dances in the vanguard of youthfully oriented popular music. A sample of their repertory drawn from a number of newspaper reviews can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7: Waikiki Hawaiians repertory c1922

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Performer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Murray Moon</td>
<td>Stoneham &amp; De Garis (c1922)</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mammy o’ Mine</td>
<td>Pinkard &amp; Tracy (1919)</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Surrender</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-Two-Three-Four</td>
<td>S. Kalama &amp; Jack Alau</td>
<td>Miss Liliokalani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dear Hawaii</td>
<td>Api Kelekena aka William J. Sheldon</td>
<td>Miss A. Leata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egyptian Eyes</td>
<td>Walter Smith &amp; George Oliver (1919)</td>
<td>Miss A. Leata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Pari Ra</td>
<td>Maori composition</td>
<td>Company</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The list reveals a combination of types of songs, one made famous by the stage play The Bird of Paradise, the hapa haole hit “One-Two-Three-Four”, and a mele composed for young Hawaiian men joining the American armed forces in 1918, “Dear Hawaii”. Songs with “ethnic characterisations” were included with orientalist content that matched the costumes worn by the young women in latter parts of the show such as long beaded harem pants in diaphanous materials delivering a surplus of exotic signs.
8.4 The World’s Greatest Entertainer and the Hilo Duo

Sir Harry Lauder, the Scots comedian and singer of “Roamin’ in the Gloamin’” fame, was known as the world’s highest-paid entertainer in 1920. Lauder had first toured the “dominion”\(^\text{15}\) in 1914 and had since been knighted in 1919. Lauder planned to travel through New Zealand, and Australia and the Far East in 1924–1925. The tour was promoted as a farewell “World Tour.” The Hilo Duo were invited to join the Lauder programme under E J Carroll’s management (and the direction of Madan Theatres in India) in 1924.\(^\text{16}\) Writing from Rangoon, another New Zealander travelling with Lauder describes their departure from Calcutta:

> Our send-off from Calcutta was the most brilliant and enthusiastic function I have ever seen. Present – The Viceroy and party, Prince and Princess Arthur of Connaught, the Rear-Admiral of the Eastern fleet, and officers from the Chatham, besides all the most important citizens of Calcutta and representative visitors from all over India, including Rajahs, [and] Maharajahs.\(^\text{17}\)

The writer goes on to say: “We leave here (Rangoon) for the Penang and other Straits Settlements towns en route to Singapore, then up to China, and then down to dear old New Zealand.”

The Hilo Duo had opened with Lauder in Bombay at the Excelsior Theatre on November 1\(^\text{st}\) 1924 and by January 1925 they were in Singapore at the Victoria Theatre. Later that year, on May 4\(^\text{th}\), the New Zealand tour commenced in the southernmost town of Invercargill travelling north to Auckland and then on to Brisbane, Australia in July. Lauder’s company was on the road in New Zealand at the same time as Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours, although Kaai started in the north and travelled south.

Lauder was a hugely popular entertainer, and no doubt young Keoki and his family saw Lauder on this first tour to New Zealand in 1914 given the strength of their identification as Scottish. For Keoki to have joined Sir Harry Lauder, “The World’s Greatest Entertainer”, and his company was a great accolade and a big step onto the international stage from parochial New Zealand. After Lauder’s tour finished in Australia the Hilo Duo continued to perform in vaudeville revues in and around Melbourne until they joined Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours in July 1926.

\(^{15}\) Australia became a British dominion in 1901 and New Zealand in 1907.

\(^{16}\) The Straits Times [Singapore], 12th November 1924: 10.

\(^{17}\) NZ Truth [Auckland], 21\(^{st}\) March 1925: 15.
8.5 Kaai’s Influence

It is highly likely that the Hilo Duo had crossed paths with Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours while they were both touring New Zealand in 1925, but Keoki may also have met Kaai earlier. The Greigs’ extensive family networks meant that relatives were often travelling and passing through Auckland and at the same time passing on instruments, techniques, songs, music sheets, recorded music and up-to-date news of music performances in and around the Pacific basin. Kaai’s visit in 1911 brought the first Hawaiian performance troupe to New Zealand and Australia. Their influence made a profound impact on the local music scene and the popularity of Hawaiian music, bringing the burgeoning “craze” that was taking hold in America, home to New Zealand and Australian audiences. Keoki and his sister’s performances as the Waikiki Hawaiians reveal the influence of the contemporaneous Hawaiian sound, but they also reveal Kaai’s performance structure – beginning with the dawn, then historical and cultural re-enactments and moving into evening and contemporary performances in the second and third acts, suggesting that they were familiar with or had attended Kaai’s Royal Hawaiian show as 10-to 13-year-olds.

Even more likely is that with Keoki’s family connections to Hawai‘i, the Greigs hosted the Hawaiian performers in Auckland, bringing cosmopolitan Honolulu and its music right into their home. The Hawaiians would have been offered the type of hospitality Epeli Hau‘ofa describes as “interdependence” and “reciprocity” in “maintaining ancestral roots… homes with warmed hearths for travellers to return to permanently or to strengthen their bonds, their souls and their identities before they move on again” (1993: 157). On each of Kaai’s tours to New Zealand (and Australia), the band members were entertained with hāngi19, umu20, afternoon teas and picnics by Māori and Oceania families. With the Greigs’ deep connections to Hawai‘i and the rare appearance of Hawaiians in New Zealand it would have been strange if Kaai and his troupe were not hosted by the Greigs in some way. It should be noted that the hospitality to visiting entertainers was not restricted to Pacific connections, however; Pākehā also hosted the musicians in church groups and civic organisations, and many of Wehi’s images show the musicians being entertained in farm settings by Pākehā families.

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18 Hawaiians and Samoans travelling with the US navy were invited for meals by the Greigs during World War II, as were many young people from Oceania who arrived in Auckland and were sent or invited to Florence and George Greig’s home. Musical instruments were always produced and evenings of singing and playing ensued.

19 Hāngi [Te Reo Māori] – earth oven; its contents.

20 Umu [Samoan] - a stone oven.
After Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours disbanded in 1930 Keoki and Wehi eventually settled in Adelaide, Australia and continued to tour Australian and New Zealand circuits until 1938, still as the Hilo Duo performing with piano-accordion, saxophone and vocal numbers under the direction of Frederick Carr and George Boyton. As part of Stanley McKay’s Gaieties, Keoki was responsible for:

something entirely new and spectacular… the “Indian Romance” scene. This atmospheric Indian phantasy, with an appealing story written and produced by George Greig, of the Hilo Duo, was productive of some fine singing and acting. The first scene showed the burning at the stake; the next scene at the Indian village, and the third, the renunciation and the “call of love.” Wehi Greig and Anthony Fredo played the part of the lovers.²¹

By 1938 the pair had five children and their focus was on the Australian entertainment scene.

![Image of Keoki Greig (with accordion) with Gertrude (Gertila Byrnes) and Eddie Kinilau, on tour in Australia, c.1927. (Source: Wehi Greig collection)](Image)

8.6 Transnationalism and teu le va

Although Keoki was from an island of just 3,200 square hectares “situated in the centre of the Pacific Ocean”,²² he had grown up in a cosmopolitan environment, travelling throughout the

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²² Fanning Island Limited Prospectus 1912.
Pacific region from a young age. Honolulu was a second home as Keoki’s grandmother Te Anau had lived there while some of her children, including his father, George, and his uncle, Will Greig, were students at Oahu College.23 Her husband William Greig, Keoki’s grandfather, visited regularly for business and supplies and various other relatives had settled in Honolulu, including Keoki’s cousin William Anderson, father of pioneering Pacific scholar Marion Kelly. So Keoki’s parents had extensive familial networks, and prior to moving to New Zealand in 1907 Keoki and his family had visited Hawai’i frequently. These were not his only Oceanic connections; Keoki’s mother, Florence, was born in Levuka, Fiji but was of Samoan descent, and her mother, Leitu Moloka Toleafoa, was from Apia, Samoa, with the family travelling from Fanning to Apia for holidays, weddings and celebrations such as young Keoki’s fifth birthday. Aside from journeys to San Francisco, where there were more family associations, the Greigs also made visits to Fiji, New Zealand and Australia, where their networks continued.

In the opening passage, which was taken from Sir Harry Lauder’s autobiography, Keoki identified himself as Scottish, but it is clear that he had multiple subjectivities, some of which are displayed in his performance design and the roles that he assumed in the production and others that he deployed situationally, such as being Scottish in Shanghai or Hawaiian on stage. Keoki and Wehi were both able cultural translators, and as a multilingual traveller at ease in diverse settings, Keoki was able to draw on a wide array of cultural resources. His family epitomised an early transnationalism in that relationships outside of New Zealand, in the Greigs’ multiple places of origin in the Pacific, were maintained to a high degree.

For Keoki and his family, boarding their grandfather’s brig The Douglas for Apia or Honolulu or a steamer for Sydney or Auckland were regular occurrences in his formative years as his family traversed Oceania conducting business and tending to kinship ties. Florence, Keoki’s mother, was a strong influence in the family, and she encouraged teu le va – the tending of familial connections – even after the Greigs moved to New Zealand from Fanning Island.

The cross border connections of the Greigs and families like them are indicative of a much earlier concept of globalisation and Pacific transnationalism than is accounted for in the literature that exists so far. The Greigs provide an addendum that rearticulates the circulation of peoples in Oceania in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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23 Will Greig (William Hugh Christie Greig) was a member of the unsuccessful Wilcox counterrevolution of 1895 that sought to overturn the provisional government led by Sanford B. Dole and return Queen Liliʻuokalani to the throne. Greig was tried before a military commission and charged along with eight others, including Robert W Wilcox, with “open rebellion.” Greig was fined $10,000 and exiled, returning to Honolulu in 1903. The trial was covered extensively in Hawaiian newspapers.
Figure 14: Keoki Greig (left) playing a “Hilo” brand Hawaiian steel guitar, Wehi Greig (standing) and Jack Phillips, c.1925, at Ingleburn, Auburn, NSW, Australia. (Source: Collection of Wehi Greig)

Figure 15: Keoki Greig and George Leywood at Temora School of Arts, Temora, New South Wales, Australia 1928. (Source: Collection of Wehi Greig)
Apart from Thelma Kaai, Frank Luiz and Edward Kinilau1 were Kaai’s longest-serving ensemble members. A singer in Kaai’s Glee Club from the age of 17, Kinilau was also part of the group of singers Kaai took to perform at the Hawaiian Village in San Diego as part of the Panama-Pacific Exposition in 1915. Along with Henry Bishaw, who had travelled to New Zealand and Australia with Kaai in 1911, Kinilau was one of a small group of musicians2 contracted for six months to perform in J.C. Williamson’s Australasian production3 of *The Bird of Paradise* with Muriel Starr in

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Figure 16: Edward Lani Kinilau. (Source: Collection of Tuavivi Greig Kaai)

2 Henry Bishaw, J.P. Nichols, Sandy Moore and Robert Baker. Described in publicity as “the sons of chiefs” – the musicians used Hawaiian names in Australia – Henry Bishaw is known in the cast list as Hanale Peelua, while the others are Keo Palakaluhu, Keo Kelliaukai, Lophka Hoapili and Kanoko Likoliho Hamapua. *Critic* [Adelaide, South Australia], Wed 27th March 1918: 17.
3 The stage production was by George Barnum.
the role of Luana, the “native princess”. In a lengthy review that encapsulates the racial confusion and orientalising characteristics of the play, Kinilau and co. are described as:

athletic Hawaiians in bathing costumes showing their big, manly limbs, tanned by exposure to the perennial sun and made sturdy by the slashing breakers… and in the background is the tropical palm, quivering listlessly in the gentle ocean zephyr, a dreamy, lazy scene that grips the spirit and conquers all who come under its spell. The drowsy, sleepy, contented, drug-like effect of the Orient is capitally conveyed. Then there is the added touch of Eastern music – with its soft, haunting cadences, almost weird but enthralling…4

Kinilau was also one of the group of five young musicians Kaai contracted to work for Stam & Weijns cafés in Soerabaja and Batavia in 1919 and he remained with Kaai until the Hawaiian Troubadours disbanded in 1930. Kinilau, as he was known amongst the Troubadours, also performed as Edward Kinley – an English transliteration of Kinilau – and would occasionally appear on the same bill under each name.

Born in Honolulu in 1897, Eddie Kinilau’s parents were George Hekelona Kinilau and Kalai Pau Nalopi. By the time of the 1910 census he was living with his grandparents Kinilau and Kahele. Many parents left their children with extended family members as they took advantage of work opportunities elsewhere or through spousal separation. Eddie may have been a hānai child (customary adoption), just as his own children would be hānai. In 1918 Eddie married Emma Kekoa Spencer, who already had a child to William Nahakualii Kekoa. When the chance came to work in Java, the 22-year-old Kinilau was a young father with two children, working as a blacksmith’s assistant and continuing to perform with Kaai’s glee groups. The offer of the contract to play in Soerebaja was an opportunity for the five young men to travel and make a good living from music. The band’s food and lodgings were included and their remuneration was to be split with a portion sent home, a percentage of which was given to their families and an unknown percentage for Kaai. After the contract ended Kaai’s Troubadours stayed on in Asia and Kinilau did not return immediately to Hawai‘i as expected. Emma reunited with William Kekoa and Kinilau’s eldest child Edward Jnr was raised as a hānai child in the Spencer ‘ohana. Eddie Jnr went on to have a significant musical career in Hawai‘i as Eddie Spencer and the Queen’s Men.

A “true Hawaiian tenor”,5 Kinilau also performed Hawaiian falsetto, and while other male voice registers are capable of performing falsetto:

4 *Daily Standard* [Brisbane], 22nd August 1918: 4. Performed at His Majesty’s Theatre, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.
5 *South Western Times* [Bunbury, WA], 23rd August 1928: 4.
in Hawai‘i the tenor uses the falsetto more commonly and successfully. [...] Whereas in Western falsetto singing the use of the break is discouraged and therefore minimal – that is, a singer practices to make the transition between the registers as smooth as possible – the Hawaiian falsetto emphasises the break and exaggerates its sound. Hawaiian falsetto also emphasises the yodel. The effect caused by the seesaw alternation of pitches between the chest and falsetto registers is manipulated by Hawaiian singers in various ways. (Kanahele 1979: 89)

Kinilau also played traps/tango drums in the band-within-a-band, variously known as the Four Noisy Jazz [sic], the Jazz Four and their final incarnation, the Moana Jazz Four. The modernity of the Jazz Four and the distinguishing characteristics of jazz “as interpreted by Hawaiians” were repeatedly singled out wherever the Troubadours played. “That inspired jazz drummer Edward Kinilau” was the consistent element of the Jazz Four from its earliest appearance in Singapore (November 1921) after the original quintette completed their contract in Java. Kinilau’s showmanship and his comedic ability, which kept audiences “simmering” with laughter, plus his engaging stage presence, are frequently commented on.

Critics consistently praised Kinilau’s rendition of “Ipo Lei Manu”. Composed by Julia Kapi‘Io‘ilani in 1890 for her husband, King Kalākaua. Kanahele (1979) states that the song is one of “a certain melodic type especially suited for falsetto songs. It is characterised by a level of contour of repeated pitches on the lower range level which are contrasted to prolonged pitches on the highest range level” (89), inviting improvisation. Kaai’s arrangement of the song, which was also known as “He Mana‘o He Aloha”, “notates the song on a relatively high pitch and writes in some of the ornaments” (89). Kinilau’s longevity with Kaai was not only due to his musicianship and versatility but also this interpretive ability, developed and nurtured early on in Kaai’s Glee Club and Kaai’s Hawaiian Orchestra. Kanahele also states: “In Hawai‘i, falsetto is also used as a harmonising voice either in full chorus or in trios and quartets” (90), and as well as performing in full chorus numbers, Kinilau partnered and trio-ed with many other members of the Troubadours – including David Kaili, Ernest Kaai, Frank Luiz and Gertila Byrnes – and would often accompany with ‘ukulele or steel guitar.

Like other band members, finding some trace of Kinilau in the public record has been a matter of sifting and searching through many sources. One of those searches brought up an incident in Singapore, ironically headlined “Unrehearsed Scene at the Back of Theatre”, which saw band members James Rodrigues Jnr and Kinilau “placed before Mr Gourlay, yesterday, on charges of

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6 *Warwick Daily News* [Queensland, Australia], 7th July 1924: 4.
7 *The Straits Times* [Singapore], 29th August 1922: 10.
assaulting a [sic] puller and police constable 318, and with offering resistance to the latter, and in
the case of Rodrigues of trying to rescue Kinilau from lawful custody.”8 Both men were fined
$50 and had a conviction recorded against them: “Mr Ernest Kaai, who was in court throughout
the proceedings, smirkingly paid up the fines, and handsomely rewarded the puller.”9 As an
intercultural encounter the episode shows Kaai resolving a situation in which his performers had
behaved questionably and in a cultural context where hierarchies and power were implicit. The
Singaporean driver and policeman, an Anglo passerby who sought to “settle the matter,” two
Hawaiian musicians out of context and unable to speak the local language – all presented in a
court that institutionalised the power of colonial England.

Kinilau’s partner on the road was fellow troubadour Gertrude, or Gertila, Byrnes, the younger
sister of Herbert Pahupu Byrnes, who was the manager and a musician in the original band that
travelled to Java. When Gertrude and Kinilau married on the 19th January 1926 in Oahu they
already had a daughter, Trudy,10 listed on tour documents as Trudy Kinley, who travelled
throughout Australasia and Asia with the Troubadours along with two other children of band
members: Lei Greig and Lei Luiz. Like Kinilau himself, Gertila also used Kinilau or Kinley
interchangeably as her stage and tour document names. After the Troubadours disbanded in
1930, Kinilau and Gertrude made their way back to Hawai‘i, where they each remarried and
began new families (Gertrude to Palmer Parker of the Hawaiian Troubadours). Kinilau
continued to work as a musician playing in club bands and orchestras in Honolulu.

Note: Of the five original musicians who were contracted to perform in Java, Frank Luiz and
Kinilau continued with Kaai around Australasia and the eastern circuits. Alexander Munson and
Herbert Pahupu Byrnes stayed on in Indonesia, touring with their own bands and teaching and
training local musicians. Both were interned, however, in Japanese POW camps with their
families, and Byrnes died in prison in 1944. Munson left for America in 1946 and settled in
California while Fred Kauhi Cockett, a member of a well-known family of musicians in Hawai‘i,
is more difficult to trace. Increasing digitisation and availability of family records will no doubt
reveal more about each of their lives in the future.

8 *The Straits Times* [Singapore], 25th January 1924: 10.
9 *The Straits Times* [Singapore], 25th January 1924: 10.
10 Julie Gertrude Waihokawananakoa Byrnes, b. 1924.
This chapter will examine the Hawaiian presence at those vernacular expressions of America’s late industrial imperialism in the early twentieth century, the World’s Fairs, and in particular the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle (1909), at which Kaai acted as musical director of the Hawaiian Pavilion. The generation of a Hawaiian music craze through the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco in 1915 (which followed the phenomenal success and ongoing impact of the musical *The Bird of Paradise* (1912), discussed earlier) will be considered as elements in the construction of a Hawaiian imaginary and the codification of Hawaiian imagery and sound.

Honolulu in the early 1900s was an increasingly developed port in the context of a plantation economy with “racialised class structures, the concentration of economic power in a few hands, an export imbalance with North America and Europe, and a strong military presence” (Imada 2004: 116). Kaai’s parents were both closely connected to King Kalākaua’s government and royal household, and in these contexts Kaai would have felt the force of Kalākaua’s slogan “Hawai‘i for Hawaiians” and the king’s efforts to strengthen the identity of Kanaka Maoli through the continuance and preservation of Hawaiian music and dance (Silva 2004). Kalākaua was committed to a vision of Hawai‘i as a modern and progressive nation and also “believed strongly that the political survival of his kingdom depended on the cultural and spiritual revitalization of the Hawaiian people” (Kanahele 1979: 201). His actions, such as the public performance of the hula – which he called “the life-blood” of the Hawaiian people - at his coronation in 1883 and at his Jubilee in 1886, have been interpreted by Jonathan K. Osorio as “highly assertive of the glory and vitality of Hawaiian traditions and affirm[ing of] the cultural distinctions between Native and foreigner” (2002: 225).

Kaai was young but well placed to witness major events that had an enduring impact on the adults close to him and on Kanaka Maoli society in general; the influence exerted by the growing haole oligarchy culminated for Kalākaua with the Bayonet Constitution of 1887, when the king was forced to sign a transfer of power to anti-monarchists by an armed militia. Lili‘uokalani was proclaimed Queen after her brother Kalākaua’s death in 1891, but in 1893, when Kaai was 12 years old, the imperialist overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy took place. Race-based legislation grew with the newly established Republic of Hawai‘i and Kaai was directly affected when in 1896

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1 Kalākaua reigned from 1874 to 1891.
the Hawaiian language was banned in public and private schools. In July 1898, with the eventual passing of a Joint Resolution of Congress – the Newlands Resolution – Hawai‘i was annexed and made a territory of the United States.

There was a persistent myth of a lack of Hawaiian resistance to these events, which has consistently constructed Native Hawaiians and their political leaders according to the “discourse of the savage pagan” (Silva 2004: 173) and sought to disenfranchise the Native Hawaiian voter (Williams Jr, 2015: 9). The settler-colonial hegemony has generated an historical narrative that configures the coup d’état as necessary and benign in conjunction with “an overstating of white presence and action in Hawaiian history [which] has left the public with general misunderstandings that continue to appear in rhetoric and print” (Williams Jr 2015: 8). Research by Kanaka Maoli scholars and others addressing Hawaiian agency and the elision of the Hawaiian voice and actions from the historical record is increasing (including Meyer 2003; Silva 2004; Osorio 2002, 2006; Coffman 2009; Williams Jr 2011; Goodyear-Kaʻōpua et al. 2014), with a growing number of dissertations focusing on critiques of colonial historiography in Hawai‘i (including Sai 2008; Beamer 2008; Preza 2010) and the retrieval of Kanaka Maoli moʻolelo (online presentation by Perkins 2012).

An important step in this process of retrieval was the rediscovery, by academic Noenoe K. Silva, of the Ku‘e Petitions: the Hui Aloha Aina Anti-Annexation Petitions, 1897–1898. Along with over 20,000 other poʻe aloha ‘aina (patriots), Kaai and his mother were both signatories to the petition that defeated the original Treaty of Annexation. Kaai (aged 17 years) signed the dual language documents as a member of “Ahahui Hawaii Aloha Aina O Ko Hawaii Paeaina, the Hawaiian Patriotic League of the Hawaiian Islands,” and Ribeka (aged 34 years) signed as a member of “Ahabui Aloha Aina Hawaii O Na Wahine O Ko Hawaii Paeaina, the Women’s Hawaiian Patriotic League of The Hawaiian Islands.” The pair would almost certainly have attended the mass meeting at Palace Square on 6th September 1897 where thousands of Kānaka Maoli assembled to listen to speeches of resistance against American imperialism and galvanising the indigenous population against annexation. Osorio has described the Hawaiian population of Kaai’s youth as “involved in and informed about the political issues of the day. In 1893 our people also understood themselves to be Hawaiian, not American” (2006: 21). The Hawaiian nation of 1893, which had a very high rate of literacy among the indigenous population, was an

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2 TEDx, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVsk1O8KMBI.
3 11th September 1897: 22, District of Honolulu Kona, Island of Oahu.
4 11th September 1897: 319, District of Kona Honolulu, Island of Oahu.
opinionated and knowledgeable population, rightfully tied to its ‘āina (land) and its lāhui (nation) (Williams Jr 2011).

10.1. Pleasure Zone

Socially and culturally diverse and increasingly urbanised, Honolulu was the service centre for the Hawaiian plantation economy. Following the overthrow there was significant promotion of Hawai’i within America as a location for more white settlement and as a playground for American holidaymakers: “a site of white Edenic regeneration” (Desmond 1999: 8) was facilitated with the growing ease of travel between the islands and the west coast of the United States. Hawai’i was also marketed in America as a stopover destination on the way to “the Orient” and Pacific ports in New Zealand, Australia and Fiji. The increasing tourism and development was, however, predicated on the “gradual but forceful erasure of Native Hawaiian art, culture and history” (Kamehiro 2011) in keeping with the settler-colonial imperatives of American domination. Hawai’i was a setting that was more and more devoted to colonial consumption.

Jane Desmond (1999) dates the growth of tourism in Hawai’i and its designation as a “pleasure zone” from 1893 following the coup d’état, ushering in a period of radical transformation for Hawaiian society. Hawai’i’s “destination image” or “the sum total of the impressions a consumer receives from many sources” (Herzog 1963, quoted in Echtner & Ritchie 1991: 39) was largely constructed alongside the enduring cultural imaginary associated with Hawai’i.

Embedded in the imperialist actions were persistent Hawaiian stereotypes, one of which was the characterisation of Hawaiians as “gentle performers… soulful, tender musicians who lacked a martial spirit” (Imada 2013: 38). Missionary-influenced restrictions gathering momentum in this period, the instrumentalisation of a ‘naturally musical’ Hawaiian imaginary in the service of tourism and commoditisation marked a shift in the restrictions of customary practices and a deployment of Hawaiian cultural forms that were now deemed permissible. Hula, for example, was decried as being “productive only of evil” and had endured moral condemnation since the earliest missionary arrivals. It was subject to a highly restrictive licensing period from 1862 to 1870, when licensing was repealed and King Kalākaua controversially and publicly reclaimed it. The first hula troupe to make an extensive tour of America and Europe left Hawai’i in 1892 and over four years “their circuits took them to an international exposition, vaudeville theaters, dime museums, and European courts. This group was the first of many other hula troupes to perform during the American colonization of the islands” (Imada 2013: 30).
Music was integral to the codification of Hawai‘i as a destination. Although this was written in 1959, it reflects the power of Hawaiian music as a marketing tool: “In music, a body of undulating songs have been more effective causes for vacationing Americans choosing Hawaii than all the illustrated brochures of the travel agencies.”

10.2. Hawai‘i at the World’s Fairs

“I thought that maybe you all don’t much wear clothes in the Hawaiian Islands; but you all still are cannibals, right?”

Conversation at 1909 A-Y-P
Reported in Ka Nūpepa Kaūkūa, 27th August 1909: 6

After the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893 imperial interests in Hawai‘i were naturalised in many ways, including legislation and redefinition of Hawaiian identity (see Kualapai 2005: 55–56 for a fuller discussion including the changing use of “kanaka” as an insult). Hawai‘i had a presence of some kind in at least 10 international expositions from as early as 1851. Hawai‘i’s grand plans for the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 were jettisoned by the coup d’état, but Lorrin A. Thurston, who had been instrumental in the overthrow, privately funded a Hawaiian concession on the Midway Plaisance. At previous fairs Hawai‘i had been represented by static displays, and Chicago was the first time live music was integrated into the content of the expositions (see Stacy Kamehiro 2000, 2011 for a detailed discussion of Hawaiian participation in World’s Fairs pre- and post-annexation). Ideological imperatives had also played out in the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exhibition (A-Y-P) in Seattle in 1909, where Hawai‘i was one of the participating territories:

The Hawaii Building was a large structure, located prominently near the Government Building. Exhibits were designed to acquaint the world with the “new” Hawaii. Native artifacts were in abundance, but the importance of Hawaii’s role as a U.S. territory, not a possession, was heavily stressed. This was the first time the Territory of Hawaii had ever taken a prominent part in any exposition.

Kaai led the musical entertainment in the Hawaiian Pavilion. The enormous popularity of the performers was reported in newspapers back in Hawai‘i at the time and included the story of an evening performance from outriggers moored on the lagoon and lit by searchlights, with an

5 Hawaii in Hi-Fi, Leo Addeo and His Orchestra, RCA Camden – CAL-510, 1959, US.
6 London’s Crystal Palace Exhibition, where a koa wood table inlaid with the Hawaiian coat of arms was exhibited. The table was a gift to Queen Victoria from Kamehameha III.
7 Planners intended the Midway Plaisance or Midway to be an anthropological lesson providing visitors with a contrasting insight into “primitive” cultures, as opposed to the civilisation of the White City.
9 The Hawaiian singers attraction at the Hawaiian Building in Seattle included Ka'ai’s cousin/niece Miss Keala Ka'ai, Chas. Palikapu, David Kaanoi, the flute player; D. Makaena, Jos. Kamakani, George Kaaua, and Jas. Aloy. PCA, [Honolulu], 8th May 1909: 1.
estimated audience of 20,000\textsuperscript{10}. Over two million people attended the A-Y-P and hundreds of thousands visited the Hawaiian Building. Motion pictures of aspects of island life (by R. K. Bonine) formed a backdrop to the Hawaiian exhibit and commodities like koa wood (\textit{Acacia koa}) and tropical foodstuffs were on display. After the screenings pineapple slices were given to visitors and the fruit was also assembled in towering arrangements.

Music united these elements. August 25\textsuperscript{th} and 26\textsuperscript{th} were designated Hawaiian Days and Kaai’s musicians performed not just at the Hawaiian Pavilion but also at sites across the Exposition. Joseph Kekuku’s demonstrations of the steel guitar were seen as radical and the portamento or continuous glissando style captivated audiences and became deeply connected to the growing Hawaiian cultural imaginary. The Hawaiians had brought their own instruments made in Hawai‘i from koa (which is a tonewood, but it has other uses such as furniture), and the skill of the musicians and the sounds they produced sparked networks and local innovations, like that of Seattle luthier Chris Knutsen, who began making his distinctive harp ‘ukuleles and thin-bodied, slope-shouldered and hollow-necked steel guitars and shifted materials to koa wood. Kaai’s product label can be found in some remaining examples of both the Knutsen harp ‘ukulele and the steel guitar, suggesting that he was a licensed reseller, but his musical expertise suggests also that he along with Kekuku may have influenced Knutsen’s designs. Kaai and his Glee Club also played the Pay Streak, an amusement strip like the Midway Plaisance at the Chicago exposition. The Glee Club showed off the “new Hawai‘i” accompanied by Kaai on ‘ukulele and Kekuku on steel guitar (Armbruster 2011).

According to the Seattle Times the A-Y-P would “carry the message of progress and prosperity” (Armbruster 2011: 59), and the audiences the Hawaiians encountered were ideally placed to take on not only the new wave of musical styles but also the imperialist imperatives underpinning the Exposition. The audience flocked to the exhibition in the Hawaiian Pavilion:

A great cement water tank, 60 feet in length, ran through the centre of the building and provided visitors with an overview of the islands in miniature. Prominence was given to the location and strategic importance of Pearl Harbour, where work had just begun on what was termed an “impregnable naval base.” Elsewhere on the map, the volcano of Kilauea emitted a plume of smoke at regular intervals.\textsuperscript{11}

The model of the island chain depicted the territory in miniature and engaged a sense of wonder at both the scale and the inventiveness and engineering, conflating that wonder and charm with a

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.

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sense of dominion. Objectified, the islands were able to enter the audience imagination as a
toy/playground/artifact. The water tank was a device that functioned on a conceptual and
strategic level, emphasising Pearl Harbour’s military position and literally containing the object
space of the islands as well as objectifying the islands themselves, codifying the power
relationship between the new ‘territory’ within the matrix of empire that the Alaska-Yukon-
Pacific Exposition represented.

The A-Y-P was a highly influential event in the transmission of the ‘weirdly sensuous music’ to
the American public and in cultivating the phantasmic figure of the native Hawaiian and
embedding colonialist and orientalist discourses within the perception of Hawai‘i. Such
perceptions were further heightened and interest in Hawaiian music continued to gain
momentum with another exposition, this time in San Francisco in 1915. The Panama-Pacific
International Exposition (PPIE) made the biggest impact in terms of popularising Hawaiian
music. The PPIE ran for seven months, during which time 17 million people visited the
Hawaiian exhibition. The Royal Hawaiian Quintette, Glee groups and hula performers were
employed to provide the entertainment for the Hawaiian display. The PPIE ostensibly celebrated
the rebuilding of San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake as well as the opening of the Panama
Canal, but one of the posters portrays a nude Atlas-like figure pushing the continent apart to
create the canal and clearly articulates the imperatives at work in not only the construction of the
canal but also the construction of the event. The music of Hawai‘i and the popularity it enjoyed
is inextricably linked in these instances with colonial/imperial depictions and intentions. World’s
Fairs and Expositions 12 had long had a Hawaiian presence, but American consumers were now
introduced to Hawai‘i as a possession. The diminishing power of Native Hawai‘i to represent
itself in the face of the settler oligarchy is reflected in the shift Kamehiro (2011) perceives in her
discussion of the changing Hawaiian presence at World’s Fairs. She notes a sharp distinction
between those fairs Hawai‘i participated in before the coup d’état and afterwards:

Native Hawaiian displays in international exhibitions [shifted] from sovereign, historically
situated, and modern self-representation to feminized, exotic, tourist curiosity. This
representational trend continued and expanded into the twentieth century so that by the
time of the Pan-American Exposition in 1901, which took place after the annexation of
Hawai‘i by the United States… the principal popular image of Native Hawaiians
consisted of topless or barely clad “hula-hula girls” and male troubadours who
performed in the “Hawaiian Village,” an orientalist-styled structure on the Midway. Their
performance now closely conformed to the exotic and erotic spectacles of “other” non-
European colonized peoples. (Kamehiro 2011)

12 Chicago World’s Fair 1893; San Francisco Midwinter Fair 1894; Trans-Mississippi Exposition, Omaha, 1898; Pan-American
Exposition, Buffalo New York, 1901.
Kaai attended World’s Fairs in Hawaiian delegations, first as musical director of the Hawaiian Pavilion at the A-Y-P in Seattle in 1909. He was also present as part of the Hawaiian contingent at the PPIE in San Francisco in 1915 (King & Tranquada 2003). Music was a crucial ingredient in engaging audiences, and Hawaiian music and instrumentation gained mass favourable attention in those environments. Officials at the A-Y-P Hawaiian Pavilion were “besieged by other building officials for the loan of Kaai’s orchestra.” The marketing of Hawai‘i can be seen in official correspondence concerning the construction of the exhibit:

Twelve of the fourteen people mentioned are charged up to the Pineapple Exhibit; six very attractive part Hawaiian girls and six native singing boys, under the leadership of Ernest Kaai. We expect to get about $10,000.00 from the Pineapple people but any money saved on transportation can be used to great advantage in the exhibit.

The colonialist preference is obviously for “lighter-skinned, mixed-race Hawaiian women” (Imada 2012: 170) who were simultaneously billed as authentic Natives. There was a belief among the young women working the pineapple booth that tourism was the key to Hawai‘i’s future:

If the Hawaiian exhibit makes a million or two million persons acquainted with our pineapples and our other fruits, the work will be a success. That is the reason for the pineapple booth – to give the people an opportunity to taste the fruit from the islands. We believe that when they do know our fruit the welfare of the islands will be assured, because a wider market will be opened.

The women were there to promote commodities and perform as Keala Kaai did, but it would not be long before Hawaiian women would become synonymous with Hawai‘i through the hula (for a fuller discussion of gendered roles at World’s Fairs see Imada 2012: 103–151). Kaai’s negotiation of these events displayed a bicultural dexterity that saw him satisfy the demands of the Hawaiian Board of Commissioners – “The singing organization, under the leadership of Ernest Kaai, was one of the finest organisations of its kind which ever left the islands, and their splendid behavior as gentlemen was a constant source of pride to us all” and also establish his own performance networks and contacts.

At the A-Y-P Kaai understood the value of his skills as a cultural translator and that, like other commodities the islands were becoming associated with, his skills would be in demand. Kaai did

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13 It is generally thought that he travelled to the Greater America Exposition held in Omaha in 1899 (Imada 2012), and the newspaper article that lists the performers, on closer reading, reveals that the “ho’opa’a” or chanter in the list of performers is “aged” and part of a married couple: “Mr and Mrs Kaai” (see above for discussion of Kaai’s marital status).
14 _Hawaiian Gazette_ [Honolulu], 28th December 1909: 5.
15 Thanks to Stacey L. Kamehiro for sharing these documents from the Archives of Hawai‘i: Box GOV 3-9: Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition.
16 Loyd Childs, Special Agent and Disbursing Officer, AYPE, Seattle, to WF Frear, Honolulu, Nov. 22, 1908: (6683-4)
17 Unidentified woman quoted in the _Pacific Commercial Advertiser_ [Honolulu], 3rd July 1909: 11
18 Loyd Childs, Special Agent and Disbursing Officer, AYPE, Seattle, to Walter Frear, Nov. 11, 1909: (6730)
not have a leadership role at the PPIE in San Francisco: he lost out to Jonah Kumalae in a competition the Honolulu Star Bulletin described as a “hot fight.” Kumalae subsequently accused Kaai of trying to buy him off after Kumalae had won the contract. He also claimed that Kaai “entered high priced musicians in the contest with the intention of substituting cheaper musicians at the fair.” Kaai did attend, however, and gave Irving Fisher (founder of the Musical Murrays) a crash course in how to play the ‘ukulele (Tranquada & King 2012), which had a profound impact. Fisher succinctly sums up the American codification of Hawaiian culture: “Hawaiian music was about to be the latest fad, I felt sure. So I needed to get some new girls, the right songs, a few short skirts, some chocolate-colored pancake make-up – and of course, a whole heap of ukuleles… This was the fad of the hour, and I had to catch the wave before it broke and I’d be washed up” (Irving Fisher as quoted in Whitcomb 1987: 14–15). Similarly timed, the Panama-California Exposition was held at Balboa Park in San Diego from January 1st 1915 to January 1st 1917. A Hawaiian Village was installed and in March Kaai took charge of the site, replacing Kenneth Croft.20

20 Honolulu Star Bulletin [Honolulu], 23rd March 1915: 3.
Born in Honolulu on the 25th August 1902, Thelma was the eldest child of Amy Hoolaikahuluonalani Sheldon and Ernest Kaleihoku Kaai. Amy Sheldon was the daughter of John Sheldon (known as Kahikina Kelikino in Hawaiian), an editor of the *Hawaii Holomua* and one of the primary authors of Hawaiian language texts in the 19th century. Sheldon was well

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21 John Graves Munn Kahikina Sheldon (1850–1914) was married to Amy Ho’olai Cummings (1856–1888).
22 A staunchly pro-monarchist newspaper, it was the only paper to print Queen Lili‘uokalani’s protest against the overthrow. John Sheldon was arrested in 1893 and charged under libel laws enacted by the provisional government for comments regarding the annexationists. See Badis (2008).
known as a court translator in his later years. Thelma toured and performed with Kaai from a young age, but apart from taking part in Kaai’s Floral Parade float in 1910 there is no mention of her in school productions or club performances until 1921 when a photograph of Thelma, poised to play a lap steel guitar, appears in the Hawaiian language newspaper Ka Nupepa Kuokoa along with her father and the five musicians he contracted to perform in Java. Thelma’s lack of profile is surprising in that her playing became fundamental to the feel and sound of the Troubadours. During Kaai’s first trip to Java in 1919 Thelma was left in charge of Kaai’s music studio and school, but she soon joined her father along with her mother and younger brother Ernest Kaai Junior (also known as Bob or Bobby).

The family travelled via Hong Kong to meet up with Kaai in Java – 17-year-old Thelma and 16-year-old Bobby list their occupations as “musician” on their passport applications – and then went on to Singapore for the first of many seasons the Troubadours were to perform at the Victoria Theatre. Amy returned to Honolulu in September of 1921, but Thelma and Bobby stayed on, and it was really the beginning of many years of touring for Kaai and Thelma as the core duo of Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours. As early as 1923 Thelma was receiving reviews such as “Miss Thelma Kaai, with her catchy songs at the piano and the wonderful music she coaxes from her steel guitar, is a hostess in herself.” Bobby, who was described as a “chip of [sic] the old block”, left the Troubadours in the midst of a tour of Australia in 1925, but the group had by that stage performed in Medan, Manila, Bombay and Calcutta and had returned to Singapore for a longer stint in 1923 and again in 1924 before embarking on a two-year tour of Australia and New Zealand. Thelma stayed with the Troubadours until the group disbanded after a tour of Western Australia in 1930.

As the Troubadours accompanist, Thelma was the mainstay of the ensemble. Her playing is mentioned in many reviews with comments along the lines of: “Miss Thelma is splendid in her accompaniments on the piano and she has much to do with the ‘snap’ and quality of the show.” A versatile instrumentalist, she played the complete range of Hawaiian instruments, and she also played jazz, leading an all-female jazz band in Bombay “made up of the lady members of the

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23 As digitisation of newspapers improves more information about all of the musicians, including Thelma, will be revealed.
24 Unlike her younger brother, Ernest Kaai Jnr, who is mentioned in relation to being a drummer in the Boy Scouts and in the band at Oahu College.
25 Ka Nupepa Kuokoa [Hawaii], 17th June 1921: 9.
27 Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser [Singapore], 29th November 1921: 6.
28 Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser [Singapore], 12th March 1923: 7.
29 Ibid.
30 11th March 1925, Ernest Kaai Jnr was a passenger on board the SS Sonoma from Sydney to Honolulu.
31 The Macleay Chronicle [Kempsey, NSW, Australia], 24th November 1926: 4.
company and played piano in the Moana Jazz Four on the 1930 tour of the goldfields in Australia. Vocally accomplished, her voice was described as deep and clear, “part contralto, part mezzo”. She accompanied herself on popular standards: “It’s Three O’Clock in the Morning” (by Paul Robledo, c1919) and “Ukulele Lady” (by Gus Kahn and Richard Whiting, 1925). As a slide steel musician Thelma’s feature repertoire included “Kilima” (Hawaiian Waltz) by Keoki Awai (1916) and “Alatau Waltz” (no details).

A feature of the Troubadours was their flexibility: all of the members were able to form quartets, quintets and trios performing a cappella as well as accompanied. Thelma’s skill and versatility meant she was able to partner with anyone in the ensemble. Thelma performed steel guitar duets with Gertila Byrnes and also often played as part of a trio with husband and wife team David and Queenie Kaili. John Troutman names Kaili as one of “the most significant first generation steel guitarists to leave the islands” (2013: 33), and Queenie (Mary Louise) earned many plaudits for her powerful song delivery, comedic ability and graceful hula. Kaili was no doubt a mentor for Thelma who in her playing: “revealed the richness of tone and the wailing sweetness of the steel guitar.” In Singapore as a 19-year-old “Thelma Kaai made the steel guitar literally speak”, and while Thelma was so adaptable instrumentally and accomplished as an accompanist, her ability on the steel guitar is worth noting because the names of professional female steel guitarists from this period are not well known (email conversation with John Troutman 20/1/2016). Thelma could have made recordings and very likely did, as so many of the others within Kaai’s Troubadours did while they were on the road, and she may be one of the “unknown” musicians or singers on Kaai’s records.

Two years after Sid Kamau joined the Troubadours in 1926, Thelma and he were married in Bangalore on November 11th. The pair travelled to Ceylon with Kaai and Tuavivi, and for the latter part of the 1930s, Thelma broadcast a nighttime radio show on the BBC’s Radio Ceylon service (428.5 m. (700 kc | s)). Called “Thelma Kaai and Her Hawaiian Troubadours,” the programme ran for over an hour at 8.30pm on a Saturday night. It appears on the schedule in the midst of Sinhalese concerts, market reports and light classical music and looks like a popular music highlight in amongst more conservative programming.

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32 *The Times of India* [Bombay], 10th December 1928: 6.
33 *Stage and Society* [periodical, Australia], 12th February 1925: 7.
34 Along with July Paka, Frank “Palakiko” Ferera and Pale K. Lua, with whom Kaili made many recordings.
36 *Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser* [Singapore], 29th November 1921: 6.
At this stage Sid Kamau and Thelma had split up and Sid was touring in the northeast, playing with Bob Kaai in Japan and Shanghai, and it was around this time that Japan’s expansion in China was having an impact on foreigners in the international settlement in Shanghai. Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours had long since disbanded and Kaai’s attempts to reignite their popularity in Singapore and his staging of the *Luan Pageant* (see Chapter 16) suggest that Hawaiian music was not as popular as it had been, in Singapore at least. Kaai and his young family with Tuavivi had led a comfortable life in Ceylon providing music for elite political and social circles, but after the collapse of Kaai’s projects in Singapore and a very public court case, the family was fragmented. Tuavivi returned to New Zealand with the children and Kaai went home to Honolulu. Bobby left Shanghai with his wife and children, returning to Honolulu in 1938. All of Thelma’s family were in Honolulu when the attack was made on Pearl Harbour in 1941, and she was no safer in Colombo because in 1942, in a raid that is sometimes referred to as “Ceylon’s Pearl Harbour”, the Japanese navy attacked Ceylon on Easter Sunday, flying air raids over Colombo where Thelma lived along with Tuavivi’s sister Annie van Gezel (née Greig), a former Hawaiian Troubadour, who had married a local doctor.

Other ex-Troubadours were also caught up in the Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies and the Philippines. Lono Munson and Herbert Pahupu Byrnes had settled in Java and established themselves as band leaders and teachers; Queenie and David Kaili had been touring the old circuits and performing in Singapore up until the late 1930s and had then had opened a club in Manila called the Bali Grill. The social and political map was changing however as the Japanese Empire expanded, with a profound impact on the old colonial establishment. News may have reached Thelma about the effect of the Japanese occupation on the lives of her friends; David Kaili was held at Fort Santiago in Manila, and even though he was released after five days, he died as a result of his injuries from torture that included “electric rod and water hose treatment.” Lono Munson and Herbert Byrnes, Gertila’s brother, were imprisoned in concentration camps with their families where Herbert died. Like her husband, Queenie was also subjected to torture, but she was released to continue operating the Bali Grill for the Japanese military. Her hands bore the scars from broken finger joints and acid and cigarette burns and she described living in constant fear until Manila was liberated by American troops and she could be

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37 Bobby’s first wife was Helen Guranova, a White Russian émigré to Shanghai. They had two sons at this stage: George, who was born in Kobe, Japan in 1933 and Rayland, born in Shanghai in 1936
38 Annie and her husband Vivian van Gezel had left to visit New Zealand in 1939.
39 From the original five musicians Kaai had contracted to work in Batavia and Soerabaia in 1919.
40 Waterboarding. *Honolulu Advertiser* [Honolulu], 16th December 1945: no page number.
evacuated to the United States in 1945. Mass evacuations of Sinhalese had followed the air raids on Ceylon in 1942 and it is likely that Thelma left Colombo for a time too as it was recommended that non-essential expatriates leave. On a personal level the upheaval continued; Thelma and Sid were separated and so were Kaai and Tuavivi. Kaai then divorced Thelma and Bobby’s mother Amy and remarried. Amy died three years later in 1946. Thelma remained in Ceylon after the war but within three months of the Sri Lankan proclamation of independence in 1948, she had left for New York, travelling as Thelma Kaai Kamau eventually joining her father and his new wife in Miami where she assisted at his music studio. Thelma died within two years of her father on the 1st October 1964.

Figure 18: Left to right, Trudy Kinilau, Wehi Greig, Sid David, Thelma Kaai, India 1928 (Source: Collection of Wehi Greig)

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Ibid.

Thelma sailed on the SS Bali from Colombo to New York. Her US passport was issued in Colombo 21st June 1948 and the address in the United States was 1522, S.W. 8th Street, Miami, 35 Florida, U.S.A.
Chapter 12. The Eastern Circuit

For Kaai and many who performed with him, travel was the norm rather than the exception. Kaai toured the colonial Asia Pacific region continuously between 1919 and 1937. He was the earliest performer of Hawaiian popular music on the entertainment circuits that wound through New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, Java, India and Sri Lanka, Manila and Rangoon, and he also made regular appearances in Japan, Shanghai and Hong Kong. E J Carroll, J C Williamson and Bandmann East and Far Eastern Circuits (aka Bandman) operated sometimes-overlapping entertainment routes that Kaai toured with his daughter Thelma, sometimes his son Ernest Jnr and an ensemble of performers, some of whom worked for Kaai for many years. His long running show *A Night in Honolulu* was presented hundreds of times in many different locations throughout the region. This chapter concentrates on the ways *A Night in Honolulu*, which featured a mix of Hawaiian song, dance, and the latest jazz ‘as interpreted by Hawaiians,’ reveals the complicated ways in which Kaai circulated popular music through colonies of the region, in particular the Eastern circuit. Kaai brokered his own ambitions and desires and he offers a discrepant view of the participation and self-awareness of indigenous actors in the mediation and commodification of Hawai‘i as both a fantasy and a tourist destination. His show *A Night in Honolulu* blended narratives of the other, embedded with images of fantasy and desire, with modernity in the form of jazz.

It is probably no coincidence that Kaai made his first foray into Asia once armistice negotiations were under way. On November 7th, 1918 he brokered a nine-month contract beginning in January 1919 for “five competent, reliable and respectable HAWAIIAN SINGERS & ENTERTAINERS to play and perform at such CAFÉ, HOTELS and other places as directed by [STAM & WEIJNS, Soerabaia, Java] on the Island of Java.”¹ The musicians were all listed on their passport applications as employees of Kaai’s Glee Club or Kaai’s Orchestra but were travelling as Kaai’s Hawaiians (Kanahele (1979) refers to them as the Royal Hawaiian Troubadours). Each musician was to be paid £1250 (florins), of which £625 was sent to Honolulu for Kaai to disperse to the “families and dependents” of the five artists, while the remaining £625 was paid directly to each musician. Kaai’s share of the payment is not disclosed. The five entertainers were also provided with “table board free of expense” and return passage from Honolulu to Soerabaia [sic] provided the contract was honoured. The five musicians were the

¹ Contract attached to Kaai’s passport application, 7th November 1918.

Kaai did not accompany the musicians at first but he did travel to Soerabaia in early 1919, four months after the musicians had left Honolulu. This note by Kaai, dated April 9th 1919, accompanied his passport application:

In lieu of the Affidavit in support of application for a passport to go abroad on Commercial business, I am writing these few lines to outline the necessity of my proposed visit to Java.

Musicians under my management left Honolulu in January of this year and are now working at Soerabaia for Stam & Weijns under difficulties arising from misunderstanding and my object is to join and assist them.

Leaving Honolulu on June 13th 1919, Kaai travelled to Soerebaia, and while the outcome of his negotiations with Stam & Weijns are not known, an article in Hawaiʻi⁴ stated that Kaai was to join his quintet in Java and play in the leading hotels of Batavia. Eighteen-year-old Thelma Kaai was left in charge of Kaai’s music school, but by August 1920 all of Kaai’s immediate family,⁵ including Thelma, had applied for passports to travel to “Japan, China, French Indo China, Siam, Straits Settlements, Federated Malay States, India, Hong Kong.” The family member’s “Object of visit” was to join Kaai, who is referred to as “residing in Java.” In October 1920 the family were living in “Netherland’s India” and applied for passport renewals in May 1921.

12.1. Tropical Gothic

In September of 1921 Amy Kaai returned to Honolulu, but the rest of the family remained, and advertisements and articles in Dutch-language newspapers list appearances by Kaai’s Hawaiians in Batavia, Java and Medan, Sumatra. They not only appear at “Stam and Weijns”⁶ but also “de Deli Bioscoop”,⁷ and advertisements promise “3 ‘Honolulu girls’ and 7 heeren.”⁸ The males or “heeren” comprised the original quintet plus Kaai and Ernest Kaai Jnr and the “Honolulu girls” are Thelma Kaai, Agnes Kaawa and “Madame Leilani.” Medan venues also included the Hotel de

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³ Also known as Alexander Lono Munson.
⁵ Kaai’s second wife, Amy Hoolai Kaai (née Sheldon), as well as daughter Thelma Kaai and son Ernest Kaai Jnr – who were both listed as “Musicians.”
⁶ Het Nieuws Van Den Dag Voor Nederlandsch-Indië [Java], 24th June 1920: 11.
⁷ Bioscoop is Dutch for cinema.
⁸ De Sumatra Post [Sumatra], 29th December 1921: 4, 8.
Boer, De Witte Sociëteit te Medan, Vergadering Gemeenteraad and the Medan Hotel, which were Whites-only venues “except for musicians and servants” (Mrázek 1994: 25). The “tropical gothic” (Anderson 1991: 137) of the Dutch colonies of Asia has been characterised by Ann Stoler, following Anderson, as an imagined community where:

the European populations to which they gave rise were based on new constructions of European-ness; they were artificial groupings – demographically, occupationally, and politically distinct… ones that [were] consciously created and fashioned to overcome the economic and social disparities that would in other contexts separate and often set their members in conflict. (Stoler 1989: 137)

Race and difference are crucial elements in the construction of colonial cultures, and “bourgeois identities in both metropole and colony emerge tacitly and emphatically coded by race” (Stoler 1995: 3). Racial differences are fixed and naturalised, smoothing out discrepancies and creating a sense of colonial community. Racism creates a context “for colonial authority and for a particular set of relations of production and power… racist ideology, fear of the Other, and preoccupation with white prestige… were not simply justifications for continued rule and white supremacy. They were part of a critical class based logic” (Stoler 1989: 137). This system is consistent across regimes but, according to Stoler, the logic changed in terms of “quality and intensity” (137) in different colonial contexts and at different historical moments, for instance the “settler colonies” of Australia, New Zealand and Hawai’i where indigenous populations were effectually made into minorities and colonies of occupation such as India and the Dutch East Indies where “indigenous people remained in the majority but were administered by a foreign power” (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2007: 236). Kaai and his ensembles experienced a diversity of colonial contexts and historical moments where their own ‘imagined community’ encountered and negotiated the specific racial pressures of each location. Benedict Anderson describes the cosmopolitanism of the Dutch colonial regime in Indonesia:

[T]his was a very rich colony, yet little Holland didn’t have the power to say “only for us,” so all kinds of people came to seek their fortunes: Indians came, Yemenese came, Europeans of different kinds – Germans, Austrians, English, Americans – and so forth. This is why the population was very mixed; there was also a huge migration of natives, mainly Javanese, from the interior where people were looking for better ways to live. The Chinese ghetto system broke down in the 1910s, so, wherever you went, you were running into all kinds of people. (Foo 2009: 8)

Colonialism, which provides a backdrop for Kaai’s travels through the region, has been understood and analysed as a series of political and economic processes and as the consolidation of political and economic interests, but they are also deeply cultural projects (Imada 2012). Hawaiian scholar Jonathan Osorio (2002) has described cultural activities undertaken in late-19th-century Hawaii by Native Hawaiians that enabled Hawaiians to distinguish themselves from
acquisitive foreigners and constitute themselves as a nation as Western powers threatened their sovereignty. This interpretation can also be applied to performers like Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours. Like other Hawaiian performers on the stage at the same time in Europe and on vaudeville circuits in America, these performers were political and cultural actors within and beyond the stage and not merely passive objects in colonial entertainment economies. They resisted and negotiated with colonisation through their own travelling cultures and consumer practices. These performers moved through uncharted territory, producing and unsettling preconceptions of Hawaiianess as they went.

The Pacific had long been imagined as “feminine, desirable and vulnerable, an ocean of desire” (Smith 1992: 210), and since the first appearance of the Hawaiian Islands in the Western historical record they were also imagined as feminised and indolent. By 1919, America had long since naturalised its colonisation of Hawai‘i as benign and consensual based on a fiction that America’s relationship with the colony was altruistic and affectionate, eroding the distinction between conquest and consent. The violence of US Imperial relations with Hawai‘i was cast in a benevolent light and a potent fantasy was fabricated that insisted upon affective bonds between the coloniser and the colonised (Imada 2012).

It has been suggested by Adria Imada that staged Hawaiian performances were most successfully realised when performed away from their actual referent and transplanted from the lived context of the islands. Hawaiian brokers and impresarios such as Kaai circumvented the haole oligarchy of the island by “playing Hawaiian” in commoditised entertainment circuits away from the colony: defying US annexation in diasporic sites, asserting their autonomy from the territorial government, converting their work in cultural performance into situations where power and agency were differently configured.

While Kaai had first toured Australia and New Zealand in 1911, it was during his later post-World War I tours from 1919 onwards when his brand of Hawaiianess really became legible, particularly in the British and Dutch East Indies colonies. British and Dutch colonial audiences consuming Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadour performances were invited into an extension of the “imagined intimacy” between Hawai‘i and its imperial possessor that did not disrupt colonial hierarchies. The title of the stageshow, A Night in Honolulu, suggests an erotic encounter, and audiences are promised hula dance sequences in their advertorial campaigns as well as jazz. The

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hula had long been sensationalised as transgressive and in this era it still retained its reputation as, at the very least, a risqué act performed by sexualised Polynesian women signifying the sensual pleasures of a new colony. Male audience members in New Zealand in 1925 were encouraged to leave their wives and their conscience at home and escape for a few hours to experience “the isle of dreamy music” and breathe all the romance of the Southern Seas.  

12.2. The Jazz Effect

Like hula, jazz was considered “an agent of transgression” (Shope 2007: 98) and was a significant feature of Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours programme. The Hawaiian musicians were said to make the more abrasive qualities of jazz agreeable, as this quote from their 1922 season in Mumbai shows:

One moment you are being soothed to sleep with the soft crooning lullabies of the Pacific isle; the next you are brought back to life again with the lively bars of jazz, yet not the jazz to which Bombay has hitherto been accustomed, aggressive, noisy, penetrating, but jazz with a lilt, jazz which may set your toes a tickling, it is true, but jazz with rhythm, soft, insinuating, almost caressing.

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Figure 19: The Jazz Four, 1925: (left to right) Eddie Kinilau (traps), Jimmy Lokila (piano), David Kaili (banjo), Bob Kaai (Ernest Kaai Jr – saxophone)

Hosokawa describes jazz in the context of Kaai’s influence in Japan as “a ‘universal’ matrix which could be transformed, appropriated or exploited by local—for example, Hawaiian or Japanese—sensibilities. (1996: 64). Responding to popular demand in India, the Hawaiians

10 The Press [Christchurch, NZ], 26th May 1925: 1.
11 The Times of India [Bombay], 18th April 1922: 9.
played “All Jazz” revues when they returned to Mumbai with the “Jazz Four” in 1923. Playing the same set they had performed for the Prince of Wales in Rawalpindi, they were lauded as a first class jazz orchestra and reviewers describe the wildest jazz sets that had audiences rocking in their seats combining “scenes of exotic splendour” and featuring nights with all female jazz bands.

At the Victoria Theatre in Singapore The Jazz Four: Jimmy Lokila, David Kaili, Eddie Kinilau and Bob Kaai were said to have caused a near riot with the “jazziest kind of melody.” They were described as being able to “jazz it with the best exponents of this very modern form of music” (quoted in Coyle & Coyle 1997: 34) in Sydney in 1925 while a later review from Bombay in 1928 states that the audiences responded so enthusiastically that they did not notice the punkahs had been turned off.

Desire was doubly inscribed in A Night in Honolulu – firstly in the conceptualisation of Hawaiians, particularly Hawaiian women, and secondly in the audience perception and experience of the music. Audiences were offered A Night in Honolulu: implicit in this is a suspension of time, responsibility and routine while explicit is the promise of hula belles, “rhythmic dancers” and the latest jazz. Hawaiian Troubadour advertisements urged theatregoers to “Have a Holiday in Honolulu.” Advertisements were accompanied by bylines such as “Dreamy Honolulu, A Pacific Phantasy” and promised authentic Hawaiians “from the land of flowers and song.” The stage became a metonym for the nation of Hawai’i and the transgressive sensualities of both jazz and hula were simultaneously deployed. Kaai’s strategy sought to capitalise on the craze for both.

In “Body and Soul: Jazz in the 1920s” (2005) Scott Appelrouth analyses 319 articles on jazz written in the period 1917–1930. Body-centred discourses dominate the discussion, which he divides into those in favour of jazz and those against. Both sides recognise jazz as a “subversion of reigning conventions” (Appelrouth 2005: 1507) but he concludes, for those who embraced jazz such as Kaai’s audiences who were “rocking in their seats”, “the music’s accentuated rhythms and liminoid performance settings offered an essential escape to a more natural world”

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13 The Times of India [Bombay], 15th May 1923: 5
14 The Times of India [Bombay], 1st December 1928: 20
15 The Straits Times [Singapore], 23rd January 1924: 10
16 The Auckland Star [Auckland], 14th April 1925: 16
Jazz undermined behavioural norms and scripts but at the same time on the Eastern circuit it was an emblem of “the culture of global modernity” (Jones 2003: 228).

Warren Pinckney Jnr (2003) provides an overview of jazz in India but the early 1920s are abruptly dealt with before he proceeds to explore the influence of African American musicians and the emerging Goan and Anglo-Indian jazz scenes in the 1930s and 1940s respectively (61–62). In an interesting aside Pinckney mentions that: “Indian maharajahs discovered Afro-American jazz musicians while traveling in Europe, particularly Paris” (61), inviting the musicians to play in India. A similar although unverified story exists about Kaai – and photographs in Wehi’s albums seem to support it – that the initial season in 1919 in Java by Kaai’s Hawaiian Orchestra was at the invitation of a wealthy Chinese sugar plantation owner who had seen Kaai and his entertainers while holidaying in Honolulu and subsequently invited them to perform in Java and Sumatra.

Like Pinckney, Bradley Shope (2007) looks at jazz in India, but his focus is on African American musicians in the 1930s. One such musician, saxophonist Roy Butler, described working in India in the 1930s and 40s as “[s]imply a millionaire’s vacation with pay and passage” (as quoted in Shope 2007: 97), while jazz pianist Teddy Weatherford is reported as saying, “They treat us white folks fine” (97). The musicians achieved a lifestyle and level of income that was rare for African American jazz musicians in America and Europe (98). The pair are often described as jazz pioneers in 1930s and 40s India (Pinckney 2003, Shope 2007), but Kaai and his ensembles were performing jazz in 1922 in Calcutta and earlier – 1919 – in Sumatra and Java. In Shope’s most recent book (2016) he extends his discussion of jazz in India and again neglects to mention Kaai. He does, however, discuss the entertainer Tau Moe, who was originally from Pago Pago in American Samoa but had migrated to Hawai‘i at an early age. Moe travelled with his family troupe, the Royal Samoan Dancers (they also performed Hawaiianess on stage), around India and Asia from 1928 to 1934 (Kanahele 1979). Kaai and his musicians do not register in Shope’s (2016) history of jazz and the British Raj in India, and while that is more likely to be a reflection of the biases and hierarchies within jazz historiography that have neglected Asia and Oceania (see Fritz Schenker’s forthcoming dissertation Empire of Syncopation regarding jazz in the Philippines which includes coverage of the 1920s), it parallels an earlier discussion of Kaai’s involvement with jazz in Japan in the later 1920s. A discussion by Shope about the popularisation of the steel guitar by Tau Moe and the Aloha Boys neglects to mention Kaai’s
early introduction of the steel guitar to India in 1919 (see: Radiodiffusion Internasionaal17).

Shope states that dozens of Hawaiian tracks had been recorded, mostly in Calcutta (2016: 165), and it would be interesting further research to document those recordings if they have not already been catalogued.

The experiences of Weatherford and Butler have implications for understanding Kaai and his Troubadours’ time in India. Aside from financial stability, esteem, adventure and opportunity, the musicians also enjoyed the blurring of social and cultural differences, agency and freedom from the race hierarchies of their homelands. African American jazz musicians in Europe in the years between 1917 and 1929 have described similar experiences in which the power relations were suspended and reframed. As ‘outsiders’ to the specific colonialism of India and the internal race and class structures, the Hawaiians offered no threat to colonial power structures and could be embraced with minimal repercussions (Gillett 2010). Having the ability to travel beyond the local is “one precondition for cosmopolitanism” (Gillett 2010: 477). Travel plus jazz, which also afforded a sense of cosmopolitanism, meant that Kaai and the Troubadours were able to socialise outside the boundaries of race and class and engage with and contribute to cosmopolitan “spaces.”

A jazz quartet featured in Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours from 1922 onwards. Known early on as the Jazz Four, they later became the Moana Jazz Four and were a band within a band. Over the years they had a changing cast of musicians apart from one regular member – Edward Kinilau on traps. In a programme from the Globe Theatre in Calcutta (now Kolkata) in 1922 they are not identified as a quartet, but the musicians are Kaai himself, Herbert Pahupu Byrnes, Frank Luiz and Kinilau. The last three had been under contract for Kaai in Batavia and Soerebaia along with musicians Alexander Lono Munson and Fred Cockett performing as Kaai’s Royal Hawaiians, playing a similar combination of jazz and Hawaiian music in cafés for Stam & Weijns.

In 1925 Kaai’s son Ernest Jnr had joined the Troubadours. Another multi-instrumentalist, he played saxophone as a member of the Jazz Four when they performed a very long season in Sydney, Melbourne and Tasmania. The members were Kinilau on traps, Jimmy Lokila on piano, David Kaili on steel guitar and Ernest Jnr, also known as Bob or Bobby Kaai. The same tour party came on to New Zealand, but Ernest Kaai Jnr had returned to Hawai‘i and been replaced in the Jazz Four by New Zealand saxophonist Vic Nicholls. In 1926 the Jazz Four had been

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renamed the Moana Jazz Four and now included, besides Kinilau, George Greig of the Hilo Duo, Sid David from New Zealand on saxophone and clarinet and Palmer Parker on tango banjo (soprano banjo).

Perhaps Kaai and his ensembles achieved a kind of emancipation through the performance of jazz in contexts where the enthusiasm of the audience strongly endorsed their performance. Keoki was known to stand up while playing the piano and on at least one occasion “he took off his coat and hurled it into the wings, and resumed his accompaniment”\(^\text{18}\) typifying the spirit of the performance according to the writer. Reviewers of the Hawaiian Troubadours describe very physical responses by the audience and the construction of identity within the scenario of A Night in Honolulu for both players and patrons allowed both to place themselves in imagined cultural narratives where aesthetic and ethical judgments are made: what sounds good, is good (Frith 1996: 124).

\(^{18}\) The Straits Times [Singapore], 1st October 1928: 11
Tuavivi Greig was a dancer with Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours but she began her travels with the ensemble singing duets with Thelma Kaai in 1925. It was not her first appearance on the stage, as she and her older brother Keoki and their younger sister Annie had started a troupe of travelling musicians, the Waikiki Hawaiians, in 1921 in New Zealand when they were all in their late teens (see Chapter 8: 8.2). Agnes, their youngest sister, was also a member early on, as was

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1 Otago Daily Times [Dunedin], 25th June 1925: 10.
their cousin Florence (aka Mickey) Howley and her husband Clyde. Advertising their ensemble
as an “All Native Cast” (see Ch. 7: 7.2 for the popularity of such acts in New Zealand), there
were 11 members who appeared on stage (Fig 18) from a variety of locations in Oceania;
Samoa, Fanning Island, Fiji, Wallis & Futuna and New Zealand/Aotearoa. Tuavivi and her
brother and sisters were originally from Fanning Island, which was a cultural intersection of not
only Oceanic pathways but also American, British, Scottish, Norwegian and other European
economic and political interests.

Tuavivi’s featured performance in the Waikiki Hawaiians was as a hula dancer with the stage
name Liliokalani, a hybridised borrowing from Hawaiian. Figure 17 and Figure 18 each portray a
different aspect of their performance design; Figure 18 shows the cultural display and enactments
of the first act while Figure 17 represents the contemporary character of the second and third
acts. By the time Tuavivi joined Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours she had some stage experience
and in Thelma Kaai she met someone of the same age and cosmopolitan experience. After the
New Zealand tour had finished Kaai sponsored 22-year-old Tuavivi to travel to Honolulu with
him and Thelma on the RMS Niagara in August of 1925. During the five months of her stay in
Hawai‘i, Kaai was busy making recruitments for the long tour beginning in Australia in early
1926. They included the duo of Palmer and Lucy Parker as well as the Hawaiian artist Leio
Palani. New performers included Tuavivi and her sister Annie performing as the Greig Sisters,
Sid David and the Hilo Duo from New Zealand joined by the familiar faces of Eddie and Gertila
Kinilau and Thelma as well as Frances and Frank Luiz. David and Queenie Kaili were part of the
tour but not consistently and Bob Kaai did not rejoin the Troubadours choosing to instead
establish himself in Japan and Shanghai.

The 1926 tour began in Australia, and although there were periods when the Troubadours were
not touring and each of the units within the ensemble focussed on their own work, A Night in
Honolulu was on the road for the next four years. As the tour proceeded, Tuavivi’s role gradually
increased. During the first act Gertila Byrnes performed the “ancient hula”, but the eroticisation
that came with the “swishing dresses, sinuous limbs and lissom bodies” that reviewers
responded to, was further expressed through the spectacularisation of the hula. Volcanoes and

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2 Florence Ellen Edith Moore (b. Uvea (Wallis and Futuna Islands) 1901-d. c1975) married New Zealand jazz musician Clyde
Howley in 1922. Both were regular performers at the Dixieland Jazz Club where Florence danced the Charleston and the pair
would perform the “Argentine Tango.” Clyde was the bandleader for the “Internationals” and had been a member of the
Divisional Forces variety theatre group the Kiwi’s Brigade. Florence later taught ballroom dancing at Atwaters on Queen St and
performed the “original Hawaiian hula” as Florence Howley and also as “Miss Folole Liliokalani” (NZ Herald [Auckland], 3rd
3 Hawera and Normanby Star [New Plymouth], 6th June 1922: 1.
4 NZ Herald [Auckland], 13th December 1927: 14.
climactic scenes of sacrifice mirrored Tully’s *Bird of Paradise*, which had been critiqued by Hawaiian musicians for its anti-modern depiction of Hawaiians nearly 20 years earlier (Troutman 2016). The enactments had come a long way from the ethnocentric kava ceremony Tuavivi can be seen performing in *Fig 18*. While both performances are imaginary, the visceral nature of the sacrifice and the dramatic “flame hula” that followed, combined with music, communicate the profusion of signs much more forcefully.

In tandem with this increased role of Tuavivi’s was the growing relationship between her and Kaai. Publicity material features her by name as a “Hawaiian Pavlova” and her off-stage characterisation is as a fashionable young urbanite in the Troubadours marketing material. The accumulation of focus on Tuavivi, the birth of Kaai and Tuavivi’s first child Karen in Singapore in 1929 and the increasing theatricality of the stage show raise questions about how the ensemble would function with the new pressures and dynamics. In April 1930 a public announcement was made in Mumbai that the Troubadours would be disbanding. After leaving India the tour did in fact continue on to Western Australia and Queenie and David Kaili are prominent features of the advertising and reviews at this time. Kaai travelled to the gold fields with the Troubadours but Tuavivi remained in Mumbai with her one-year-old daughter Karen, performing solo hula shows for at least three months as a series of advertisements indicate in the *Times of India* entertainment pages. After the Western Australia tour concluded Kaai and Tuavivi established a home in Colombo joined by Thelma and Sid and were there by the time their second child, Mana Leata, was born in July 1931.

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5 *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile* [Singapore], 27th September 1928: 7
6 *The Times of India* [Mumbai], 28th April 1930: 10.
Figure 22: A publicity image for the Waikiki Hawaiians c.1921. (Source: Collection of Tuavivi Greig Kaai)

Figure 23: The Waikiki Hawaiians c.1921. Front row (left to right) Florence Howley, Tuavivi Greig, Keoki Greig, Annie Greig. Directly behind Keoki is Florence Greig, the chaperone and mother of Tuavivi, Keoki and Annie. The child in the foreground is George Howley. New Zealand jazz musician Clyde Howley, the husband of Florence, is in the back row second from right. (Source: Collection of Tuavivi Greig Kaai)
Chapter 14. Sad Minors and Hailing Cadences

Figure 24: Front left to right - Queenie Kaili, Eddie Kinilau, Gertila Kinilau (Gertrude Byrne), David Kaili, Frances Luiz, George Leywood (Manager) Layley Leywood, “Bub” Kaai (Ernest Kaai Jnr), Thelma Kaai. Back row left to right: Jimmy Lokila, Ernest Kaai, Frank Luiz (Source: New Zealand Theatre and Motion Picture, October 1925).

HAUOLI KO NU KILANI I NA MELE HAWAII

E hoakaka ana kekahie meahou o ka hoopukaia ana ae maloko o ka nupepa Auckland Star, o ka la 20 o ka mahina o Aperila aku la i hala, uo ka nui ohohia o ko Nu Kilani poe i na mele Hawaii, i haawii aae ma na ahamele i malamaa e Ernest Kaaiame kona hui himeni, e kaahele mai la ma Nu Kilani. Ma ka manawa o ka weheia ana o kekahie ahamele maloko o ka halekeaka, ua hooihawiwaia oloko o kela hale me na meakanu uliuli, ua hoopouliuliia no hoi oloko o ka halekeaka, a i ka manawa i kani ae ai na meakani, i ukaliia mai e na leo, o ka poe himeni, me he mea a, o ka hiona e nanaia aku ana i kela wa, o ia no oe o ka wehewehe ana no o ke alaula o ka malamalama, i ka pili o ke a; a ua pilipu hoi ka hanu o ke anaina, i ka wa i meleia mai ai o Aloha Oe, oiai ia meakani e hone ana i ka manawa hookahi. I ka manawa hoi i hoia ae ai ke kuku, a hoomau mai la kela poe himeni i ka lakou hookani ana i na pila, me ke mele ana mai i na himeni, be nani okoa aku no ia hiona. Hookahi nae mea i makemake nui ia, o ia no ka paani ana a Thelma Kaai i ke gita me ke kila, i kokuaia aku e David Kaili, ame Eddie Kinolau; ua nokeia Iakou i ka pa’ipaa’i, aka o ka oi loa aku o ka pa’ipaa’i ia i ka manawa a Thelma Kaai, David Kaili ame Queene i oili hou mai ai, ua hoopihaiia aku ka poe oloko o ka halekeaka me ka hauoli me ka noke i
THE PEOPLE OF NEW ZEALAND REJOICE IN HEARING HAWAIIAN MUSIC

A new event here in the Auckland newspaper has been advertised. On the 20th of the month of this past April, there was a great outpouring of excitement of the people of NZ regarding Hawaiian music – shown in several concerts produced by Ernest Kaai and his music group that has been traveling the NZ circuit. During the opening ceremonies of one of the concerts in the theatre, the inside of the hall was decorated with uliuli instruments and the entire place was completely black. When the uliuli rattles began to sound, it was accompanied with voices from the musicians appropriate to the ambiance of the scenery of the setting, and then came the rising of the lights as if it was the rising of the dawn and the light against the morning clouds. You should have heard the gasp of the audience when Aloha Oe was sung during the same time of the rattling of the uliuli instruments. And once all lights filled the entire stage, the band began to play all the instruments with the singing of various songs. Once they started playing, it changed the entire feeling of the show. One aspect of the concert that really caught the attention of the audience was Miss Thelma Ka’ai’s playing of the guitar and steel guitar accompanied by David Kaili and Eddie Kinolau [sic]. The cheers from the crowd were unceasing in praise especially when Miss Thema Kaai, D Kaili and Queenie appeared again, the theatre was filled with such that their applause continued until they appeared over and over again perhaps 4 or 5 times to take a bow. Mr. Ernest Ka’ai’s arrangements of his band as well as the blending of the voices were something New Zealanders greatly enjoyed insomuch that they could not stay home for every place this band appeared and offered concerts, it was filled with people.  

Kaai’s stage design and musical direction are evocatively rendered in this Hawaiian-language description of A Night in Honolulu. Performing at His Majesty’s Theatre in Auckland, New Zealand in 1925, the article was no doubt written by Kaai, who occasionally sent news items and other ephemera back to Hawai’i for publication in Hawaiian-language newspapers such as Ka Nupepa Kuokoa and Ke Aloha Aina and English-language newspaper The Evening Bulletin. Apart from the language, the detail – such as the ‘uli’uli description and highlighting the Hawaiian identities of the Troubadours – indicate that the article is for an audience familiar with the musicians and the indigenous instruments. The article makes particular mention of Queenie and David Kaili, who were very popular performers in Hawai’i as well as on the Australasian and Southeast Asian circuits and in America. Variously described as the Hawaiian Sophie Tucker,
the Gracie Fields of Hawai‘i, Queenie was said to have “the heaven-sent gift of comedy”, while David Kaili is still regarded as one of the masters of the Hawaiian steel guitar (Ruymar 1996; Troutman 2013, 2016).

Describing the dawn rising above “a pretty palm fringed beach”, the Auckland Star newspaper reported the same evening’s performance. Twilight concluded the first half with “the stage fading melodiously into darkness”. Set at night in a seaside hotel in Waikiki, the second part of the show featured the Jazz Four and saw the addition of traps and saxophone. In contrast the reviewer describes previously seen vaudeville circuit performances featuring Hawaiian music as “mere museum specimens” in relation to “the living actuality” of Kaai and his Troubadours.

Kaai had participated in vaudeville productions (cf The Land of Harmony) that had emphasised variety – magicians, acrobats and gymnasts as well as skits and songs – and he had glee groups performing on the Circuit Chautauqua, which combined “education and uplift” (Canning 2005). But unlike vaudeville revues, A Night in Honolulu, while it presented novelty and variety styled items, functioned more like an umbrella, with a set structure within which different programmes of songs and dances could take place, all linked to Hawai‘i through personnel (as far as the audience was concerned), language, instrumentation, composers, set design, soundscape and dance routines.

14.1. From Dawn to Dusk: Beginning in Deep Darkness

Kaai’s construction of A Night in Honolulu was by no means a static production even though the title and the basic structure remained the same for at least 10 years. Within the configuration of ‘dawn to dusk’ Kaai would offer new song programmes over the course of the season. While the aesthetics of this kind of theatre are of Western origin, the darkened stage of the opening scene with the full ensemble of voices rising with the sun has ties to Hawaiian concepts of origin that are told in the Kumulipo “Beginning in deep darkness” (the past), the “genealogical prayer chant” (Beckwith 1972: xii) of Hawai‘i. In 1897 Queen Liliʻuokalani translated the Kumulipo into English, but as a hula practitioner Kaai would already have been aware of Hawaiian cosmogonic genealogies, of which the Kumulipo is the oldest and the one least influenced by Christian and other non-Hawaiian influences (Beckwith 1972). A Night in Honolulu’s opening

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4 The Times of India [Bombay], 8th February 1930: 20.
5 Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser [Singapore], 16th January 1937: 2.
6 The Argus [Melbourne], 21st August 1926: 10.
7 Auckland Star [Auckland], 20th April 1925: 9.
number was usually Queen Liliʻuokalani’s composition “Aloha Oe,” sung a cappella apart from the “rattling of the uliuli” or feathered gourds. The link to the Kumulipo was implicit rather than explicit. Kaai had utilised the same opening device from the early 1900s, and during his first tour of New Zealand and Australia in 1911 the show opened with the same effect. The gasp from the audience described in the above newspaper report testifies to its affective qualities, as do many reviews of the opening sequence. It was a design that Kaai had deployed in a number of settings and spatially adapted to an outdoor setting on more than one occasion: at Prince Kalanianaole’s Night in Hawaii at his property at Waikiki and from outriggers on Lake Washington at the A-Y-P in Seattle in 1909.

Typically, A Night in Honolulu was performed in two parts. Part 1 began with the full ensemble performing “Aloha Oe” in the darkened theatre and as the curtains rose, the voices rose and a beach scene at dawn was revealed. The littoral zone of the beach was framed with palms, painted backdrops of volcanoes, curving shorelines and other Hawaiian and tropical signifiers. The beach has been theorised as a space of permeable cultural boundaries (Dening 1980) and in which each group – Islander and European – transmitted their cultural signs across beaches and in this process islands were remade and cultures profoundly transformed. In this sense the beach as a motif for the performances of Hawaiianness seems appropriate, bringing the audience into a porous space in which boundaries are suspended. Reviewers described the opening scene as very affective.

As musical director, Kaai was a mediator of Hawai‘i’s fantasy image. His choice of repertoire brings together the hula of popular cultural phenomenon, a valorisation of Hawaiian sovereignty in his featuring of songs by members Na Lani Eha, the Royal Four composers. Repertory in the first act took the form of Hawaiian-language songs – “himeni-type” – with tenor solos, Hawaiian guitar selections, ballads and “the ancient hula.” Many of the compositions performed in this act were part of a stable group of songs that Kaai featured over many years, drawing on the work of well-known Hawaiian composers such as David Nape, Charles E. King and Kaai himself. The first half also featured compositions by two of Kaai’s collaborators who frequently toured as part of the Troubadours: steel guitar virtuoso David Kali and Queenie Kaili. Just as Part 1 began with “Aloha Oe”, it ended with twilight falling and the whole ensemble reprising “Aloha Oe” as the scene returned to darkness.
14.2. Mise-en-scène in A Night in Honolulu

In typical proscenium stage theatre settings, Kaai utilised scenographic conventions to evoke the opening beach scene and the nightclub of the second act. Painted scenery flats create the impression of coconut groves in a beach setting (Figure 24) or columns and French doors opening on to a balcony (Figure 25) with, in each case, some distant iconography painted on the backcloth, such as the volcanic cone Diamond Head, now a ubiquitous and enduring touristic sign. The effects of swaying palms on staggered flats and the far-off horizons are visual semiotics commonly associated with Hawai’i. The space of the stage is a metaphorical space, a metonym that transports the audience to an imaginary place, what Appelrouth (2005) calls the “liminoid” space of the set – even though they usually performed in proscenium settings, the set design invited a more intimate relationship with the audience through the representations of first the beach and then the club. Very few photographic images exist of the Hawaiian Troubadours on stage, but the two images (Fig. 24 and Fig. 25) offer images of the stage setting for the first act and the second act respectively albeit in different theatres.

14.3. The Second Act

The second act fulfilled the promise in the title with the scene changing to a supper club on the beach at Waikiki and offering much more variety in the form of popular songs, comedy, jazz and jazz dances. In 1922 the first and second acts were much more clearly demarcated in terms of
content, and while the himeni-type content was more restricted to the first act, as the show evolved and jazz was more popular the content of the two halves of the show began to merge. Jazz Age influence is revealed in the hula costumes and overall styling of the dancers, as is the influence of the hit stage production *The Bird of Paradise*.

The same dancers that performed the hula would also perform contemporary jazz dances like the black bottom, the tickle toe (or tap dancing) and tango in the second part of the show. Frances Luiz was an Australian-born dancer who joined the Troubadours in the early 1920s performing as Madame Leilani and eventually marrying Frank Luiz, who had travelled with Kaai since 1919 in Java. She presented the tickle toe and clog dances as well as a nautch dance “in which her costume consisted mainly of strings of pearls, which clashed musically as she swayed and postured. Her long cloak of black hair twined with pearls added to the charm of this unusual
turn.”

Lucy Palmer (sometimes known as Luci Pama) performed alongside the Moana Jazz Four dancing the black bottom and “a clever doll dance, in which she appeared as a toy soldier.”

The hula appeared in the second half as well as the first but it became contemporised and over the years increasingly exoticised in comparison with hula from the first act. In Calcutta in 1922 Agnes Kaawa danced the “Vivid Hula” in the second act, but by 1924/25 Layley Leywood was performing “Persuasion Hula Hula” and in 1928 Tuavivi Greig was dancing “Persuasion Hula – Ra Ra Hula-la.” “Her black and silver fringes gleamed in the subdued light, and the effect was singularly pretty as she kept time to the strange throbbing music” (see Fig. 26 for stylised hula costume). Titles of dance sequences such as Persuasion Hula are indicative of the “spectacularisation” of the hula itself and also of the eroticised roles the female members of the Troubadours performed on colonial stages throughout the region. At the Excelsior Theatre in Bombay was danced, in a scene clearly drawn from Tully’s Bird of Paradise:

a fantasia on the legends of Hawaii according to which a human sacrifice in the shape of a beautiful girl was offered to the volcano of Kilauea by the inhabitants of the island. The setting for this was remarkably fine and the effect realistic to a degree. Tuavivi Greig who took the part of the girl who is sacrificed to the volcano and later becomes the spirit of fire, giving a splendid interpretation of the national dance.

Other types of performance featured in the second act. Hawaiian visual artist Leio Palani toured with the Troubadours, drawing on stage “sketches in charcoal and pastels ranging from a Red Indian to a pretty Hawaiian harbour scene executed upside down. The artist worked at extreme speed, all his illustrations being done inside ten minutes.”

Adapting the show to different locations sometimes meant integrating local stories or songs into the repertory, and one of the most meaningful for post-World War I Australian audiences was a song called “Hustling Hinkler,” a big hit in Australia at the time. Bert Hinkler was a pioneering Australian aviator and celebrated World War I pilot. The Troubadours were playing at the Garden Theatre in Adelaide in a large marquee and during Kinilau’s rendition of the song an aeroplane was flown across the stage. Kaai’s collaboration with Australian composer Bert Carlson featured too, and their song “Aloha Baby Boy” was also included in Australian shows.
During a season the company might offer a “Grand Change of Programme” or a series of nightly programmes that often ran under alternative show titles such as *Moonlight in Hawaii*,\(^{15}\) *Hawaiian Smile*,\(^{16}\) and *A Pacific Phantasy*,\(^{17}\) but the basic structure remained the same. Repertory in the second act was largely Euro-American popular music and featured some version of the jazz combination, the ‘band within a band’ that, with changing personnel, had played a part in the second act since the early days on the Eastern circuit. In 1922 the show featured a “Russian Rag” as well as recent releases “Tell Me Little Gypsy” by Irving Berlin (1920), “Avalon” by Al Jolson (1920) and “Japanese Sandman” by Raymond Egan & Paul Whiting (1920), the latter of which had been a huge hit in America in 1920 for bandleader Paul Whiteman, selling over two million copies by 1921 (Tyler 2007: 114). In 1924, Queenie Kaili performed “Running Wild” by Gibbs, Grey & Wood (1922) at the Warwick Town Hall in Queensland, which would become a hit for Django Reinhardt in 1928 and an even bigger success for Marilyn Monroe in *Some Like it Hot* (1959). In 1927 songs such as “Hello Bluebird” by Cliff Friend (c1926), which was a hit for Josephine Baker, and “In a Little Spanish Town” by Mabel Wayne with Lewis & Young (1926), another hit for Paul Whiteman in 1927 topping the US charts for 15 consecutive weeks (Ruhlmann 2004: 53), were all included in the Troubadours’ repertoire. The content can be seen as reflecting the American market’s most contemporary popular music of the day while in locations as diverse as His Majesty’s Theatre in Auckland, New Zealand, to the Excelsior Theatre in Bombay.

The repertory shows an effort to be up to date but also reveals, as was stated above, that performances move in multiple circuits “including national and transnational spaces and economies” (Taylor 2003: 27). Other Hawaiian musicians, such as the group of five who played for Tully’s original staging of *The Bird of Paradise* (1913), resisted Tully’s depiction of Hawaiians and challenged “the antimodern roles offered them by playing a modern mele repertoire” (Troutman 2016: 91). In the two halves of Kaai’s show, however, the depictions of the entertainers were self-representations and present the Hawaiian performers as grounded in Hawaiian culture but also as cosmopolitan actors who are able to adapt to the demands of any given context, demonstrating their cosmopolitan competencies and capable of making, as Clifford (1998) says, “hybrid accommodations” (367).

\(^{15}\) *The Straits Times* [Singapore], 16\(^{th}\) March 1923: 10.
\(^{16}\) *The Times of India* [Bombay], 5\(^{th}\) December 1928: 4.
\(^{17}\) *The Times of India* [Bombay], 7\(^{th}\) December 1928: 4.
Hirini Rawiri¹ Kamau (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Poporo)² was born on the 13th February 1901 at Bridge Pā, a Māori community in Hawke’s Bay, New Zealand. Hirini was the son of Rawiri Kamau³ and Ani Tipare Kamau (née Stott). The Church of the Latter-day Saints (LDS) was influential in the community of Bridge Pā and it was through the church that Kamau and his mentor Walter Watene Smith (1883–1960) came into contact.

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¹ Transliterations in Māori: Hirini = Sydney, Rawiri = David.
² Tribal affiliations sourced from the 1949 Eastern Maori General Roll.
³ A member of the Tamatea Māori Council which, under Ihaia Hutana, has been described as a “most active and progressive body” (Lange 1999: 212).
Walter Smith⁴ (Ngāti Kahungunu) was originally from Nūhaka, also in Hawke’s Bay, and was a music teacher, composer⁵ and multi-instrumentalist who had travelled to America as a young boy with his family. Smith was also LDS and had studied music at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. After college he toured the United States with Ed Montgomery’s Royal Hawaiian Quintette as well as his own group, the Hawaii-Maorian Quintette (Bourke 2010). He returned to New Zealand in 1913 to teach at the Maori Agricultural College, a Mormon school in Hawke’s Bay, where one of his students was Hirini Kamau. Under Smith’s teaching and mentorship Hirini/Sidney became adept at many instruments including the violin but was an especially skilled clarinettist. Kamau recalled that at the age of 13:

“My only ambition was to learn to play any instrument well enough to join a travelling musical show. I always enjoyed practicing but at that time music was hard to come by and was very expensive.” To beat this, his father gave him a hymn book and for his practice he played the hymns cover to cover. In 1921 he left the college and followed his violin teacher [Smith] to Auckland to continue studying the violin.⁶

Smith had moved to Auckland in 1918 and is credited with founding Auckland’s first jazz band along with Robert Adam (Bourke 2010: 12) and doing “more for jazz and for popularising stringed instruments in the city than anyone else” (12). Kamau followed in 1921 and played in Walter Smith’s Jazz Band and at Rush-Munro’s Cabaret on Karangahape Road led by Lew Munro where Kamau, now calling himself Syd David (note the spelling but this was not consistent), played saxophone and banjo.⁷ Emulating his mentor, Kamau formed Syd David’s Jazz Band,⁸ but also continued to play in Walter Smith’s eponymous band as well as Smith’s Aloha Jazz Dispensers, where Kamau played saxophone and violin.⁹

Smith’s cosmopolitanism no doubt rubbed off on Kamau as a young man, although the Bridge Pā community’s association with the LDS church meant that overseas travel was not uncommon for Māori in the LDS community. Smith had travelled as a young boy with a group of Māori missionaries to Utah in the 1890s while members of Kamau’s whānau¹⁰ had travelled to America and Hawai’i, where the LDS had been established since the mid 1800s. Even with the international links Bridge Pā had to the wider world, the modernity that Smith’s jazz bands represented for Kamau took him from rural, provincial New Zealand to a situation Chris Bourke

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⁴ b. 11 May 1883 – d. 1963.
⁵ Well-known compositions by Smith include “Beneath the Maori Moon”, “Kia Ngawari” and “Dear Old Maoriland”.
⁶ *Hawke’s Bay Herald Tribune* [Hastings, NZ], c1965. Thanks to Jerry Edwards and the Kamau whānau for sharing this newspaper clipping with me. No date or page number.
⁷ *Auckland Star* [Auckland, NZ], 1st March 1923: 16.
⁸ *Auckland Star* [Auckland, NZ], 13th February 1924: 16.
⁹ *Auckland Star* [Auckland, NZ], 17th January 1925: 16.
(2010) describes as follows: “Auckland nightlife in the early 1920s offered silent movies, theatre, vaudeville, and dance halls. Walter Smith and his bands were very much at the centre of this” (2010: 13).

“Hawaiian” and “jazz” appear coterminous in the advertisements and conceptualising of the music Smith and others were playing. There are numerous instances of the terms being used interchangeably, not just by Smith but many musicians who advertised in the amusements pages of the local papers. Curiously, in April 1925, Smith and his Dispensers, including Kamau on saxophone and clarinet, presented a “Jazz Evening” titled “Night in Honolulu” at the Palace De Danse (St Benedict’s Hall in Newton). Simultaneously Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours were performing A Night in Honolulu at His Majesty’s Theatre down the road and Smith even appears to borrow some of the advertorial phrases. It must have all been in good spirit, however, because Kamau joined Ernest Kaai’s Troubadours on their following tour of Australia in 1926 in a role previously filled, on the 1925 tour, by Ernest Kaai Junior and then later, by New Zealander Vic Nicholls. When Kaai’s A Night in Honolulu opened at His Majesty’s Theatre in Auckland in November 1927, Smith and his Aloha Jazz Band hosted a “Welcome back” party12 in Kamau’s honour at the Click Clack Cabaret in Newmarket (Bourke 2010). The Hawaiian Troubadours were also entertained at the Dixieland Cabaret in Point Chevalier, where many of the ensemble had close ties to the resident New Internationals jazz band.

