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## Living in Hawai'i: The Pleasures and Rewards of Hawaiian Music for an 'Outsider' Ethnomusicologist

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### Foreword

I first met Stephen Wild at the 1976 Society for Ethnomusicology meeting in Philadelphia. Since that time we have enjoyed four decades as session-hopping colleagues and pub-crawling mates. In regard to the former, most memorable was the 1987 International Council for Traditional Music meeting in Berlin, where, appropriate to our honoree, one of the conference themes was 'Ethnomusicology at Home'. It is this aspect of Stephen's service that I celebrate in my modest effort for this festschrift. In 2006, the journal *Ethnomusicology* produced its '50th Anniversary Commemorative Issue', which contained the essay 'Ethnomusicology Down Under: A Distinctive Voice in the Antipodes?' (Wild 2006). It was an informative and at times prescriptive account of the trajectory for ethnomusicology in Australia. I found the essay a most engaging exercise in personal positioning by an author within a historical narrative, one in which personality and persona were very much in evidence. Inspired by the spirit of that essay and emboldened by its novel approach, I share

observations about ‘doing ethnomusicology’ where I live—in Honolulu, Hawai‘i. This brief and personal account deliberately draws parallels with our honoree’s experiences and activities during a long career in his ‘homeplace’ (Cuba and Hummon 1993).

## The pleasures of Hawaiian music in California

My first encounters with Hawaiian music were not in Hawai‘i but in San Jose,<sup>1</sup> California, locale for the first two decades of my life. Two experiences were key to my later involvement with it. At age 10 I heard electric steel guitar played by Sonny Ragsac,<sup>2</sup> a 13-year-old Filipino whose family had just moved to San Jose from the island of Kaua‘i. As a 10-year-old aspiring concert pianist, I was initially attracted to steel guitar as a fascinating but puzzling alternative sound, in which sliding from one pitch to another was intentional, meter was not metronomically obsessive, chromatic transpositions could occur without modulation, and familiar harmonies followed an unfamiliar but inevitable logic. I liked Sonny’s rendition of ‘Pālolo’,<sup>3</sup> plus he allowed me to pal around with him and his friends. His accounts of ‘growing up plantation’ in Hawai‘i was colourful with a bit of the forbidden—swimming in irrigation ditches, Filipino camp parties, cockfights, *katchi-katchi* dance music, and *balisong* butterfly knives. This was certainly a different music and social scene to the one I was growing into, which was the regimen of ‘classical music’ replete with the spring-wound metronomic control of well-tempered preludes and fugues, practice hours ad infinitum, and Sunday afternoon piano recitals initially in short pants. So my first pleasure of Hawaiian music concerned a sound and a music style that was different from my own musical background, but with an autonomous integrity and logic. It was also tied to Sonny as the cool older kid with a slightly dangerous Island childhood who knew how to roll his own cigarettes.

1 During the heightened awareness of Hispanic heritage in the 1990s, the name of the city was reformatted as San José, which constitutes official usage (City of San José 2015).

2 ‘Sonny Ragsac’ is a pseudonym; I do not have permission to use his real name.

3 For Hawaiian song titles cited, the reader can find general information, song texts with translation, and selected sound examples in the invaluable online compendium Huapala (Kanoa-Martin 2015).

The second memorable Hawaiian music experience in California involved a group of college students from Hawai'i studying at San Jose State College<sup>4</sup> and known as 'The Hawaiians'. They formed an active hula group and performed mostly *hapa-haole* repertory for public 'Intercultural Evening' multicultural programs, the same community circuit in which our family presented Filipino music and dance. Its members were ethnically diverse, mostly Japanese and Chinese with one *haole* and two part-Hawaiians.<sup>5</sup> These Island undergraduates immediately took to our family, plying my brother and me with coconut candy and addressing my mother with the honorific 'Aunty'. I got to know them because they lived in a rented house near the college and a half-block from our church, where they sat on the front lawn playing 'ukulele and singing. Walking home after organ practice at church, I was often invited to join them and talk story, occasionally with pineapple swipe as further incentive. At these sessions, I noticed that the repertory was different from the *hapa-haole* 'good time' pieces they performed at the Intercultural Evening events. From a purely sound perspective, I liked the Monarchy Period Style songs, such as 'Mi Nei' and 'Paokalani', which for me carried the scent of fin-de-siècle operetta. I was very surprised that one Hawaiian song, 'Ho'onani i ka Makua Mau', used the same tune as the Doxology, which I as fledgling organist could crank out in any of the 12 available keys. It was in San Jose that I heard 'Kaulana nā Pua' for the first time, with its distinctive triadic melody. However, it was not until I came to Hawai'i as a graduate student that I learned that it was a song of protest and bitterness against the overthrow of the Hawaiian kingdom by the United States and fully understood the group's change in mood when they sang it. The next year I entered San Jose State College as a freshman piano major. The 'Hawaiians' had moved out of the house. I lost contact with them and with Hawaiian music. What followed was four undergraduate years of intensive involvement with classical music.

My initial experiences with Hawaiian music and with classical music were remarkably similar. I was first drawn to each because of an engaging musical sound effectively without any homeland cultural context. 'Pālolo' on steel guitar without having lived in the Islands was as enjoyable

4 The institution was San José State University in 1974.

5 Observing current usage in Hawai'i, in this chapter the term 'Hawaiian' refers only to the native population, i.e. those that self-identify as *kanaka maoli*. Individuals of other ethnicities resident in Hawai'i are referred to as 'Local' or as 'Islanders'. Some three decades previously (and still currently outside Hawai'i) the term 'Hawaiian' referred more inclusively to persons of colour born or living in Hawai'i, irrespective of ethnicity. Outside the metropole the term 'Local' still largely includes Hawaiians.

for me as ‘Faschingsschwank aus Wien’ for piano without having set foot in Vienna. However, neither was completely devoid of context. Rather than a received cultural context, each carried an idiosyncratic, personally constructed one, informed by my circle of performers, teachers, and experiences in (at that time) the agricultural heart of California. For Hawaiian music it was about Sonny Ragsac and the Island college students living on Tenth Street; for classical music it was about piano teachers and a *communitas* of college orchestra, band, and choir peers.

From my present vantage point more than half a century later, the encounter with Hawaiian music in California was the first suggestion of the possibility for musical alternatives—diverse musics each with its own grammar, its own logic, and its own criteria of excellence. As a minority American growing up during the immediate post-Pacific War years in a California traumatised by the wartime internship of Japanese-Americans, I found the possibility of musical-cum-cultural alternatives both assuring and encouraging.

## The pleasures of Hawaiian music in *nani Hawai‘i nei*<sup>6</sup>

Here I narrate my graduate student years, which constitute the basis for the ethnomusicological perspective I now bring to Hawaiian music. When I arrived at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa to pursue graduate study in ethnomusicology in 1962, Hawaiian music and dance were at their zenith. Hawaiian performance enjoyed a high profile in the tourist industry of Waikiki and was equally robust in the local settings of baby luaus, backyard wedding celebrations, neighbourhood *pupu* bars, and elaborate private gatherings for the *haole* and Hawaiian elites of Honolulu. Hawaiian acts headlined the major hotels, including the Royal Hawaiian, the Halekulani, and the Moana. The fabled Duke Kahanamoku and his wife Nadine hosted a continually sold-out show at the International Market Place.<sup>7</sup> As a student I joined other cash-strapped mates in the ‘scholarship seats’, standing beyond the volcano rock wall at the Halekulani Hotel or sitting on the sand outside the

6 ‘*Nani Hawai‘i nei*’ was a phrase of affection for Hawai‘i as place often invoked during the 1960s. As an utterance it points to Hawai‘i as a glorious place.

7 The original structures were razed and in 2016 replaced by a three-storey commercial complex of high-end international stores anchored by Saks Fifth Avenue.

Barefoot Bar at Queen's Surf Beach listening to the likes of Emma Veary and Sterling Mossman for free. The student years provided entrée to Hawaiian music in this 'authentic' cultural context, which in the Waikiki of the 1960s meant a star system of singers, choreographed hula dancers (mostly female) à la Jo Flanders, a 'maitai mindset', and the fourth wall between audience and performers formed by a raised stage and banks of microphones and loudspeakers. This received context at the tail end of the Golden Age of Waikiki afforded me a significant re-contextualisation for the reception of such songs as 'The Cockeyed Mayor of Kaunakakai' and 'E Huli Mākou', which in my California days seemed to teeter on the outer edge of good taste. The Hawaiian practice of public teasing and alluring suggestiveness enacted in local gatherings and commodified on Waikiki stages provided the cultural logic for such songs that had been missing in my self-constructed California setting.

However, Waikiki was only one of a number of 'authentic' settings for Hawaiian music in Hawai'i. Private parties and celebrations in those days were legion. Musicians occasionally performed for fees but more often just for the hospitality of food, drinks, and a place to sleep—local parties could last for days. I recall (albeit somewhat dimly) a party in Kalihi Uka that went on for two and a half days with non-stop music and spontaneous hula. Here pieces such as 'Rocking Chair Hula' and 'Princess Poopooly (Pupule)' constituted 'naughty hulas', especially when a grandma or aunty got up to dance enthusiastically cheered on by children, grandchildren, other relatives, and friends. It was in such private settings that we heard the complete eight verses of 'Sassy' and all nine verses of "Alekokī", while in a tourist venue the two songs might be combined into a medley with other songs in which only the first verse and the closing *ha'ina* stanza of each song were performed. As a non-speaker of Hawaiian, I found my initial enjoyment of complete performances and extended musical events to be a combination of the sound and the setting. The incredible nuances of vocal timbre, changes in ornamentation, and even melodic variations for each successive verse—accompanied by a second or third bottle of Primo (the local beer)—were part of that experience. Equally pleasurable was an 'authentic' cultural setting—being with listeners knowledgeable in the language and background of the songs.<sup>8</sup> For example, while listening to "Alekokī" the *kupuna* elders would wait for the sixth verse and exchange

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8 In the 1960s a significant number of non-Hawaiian elders understood or spoke the Hawaiian language, mostly in settlements outside of urban Honolulu such as Ewa, Aiea, and Haleiwa, so that the primary audience was not limited to ethnic Hawaiians or part-Hawaiians.

knowing glances at the mention of Māmala and the lines in Hawaiian, ‘I am wet with foam and sea slippery to the skin’.<sup>9</sup> Sometimes a *kupuna* would whisper a short explanation, but for the most part I (along with my Hawaiian friends who were as anglophone as I) was forced to smile when elders smiled or—in a form of fishing while listening (Rafael 1988)—to respond knowingly when I recognised words that alluded to *kaona* or hidden meaning, such as the phrase ‘*nui manu*’ (group of birds) referring to gossiping people in the canonic song about a secret love, ‘Hi‘ilawe’.

Those graduate student years opened many doors in the Hawaiian community: by accident, by network, and by design. As a student, I made a number of contacts that would become friendships in later life and experienced encounters that were initial steps for my almost five decades of professional and personal life in Hawai‘i. The benefit of any long-term ‘living in the field’ is to observe and experience music life *en longue durée* and to witness processes that lead to the important social or cultural event that research studies often frame as a single snapshot in time. I share my observations concerning two Hawaiian music events, which for me constitute part of the pleasures and rewards of living in Hawai‘i. The first set of observations concern the Merrie Monarch Hula Festival and its *mele*. The Hawaiian concept of *mele* understands the triumvirate of poetry, music, and dance, which necessitates a multimedia research stance typical for most Pacific cultures (Clunies Ross and Wild 1984). The second is a reflection on Hawaiian slack-key guitar as the featured music for the 2011 film *The Descendants*, starring George Clooney. Because my contribution celebrates Stephen both as friend and as ethnomusicologist, I now shift to a more ethnomusicological voice and register.

## Native empowerment and the Merrie Monarch Hula Festival<sup>10</sup>

The Merrie Monarch Hula Festival is an exemplary instance of Hawaiian empowerment and control. The annual three-day competition presents hula groups (*bālau*) invited from the various Hawaiian Islands and from

9 In *mele*, the mention of wetness and coolness were often part of a hidden meaning (*kaona*) related to things sensual and sexual.

10 Parts of this section are based upon the paper ‘Music of “Minorities” as Lived Experience and Performed Identity: The Philippines’ Sulu, America’s Hawai‘i, and Japan’s Okinawa’ presented at the 2014 International Council for Traditional Music Study Group on Music and Minorities in Osaka, Japan.

California, where a significant ethnic Hawaiian and Islander population resides. The festival competition, popularly referred to as ‘The Olympics of Hula’, attracts a worldwide audience, with visitors coming from Japan, the US mainland, other Pacific islands, and Europe. Held annually for the last half-century, its planning, leadership, organising force, and judges are Hawaiian (Skillman 2012). A retinue re-enacting Hawaiian royalty provides opening and closing ceremonials. The royal retinue, selected annually from the Hawaiian community, references the last reigning king, David La‘amea Kalākaua, who revitalised Hawaiian music and hula after decades of sanctions by Christian missionaries and Hawaiian converts. He was known as the Merrie Monarch, from which the name of the festival derives.

Hawaiian sensibilities and values clearly guide the event from start to finish. The planning committee decides which groups are invited each year. Master hula elders monitor protocol and (more importantly) determine scoring criteria for the competition. Each group must present ancient chant and hula (called *kahiko*) reflecting the pre-contact tradition on one night and modern repertory (called *‘auana*) on the following night. *‘Auana* features harmonically based music and topics that reflect sentiments and themes informed by Western contact. Judging for the ancient *kahiko* performance is strict and conservative, with attention to language pronunciation, use of established movement motifs or kinemes (Kaeppeler 2001), knowledge of canonic repertory, correct attire, and appropriate accessories including flower leis. The committee has allowed new works composed in ancient style for the *kahiko* competition. Unequivocally, ceremonial and artistic power is in the hands of the Hawaiian culture-bearing elders, the *kupuna*.

However, the festival is one of few instances of indigenous empowerment—all is not perfect in Paradise. The Hawaiian community has a long and tragic history of economic disenfranchisement and social marginalisation by an American (white) hegemony. Ethnic Hawaiians are largely subaltern in their own land, manifesting abnormally high rates of poverty, health problems, substance abuse, and incarceration (Silva 2004). The abjection of the people stands in stark contrast to the celebratory and often privileged place accorded Hawaiian culture in Island public life. Hawai‘i calls itself the ‘Aloha State’ and it uses Hawaiian *mele*—chant, song, and hula—for official and public ceremonies, such as the opening of the 2011 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) international

meeting in Honolulu<sup>11</sup> (Gomes 2011; Kamehameha High School Kapalama Campus 2011). The State of Hawai‘i has a governmental structure that is basically American, and its Hawaiian and part-Hawaiian minority comprises only 20 per cent of the 1.1 million residents. However, a minority does have power and agency although it may not be satisfactory, sufficient, or of the specific type needed to decentre a majority hegemon. The Hawaiian minority has negotiated areas of power and agency for itself. The frequently invoked trope that Hawaiians are the ‘host culture’ for the multicultural mix of Hawai‘i is problematic (State of Hawai‘i n.d.) for what it does not enable, given a Euro-American majority society nuanced by Asian and Pacific Island streams.

Regarding the Merrie Monarch Hula Festival, one notable instance of native authority vis-à-vis a prevailing mainstream hegemon concerns the broadcast media. A television station won the contract to transmit live all three nights of the competition. It proceeded to dictate to the committee time slots for commercials, during which competition activity must stop. To the surprise of the media, the planning committee rejected the station’s conditions and countered with its own: either commercials accommodate festival activities—or the festival moves to another network. This is but one instance of the Hawaiian leadership holding fast against hegemonic and commercial agendas. The festival has staved off other majority attempts: to exempt tour operators from the maximum limit of five tickets per request, to transfer the festival to the Honolulu metropole, and to allow Japanese hula groups to compete.

The degree and kinds of indigenous agency evident in the festival stand in dramatic contrast to those in tourist shows, particularly as regards a ‘Polynesian look’ for female dancers. Dancers in the festival come in many sizes and shades of colour: large and dark women are not the exception, as the 2001 Miss Aloha Hula finalist Snowbird Bento demonstrated. Hawaiian aesthetic regards the large body as an ideal receptacle for *mana*, or spiritual power. It is to be admired and respected. Additionally, festival audiences generally arrive with informed expectations, which differ from the mediated expectations of a typical tourist audience. Festival attendees assume a celebration of Hawaiian culture as lived experience, not as the

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11 From the *Star Advertiser* newspaper account (Gomes 2011): ‘Hawaii’s senior Senator said he hoped CEO Summit participants will take away a gift found nowhere else in the world: the gift of aloha. “To all of you: welcome to Hawaii. E komo mai”, he said. Inouye’s remarks were part of an opening ceremony that began with two performers blowing conch shells and delivery of a long chant and blessing by a Hawaiian spiritual leader, or kahu.’



staged authenticity of touristic venues (MacCannell 1999). The festival combines lived experience and performed identity in which a Hawaiian ethos and sensibility are celebrated and constitute its *modus operandi*.

## Intertextuality, slack-key guitar, and the soundtrack of *The Descendants*<sup>12</sup>

This Hollywood production of *The Descendants* revolves around issues current in Hawai'i: the privileged position of missionary descendants (hence, the film title), land ownership, and *aloha 'aina* stewardship of the land played out against a subtext of indigenous sovereignty. In the film, members of an extended missionary family try to convince the family patriarch (played by George Clooney) to sell an entire valley of pristine land to developers, negotiations complicated by his wife's secret love affair and his rebellious teenage daughter. *The Descendants* uses slack-key guitar exclusively for its sound track, an innovation that received much attention from local audiences and commentary from slack-key musicians, including conversations with practitioners such as Jeff Peterson and Dennis Kamakahi (1953–2014). The effect was twofold: a mainstream validation of a Hawaiian identity locally for the Hawai'i community and a wider awareness of Hawaiian culture via the mediated world of Hollywood film for an international consumership. For Local audiences and others familiar with Hawaiian music, the sound track offered many instances of intertextuality that were primarily sonic and secondarily social and cultural. I note intertextuality in various domains of the film and consider their reception.

Slack-key guitar (*ki ho'alu* in Hawaiian) denotes a Hawai'i-created playing style of acoustic guitar (Trimillos 1987) using numerous open tunings, many of which are named (Dancing Cat 2011). Its original function was as accompaniment to singing; however, a stand-alone solo instrumental practice emerged during the second Hawaiian Renaissance. Intertextuality asserts that a musical performance or composition can be regarded as a 'text' that is apprehended by listeners based upon their previous

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12 Parts of this section are based on my paper 'Intertextualities and Distancing in the Music of the Second Hawaiian Renaissance: The Soundtrack of *The Descendants*', presented at the 2013 College Music Society National Conference in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

experience or background with the ‘text’ (de Toro and Hubbard 1995), either the musical style—here slack key in particular or Hawaiian music in general—or a specific, titled *mele* or song.

Slack key is iconic to Hawai‘i and increased in popularity after its inclusion in the World Music category of the recording industry. It was further promulgated by established mainland commercial musicians, notably Ry Cooder of the folk music industry (Cooder 1976) and George Winston, known primarily in New Age circles (Dancing Cat 2011). Its notoriety coincides with the second Hawaiian Renaissance,<sup>13</sup> a social and political movement for Hawaiian identity begun about 1970, fuelled primarily by music, hula, and language recovery (Kanahele 1979). This Renaissance coincides with the start of my faculty career at the University of Hawai‘i and informs the interconnectedness of my professional and personal life, including friendships with Hawaiian performers established during student days.

Slack key in the 1970s provided an alternative sonic identity to the touristic cliché of the Hawaiian steel guitar and its signature slow glissando. For local youth, the softer, more intimate sounds of slack key provided a counterstatement to ‘Waikiki music’. Its invocation of a rural Island past is part of an embraceable local imagery, replete with recalled anecdotes of late-night slack-key sounds filling the darkness before there were electric lights (Kaapana 2011). Its transparent texture and clear delineation of melody and bass lines are folded into the Hawaiian quality of *nahenahē*, connoting something mellow, sweet, and calming. Island youth, Native Hawaiian or not, turned to this genre to reclaim Hawaiian culture in the same way they sought to restore Hawaiian *‘ōlelo* as a living language. From the 1970s onward, slack key had an intertextual iconicity as the authentic, the indigenous, and the inclusive (Burlingame and Kasher 1978), in contrast to the showbiz, the touristic, and the staged of tourist venues. This authenticity was embraced not only by the local population and diasporic Islanders throughout the mainland US, but also by non-Locals who resonated with Hawaiian and Island culture. Such individuals were often described as ‘Hawaiian at heart’, a phrase sometimes invoked for the aforementioned George Winston. In each instance an aspect of slack key is informed by a previous ‘text’, whether it be social meaning, aesthetic quality, or material object. Each possesses nuanced meanings.

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13 This period is generally referred to as ‘The Hawaiian Renaissance’. However, there was a previous one—the first Hawaiian Renaissance during the reign of King Kalākaua (1874–91).

