

Wai Fresh Water Songs

KIM SUEOKA & LAU HAWAIIAN COLLECTIVE

Album Liner Notes and Credits

The importance of fresh water, or *wai*, is reflected in numerous aspects of Hawaiian culture. Fresh water features prominently in Hawaiian place names, traditional land management systems, *mo'olelo* (story-telling), and *mele* (poetry and songs). Hawaiian concepts of water as a vital resource, a source of enjoyment, a symbol for love and life, and a big player in myths and legends abound in traditional and modern song material. This album is a celebration of humanity's shared reverence for water and an invitation to explore the place of water in today's world.

Program Consultant: Amy Ku'uleialoha Stillman

Producers: Kim Sueoka and David Burk

CD Graphic Design: Paul Karlson

CD Photography and Illustrations: Kim Sueoka, Dave Kapell, and Paul Karlson

Musical Arrangements: Kim Sueoka and David Burk

SONG NOTES

1. Koni au i ka wai (I throb for water), King Kalākaua (1836-1891)

Taylor 314 CE 6-string guitar, standard tuning: David Burk

KoAloha concert 'ukulele: Kim Sueoka

Late 18th century French bass, restored by August Germunder (New York City, 1883) and Albert Muller (Sacramento, 1990): Rahn Yanes

Vocals: Kim Sueoka and Shahzore Shah

2. 'Āinahau (Land of hau trees), Princess Likelike (1851-1887)

Taylor 314 CE 6-string guitar, standard tuning: David Burk

KoAloha concert 'ukulele: Kim Sueoka

Late 18th century French bass, restored by August Germunder (New York City, 1883) and Albert Muller (Sacramento, 1990): Rahn Yanes

Vocals: Kim Sueoka

The lyrics of this song describe 'Āinahau, an estate owned by Cleghorn family in Waikiki. Princess Miriam Likelike's husband Archibald Cleghorn planned and cared for this lush, beautiful residence near the sea. The residence served as a musical and visual oasis; it was at 'Āinahau that Likelike composed most of her songs (including this one), nurtured her daughter Princess Ka'iulani's love of music and animals, and regularly hosted musical gatherings. Archibald survived both his wife and daughter. He attempted to gift the estate to the Territory

of Hawai‘i upon his death, in hopes that it would be used for a public park named after Ka‘iulani, but the Territory refused to accept it. Although the estate no longer exists – today, a historical marker for ‘Āinahau sits on Kuhio Avenue in Waikiki, near the statue of Princess Ka‘iulani and the Princes Ka‘iulani Hotel – this song reassembles its beautiful image for us, affectionately evoking the swaying leaves of coconut trees, flowering plants, fresh water ponds, exotic birds, and the scent of līpoa (a delicious, edible seaweed) that adorned the property. Likelike and her siblings Queen Lili‘uokalani, King Kalākaua, and Prince Leleiohoku, all poets and musicians, were active in creating music as well as supporting musical activity in their communities and music education. The introduction, outro, and interludes were inspired by the song’s opening lyrics: “Sweet water, cool water of the rose.” We came up with patterns of “rain-drop” eighth notes, and, inspired by the music of Phillip Glass and John Adams, layered them in cycles upon one another. To create a slightly dreamy feel, we have added a number of seconds, sixths, and sevenths to the chords during the verses and huis (refrains).

3. Wai o Minehaha (The waters of Minehaha), Robert Wai‘ale‘ale (dates unknown)

Taylor 314 CE 6-string guitar, standard tuning: David Burk

KoAloha concert ‘ukulele: Kim Sueoka

Late 18th century French bass, restored by August Germunder (New York City, 1883) and Albert Muller (Sacramento, 1990): Rahn Yanes

Vocals: Kim Sueoka

Wai‘ale‘ale describes Manawaiopuna Falls (alternately known as “Manawaiopuna Falls,” and known widely today as the “Jurassic Park Waterfall”) on the west side of Kaua‘i, inland from Hanapepe and Waimea; and Mōpua Falls near northwest coast of Maui, south of Lahaina town. No one knows exactly why the “wai o Minehaha” (“waters of Minehaha”) is mentioned in the song, or whether its spelling is intentional. “Minehaha” is not a Hawai‘i place name or even a Hawaiian word – but it looks and sounds like it could be either! (Hawaiian vowels: a, e, i, o, u; consonants: h, k, l, m, n, p, w, and a glottal stop) Our program consultant Amy Ku‘uleialoha Stillman says, “it is possible that there is deeper kaona (level of meaning) that composer Robert Wai‘ale‘ale is drawing upon, of referring to a couple, one person on Kaua‘i and the other on Maui, and drawing a comparison with Minnehaha Falls (in Minneapolis, Minnesota) to comment on the intensity of their love.” As in many Hawaiian love songs, the narrator pairs falling water with romantic desire. The print music we used to learn this song (Charles E. King Music Co) was notated in triple meter (a waltz), but several well-known recordings are in duple meter. We have chosen to open the piece as a relaxed waltz, then pick the tempo up to a fast duple meter. Wai‘ale‘ale’s daughter Lena Machado became a well-known Hawaiian singer, often called “Hawai‘i’s Songbird,” during the 1930s and 40s.

Translation:

There in the upland of Manawaiopuna

Are two waterfalls meeting on the face of the cliff

I have seen the waterfall of Mōpua [Place Names: village in Olowalu, Maui]

In the calm of the refreshing breeze [Blown gently by soft winds]

Hui:

I am soaked by the spray of fresh water
The famous waters of Minnehaha
There my thoughts and desires dwell
In the waterfall of Manowaiopuna

Translation: Amy Ku'uleialoha Stillman

4. Adios ke aloha (Farewell, beloved), Prince Leleiohoku (1854-1877)

Taylor 314 CE 6-string guitar, standard tuning: David Burk

Fender 12-string guitar, standard tuning: David Burk

KoAloha concert 'ukulele: Kim Sueoka

Late 18th century French bass, restored by August Germunder (New York City, 1883) and Albert Muller (Sacramento, 1990): Rahn Yanes

Vocals: Kim Sueoka, Shahzore Shah, David Burk, and Rahn Yanes

Prince William Pitt Leleiōhoku composed this song in Paniolo (Hawaiian Cowboy) style, several decades after the arrival of Hawai'i's first resident cattle. At the end of the 18th century, a group of heavy-footed, hungry, unfamiliar longhorn were presented as a gift to King Kamehameha I. The king placed a ten-year kapu (ban) on harming the cattle, so they were allowed to roam about without restriction. Horses arrived soon afterward, and since Hawaiians had no experience managing these types of animals, they quickly created an environmental dilemma. In 1838, King Kamehameha III hired Mexican vaqueros from California to instruct Hawaiians in caring for cattle and horses. Most of the vaqueros were Spanish speakers, and many brought their guitars and traditional songs to the islands. They became known to Hawaiians as "Paniolo," (a Hawaiian version of the word "Español"). Paniolo music is distinct from other cowboy or ranch music in that its lyrics are primarily in the Hawaiian language, and that its subject material tends to focus on Hawaii-specific themes, place names, and kaona (levels of meaning). Leleiōhoku wrote this song of love and longing in Hawaiian, along with occasional Spanish ("adios"), French ("belle"), and English ("kiss") words. The narrator calls out in the cool, moonlit night, hoping to capture a lover's attention. He trembles with anticipation for the lover to turn to him, summoning multiple forms of water to illustrate his desire: rain, dew drops, mist. In the end, he returns empty-handed, but continues to call out while bidding the lover farewell. These lyrics seem to smart with the swooning drama of new love, so we have attempted to musically convey a taste of the sometimes steady, sometimes jolting journey of a new paniolo.

5. Ka ipo lei manu (My sweetheart the bird), (aka "He mana'o he aloha")

Queen Kapi'olani (1834-1899)

Fender 12-string guitar, F Taro Patch tuning: David Burk

KoAloha concert 'ukulele: Kim Sueoka

Late 18th century French bass, restored by August Germunder (New York City, 1883) and Albert Muller (Sacramento, 1990): Rahn Yanes
Glass Harp: Dave Kapell
Vocals: Kim Sueoka

Beloved wife of King David Kalākaua, Queen Julia Kapi'olani traveled the Hawaiian Kingdom and beyond, connecting with people and nurturing a passion for improving social and medical conditions in the islands. She worked to raise funds to better the living conditions and medical care of patients with Hansen's Disease (leprosy) at the mandatory settlement established by the Hawaiian government in 1866 on Kalaupapa Peninsula, Moloka'i. The disease was little understood, and early treatment options were fairly primitive and painful. It became common knowledge that those who were sent to Kalaupapa would never return to their homes and families. The severe geographic and social isolation of the peninsula also spawned a deep sense of community among the residents; consequently, after sulfone drugs rendered the disease incommunicable, most chose to remain at Kalaupapa for the rest of their lives. Hawaiians referred to the disease as the "ma'i ho'oka'awale" (sickness that separates), because families and communities were split apart by the relocation mandate. There are numerous accounts of Hawaii residents trying desperately to contract the disease from their loved ones after a diagnosis in an effort to remain together. Kapi'olani also founded Kapi'olani Maternity home on O'ahu in June of 1890 (now Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women and Children). Her maxim, "Kulia no i ka Nu'u" ("Strive for the Highest") appears in numerous Hawaiian songs and has been adopted by many organizations as a motto for the advancement of Native Hawaiian culture and education. Kapi'olani wrote "Ka ipo lei manu" for King Kalākaua after he departed for California in search of medical treatment in November, 1890. In it, she compares her sweetheart to the 'i'iwi bird of the uplands, and recalls being numb with cold as she is drenched with her lover by the great rains of Hanalei, Kaua'i. While on the mainland, Kalākaua suffered a stroke, followed by kidney failure. He died in San Francisco on Jan 20, 1891, and was mourned deeply by his people.

This song has brought me unexplainable feelings of joy and sadness, even before I learned the story of its genesis. It seemed fitting to add glass harp to this piece – this instrument has a haunting, omnidirectional sound quality, and the active, physical presence of water among our bodies and instruments remind me of the many earthly and spiritual elements that exist in our small group of musicians: wood, metal, breath, voice, memory, emotion. Guitarist David Burk initiates and then improvises on a "bird" theme in the song's intro and interludes. After the final verse, "Hā'ina ka puana no ka lani heleloa," ("Tell the refrain for the chief who has gone far away") the bird theme culminates in duet with the voice, then both fade away into the air. This song has a total of 13 verses; our arrangement comprises seven of them (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 13). The complete lyrics can be viewed at www.huapala.org.

6. He mele no nā wai aloha (A song for love of water)

Hula noho, hula 'ili'ili by Pohaku Nishimitsu (1957-2006)

Fender 12-string guitar, F Taro Patch tuning: David Burk

Late 18th century French bass, restored by August Germunder (New York City, 1883) and Albert Muller (Sacramento, 1990): Rahn Yanes

Vocals and 'ili'ili: Kim Sueoka

This hula noho (seated hula) in praise of fresh water was taught to me and other three members of the Rose Ensemble (www.roseensemble.org) in 2005 by our late kumu (teacher, guide) Pohaku Nishimitsu on the island of Kaua'i. Pohaku's love of learning and teaching were apparent in his life and in his career; he founded Halau Kanikapahulohi'au in Kapa'a in 1980 and served as a consultant and educator with the State of Hawai'i's Kupuna program and as an administrator at Chiefess Kamakahelei Middle School and Kōloa Elementary School. He studied Hawaiian Mo'olelo (storytelling) and composed songs, hulas, and chants throughout his life. Pōhaku's legacy continues in the work of his haumana (students), and in the thirst for exploration and learning he shared with the community.

Pōhaku planted the seeds of this recording and concert project by pointing out the numerous places names in Hawai'i and Minnesota that contain the word water ("wai" in Hawaiian, and "minne," "mini," or "mni" in the Lakota/Dakota language). He composed "He mele no nā wai aloha" as spoken, rhythmic chant that is performed in a seated position with a pair of 'ili'ili (water-washed pebbles) in each hand. The 'ili'ili used for this recording come from the Wailua Arboretum stream (a tributary of the Wailua River) on the east side of Kaua'i. Our arrangement maintains Pohaku's original choreography and poetry while incorporating a newly composed melody and harmonic progression. I am deeply grateful to Pohaku for welcoming us into his hālau, and for introducing us to his intimate relationship with Hawaiian culture. I would also like to thank Pōhaku's family for granting Lau Hawaiian Collective permission to perform and record this song.

Translation:

What is water for?

It is for drinking, it gives life.

What is water like?

It is slippery! It slides! It is so refreshing!

Where is water?

It is there in the clouds, there in the sea.

When does it show forth?

When the clouds are full, it falls down .

For whom is water?

It is for the land, it is for all of us.

How do we take care of it?

We share it, we clean it.

What is water?
It is a precious gift, a thing of greatness is water!

Tell the refrain,
Love water, take care of water.

Translation: Pohaku Nishimitsu

7. Ku'u home (My home) (aka. “Old Plantation”), David Nape (1870-1913)

Yamaha nylon string guitar, standard tuning: David Burk
Taylor 314 CE 6-string guitar, standard tuning: David Burk
KoAloha concert ‘ukulele: Kim Sueoka
Late 18th century French bass, restored by August Germunder (New York City, 1883) and Albert Muller (Sacramento, 1990): Rahn Yanes
Vocals: Kim Sueoka

8. Wai o Punalau (The waters of Punalau), David Nape (1870-1913)

Taylor 314 CE 6-string guitar, standard tuning: David Burk
KoAloha concert ‘ukulele: Kim Sueoka
Late 18th century French bass, restored by August Germunder (New York City, 1883) and Albert Muller (Sacramento, 1990): Rahn Yanes
Vocals: Kim Sueoka, Shahzore Shah

9. Ka wai ‘olu o Waipi’o (The peaceful waters of Waipi’o), Kū Kahakalau (dates unknown)

Wechter 6-string guitar, Nashville tuning: David Burk
KoAloha concert ‘ukulele: Kim Sueoka
Late 18th century French bass, restored by August Germunder (New York City, 1883) and Albert Muller (Sacramento, 1990): Rahn Yanes
Glass Harp: Dave Kapell
Vocals: Kim Sueoka, Shahzore Shah

10. Ka wiliwiliwai (The rotating water sprinkler) (aka “Ka Wiliwiliwai”)

Queen Lili’uokalani (1838-1917)
Wechter 6-string guitar, Nashville tuning: David Burk
KoAloha concert ‘ukulele: Kim Sueoka
Late 18th century French bass, restored by August Germunder (New York City, 1883) and Albert Muller (Sacramento, 1990): Rahn Yanes
Vocals: Kim Sueoka

“Wiliwiliwai” is the Hawaiian word for revolving water sprinkler. Queen Lili‘uokalani composed this song after being mesmerized by novel gadget at work in the yard of Dr. Robert McKibbin (a neighbor of Washington Place).

11. Aihea ‘o ka lani? (Where is the royal one?)

Traditional hula noho, hula ‘ili‘ili in honor of King Lunalilo (1835-1874)

Vocals, ‘ili‘ili, finger cymbals: Kim Sueoka

Rainstick, oud and backwards oud sample,

Wechter 6-string guitar (Nashville tuning): David Burk

12. Ka wai ‘apo lani (Royal and sacred taro leaf-caught rain drops)

Queen Lili‘uokalani (1838-1917)

Wechter 6-string guitar, Nashville tuning: David Burk

KoAloha concert ‘ukulele: Kim Sueoka

Late 18th century French bass, restored by August Germunder (New York City, 1883)

and Albert Muller (Sacramento, 1990): Rahn Yanes

Glass Harp: Dave Kapell

Vocals: Kim Sueoka, Shahzore Shah

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