From 1926 onwards, Kamau toured with Ernest Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours continuously for four years. Described as having “movie star good looks” and in the Singapore Free Press as “a handsome young man who plays the saxophone and clarinet well”,13 Kamau became not just an integral part of the Moana Jazz Four, the ‘band within a band’, but also the Kaai family: on the 11th of November 1928 Kamau14 and Kaai’s daughter Thelma were married in Bangalore, India. When the ensemble disbanded at the end of 1930 after a tour of the goldfields in Western Australia, most of the members returned to Honolulu. Syd and Thelma followed Kaai to Ceylon and Kamau continued to work in Japan and Shanghai alongside Ernest Kaai Senior and Ernest Kaai Junior. The marriage did not last, but Kamau remained a close associate of Thelma’s brother Bob (Ernest Kaai Jnr); the pair worked together in Shanghai (Kamau for the Bing Boys on Broadway) while Bob Kaai was bandleader at the Del Monté Café and also in Tokyo alongside “Buckie” Shirakata and David Pokipala, amongst many others (Kanahele 1979).

11 Auckland Star [Auckland, NZ], 11th April 1925: 11.
12 Auckland Star [Auckland, NZ], 13th December 1927: 24.
13 The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser [Singapore], 18th September 1928: 8.
14 He is listed on the register as David Maraki Kaman.
Kamau also worked for the Tokyo Broadcasting Station (JOAK)\footnote{Broadcasting began in 1925 but by the mid 1930s the station was renamed Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK) and had a network of stations across the main islands.} and JOBK in Osaka, playing with Bob Kaai and other Hawaiian and American musicians making recordings and broadcasting. Kaai’s discography includes recordings made in Japan, and although some of the musicians are listed, many are unknown, and it is likely that Kamau performed on some of those recordings.

A commission to contract a band to work in Shanghai led Kamau to San Francisco (c.1938) and while there he took part in a recording session with HMV (His Master’s Voice) of “My Blue Heaven.” Kamau played guitar, tenor saxophone, and clarinet and sang in the chorus as the recording was made with multiple takes. Jimmy’s Kitchen was the band that Kamau eventually contracted and back in Shanghai he fronted the 12-piece band of African American musicians. Based in Shanghai, the band also visited Russia twice, travelling on the Trans-Siberian railway with shows in Khabarovsk and Vladivostok. Kamau continued to perform with them until 1941. Bob Kaai and his young family had left Shanghai in 1938 to return to Honolulu, but Kamau stayed on in the embattled city, living in the International Settlement on Nangking Road with his friend J.J. James of Jimmy’s Kitchen. The Settlement had been under siege by the Japanese since 1937 and Kamau left for Honolulu in January 1941 on the SS \textit{Yawata Maru}, which he described as “the last boat allowed out by the Chinese.”\footnote{\textit{Hawke’s Bay Herald Tribune} [Hastings, NZ], c1965.} The Japanese finally invaded the International Settlement later in 1941 just after the attack on Pearl Harbour on the 7th December, but Kamau stayed ahead of these catastrophic events, and after a short stay with Bob Kaai in Honolulu he returned to New Zealand where he stayed with Uncle Walter Smith and his wife Ida on Upper Queen Street, Auckland.

The New Zealand music scene Kamau had returned to in 1941 was about to be heavily influenced by the “American invasion” of troops as the United States poured resources into the Pacific arena after Pearl Harbour and the fall of Singapore. From June 1942 over 150,000 American troops would pass through New Zealand. Saturday night advertisements for “Dances” in the \textit{Auckland Star} provide a snapshot of Auckland’s music scene: Epi Shalfoon and his orchestra at the Crystal Palace Ballroom, Bill Sevesi’s Hawaiian Band at the Zealandia Hall in Balmoral plus Tony Lindsay, Norm Crowder and Al Clarke leading orchestras at venues around
the inner city as well as Sid David, under Smith’s management, “direct from the Orient” at the Lewis Eady Hall on Queen Street.

American influence is detected in Kamau’s advertisements for his Masters of Swing, who were part of Auckland’s thriving musical nightlife, and as a clarinettist Artie Shaw’s visit to New Zealand in 1943 must have been a highlight for Kamau. Advertisements in Auckland in 1944 invited audiences to “Come, waltz, swing and Jitterbug to the Masters of Swing and Harmony led by Sid Kamau (the boy the Japs would like to swing), and His Clarinet” and “Hear the World Travelled Ace Clarinettist Sid (David) Kamau and His 12 Swing Kings.”

Kamau, appearing as Sid David and his Maori Swing Orchestra, also performed in Walter Smith’s “Polynesian Concert – In aid of Maori Welfare” at the Auckland Town Hall and in other victory/war loan fundraisers organised by Smith.

By 1944 the Americans were leaving for the Pacific and at the end of the year Kamau’s advertisements disappear; increasing digitisation of regional newspapers and ephemera will bring more appearances by Kamau to light, but at present the drop in newspaper notices appears dramatic. The end of World War II, the boom in New Zealand’s recording industry and the rise of artists like Julian Lee and Mavis Rivers suggest an opportune environment for a musician like Kamau. While Walter Smith described the Auckland music scene in the early 1950s as being all “cowboy and boogie” (quoted in Bourke 2010: 16), there was a new wave of Hawaiian music led (independently of one another) by two musicians of Tongan descent, Bill Sevesi and Bill Wolfram, both of whom Kamau had links to. At this stage, however, Kamau was once again living at Bridge Pā and is listed on the Southern Māori Roll in 1952 as a labourer, one of a number of jobs including freezing worker, shearer and office worker that Kamau undertook before returning to music. Kamau worked in Sutcliffe’s Music Shop in Hastings and was also a member of the Hawke’s Bay Swing Club and played in a stringed instrument trio. Like his early mentor Walter Smith, Kamau became a music teacher and in 1965 was quoted in the Hawke’s Bay Herald Tribune, saying:

I’ve now seen all I want to see of the world, and I don’t have any plans to go away again… The greatest kick I’m getting out of life at the moment is in moulding people to play music. I just want to keep on doing that.

17 *Auckland Star* [Auckland], 5th August 1944: 9.
18 *Auckland Star* [Auckland], 18 & 20th July 1944: 8.
19 *Auckland Star* [Auckland], 4th September 1944: 2.
20 *Hawke’s Bay Herald Tribune* [Hastings, NZ], c1965
Kamau was known to his whānau as Papa Shanghai or Uncle Shanghai and his return to Bridge Pā was in opposition to the urban migration of Māori in post-war New Zealand. While Kamau’s father Rawiri had died in 1943, his mother Ani (1874–1958) was still alive, and Kamau’s close involvement in the community is reflected in Te Karere, the official “messenger” of the LDS community in New Zealand: a 1957 issue lists Kamau as working alongside his mother and aunty as his family’s genealogist and representative. Kamau died on a trip to Auckland in 1974. His body was taken back to Bridge Pā and he is buried at Korongata Cemetery.
Chapter 16. – Conclusion

In January 1937, Kaai, Tuavivi and their children were living in Singapore because Kaai was to present an ambitious production, “The Luau,” at Tamagawa Garden. Large notices were placed in Singapore newspapers:

THE SENSATION OF THE YEAR!
ERNEST KAAI
Presents a
PAGEANT
Depicting The
LANDING OF KING KAMEHAMEHA & HIS WARRIORS
ON THE SHORES OF HONOLULU
In
SPECTACULAR SCENES
VIVID DANCES    ROMANTIC MUSIC
MERRIMENT    SOUVENIR
Then The Order of Welcome
THE L UAU (Hawaiian Feast)
8PM – 2AM
SUNDAY 17TH JANUARY
Attended by H. H. Tungku Mahkota Johore
TAMAGAWA GARDEN

1 The Straits Times [Singapore], 13th January 1937: 5.
Kaai promised “Real South Seas atmosphere and vivid Polynesian dances, never seen before –
The Paki Paki of Tahiti, Siva Siva of Samoa, Meki Meki of Rarotonga – Gaiety – Sweet Music –
Romance – Spectacular Rituals.”² Kanahele (1979) says that Kaai proposed a “Hawaiian Village”
in Shanghai but this was abandoned following the Japanese invasion in 1937. The pageant in
Singapore follows on from the notion of the Hawaiian Village, but this and a short season of A
Night in Honolulu at the Victoria Theatre suffered losses and his creditors Mrs G. Willis and Mr
O. Edwards subsequently sued Kaai. The reasons for the failure of these productions are
difficult to gauge. David and Queenie Kaili were working in Manila and Java and Tau Moe was
successfully touring his Hawaiian act and had recently joined Professor Dorlay’s Tropical
Express (Kanahele 1979: 245). One likely reason for the failure of the productions is that Kaai
had last played a season in Singapore in 1928 and times had changed. Alongside notices for
Kaai’s “Luau Pageant” are advertisements for Gary Cooper in Mr Deeds Goes to Town (1936), Paul
Robeson in Showboat (1936) and Maurice Chevalier in The Beloved Vagabond (1936).³ While Kaai
had competed with film from early on, “talkies” had become a global phenomenon in the
intervening years.

Kaai was under financial pressure to repay his creditors and while he had had pawned a $1,200
[possibly Straits dollars] diamond ring, he did not use the funds to make any payments. Edwards’
questions to an unapologetic Kaai, reported in the Straits Times,⁴ offer a depiction of Kaai’s life in
Singapore and his financial position:

Mr Kaai said that he was a married man with six children, two of whom were married.
He lived at Amber Mansions. He was the proprietor of a theatrical company, the
Hawaiian Troubadours. He also taught music.
[…]
[Kaai] had a diamond-set ring which he pawned in North Bridge Road. He also had
musical instruments worth $200 to $300.
“How do you propose to pay these two plaintiffs who have judgements against you?”
asked his honour.
“I am looking forward to contracts and small tours here and there,” said Mr Kaai.
“He told me he had property in Honolulu,” said Mrs Willis.
“I have property in Honolulu,” said Mr Kaai. “It is real estate, about half an acre and
there is a church on it. I don’t know how much it is worth but I was offered $100 on one
occasion.”
[…]
He was not leaving for New Zealand in March but he might leave for Europe later on, he
said.
[…]

² The Straits Times [Singapore], 16th January 1937: 5.
³ The Straits Times [Singapore], 13th January 1937: 5.
⁴ The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser [Singapore], 24th February 1937: 9; 3rd March 1937: 3.
Mr Edwards: May I ask how you are going to Europe when you have not got sufficient funds to pay me $180? – [Replied Kaai] By getting a financier to finance the show. I have been 18 years in the theatrical business and this is the first time I have been brought to court.

Edwards: “Why do you live in a luxurious flat costing $170, keep two amahs, run about in taxi cabs and go to theatre shows…”

“Do you keep two amahs?” interrupted his honour.

“Yes,” said Mr Kaai, “but not at my expense. My sister-in-law and wife⁵ pay for them.”

At his second appearance in court⁶ Kaai stated that money that he was expecting from Honolulu had not arrived and he would not be able to repay his creditors. The Civil District Judge would not make an order on the evidence before him and so Kaai was able to leave, and after Tuavivi and the children had departed for New Zealand in April⁷ of 1937 he made his way to Japan. No explanation is available for their separation, but later that year in September, Kaai sailed from Kobe, Japan on the SS President Coolidge bound for Honolulu. The impact of the court case on Kaai and Tuavivi’s relationship is unknown: perhaps they had intended to reunite as a family, but while there was some communication and gifts for the children from Hawai‘i of sheet music for a short period (including signed sheet music by Johnny Noble), the couple remained estranged and lost contact.

Kaai remained in Hawai‘i for a short time, but he encountered a very different music scene from the one he had left in in the mid 1920s. He eventually made the decision to move to Miami, Florida, where he opened Kaai’s Music Studio on Ludlum Drive in Miami Springs. In an interview from 1944 Kaai describes touring “all up and down the coast of Asia – Malay, Sumatra, Java, India, Russia, Manchuria, far into China, Japan, Borneo, Burma and back to Australia…” – but, the article continued, “War time has brought Ernest Kaai to Miami, Florida.”⁸ In 1942 Kaai divorced Amy Kaai and married Gunda Mae Luttmann (b.1893–d.1965), a nurse, the following year. A few months after independence was declared in Sri Lanka in 1948, Thelma left Colombo travelling via New York to Miami where she joined her father and his new wife. Kaai continued to teach, write and perform and only occasionally returned to Hawai‘i. He encouraged Bobby Kaai and his second wife Josephine to migrate with their family of seven children to Florida, which they did but did not settle and returned to Honolulu. Aside from a trip to Cuba, Kaai remained in Miami where he died in 1962 at the age of 81 years.

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⁵ Sisters Annie Van Geyzel and Tuavivi Kaai
⁶ The Straits Times [Singapore], 17th March 1937: 17.
⁷ The SS Narbada departed Calcutta for Auckland, NZ on 2nd April 1937 and arrived 7th May 1937.
Ernest Kaleihoku Kaai’s life bridged two centuries and crossed many borders. A global system emerged in this time in which the flow of “people, machinery, money, images, and ideas” (Appadurai 1990: 301) proliferated. Kaai was an early participant in each of these developing scapes. His early career in Hawai‘i as a “quintessential culture broker” (Waterman 1993: 66) saw him exploit the potential in his teaching, performing, writing and manufacturing ventures. He was also a pioneer of Hawaiian music on circuits in Asia and Australasia that were alternatives to European circuits, American vaudeville routes or the plantation-fuelled tourist locales of settler-colonial Hawai‘i. Kaai and his ensembles of musicians navigated multiple colonial formations at a time when colonialism was a defining force in the locations they toured. Cosmopolitanism informed Kaai’s ability to negotiate the demands of different settings, enabling him to establish and maintain intercultural networks that saw him successfully travel the Eastern and Australasian circuits with his stage show *A Night in Honolulu* from 1921 to 1930.

Kaai travelled for over ten years with groups of Oceanic musicians and dancers who brought their own stories and performance practices to *A Night in Honolulu*. The transnational linkages that connected the men and women to not only their locales but also the shared community of their travelling culture came together in the context of “a modern world system” (Rice 2003: 152). Following Rice and Abu-Lughod, I have advocated for the subject and in particular the “atomised study of individuals and small groups of individuals” (152) in order to argue against typification and activate the power of the story, of narrative, of mo’olelo to “retrench, remake,
retrieve” (Smith 1999: 4) our histories. Mo’olelo and ki’i have provided ways to work in tandem with a subject-centred process and frame the narrative in terms of Hawaiian-centric story telling. These methods have provided a way in which to simultaneously tell a family story and in doing so honour kupuna and pass on knowledge.

In 2011 Kaai was posthumously inducted into the Hawaiian Music Hall of Fame as an acknowledgement of his significant contribution to Hawai’i and Hawaiian music. The biographical material the HMHF relied upon was drawn from George Kanahele (1977, 1979) but while Kanahele managed to portray the scope of Kaai’s achievements the formats and intentionality of his writing left little room for detail and critical evaluation. Through this thesis I have sought to address the gaps in what is generally known about Kaai and within the accumulation of material, attempted to understand something of his sense of identity and subjectivity. For an individual with a seemingly high profile, he was an elusive subject but through the examination of archival material such as photographs, newspaper and magazine articles, travel documents, contracts, songs and programmes I was able to piece together the life of a figure who was well represented, particularly in print media of his time, but who simultaneously revealed ways in which marginalization and erasure of indigenous lives occurs within colonially dominated narratives.

Who we were and who we can be is determined through narrative. Personal stories can generate empowerment and in the face of settler-colonialism and its powerful narratives it is more important than ever for stories to be told that provide a sense of continuance of not only Hawaiian history but also other Oceanic nations; connecting the past with the future, generations with the land, the people with the story. This is the function of the storyteller (Smith, 1999: 144–145) and Kaai’s story and the stories of those who accompanied him provide a discrepant and disruptive view that has relevance for contemporary researchers in many areas including ethnomusicology, Hawaiian Studies and Oceanic history. Music linked Kaai and his small group of entertainers but they were also cultural actors in a diasporic network. The atomized view of Kaai’s life takes place against a backdrop of world events and processes and the specificities of Kaai’s biography demonstrate ways in which other Hawaiian musician’s and performer’s lives can be retrieved and therefore address the gap in this subject area. Kaai lived his life outside of the concept of huikau that Jonathan Osorio (2002) has identified as having such great impact on Hawaiian lives under American imperialism, his life shows what that might look like, what it meant to understand oneself as a citizen of the sovereign nation of Hawai‘i.
Appendix 1. Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours

The entertainers who travelled with Kaai from the mid 1920s to 1930 do not have Kaai’s profile in current research or historical media. Searches for information have involved the exploration of numerous genealogical sites and newspaper reviews. Within the collection of photographs I inherited from Tuavivi Greig Kaai there are studio portraits of many members: Sid David, Gertila Byrnes, Palmer Parker, Thelma Kaai and Eddie Kinilau. As I have cleaned and repaired the images in Photoshop, staring at faces, examining them minutely, removing stains from deterioration, erasing rips and pinholes, I have questioned whether or not to show the damage that the past time has produced on the images. I decided that as my intention is to recover the lives of the individuals, I want the image to reflect that recuperation. The digital processing has mirrored the research bricolage in that I have been piecing together and merging details in order to find the person and be as conscious as possible of my own interventions. The following written kiʻi are brief and do not have the smooth semblance of the images, but they do contain material that others may find useful in the interests of future research into Hawaiian music and they bring attention to people who may otherwise be absent from a history to which they have made a profound contribution.

Figure 30: Palmer Kanalii Parker Waipa (b. Honolulu 6 April 1897 – d. Honolulu 4 April 1974). (Source: Collection of Tuavivi Greig Kaai)
Connected to the well-known Parker family, who were prominent in politics and ranching in Hawai‘i, Palmer Parker was the grandson of Mary Ann Kaulalani Parker and Kameeiamoku Waipa of Kohala on his father’s side, and on his maternal side of Sam (Stephen) Spencer and Kamakaholoi. Palmer’s parents were Sarah Waialeale Koa Spencer and Captain Robert Parker Waipa of the Honolulu Police Department, who, like Kaai, had close connections to the Kalākaua monarchy. Princess Ruth Keʻelekulani had sponsored Waipa’s schooling and he had been aide-de-camp for Prince William Pitt Leleiohoku before joining the police force.

