

Patrick Landeza

Biography

Hawaiian musician, songwriter, producer and educator Patrick Kahakauwila Kamaholelani Landeza is considered to be a leading performer of Hawaiian slack key guitar, or *ki ho'alu*, one of the world's great acoustic guitar traditions.

In a career that includes having his original composition featured on a Miss Universe Pageant television special, becoming the first slack key artist to perform the national anthem at a Major League Baseball game, opening for legendary Hawaiian musicians Israel "Bruddah Iz" Kamakawiwo'ole, