Ka Haku Mele ‘Āina a Hoʻoipoipo
Programmatic Elements in the Hawaiian-Themed Compositions of Nolan Stolz

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Ka haku mele ‘āina a hoʻoipoipo (composing land songs and love songs) about Hawai‘i is an important part of my compositional output. Hawaiian places, folklore and people have not only inspired several works, but, in some cases, have provided musical and extramusical content. Some pieces are overtly programmatic (e.g., Legend of Waianapanapa Caves) and others merely reference Hawaiian places (e.g., Why Waianae? and Makaha Valley). This paper discusses the programmatic aspects of my Hawaiian-themed compositions and the elements of traditional mele fused with contemporary compositional techniques that help define their style.

Mele ‘Āina

The Hawaiian word mele means “chant,” but it can also mean “poetry,” “music” or “song.”¹ In art music, “song” is a specific genre, therefore terms like “piece,” “work” or “composition” are used generically. My compositions’ titles, subtitles and program notes use mele to distinguish my Hawaiian-themed works.

Makaha Valley (2007), Why Waianae? (2007/08) and Kaena Point (2008) are three examples of mele ‘āina (works in appreciation of the land).² The latter musically depicts the wind and crashing waves at Kaʻena Point (located on Oʻahu). Although Makaha Valley and Why Waianae? do not depict the land programmatically, I categorize them as mele ‘āina because they are tributes to the land and to the communities.

Makaha Valley (for alto saxophone, piano, violin, and drum set) is named after the area in which it was composed. The last “village” along the Farrington Highway as one travels west along the “West Side” of Oʻahu is Mākaha, a small, unincorporated census designated place (CDP). Neighboring Mākaha to the northeast (inland) is Mākaha Valley, surrounded by beautiful mountains that separate this side of the island from the North Shore. Although it was inspired by the Mākaha Valley, the piece does not attempt to depict the landscape. Makaha Valley does,

¹ As there was no purely instrumental music in pre-contact Hawai‘i, there is no term for such genre; nor is there a term to describe the musical accompaniment to the chant text (Donaghy 2012). Mele has been used, in more-recent times, for Hawaiian poetry, music, song and chant.

² Mele ‘āina are sometimes called mele pana or mele wahi pana (place chants). Some sources distinguish ‘āina from pana as two different chant types: the former honors (or at least shows appreciation for) the land and/or a place, whereas the latter might merely mention a place (e.g., a narrative mele whose story takes place there).
however, have elements of several styles of music that I performed with various groups when I was living there in the summers of 2005, '06 and '07. The piece incorporates elements of jazz, rock and contemporary classical music: a fusion that has since become a staple of my compositional voice.

When asked where I was staying during those summers, I would respond “Wai‘anae.” I found that people were more familiar with the nearby Wai‘anae than with Mākaha, making it easier to explain. My response was not entirely inaccurate because Mākaha does not have a post office, so we used Wai‘anae’s zip code. Assuming that I stayed in Waikīkī (the tourist district of Honolulu), they were surprised to learn that I lived an hour’s drive from Honolulu. With a bewildered look, they would ask “Why Wai‘anae?”.

To reflect on the experience of living in Mākaha during those three summers far away from the activities of Waikīkī and Honolulu, my wind ensemble piece from 2007 was titled Why Wai‘anae?. The material for the piece came from Jet Setting, a chamber orchestra work from 2006–07. Sections of Jet Setting were composed in Mākaha, Boston, Chicago, Las Vegas, New York, San Francisco, Tokyo, Eugene (OR), Hartford (CT), Lake Havasu City (AZ), Milwaukee (WI), Reno (NV) and San Jose (CA). It would be impossible to determine which parts of Jet Setting were composed where, but Why Wai‘anae? was conceived as a wind ensemble piece in the summer of 2007, parts of which were written in the summer of 2006 in Mākaha.

Sketches for Kaena Point began in 2007 at Ka‘ena Point, located on the northwestern-most point of the island of O‘ahu. Highways follow the island’s coastline except for the several miles known as Ka‘ena Point. One can approach the area by trail from either the “West Side” of the island or the “North Shore.” This secluded part of the highly-populated island is unique in that one can view both shores, the West and the North, at once. It is often very windy at Ka‘ena Point, and the waves crash into the rocky shore sending countless beads of water into the air.

Although I had been to Ka‘ena Point several times previously, it was during a visit in July 2007 when I was inspired by the behavior of the wind and water to write a new work. I decided to write a piano trio (violin, cello and piano) to depict those images. After some time of working on the piece, it became apparent that a fourth instrument ought to be added in order to achieve a sonority that could effectively resemble the complexity of the waves crashing into the rocks. The fourth instrument would not be ancillary, serving merely to thicken the sound; it would provide another dimension of complexity. In the fall of 2007, Performance 20/20, a select group of students at The Hartt School, offered to premiere a new work. They had a piano quartet available, so the decision to add viola to the instrumentation was an easy, practical and obvious one. Kaena Point was completed in 2008, and premiered by Performance 20/20 at Hartt, myself

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3 A mele titled “Hālau Wai‘anae,” labeled as a “wahi pana (place)” chant, is included in Beamer 2001.
Although the piece was not intended to require a conductor, its rhythmic language is complex enough that some ensembles benefit from having a conductor or a metronome/click-track in headphones.

*Kaena Point* opens with a soft, repeated pattern in the piano; it is harmonically blurred because ten different pitches (C, D, E, F, G in the left hand; B-flat, A-flat, G-flat, E-flat, D-flat in the right hand) are heard with the sustain pedal depressed. A seventeen-note pattern fits within a single beat, lasting approximately 1.3 seconds (see Ex. 1, top-left). The violin enters next with a trill-like figure repeating the notes B-flat, C-flat and D-flat five times, totaling fifteen notes within a single beat, thus creating a 15:17 polyrhythm against the piano. Next, the viola enters with the trill-like figure transposed down a perfect fourth (F, G-flat and A-flat), but at a slower rate: the three-note figure is played only four times per beat (twelve notes). Last to enter is the cello, playing at an even slower rate: the three-note figure (transposed to D, E-flat and F) is played only three times within a beat (nine notes). Although each subsequent entrance is at a slower rate, giving the feeling of slowing down, the polyrhythms between the instruments become progressively more complex (eventually 9:12:15:17). Furthermore, the texture becomes denser with each entrance. Harmonically, this section is purposefully unintelligible; eleven of the twelve notes of the chromatic scale are heard (only “A” is missing). The composite sound represents the wind at Ka’ena Point.

Ex. 1 “Wind Music,” opening section from *Kaena Point*

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4 A video of the premiere performance may be viewed here (split into two parts): [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BmNLkb1NVs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BmNLkb1NVs) (part one) and [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7ryAQWVRzk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7ryAQWVRzk) (conclusion)
At m. 32, the viola, cello and piano cease their trill-like figures, leaving the violin alone playing B-flat, C-flat and D-flat at a rate of fifteen notes per beat. The music begins to explore these three pitches at various rates, as if to represent different streams of wind. As shown in Ex. 2, the viola echoes the violin an octave below (still fifteen per beat), the piano follows at six per beat (notated as eighth-note triplets), and the cello two per beat (quarter notes). The piano increases its rate to nine per beat, and the cello increases from two to three (quarter note triplets). At m. 38, the viola re-enters at four per beat and then increases its rate to five per beat in m. 39; this five-note pattern becomes an important motive later in the piece.

Ex. 2 Viola, Cello and Piano: “Wind Music” at m. 36

Ex. 3 Measures 44 and 45: Strong Quintuple Division and Tempo Modulation
At m. 44, the violin returns at fifteen notes per beat, but with bow changes that occur every three notes, so the sonic result is actually five per beat (eighth-note quintuplets). The piano offsets the violin’s motif slightly, but the slur grouping is the same (every three notes), also giving the effect of eighth-note quintuplets. The viola, cello and left hand piano have eighth-note quintuplets. Now that all four instruments emphasize a single grouping (five), the music is no longer polyrhythmic and, thus, one true meter arises. At m. 45, a tempo modulation (metric modulation) occurs when the eighth-note quintuplet becomes the eighth note of the new tempo. The tempo, previously at 44 BPM (beats per minute), becomes 55 BPM (see Ex. 3). The new tempo may not be aurally perceptible, as it can still be heard as 44 BPM (and could have been notated as such). But, mm. 45–48 are notated in 7/8, 6/8, 5/8 and 2/4, so the natural emphasis of the notated downbeats changes the listener’s perceived beat from 44 BPM to 55 BPM, via a 220 BPM subdivision. The “wind music” stops, and the piano motif in mm. 49–51 confirms the new tempo (it is notated, and felt, as 4/4 at 110 BPM). The piano motif returns regularly throughout the piece, representing the regularity of waves, in the sense that waves continuously reach the shoreline (see Ex. 4).

Ex. 4 First Appearance of “Wave” Motif, mm. 49–51

Beginning at m. 52, the string trio plays violent figures to depict the wave crashing against the rocks. Each note represents a bead of water. The polyrhythms and quick changes in dynamics, technique, contour and texture give the sense that these beads are exploding in many directions. It may sound random at first listen, but the musical gestures are tightly organized. It is fugal, using a limited amount of material which is repeated and rotated among the voices. The fugue subject is presented in the violin. Although it may appear that answers appear in the viola and cello two and three beats later, both are false fugue answers. The actual fugue answer does not appear until m. 58 on the “and of 3” in the viola part. The rhythmic offsetting of the material causes tuplets to occur over beats and barlines, creating another complex dimension to the music, thus contributing to the visual imagery of water dispersing in a complex, yet natural, manner (see Ex. 5).

The “crashing wave” music dissolves into a return of the “wind” music at m. 80 (this time in 6:9:15 polyrhythm) as the piano recalls fragments of the “wave” motif. Rather than
developing the violin’s B-flat, C-flat and D-flat as it did in m. 32, this time the music explores the relationship of the viola’s three-note figure (F, G-flat and A-flat) to the bass note B-flat.

Ex. 5 Crashing Wave, mm. 52–56

The “wave” motif returns at m. 112, but the wave “crashes” softly and with much simpler polyrhythmic activity. For eleven measures, only two rhythmic divisions of the beat are used: 3 and 4. From mm. 131–143, the dynamics are louder and quintuplets are added, creating a 3:4:5 polyrhythm. Compared to the violent wave that crashed at m. 52, this section is like viewing a slow motion video of the water crashing, because the rhythms are slower and more deliberate.

Ex. 6 Wave crashing in “slow motion,” mm. 131–36

As the violin’s and viola’s three-note figures were developed earlier in the piece, the relationship of the cello’s three-note figure (D, E-flat and F) to the B-flat bass note is explored in the section beginning at m. 150. These four pitches have a strong association with tonal harmony: they are the tonic, mediant, subdominant, dominant scale degrees of a B-flat major scale. Rather than limiting the melodic and harmonic palette to only B-flat, D, E-flat and F, I use several of the overtones of each of the four pitches. If the previous section was like watching the water crash in slow-motion, this would be like taking a magnifying glass to only four beads of water and examining their beauty.
The bass line of each downbeat in Ex. 7 reveals the four-note group (B-flat, D, E-flat, F). On the downbeat of m. 158, the piano harmonically reinforces the bass note with its second, fifth, sixth, and tenth overtones (B-flat, D, F and D). The cello plays the fourth and seventh overtones (B-flat, and 1/6 tone lower than A-flat: pitch class 7.7), and the violin has the thirteenth overtone (the quartertone between G and G-flat: PC 6.5). The piano completes the harmonic spectrum with the third overtone (F) and an eight-note cluster approximating the partials fifteen to twenty-one. As harmonically rich as this one measure may be, it only represents a single pitch, or bead of water.

Ex. 7 Exploring Harmonic Spectra, mm. 158–61

Another “wave” comes in at m. 176, “crashing” at m. 179 in a 3:4:5 polyrhythm, but this time the piano doubles one of the rhythms. After six measures, the polyrhythm accelerates to 4:5:6, and then to 5:6:7 to close the section at m. 196. The next “wave” comes in at m. 240, “crashing” at m. 243 with the 5:6:7 polyrhythm with which the previous crashing section closed. It accelerates to polyrhythms of 6:7:8, 7:8:9 and 8:9:10, morphing its way back to the “wind” music of the opening with its 9:12:15:17 polyrhythm. The final “wave” comes in at m. 288 with the string trio accenting with the piano. The final “crash” begins at m. 290 even more violently

5 For explanation of microtonal pitch classes, see Stolz’s “Fractional Set Theory: A System for the Analysis of Microtonal Music,” a paper given at the Second International Conference on Analytical Approaches to World Music, currently available at www.nolanstolz.com/fst
than at m. 52, with the piano contributing to the aggressive gestures. The energy quickly calms, the texture thins, the wave comes to a rest, and the piece concludes.

Ex. 8 From the Final “Crash of the Wave”, mm. 295–8

Mele Oli, Mele Hula and Mele Ho‘oipoipo

The two primary categories of mele chants are mele oli (formal, ametric, without accompaniment) and mele hula (sung with an accompaniment, e.g. a drum). Mele oli often consist of a single repeated pitch (with minimal movement to other pitches) that is sung in a rhythm dictated by the corresponding text.⁶ Mele Ho‘oipoipo (2011) for band opens with a chant-like melody in one trumpet and two horns in unison, with additional brass harmonizing in long tones. It is melodically similar to mele oli: it consists of only two pitches, the second of which does not appear until the end of the phrase (the range is typical of mele oli: a minor third). The rhythms of the mele are not derived from a text, but were composed in a simple, speech-like rhythm. Although the rhythm is similar to mele oli, it is closer to mele hula in that it has a meter. Mele hula are usually in 4/4, but sometimes in 3/4; Mele Ho‘oipoipo is primarily in 4/4, with only a few measures in 3/4. Each appearance of the chant is marked “mele” in the score and parts; the performers are instructed to “bring out” the mele so that it is clearly heard. At the climax of the work, the mele disappears and a drum set plays a rock beat. The presence of meter and the use of percussion are the only aspects of mele hula that are found in this work.

Although there are several meanings for “ho‘oipoipo,” such as “love,” “woo” and “to make love,” a “mele ho‘oipoipo” is a love song, or romantic song. Mele Ho‘oipoipo contains two key programmatic elements: the “love” theme and the instrumentation. The melodic contour of

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⁶ For a detailed description of stylistic musical elements found in mele oli and mele hula, see “Chant” in George S. Kanahele’s Hawaiian Music and Musicians (1979), pp. 53–68.
the “love” theme was derived from the name of the person to whom the piece was dedicated. The dedicatee plays the euphonium, so the decision to feature that instrument was extramusical. The instrumentation choices for the piece were not entirely programmatic: it was written specifically to fit the 2011 roster of the 111th Army Band (Hawaii Army National Guard).

Ex. 9 Chant-Like Melody (Mele) in Mele Ho‘ipoipo: Trumpet in B-flat Part (Transposed)

Ex. 10 “Love” Theme from Mele Ho‘ipoipo: Tenor Saxophone Part (Transposed)

The “love” theme is a much more melodic tune than the melodically-static mele, making the formal divisions between sections aurally perceptible. The mele returns at m. 45, but faster than the original tempo, giving an edgier level of excitement. From mm. 45–56, the percussion play the mele accompanied by winds and euphonium. This is opposite of what is found in a mele hula where, traditionally, percussion play an accompanimental role subservient to the mele. After the climactic section (mm. 61–68), the energy subsides slightly. The trumpets recall the mele, joined by the winds for the second half of the mele. The slow “love” theme returns, but the underlying fast rhythms remain. Brass and saxophones play new, surprising chords in a declamatory fashion. It quickly unwinds, and four long, simple chords end the piece.
Mele ‘Āina, Mele Hoʻoipoipo and Mele Inoa

A mele inoa (“name chant”) honors an individual (e.g., a king, a new family member, etc.). Composed for President Obama’s inauguration, Manu Ikaika’s He Mele Inoa No Obama is an excellent example of a 21st century name chant. My solo flute piece from 2010, Princess Kaʻiulani (he mele hoʻoipoipo), was not intended to posthumously honor Hawaiʻi’s last princess in the manner of a mele inoa; it was, however, a post-modernistic attempt to reflect on her love for her land and people. Although subtitled “a love song,” Princess Kaʻiulani is both a mele ʻāina and a mele hoʻoipoipopo.7

Princess Kaʻiulani requires the performer to sing, speak and whisper into the flute. This was not only an artistic choice, but a historically-informed one as well (the Princess composed music and was said to have had a “sweet soprano voice”).8 The text for the work is not a poem, but a series of Hawaiian words, and fragments thereof, that evoke feelings and emotions of love, anxiety and uncertainty. The Princess loved her land and people, and she must have had feelings of anxiety and uncertainty when her kingdom was being overtaken. The text also represents the feelings of love (and the anxiety and uncertainty that comes with it) that she may have experienced as a young woman. The Princess’s story aside, the text may also be understood as a general expression of love or longing (nipo) and the emotions that sometimes coincide.

The piece opens with the performer whispering “hoʻoheno,” an expression of affection, or love, or cherish. The last syllable becomes a part of the flute sound, and a flurry of notes follow (see Ex. 11). Then, “Kaʻiulani” is whispered into the flute, and another flurry follows similarly. “Maka” (beloved one, or favorite person) is then sung into the flute, followed by a truncated, varied version of the flutter. Next, the second syllable of “maka” is used percussively to accent two trill figures. It is important to note that when syllables are extracted from the original word, they could take on different, unrelated, meanings. To avoid this confusion, brackets are placed around the syllables in the printed music and program notes.

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7 A performance by Melanie Chirignan can be viewed at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3CPhd0VWb10, and a performance by Jennifer Grim can be heard, at no charge, on iTunes U: http://itunes.apple.com/itunes-u/cms-new-music-recital-2011/id453836473

8 from a letter from the Princess to her aunt reproduced in Webb 1998, Zumbucka 2005 and other sources.
Ex. 11 Opening Statement of Princess Ka‘iulani (he mele ho‘oipoipo)

The pitch content of these flurries is related to the ukulele and the Hirajoshi (Japanese) scale. The quintuplet in Ex. 11 includes the pitches B-flat, E-flat, G and C. When transposed down a minor third, that figure would be the open strings of an ukulele (G, C, E, A). The first five pitches that appear in the piece (D, E-flat, G, A-flat, C) make up the Hirajoshi scale. The scale on “Ka‘iulani” (shown in Ex. 12) uses a pattern of alternating minor seconds and major thirds (D, E-flat, G, etc.), but it continues beyond C: D, E-flat, G, A-flat, C, D-flat, F, G-flat, B-flat, C-flat, E-flat, F-flat and A-flat.

Ex. 12 “Ka‘iulani” with Exotic/Synthetic Scale

The text continues with “makamaka,” “makalapua” and recalls “maka.” The first two translate as “intimate person with whom is on open terms” and “beautiful,” respectively. On the second system of the second page, the vocal range extends into a higher register. The word “nipo” (to be in love with, to love, to long for) and fragments of “ho‘oipoipo” are sung in dissonance with the pitches played on the flute, creating a complex overtone structure. This represents the uneasiness that comes with being in love, especially “to long for” alluding that the romantic goal may not be attainable. This notion is confirmed in the next line: “ho‘ohopohopo” (to produce anxiety) and “hopohopo” (anxiety, uncertainty), which are sung in dissonant parallel ninths with the flute part.

9 The notated rests allow for the glottal stop, which is equivalent to the separation in “uh-oh,” occurring before a syllable preceding with an ‘okina (‘). Slurs indicate a change in syllable. Notice the single slur for ‘iu, because it is a single syllable, albeit a diphthong.
Ex. 13 Conclusion of *Princess Ka‘iulani*
The textless, middle section represents anxiety. The music, at times, is intense and unsettling. Even the soft multiphonic dyads provide discomfort to the listener. The conclusion of the work (page 5, reproduced as Ex. 13) recalls the material of the opening, but played in an aggressive (or frustrated or anxious perhaps) manner. With only two words, the final strain reveals a deeper, second meaning to the piece: ‘āina and kānaka (people). At this point in the piece, it is revealed that Princess Ka‘iulani is not only a mele ho‘ōipoipo, but also a mele ‘āina.

**Legend of Waianapanapa Caves**

Of my Hawaiian-themed works, the most overtly programmatic one is *Legend of Waianapanapa Caves* (2007) for viola (or violin) and piano, with optional dance. It was composed on commission by the State University of New York, Stony Brook Find a Composer project, and premiered by violist David Hamano and pianist Alex Le (Hamano is an alumnus of the University of Hawai‘i and SUNY-Stony Brook, and is currently a music instructor at the Punahou School in Honolulu).  

This work depicts a Hawaiian legend that explains why sometimes during the year the water in the Wai‘anapanapa caves seemingly turns red. According to the legend, Princess (chiefess) Popoalaeia fled with her serving maid from her cruel, jealous husband Chief Kaakea. They sat on a ledge along the opening of the cave, and the maid fanned the princess with a Kahili feather, a symbol of royalty. When the chief saw the reflection of the feather in the water, he learned of her hiding place and murdered her. The legend says that the water turns red because it is the blood of the princess (the water actually appears red due to small shrimp that congregate in the cave’s waters). The story is told in the music (and optional dance), and each section is labeled to coincide with the story. I composed the form of the piece first; but without a pencil and paper handy, I placed rocks from Wai‘anapanapa’s black sand beach to represent the various sections, took a video, and narrated the form to myself as a reminder.

The music at the beginning of the piece is similar to a *mele* I heard four women sing before they dove into the cave’s waters. The chant is in the style of a *mele oli*: it has a speech-like rhythm, centers around a single pitch with limited pitch material, and begins ametrically. When the chant is repeated, it is harmonized by parallel stacked perfect fourths (a 027 chord); this more-contemporary musical language makes it less like *mele oli* (see Ex. 14).

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10 The viola version can be heard, with video of the Waianapanapa Caves, at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ttcHGkgWllw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ttcHGkgWllw) (parts I-IV) and [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNecckzZKg4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNecckzZKg4) (parts V-X), and a video of a performance of the violin version with dance can be viewed at: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uW9u1Gh8HZ4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uW9u1Gh8HZ4)

11 The Wainapanapa Caves are located in Waianapanapa State Park on Maui, near Hana. The piece was composed on Maui, on the beach in Mākaha (O‘ahu), and at my studio in Mākaha Valley. The legend can be found in Beckwith 1976.
Ex. 14 Measures 1-13 of *Legend of Waianapanapa Caves* (Violin Version)

Ex. 15 Chief Kaakea’s Theme from *Legend of Waianapanapa Caves* (Violin Version)
The Chief’s theme is very forceful and low in register. Harmonically and melodically it is very dark: it emphasizes the minor second and tritone (A, B-flat, E-flat). The scale is constructed of ascending perfect fourths (A, D, G) with adjacent minor seconds (B-flat, C-sharp, E-flat and F-sharp). Sometimes “C” is used, giving it an A Locrian sound (A, B-flat, C, D, E-flat). It is aurally clear that the Chief is an unpleasant, angry individual.

The Princess’s theme, in F major, is very tonal; in fact, it is a tongue-in-cheek late-Romantic era parody. From the connotations associated with this style of music, it is made clear that she is the heroine of the story.

The Chief’s theme is developed in “The Princess Escapes” section. The music is very unsettling, very appropriate for “escape” music. The meter is in various forms of 7/4, including 3/2+1/4, 5+5+4/8, 21/8 and alternating measures of 3/4 and 4/4. At one point, the violin plays in

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12 This paper refers to the violin version.
21/8 (felt as a compound meter of 7: 9+6+6/8) while the piano plays in 3/2+1/4. For every two measures of 21/8, there are three measures of 3/2+1/4 (see Ex. 17).

Ex. 17 Polymetric Structures in *Legend of Waianapanapa Caves*

The music in the fifth section, “The Princess hides on a ledge along the Wai’anapanapa Caves/Her maid fans her with a Kahili feather,” is serene, like the relief the Princess must have felt being away from the Chief. The aggressive Chief music returns in the sixth section, “The Chief searches for the Princess.” The calm music from section V is recalled in the seventh section, “The reflection of the Kahili feather in the water.” To represent the reflective qualities of the cave’s water, material is recalled in retrograde. In the passage given in Ex. 18, the Kahili theme is recalled in the right hand of the piano and mirrored in the left hand over an E-flat axis.

Ex. 18 Kahili Feather Theme Mirrored in the Left Hand to Represent its Reflection in the Water

The Princess theme is superimposed over the Chief theme in the eighth section, “The chief sees the reflection of the Kahili feather and murders the princess” (see Ex. 19). Material from the “escape” section is recalled and developed in this section as well. The energy dissipates, and the chant is recalled. The final section, “The ghost of the Princess,” places the Princess
theme in a new key in a very high register with artificial harmonics. The final fourteen measures are bowed near the bridge (sul ponticello), providing an additional ghostly quality to the timbre (Ex. 20).

Ex. 19 Princess Theme in Violin Superimposed Over Chief Theme in Piano

X. The ghost of the Princess
Rubato =50-60

Ex. 20 “Ghostly” Version of the Princess Theme (Violin Part)
“Why Doesn’t It Sound Hawaiian?”

I should address the question that I am sometimes asked about my Hawaiian-themed compositions: “Why doesn’t it sound Hawaiian?”. The answer is twofold. I have only stayed in a tourist district once (my first trip to Hawai‘i in 1995); since then, I have stayed on the Windward Side, West Side and on the North Shore. Therefore, I am not regularly exposed to the music intended for tourists, i.e. the music that the general public thinks of as “Hawaiian.” Currently, I am not interested in incorporating popular (i.e. “modern,” post-1910) hula style or hapa haole songs into my compositions. I am, however, interested in the open tunings and use of harmonics in the slack-key guitar playing found ubiquitously throughout Hawai‘i. Listen, for instance, to my Lullaby for Sam (2008) from Classical guitarist Aaron Larget-Caplan’s CD New Lullaby; the final section liberally uses harmonics in a “drop D” tuning. Secondly, the works discussed in this paper are reflections of my experience with the ‘āina and its history. Incorporating musical elements associated with mele oli as a compositional technique for instrumental works, or using the pitches of an ukelele’s strings as pitch material are but two examples. Most importantly, however, these pieces sound “Hawaiian” to my ears, and, therefore, have achieved their goal.

Plans for Future Hawaiian-Themed Works

Several other works were composed in Hawai‘i: Fog for soprano and piano, Two Stars, Bitonal for jazz ensemble, Two Stars for vocal quartet, and some miscellaneous miniatures for solo instruments. The text for Two Stars was written on Maui, and it was certainly inspired by the landscape (e.g. “reflection off the ocean/waves are breaking”). There was even a piece titled Loco Moco named after the fatty plate lunch(!). Several pieces (or “tunes”) were written for Honolulu-based jazz groups like the Gil Batangan Trio (Gil Batangan, guitar; Mark Tanouye, bass; myself on drums) or the Nolan Stolz Jazz Quartet (a performance at Ward’s Rafters included Robert Shinoda on guitar, Adam Townley-Wren on vibraphone, and Jeremy Ward on bass). These works were probably inspired by Hawai‘i, but they certainly do not directly reference Hawai‘i nor are they as programmatic as the works discussed in this paper. Regardless, it is evident that Hawai‘i continually serves as a place for inspiration for my music. Whether my next visit will be only ten days or an entire summer, I will return to the Mainland artistically refreshed.
References


Donaghy, Keola. 2012. E-mail correspondence. May 17.