Palmer’s first marriage was to Lucy Kaulukou1 (c1925), a dancer, and together they travelled with Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours from 1927 to 1930. Like Lucy, who occasionally used a Hawaiian transliteration of her name (Luci Paka), Palmer would use the name Pama Paka. Together they performed contemporary items in one of several husband-and-wife duos that made up the Hawaiian Troubadours: “Miss Lucy Parker and Mr Palmer Parker informed the audience that this was their lucky day with a gaiety that was infectious.”2 His solo featured performance within the Troubadours was to imitate the human voice on the steel guitar, which he played with one hand. Also a member of the Moana Jazz Four, Palmer played a variety of chordophones alongside Sid David (saxophone), Eddie Kinilau (drums) and Keoki Greig (piano). A reviewer described their set at His Majesty’s Theatre in Auckland: “American jazz was played in away that would not have discredited Paul Whiteman. The Moana Jazz Four ran riot.”3

Once the Hawaiian Troubadours disbanded in 1930 and Palmer and Lucy returned to Honolulu, the pair split up. Palmer remarried to Gertila Byrnes after her separation from Eddie Kinilau and the couple started a new family. Whether they continued performing professionally is unclear as in the Hawaiian census of 1940 Palmer’s occupation is “Bondsman” while Gertila’s is entered as “Clerk.” Lucy Parker (nee Kaulukou, b. Honolulu 18th June 1901) is harder to trace. Her featured dances as part of the Hawaiian Troubadours received many positive reviews, whether it was her performance as a toy soldier or contemporary jazz era dances (she does not appear to have performed as a hula dancer), but after her return to Honolulu in 1930 it is difficult to find any details. As digitisation of newspaper and genealogical databases increase, more information may be discovered.

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1 They had one child, Lucille Betty Parker, b. 20th October 1925 in Odebolt, Iowa.
3 Ibid.
Like Lucy, Gertila was primarily a dancer with the Hawaiian Troubadours, but Gertila was a hula specialist, often performing the “Ancient Hula” with oli (chant) and ipu (gourd percussion instrument) accompaniment. All of the Troubadours, including Gertila, were accomplished musicians, and aside from hula she performed in a variety of duets and trios with other members, most notably steel guitar and vocal duets with Thelma Kaai.

Gertila’s brother Herbert Pahupu Byrnes was the manager of Kaai’s Royal Hawaiians in Batavia and Medan. After a brief marriage in 1918 to Edward Myron Bailey (aka Bayley) had ended, Gertila also travelled to the Dutch East Indies in the early 1920s. A surname change to Dunn was presumably the result of another marriage (no documentation discovered so far), and her first child, Velma Dunn, was born in the American settlement in Singapore in 1924. At the time, Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours were performing in Asia and Herbert was part of the touring party. Gertila joined them, travelling on the circuit through the Dutch East Indies, India and Australia, returning to Honolulu with the other Troubadours and her daughter Velma in 1925. On the 19th January 1926 Gertrude Byrnes Dunn and Eddie Kinilau were married in Honolulu (Eddie’s name in the register is “Edward Tani Kinolau”) and rejoined Kaai on a tour of Australasia.
Along with Gertila and Eddie, Frank Luiz and his wife Frances, or Mary Frances, were longstanding associates of Kaai’s. Frank had worked on the Stam & Weijns contract in Soerabaia, and Frances, as Madame Frances Leilani, was part of the Troubadours from as early as 1921, performing at the Victoria Theatre in Singapore. She was also part of the ensemble in Kolkata at the Globe Theatre in 1922. An Australian citizen from Melbourne, Frances was known as a “toe and clog dancer” – toe being “tickle toe” or tap-dancing. Early details are difficult to find for Frances, but she was naturalised as an American citizen in 1923.

Documentation for Frank (Francisco Valentin) Luiz is more readily available, partly because of the digitisation of American passport applications up until 1925. Born in Mahukona, Hawai’i on October 28th 1897, Frank was the son of Portugeuse immigrants and was working as an apprentice in an auto shop prior to leaving as part of Kaai’s band for the Stam & Weijns contract. Frank was a baritone and multi-instrumentalist, and like the other duos in the band, he and Frances had a separate professional act as “Frances and Frank Luiz, celebrated Hawaiian instrumentalists, dancers, vocalists”, performing on the Australian stage and radio between contracts with Kaai, just as the Hilo Duo did.

Along with their young daughter Lei Luiz (b.1926), the pair travelled throughout Asia and Australasia with Kaai’s Hawaiian Troubadours, returning to Honolulu in 1930 after the Troubadours disbanded. Both Frank and Frances continued to work in the entertainment industry, Frank in the theatre and Frances as a dance instructor. The whole family travelled to Shanghai in December 1933, spending six months there with their two daughters (Loretta was born in 1929) and no doubt working with Bob Kaai and Sid Kamau before returning to Honolulu in July 1934. Another child, Frank, was born in 1937 in Hawai’i, but by 1940 the family were living in San Francisco where Frank and Frances continued their careers.

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4 *Daily Standard* [Brisbane], 29th January 1927: 2.
5 3L0, 3LV, Melbourne. Advertised in *The Brisbane Courier* [Brisbane], 16th May 1927: 14.
Appendix 2. Discography

The following discography is compiled from data sourced from several different discographies. The recordings are organised in chronological order and then by label since the tracks seem to have been made in sessions when multiple sides were produced. It is probable that Kaai made recordings in other countries that he visited with the Hawaiian Troubadours as other members of the ensemble, such as David and Queenie Kaili and the Hilo Duo, all made recordings while on tour with Kaai in Australia in the 1920s, for example. Kaai may have also made recordings in America, but as yet I have found no details for these (cf. DAHR, Discography of American Historical Recordings at UCSB; University of Hawai‘i at Manoa; OCLC; Library of Congress).

The Columbia material is largely drawn from Kanahele (1979) with reverse side information from Hawaiian and Hawaiian Guitar Records 1891–1960 (2007) by Malcolm Rockwell at www.78rpm. The Victor (Japan) and Nipponophone recordings are also drawn from Rockwell’s catalogue. Decca and Bell recordings are sourced from OCLC www.worldcat.org and the Brunswick was sourced on Youtube.com. Neither Rockwell nor Kanahele have included composer details or variant titles and I have added that material from my own research. OCLC data is not always clear about the difference between composer and arranger, but based on other records I have made the best-calculated guesses. Rockwell’s primary focus is Hawaiian content in the music he curates; as such he has not included the metadata if he deems the recording “of no Hawaiian interest” even if it is performed by Hawaiian musicians such as Kaai. However, it is likely that the reverse sides are also by Kaai.

The Columbia Master Book Discography: Principal U.S. Matrix Series 1910–1924 Vols I & II (Brooks & Rust 1999) does not contain any information on Kaai or the “Y” series of recordings.

See Chapter 5.7: A Discography of this thesis for information regarding recordings that may have been made earlier than 1911 on the American Record Company label but cannot be confirmed as being by Kaai. There is also a suggestion that Kaai may have possibly recorded on cylinder formats (Edison and Columbia) as early as 1901.

For the listed recordings:
- each is performed by Kaai’s glee group or band and/or
- the song is composed by Kaai (eg: there are numerous recordings of his composition “Across the Sea”)
- Kaai is a supporting artist listed in the metadata (recordings by Keala Kaai for example)
- all are in 78 rpm format.

I have not been able to locate the catalogue numbers for the following seven recordings by Kaai, but this data is sourced from Kurokawa (2004) and Hosokawa (1994):
- “Mura Ichiban no Dateotoko” (Gay Caballero) with Teiichi Futamura
- “Minami e Minami” (Down South) with female vocalist Kikuyo Amano
- “Omou Futari” (Leilani) with vocalist Kikuyo Amano
- “Akai Kuchiburu” (Red Lips) with vocalist Kikuyo Amano

Kaai also recorded mainstream hits with vocalist Kikuyo Amano:

1 The Kaai Serenaders were also recording in the mid 1920s and cut tracks such as “Hula Shake That Thing” (3084-1) and “Hula Mama Blues” (3084-2) in Chicago, October 1926 (Gibbs 2012: 360). While it is likely that Bob Kaai was a member, it is not Ernest Kaai Jnr who also went by the name of Bob Kaai – it is probably Bob Kaai from “Jim and Bob – the Genial Hawaiians” (Jim Holstein and Bob Kaai) playing with a different partner.
• “Arabia no Uta” (Sing me a song of Araby) (by Fred Fischer, 1928; on Columbia according to Hosokawa 1994: 55)
• “Asakusa Koshinkyoku” (Asakusa March) (by Shiojiri Seihachi, 1928)
• “Watashi no Aozora” (My Blue Heaven) (by Walter Donaldson; on Columbia according to Hosokawa 1994: 55)

A record advertisement for Kaai’s Glee Club from 1912:


Columbia (Hawai‘i):
These recordings were made circa 06/1911 according to Rockwell (2007).

* indicates the source as Kanahele (1979: 430–431)

Columbia Y-1 (21285-1)

“Akahi Hoi”♦ (Kalākaua n.d.) – Keala Kaai and the Kaai Glee Club. Soprano solo.
Columbia Y-2 (21286-1)

Columbia Y-3 (21284-1)

Columbia Y-4 (21287-1)

“Enihi Kahiele”♦ (Kalākaua, c1887) – Keala Kaai and the Kaai Glee Club. Soprano Solo.
Columbia Y-6 (21289-1)

Columbia Y-7 (21290-1)

“Sweet Lei Lehua”♦ (Kalākaua and Berger, H. c1884) – Keala Kaai and the Kaai Glee Club. Soprano solo with violins and guitars.
Columbia Y-8 (21291-1)

“Ua Like No A Like”* (Everett, A, 1882) – Thomas Carter and the Kaai Glee Club. Columbia Y-10 - no matrix number listed


“Hawaii Ponoi”* (Kalākaua and Berger, H. 1874) and “Aloha Oe” (Liliʻuokalani, 1887) – Kaai Glee Club. Columbia Y-14 (21250-1). Reverse Co Y-14 by Robert Kaawa


“Wahiikaahuula”* (Kealakai, M. n.d.) – Ernest Kaai and the Kaai Glee Club. Columbia Y-16 (21316)

“He Manaoh He Aloha”* (Hula) (Kapiolani, 1890) – Kaai Glee Club. Columbia Y-16 (21300-1) Reverse Co Y-16 by Ernest Kaai

“My Honolulu Tom Boy”* (Cunha, A. 1905) – Harry Clark and the Kaai Glee Club. Columbia Y-17 (21306)

“A Song To Hawaii”* (Redding J. D. pre 1910) – Ernest Kaai and the Kaai Glee Club. Columbia Y-17 (21317)

“Taleho”* (Hula) (unknown) – Kaai Glee Club. Columbia Y-18 (21305-1)


“Lei Ohaoha”* (Nape, D. 1899) – Palikapu and the Kaai Glee Club. Columbia Y-19 - no matrix number listed

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2 Included in *Aloha Collection of Hawaiian Songs* (1899) by Charles K. Hopkins (ed), Wall Nichols Co, Honolulu.
3 This is included in Kaai’s 1910 ʻukulele method book.
“Hinahina”* (no details) – Harry Clark and the Kaai Glee Club.
Columbia Y-19 - no matrix number listed

Columbia Y-20 (21321)

Columbia Y-20 (21310-1). Reverse Y-20 by Harry Clark

Columbia Y-23 (21328-1)

Columbia Y-23 (21312-1) Reverse Co Y-23 by Keala Kaai

Columbia Y-25 (21?31) Reverse Co Y-25 (212??) Moani Ke Ala by the Lemon Glee Club

Columbia Y-26 (21313)

Columbia Y-26 (21332)

Columbia Y-28 (21329-1)

Columbia Y-30 (21323). Reverse Aloha Oe by Madame Alapai and Henry N. Clark Co Y-30 (21204)

Columbia Y-32 (21302-1). Reverse Co Y-32 by Madam Alapai

“Sweet Lei Mamo”* (Huelani and Hopkins, C. n.d) – Ernest Kaai and the Kaai Glee Club.
Columbia Y-33 (21314-1). Reverse Co Y-33 by Henry N. Clark

Kanahele (1979: 131) lists Columbia Y-34 – Y-47 by the Hawaiian Octette; the featured soloists are members of Kaai's glee groups (Mme. Alapai, Robert Kaawa, Henry N. Clark so it is likely that these are recordings by Kaai). Some of the “B” sides are by the Lemon Glee Club (Y-7, Y-34) and these are likely to be by Kaai as well.

Nipponophone:

Nipponophone 15072 (Jpn). Tokyo, 1923

Nipponophone 15072 (Jpn). Tokyo, 1923
Victor (Japan):

“Hawaii no Uta” (“Song of Hawaii”) – Teiichi Futamura with Ernest Kaai Jazz Band.
Vi 50491 (Jpn) – Tokyo, 10/01/28

“Among My Souvenirs” – Teiichi Futamura with Ernest Kaai Jazz Band.
Vi 50491 – Tokyo, JPN 10/01/28

“Share Otoko” (“A Modern Boy”) - Teiichi Futamura with Ernest Kaai Jazz Band.
Vi 51013 (Jpn) – Tokyo, 10/01/28

“Ukulele Baby” (Kamano, J. and Shuster, J. 1926) - Teiichi Futamura with Ernest Kaai Jazz Band.
Vi 51013 – Tokyo, 10/01/28

“Amaki Omoi” (“Drifting and Dreaming”) (Gillespie, Van Alstyne, Schmidt and Curtis, 1925) – Chieko Tateishi with Ernest Kaai Jazz Band.
Vi 51158 (Jpn) – Tokyo, 05/1930. Reverse side unknown.

“Aloha Oe” (Liliʻuokalani 1887) – Ernest Kaai Jazz Band with unknown female vocalist.
Vi 51450 – Tokyo, 01/31/1930. Reverse side unknown.

“Hawaiian Love” (Hetzel, J. and Lopes J. 1925)– Ernest Kaai Jazz Band with unknown female vocalist.
Vi 51419 – Tokyo, 01/31/1930. Reverse side Ernest Kaai Jazz Band with Teiichi Futamura.

“Ukulele no Oto” (“The Sound of the Ukulele”) (unknown) – Utako Hagoromo with Ernest Kaai Hawaiian Trio.
Vi 51685 – Tokyo, 03/02/31

“Odore, Odore” (“Dance, Dance”) (unknown) – Goro Fujisawa with Ernest Kaai Hawaiian Trio.
Vi 51685 – Tokyo, n.d.

“Maori no Tsuki” (“Maori Moon”) (possibly “Beneath a Maori Moon” by Smith, W.) – Utako Hagoromo with Ernest Kaai Hawaiian Quartet.
Vi 51762 – Tokyo, 04/07/1931

“Indiana no Sora” (“Indiana Sky”) (possibly Indiana Skies by Marr, F. and Manors E. 1930) – Utako Hagoromo with Ernest Kaai Hawaiian Quartet.
Vi 51762 – Tokyo, 04/07/1931

Victor (USA):
“Hawaii Across the Sea” – Foxtrot (Kaai, E. K., Kinney, R., Noble, J. 1919) – Ray Kinney; George Kainapau; Henry Paul; Hawaiian Musical Ambassadors
Vi 27290-A, c1940

Bell:
“Maia Lau Pala” (Kaai, Ernest K. n.d.) – George Kainapau; Vickie Li Rodrigues; Harmony Hawaiians
LKS-192; mx A 6505
Brunswick:

Decca:
“Across the Sea” (Kaai, E. K., Kinney, R., Noble, J. 1919) – Ray Kinney and His Hawaiians 25181B [Date and recording details unclear]


“Across the Sea” (Kaai, E. K., Kinney, R., Noble, J. 1919) – Paradise Island Trio. Los Angeles, September 10th 1937 1548 Decca; Side B – matrix DLA-904

**Modern Compilations from Japan:**

*Japanese Pre-War Jazz Songs – Early Days of Japanese Jazz (Various Artists)*

*Variant title:* Nippon no Jazz Song (5 LPs originally released in 1976, reissued from 78rpm formats)

*Ref:* FSD4147

*Release date:* unknown

*Format:* CD

*Notes:* “CD1 of 5, originally released as an LP box set in 1976. In 1927, Columbia (along with Victor and Polydor) was established and electric recording introduced. Teiichi Futamura, a male singer from Asakusa Opera, had hits with two jazz songs, My Blue Heaven and Song of Araby in 1928…”

*Includes:

Track 1 – Teiichi Futamura, Kikuyo Amano + Red Blue Club Orchestra: “My Blue Heaven”

Track 2 - Teiichi Futamura, Kikuyo Amano + Red Blue Club Orchestra: “Sing Me A Song of Arabia” [sic]

Track 3 - Teiichi Futamura, Kikuyo Amano + Red Blue Club Orchestra: “Adios”

Track 8 – Kikuyo Amano, Teiichi Yanagida + Kaai Jazz Band: “Salome”

Track 9 - Kikuyo Amano, Teiichi Yanagida + Kaai Jazz Band: “I’m Ringing(?) Home”

*Aloha Oe: Hawaiian Music in Japan 1928-1939 (Various Artists)*

*Label:* Victor Entertainment VICG60407

*Ref:* FSD1494

*Release date:* July 26 2000

*Format:* CD

*Notes:* It is likely that Tracks 1–6 (of 24) features Kaai but no metadata available

*Japanese Popular Music: 1928-1933 – Pre War Vol 1*

*Ref:* FSD3920

*Format:* CD

*Notes:* Likely that tracks 5–8 (of 19) on CD 1 (of 2) feature Kaai but no metadata available.
Appendix 3. Publications: Sheet Music, Song Folios & Methods

This appendix is a collection of Kaai’s publications, sheet music and method books sourced from online library catalogues at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa, the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC – which also provides links to individual library holdings if they are available) and the Library of Congress. Some of the publications are also from my own collection. The listings are arranged chronologically and then alphabetically.

**Royal Collection of Hawaiian Songs**

**By:** Ernest K. Kaai  
**Publisher:** Honolulu: Hawaiian News Co., ©1915.  
**Description:** This is described as an “Audiobook” and “Sound Recording.” 1 score (115pages); 32cm  
**Notes:** 50 songs. For voice and piano and: A first edition was printed in 1907. According to Amy Stillman ([https://amykstillman.wordpress.com/2011/03/12/mele-hawai%E2%80%98i-historical-sources/](https://amykstillman.wordpress.com/2011/03/12/mele-hawai%E2%80%98i-historical-sources/)) there is no apparent editor or compiler for either the 1907 or 1915 editions. However, when it was reprinted in 1915 the foreword stated that it contained “Revised and ukulele accompaniments inserted by Ernest K. Kaai, Hawaii’s well known musician and author,” suggesting changes were made that reflect the huge growth in popularity of the ‘ukulele since 1907 and the surge of interest in rag-time: the revision of chord signatures “has a number of advantages, in that it also stands for the signature of the guitar and steel-guitar chords. It will be observed that all the instrument and the piano parts are written in the same key, thereby simplifying the playing without transposition.” Words in Hawaiian and English. Digitalised copy of the 1915 edition available on the Hathi Trust Digital Library site: [https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.c097399066;view=2up;seq=1](https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.c097399066;view=2up;seq=1)

“**Akahi Hoi**”  
**By:** Kalākaua  
**Arranged By:** Ernest K. Kaai  
**Publisher:** Honolulu: Kaai Music Co., c1915.  
**Description:** 3 pages; 35 cm  
**Notes:** For voice and piano. Words in Hawaiian and English

“**Honey Moon Isles**”  
**By:** Lyrics: Hodges, Wm. C (William C.) and Composer: Kaai, Ernest K.  
**Variant Title:**  
“Honey moon isles honey moon isles calling me  
Honi kaua wiki wiki pack your grip and come with me to the shores of Waikiki”  
**Publisher:** Honolulu: Kaai Music Co., c1917.  
**Notes:** Words by Wm C. Hodges; Music by Ernest K. Kaai. In English and Hawaiian.