They present contrast or represent reaction to competing global and hegemonic musics while overlaying a ‘universal’ text (the guitar) with a specifically ‘Local’ text (slack-key style).

Intertextuality is also related to reception, effectively illustrated in *The Descendants* by the track of ‘Hi‘ilawe’ sung by Gabby Pahinui (1921–1980).<sup>14</sup> Gabby, as he is most generally called, was a musical giant for the Renaissance generation, an artist maintaining a rural lifestyle in the milieu of Hawaiian Homelands, residential land set aside for Hawaiians. He emerged as a model and exemplary persona of the Bridge Generation for youth of the 1970s. Alexander Payne, film director for *The Descendants*, was captivated by ‘the Gabby sound’ and learned of his importance for the Renaissance (Descendants 2011: 4 (liner notes)).

Payne’s decision to use slack-key sound almost exclusively for the sound track constitutes a primary intertextuality related to reception. A second kind of intertextuality is the nature of the song as authentically and historically Hawaiian. ‘Hi‘ilawe’ is one of the best-known *mele* (along with ‘Aloha ‘oe’) to emerge from early twentieth-century Hawai‘i, and is often described as a song ‘in the real old style’. Thus for most Local listeners the sound track projects a sonic authority. A third kind of intertextuality concerns the song’s putative context. Folk knowledge alludes to a secret liaison involving a young woman from Puna with an unidentified lover. The two principals are represented metaphorically by the twin waterfalls—Hi‘ilawe of the title and Hakalaoa—that merge in Waipi‘o Valley (Elbert and Mahoe 1970: 49). The film’s illicit affair between the wife of protagonist Matt King (played by George Clooney) and a real estate broker parallels the Big Island original—and privileges those who know that account. The double reference also resonates with the Hawaiian concept of *kaona*, or hidden meaning. This single example reflects intertextualities based upon the reputation of the performer (Gabby), an indisputably Hawaiian musical style, and the backstory of the specific composition, respectively.

Strategies of distancing (Bullough 1912) can also involve intertextuality. Distancing is present in many aspects of the film, including the narrative of the story, the grouping of images, and the registers of language used in the dialogue. Regarding the musical architecture of the film, one fascinating construction combines (1) silences, (2) instrumental music, and (3) song with guitar accompaniment. A second musical construction

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14 The example is found on the film’s CD (Descendants 2011: Track 3).

invokes (1) slack-key ‘vamps’, (2) paraphrases of known melodies, and (3) entire songs. A third strategy of distancing, examined below, involves a more subtle technique of distancing employed during the final film credits. It exploits the historicity of musical styles and relates directly to intertextuality.

The rolling film credits are accompanied by three recordings, in sequential order: (1) Gabby Pahinui’s 1978 rendition of ‘Kamakani Ka‘ili Aloha’, which also accompanies the opening scene of the film; (2) Ernest Tavares’s 1954 recording of ‘Hi‘ilawe’, the third and final presentation of this song in addition to the Gabby rendition and a second one by Sonny Chillingworth (1932–1994);<sup>15</sup> and (3) ‘Mom’, the 1944 signature composition by Lena Machado (1903–1973),<sup>16</sup> one of two non-slack-key tracks in the film. The sequence yields a sonic design that effects an historical regression via musical style. This regression allows the contemporary viewer to increasingly distance her or himself from the film’s reality of Hawai‘i today and its contested issues of land ownership and native rights. The Gabby song recalls the 1970s era as the triumphalist height of the Hawaiian Renaissance. The Tavares version of ‘Hi‘ilawe’ in fact was recorded in Los Angeles and represents a stage-show style of Hawaiian music current in mainland Polynesian clubs of the 1950s, especially in Southern California and Las Vegas. The final piece, Lena Machado’s ‘Mom’, effectively returns the filmgoer to a familiar language—English—and a familiar musical style informed by the pre-Pacific War pop ballads of mainland America. Through the strategy of distancing, the musical regression transports audience members back to a comfort zone and a psychological distance that reassure them that *The Descendants* is, after all, a feature film<sup>17</sup>—and that any possible moral imperatives it raises concerning land ownership and Hawaiian rights can be conveniently left at the theatre exits.