“**Kaleihoku**” (Hula) (“A wreath of stars”)  
**By:** Ernest K. Kaai  
**Variant Title:** First line: “Aia‘i Honolulu kaleihoku, ke kau maila Kaimana Hila”  
**Publisher:** Honolulu, Hawaii: Ernest K. Kaai ©1917  
**Other Name(s):** Kaai, Ernest K.  
**Notes:** [By] Ernest K. Kaai; Imprint “To my mother;” Front cover includes picture of Ernest K. Kaai; Front cover title “Hawaii’s music compositions and arrangements.”
'Sweet lei ilima'

**Variant Title:** “Sweet lei lehua sweet lei lehua nani lei lehua lei o Hawaii”

**Arranged by:** Ernest K. Kaai

**Edition:** Kaai ed.

**Publisher:** Honolulu, Hawaii: Ernest K. Kaai ©1917

**Other Name(s):** Kaai, Ernest K. Kalākaula

**Notes:** Arr. [by] Ernest K. Kaai; Front cover includes picture of Ernest K. Kaai; Front cover title: “Hawaii’s music compositions and arrangements.”

**Hawaiian songs**

**Publisher:** Soerabaia, Java: Compliments of Simpang Hotel, ©1917.

**Description:** 1 score (15 pages); 31 cm.

**Other Name(s):** Kaai, Ernest K.

**Notes:** Most of the songs are written or arranged by Ernest K. Kaai. For voice and piano.

**Hawaiian melodies arranged … for first and second mandolines, etc**

**By:** Ernest K. Kaai

**Publisher:** Honolulu, Hawaii, Bergstrom Music Co., ©1917.

**Description:** 1 Score (21 pages); 31 cm.

**Notes:** Words in Hawaiian. Amy Stillman mentions a publication called “Hawaiian Melodies” by Kaai (1917) in her Hawaiian Songbook database that is probably the same book:

[http://www2.hawaii.edu/~speccoll/chants/songbksbib.htm#chk](http://www2.hawaii.edu/~speccoll/chants/songbksbib.htm#chk)

“Hola e pae”

**By:** Ernest K. Kaai

**Variant Title:** “Hawaiian fox trot”

**Publisher:** Honolulu, Hawaii: Ernest K. Kaai ©1917

**Description:** 1 score (3 pages); 32cm

**Notes:** For voice and piano; includes ukulele chord symbols

“Ipo lei manu”

**By:** Princess Kapiʻolani, 1890

**Arranged by:** Ernest K. Kaai

**Variant Title:** “He manao he aloha”

**Publisher:** Honolulu, Hawaii: Ernest K. Kaai ©1917

**Description:** 1 score (3 pages); 32cm

**Notes:** For voice and piano; includes ukulele chord symbols

**Kaai’s song classics for ukulele**

**By:** Ernest K. Kaai

**Publisher:** Ernest K. Kaai, Honolulu ©1917.

**Description:** 5 volumes

**Notes:** The melody is printed in staff notation, the ukulele accompaniment in tablature.

**Contents:** I love you / Spring Flowers / This want of you / Weedie / You (all by Kaai)

“Kalanianaole”

**By:** Ernest K. Kaai

**Publisher:** Honolulu, Hawaii: Ernest K. Kaai ©1917

**Description:** Musical score, (3 pages); 32 cm

**Notes:** For voice and piano; includes ukulele chord symbols.
“Kaleihoku” (hula): “A wreath of stars”
By: Ernest K. Kaai
Variant Title: Wreath of Stars
Publisher: Ernest K. Kaai, Honolulu ©1917.
Description: 3 pages.
Notes: For voice and piano. Words in Hawaiian.

“Puuwaawaa”
By: Music by Ernest K. Kaai; words by Mary E. Low
Publisher: Ernest K. Kaai, Honolulu ©1917.
Notes: For voice and piano; includes ukulele chord symbols. 1 score (3 pages); 32 cm

Souvenir collection of Hawaiian songs & views: Souvenir collection of Hawaiian songs & views [edited and compiled by Wm. C. Hodges, Jr., and Ernest K. Kaai]
Publisher: Honolulu, Hawaii Promotion Committee [1917?]
Description: 56 pages, illustrations, 31 cm.
Notes: Chiefly for voice and piano. Hawaiian or English words. Includes tablature for ukulele.

“Ta Maoli”
First Line: “Auhea wale oe e ka maoli”
Arranged By: Ernest K. Kaai
Publisher: Hodges and Kaai 1917, Hodges 1919
Description: 42 pages
Source: Hawaiian Songs (from a database compiled by Amy Stillman: http://www2.hawaii.edu/~speccoll/chants/T-Y.htm#WI

“Eiala e”
By: Ernest K. Kaai
Publisher: Honolulu, Hawaii: Ernest K. Kaai ©1918
Description: Musical score, (3 pages); 32 cm
Notes: For voice and piano; includes ukulele, guitar and steel guitar chord symbols.

Hawaii Ponoî (Hawaiian National Anthem)
Variant Title: “Hawaii ponoi, nana i kou moi
Makua lani e, Kamehameha e”
Publisher: Honolulu: Ernest K. Kaai, c1918.
Notes: By King Kalâkaua; arranged by Ernest K. Kaai; “Kaai edition”; front cover has picture of Kaai.
“Iniiniki Malie” (“Tickle a Little”: Hula)  
**Variant title:** “Waikapu Hula”  
**By:** Ernest K. Kaai  
**Publisher:** Honolulu, Hawaii: Ernest K. Kaai ©1918  
**Description:** Musical score (3 pages); 32 cm  
**Notes:** For voice and piano; includes ukulele chord symbols.

“Lei poni moi” (“Carnation wreath”)  
**Variant Title:**  
“Mahalo au o ka nani, o kuu lei poni moi  
Ke ala kai hiki mai, o kuu lei poni moi”  
**Edition:** Kaai ed.  
**Publisher:** Honolulu: Ernest K. Kaai, c1918.  
**Description:** 3 pages; 35 cm.  
**Notes:** Wm. J. Coelho; arr. by Ernest K. Kaai; cover has picture of Ernest K. Kaai.

“Nohenohea”  
**Arranged by:** Ernest K. Kaai  
**Publisher:** Honolulu, Hawaii: Ernest K. Kaai ©1918  
**Description:** Musical score (3 pages); 32 cm  
**Notes:** For voice and piano; includes ukulele, guitar and steel guitar chord symbols.

“Palolo” (Hula)  
**Arranged by:** Ernest K. Kaai  
**Publisher:** Honolulu, Hawaii: Ernest K. Kaai ©1918  
**Description:** Musical score (3 pages); 32 cm  
**Notes:** For voice and piano; includes ukulele chord symbols.

“Tu Moa” (Hula)  
**Variant title:** “Twice Again”  
**Arranged by:** Ernest K. Kaai  
**Publisher:** Honolulu, Hawaii: Ernest K. Kaai ©1918  
**Description:** Musical score, (1 page); 32 cm  
**Notes:** For voice and piano; includes ukulele chord symbols.

“Wahine ui” (Hula)  
**Variant title:** “Pretty Maid”  
**Arranged by:** Ernest K. Kaai  
**Publisher:** Honolulu, Hawaii: Ernest K. Kaai ©1918  
**Description:** Musical score (3 pages); 32 cm  
**Notes:** For voice and piano; includes ukulele chord symbols.

“Wehiwehi Oe”  
**Variant title:** “Beautiful One”  
**By:** Ernest K. Kaai  
**Publisher:** Honolulu, Hawaii: Ernest K. Kaai ©1918  
**Description:** Musical score (3 pages); 32 cm  
**Notes:** For voice and piano; includes ukulele chord symbols.
California-Hawaiian souvenir collection of songs and views

Title: by Liliuokalani, Queen of Hawaii; Harry Lauder, Sir; Ernest K. Kaai; Mary E Low; David S. Lindeman; F. B. Silverwood; A F Frankenstein; Charles W Hatch; Charles C Overbury; Byron Gay; George A Norton; David Kalakaua, King of Hawaii; William C Hodges Jnr.

Publisher: Los Angeles: William C Hodges, Jnr. ©1919

Description: 1 score (32 pages): illustrations 31cm.

“Across the sea”

Author: Ernest K. Kaai
Title: “Across the sea” / Ernest K. Kaai, Ray Kinney, Johnny Noble.
Edition: Rev. ed.

Description: 1 score (5 pAGES) ; 31 cm.

Notes: Includes ukulele chord diagrams. Image of Ray Kinney and “Ray Kinney’s Theme Song.” Victor Record No. 27290

Hawaiian song folio no. 1: a collection of Hawaiian song gems.

Publisher: New York: Shapiro, Bernstein, 1921

Description: 28 pages ; 31 cm.

Other Name(s): Kaai, Ernest K.

Notes: Cover title: “Featured by Kaai’s Hawaiians in the Far East.” Image of Kaai, Kinilau, Byrnes, Luiz, Munson on the cover. Includes “Hawaii Across the Sea” by Ernest K. Kaai

“The Native Sons of Aussie”

Variant title: “Patriotic Song”

By: Kaai, Ernest K. and Carlson, Bert H.

Publisher: Ernest K. Kaai, Honolulu, T.H. 1926.

Includes: Score for “Aloha Baby Boy” words and music by Ernest K. Kaai [includes ukulele chord diagrams]

“Hawaii across the sea”

Author: Ernest K. Kaai
Title: “Hawaii across the sea” / by Ernest Kaai and Johnny Noble.
Edition: Johnny Noble's Hawaiian ed.
Publisher: Honolulu, T.H.: Johnny Noble c1934.

Description: 1 score (3 pages): port. ; 31 cm.

Other Name(s): Noble, Johnny, 1892–1944, Kaai, Ernest K., Kinney, Ray

Notes: For voice and piano with ukulele chord diagrams. “Popular.” Illustrated t.p. includes picture of Johnny Noble with caption “Featured with great success by Johnny Noble and his Brunswick Recording Orchestra, Royal Hawaiian Hotel, Honolulu, T.H.”

Kaai’s enchanting melodies of the Islands for Hawaiian guitar

Publisher: Chicago: Chart Music Pub., House, ©1940.

Description: 1 score (26 pages); 31 cm.

Publisher Number: C 172-24 Chart Music Pub. House

Related Title added entry: Enchanting melodies of the Islands.
Library of Congress call number: M142.H3K
Songs of Old Hawaii: E7th Tuning / Hawaiian and Electric Guitars

Author: By Ernest K. Kaai
Publisher: WM. J. Smith, Music Co., Inc., New York, N.Y., ©1941
Description: 26+pages
Library of Congress call number: M128.K2

United Artists Music Publishing Group presents songs of the 1940s
Publisher: Los Angeles, California; United Artists Music; c1970
Description: Musical score (89 pages); 31cm
Notes: 38 songs, entry number 36: “Across the Sea” (Kaai, Kinney, Noble).

Kaai has written many songs for which the sheet music is no longer extant. John King has identified the following ten compositions as being written by Kaai and reprinted them in his Famous Solos and Duets for the Ukulele (2004: 3) with staff notation and ‘ukulele tablature, but with no publication dates or copyright information. The songs are contained in Kaai’s ‘ukulele method books (indicated in brackets with page numbers along with variant titles) but there is very uneven composition accreditation in the books so it is difficult to say whether any of the many other unaccredited compositions in the three method books are by Kaai or not. The titles have been cross-referenced with other sources to confirm Kaai’s authorship:

- “Haele” (aka “Haere”) (1916, p34)
- “Hone a Ka Wai” (1916, p23)
- “Polka Mazurka” (1916, p38)
- “Ka Wehi” (1916, p32)
- “Banjo Schottische” (1916, p36); (aka “Sunset Schottische” in 1906 p29, 1910 p29)
- “Ei Nei” (1916, p20)
- “El Recuerdo” (1916, p30)
- “Aloha Quickstep” (1916, p39)
- “Leilani” (1916, p37)

A short article in a Hawaiian-language newspaper mentions the publication of early sheet music for songs performed by Kaai. One of the songs, “Uina Loko”, was part of the repertory of Kaai’s tour to Australia and New Zealand in 1911 and was composed by Kalani Peters, who may also have composed “Sweet Sweeting”, listed in an earlier article from 1908 as being composed by “native Hawaiian youths”:

> Everyone wanting copies of the famous songs being sung by the group of Ernest Kaai, they being “Uina Loko” and “Sweet Sweeting,” write to Kalani Peters, Number 168, Beritania Street. These are mele set with musical notes so that those who read music can sing them without confusion. They are 25 cents per copy (Aloha Aina, 24th Feb 1912, p4).

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1 A schottische is a partnered country dance which became very popular in the Bohemian dance craze in the late 19th century. It is slower than a polka.
2 Translated from Hawaiian at https://nupepa-hawaii.com/tag/sweet-sweeting/.
Methods

The ukulele: a Hawaiian guitar and how to play it.
Author: Ernest K. Kaai
Edition: 1st edition
Publisher: Honolulu, Wall, Nichols, ©1906
Description: 39 pages. Portrait.

The ukulele: a Hawaiian guitar and how to play it.
Author: Ernest K. Kaai
Edition: Revised edition
Publisher: Honolulu, Wall, Nichols, ©1910.
Description: 39 pages. Portrait.

The ukulele and how it’s played.
Author: Ernest K. Kaai
Publisher: Honolulu, Hawaii News Co., Ltd [©1916]
Description: 58 pages. Illustrations.

Simplified Chords of all the Major and Minor Keys for the Ukulele, Guitar and Steel Guitar
Author: Ernest K. Kaai
Publisher: Honolulu, Hawaii: Ernest K. Kaai ©1917
Library of Congress call number: MT645.K14

Kaai’s Photographic Illustrations for Handling and Playing the Ukulele
Author: Ernest K. Kaai
Publisher: Honolulu, Hawaii: Ernest K. Kaai ©1917
Library of Congress Catalogue of Copyright Entries 1917 Volume 14, Number 8, Entry A475388, p1093

Kaai’s Hawaiian Guitar Method
Author: Ernest K. Kaai
Publisher: Chicago: Chart Music Publishing House, ©1919, 1926
Description: 1 score (58 pages) ; 31 cm.
Notes: Cover title.

Self Instructor: A Diagram System for Ukulele, Banjo Uke, Steel Guitar and Tenor Banjo
Author: Ernest K. Kaai
Publisher: Chicago : Chart Music Publishing House, 1926.
Description: 16 pages: 26 cm.
Library of Congress call number: MT645.K144

Kaai’s Method and Solos for Ukulele or Tiple
Author: Ernest K. Kaai
Publisher: Chicago : Chart Music Publishing House, 1926.
Description: 50 pages, 31 cm. “This practical method contains all the Major and Minor chords by the Chart, Number and Note System. Shows how and when to use them in Song and Orchestral Accompaniment. Such fascinating Strokes, as roll, Shuffle, double Shuffle, jazz, syncopated triple and etc., explained in a simple manner. Playing from notes as well, with finger and with plectrum treatises, Progressive melodic exercises, Simple Hawaiian Solos and Songs, How to transpose and harmonise. A complete instructor in the Hawaiian style of playing.
Contains such numbers as “My Bonnie, Repining, Maunakea, Sweet Lei Lehua, Mai Poina Oe I‘au, Akahi Hoi, Maui Girl, Aloha Oe, Moonlight Hawaii and You, Vista Mista Kista, On the Beach at Waikiki, Rotorua Waltz, Roselani Waltz, Onehunga Waltz, Hoki Hoki, Tofa Ma Feleni (Samoan Song), Aloha Baby Boy, Dear Heart, Hawaii, El Rocuerdo [sic], Lauia Waltz, Kawehi etc.” (Notes quoted from page 51 of Kaai’s Method for Hawaiian Guitar, 1926)

**Notes:** Cover art is the same format as *Kaai’s Method for Hawaiian Guitar* (1926) suggesting they are part of a set.

**Library of Congress call number:** MT570.K12 M3

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**Kaai’s Method for Hawaiian guitar**

**Author:** Ernest K. Kaai

**Title:** Kaai’s method and solos for Hawaiian guitar / written and composed by Ernest K. Kaai.

**Variant Title:** Kaai’s Method and Solos for Hawaiian Guitar

**Publisher:** Chicago : Chart Music Publishing House, 1926.

**Description:** 1 score (50 pages); 31 cm.

**Notes:** Cover title: Kaai's method for Hawaiian guitar. Includes exercises and songs for the Hawaiian guitar.

**Library of Congress call number:** MT590. K13

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**Kaai’s Hawaiian Methods for Ukulele, Steel Guitar, Hawaiian Language, Songs and Hula Dance**

**Author:** Ernest K. Kaai

**Publisher:** Honolulu, T.H. E. K. Kaai, c1939

**Description:** 71 pages includes diagrams, illustrations

**Library of Congress call number:** MT950.K13 H2

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**The Hawaiian hula instruction: complete in 10 easy lessons**

**Author:** Ernest K. Kaai

**Title:** The Hawaiian hula instruction: complete in 10 easy lessons.

**Edition:** 4th ed.

**Publisher:** Honolulu: Royal Hawaiian Distributing Co., [1940].

**Description:** [27] pages: illustrations; 21 cm.

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**The Collection of Popular Early Hawaiian Ukulele Methods**

**Publisher:** Anaheim Hills, CA: Centerbrook Pub., ©1998

**Description:** Contains reprints of early ‘ukulele method books including Kaai’s 1916 edition. (415 pages; 28cm)
Appendix 4. A Night in Honolulu Programme, 1925

Programme from the Athenaeum in Melbourne, Australia 1925
References


Liliuokalani, Q. (1917). *Hawaii’s Story by Hawaii’s Queen*. Boston: Lee and Shepard