I suggest that intertextuality is an inevitable part of musical experience and has aesthetic, affective, social, and political implications. Further, it defines groupings of reception according to degrees of familiarity and knowledge about a musical text—a fourth kind of distancing. In the case

15 The Chillingworth track accompanies the episode of the family gathering to vote on the sale of the land (*Descendants* 2012: at 1:32:23).

16 Lena Machado was celebrated as the ‘Hawaiian Songbird’. The song ‘Mom’ is a clear reference to the deceased wife of the protagonist in the film, thus constituting another kind of intertextuality.

17 Betsy Sharkey of the *Los Angeles Times* (2011) describes it as ‘a tragedy infused with comedy’.

of *The Descendants* film, these groupings involve both in-culture and cross-cultural reception, thus problematising issues of cultural identity, native voice, and entitlement.

## The rewards of Hawaiian music living in Hawai‘i

Although rewards are many, I single out three from my experience that resonate with the career path of our honoree. The first relates to the kinds of research possible. The two accounts—their nature, scope, and data shared—are enabled in large part by circumstances of *longue durée* with the music, its performers, its primary consumers, and its *kupuna* elders. The extended and continuous contact with a *communitas* of musicking (Small 1998) has afforded me a degree of credibility that includes an atmosphere of mutual trust. This trust and credibility have allowed access to various individually held knowledges, some that I am allowed to share during the lifetime of its holder and others that I am to hold for a later time. The accomplishments in research and knowledge-making enabled by these long-term relationships bring a sense of personal fulfilment for me.

A second is experiential: living Hawaiian music in Hawai‘i. Sonic Hawaiianness dominates my quotidian soundscape—from the mediated delivery of elevator music and of KINE radio, through countless planned and spontaneous parties, opening ceremonies for conferences and dedications of new buildings, Christian and Buddhist church services, Thursday evenings at the Marriott Waikiki Beach Resort, to the male bonding ‘ukulele sessions in locations as diverse as the loading dock at Queens Hospital and the rock wall facing Bomboras, a so-so surfing spot near Magic Island. For us living in the Islands, Hawaiian music is one of various musics available. It co-exists with globalised pop and Western elite forms, as well as classical and folk musics from Asia and the Pacific. Thus the possibility of alternatives that Hawaiian music presented to me in California have become in Hawai‘i a meaningful and ever-present component of my life; a sonic resonance historically links my locales of enculturation and career.

A final claim speaks to self-worth and personal fulfilment: making a meaningful contribution to the community in which I live and consequently responding to challenges that arise from that resolve. For ethnomusicologists residing in situ, issues of custodianship (Wild 1992) and *kuleana* (Stillman 2010)—as responsibility rather than privilege—loom large. Another challenge for ‘outsider’ scholars is to determine which classes of contributions are most useful to and appreciated by the various communities they serve (May and Wild 1967; Wild 2001) and, increasingly, how such colleagues can relate to the emerging group of indigenous scholars working in their own community who inevitably engage additional agendas of self-discovery, peer-group sanctions, and subject positionality (Jacobs-Huey 2002). In a twenty-first-century context, additional challenges concern both when to speak and what to speak about (Roof and Wiegman 1995).

For me the ultimate reward is twofold: as an academic, to understand and to facilitate others’ discovery and appreciation of the richness and complexity of Hawaiian music as a vibrant practice within a dynamic community; and as a resident of Hawai‘i, to share with others the joys of an artistic and spiritual resource that can move those willing to open themselves to it.

## Afterword

The contributions of Stephen Wild to ethnomusicology have been many: to the field, his research in his homeplace on the music of its first people; to the country, his leadership in the development of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Studies; and to the profession, his stewardship of the Secretariat of the International Council for Traditional Music. However, in this light-hearted closing I commend him for yet another accomplishment possible only through *longue durée* involvement: generating an ageist taxonomy of scholars<sup>18</sup> (Wild 2006: 350). It is evident that our honoree has attained the status designated in his taxonomy as ‘eminence grise’ and will fulfil the expectations set forth therein! He is well deserving of the limelight and hopefully retains both the inclination and ability to bask. In my lower status as ‘senior scholar’, I look forward (as his

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18 I find his formulation, ‘homemade career categories’, to be less elegant!

*kōhai*) to more years of shared session-hopping and a modicum of pub-crawling as he continues to craft further pronouncements for posterity. *Me ke aloha*, Stephen.

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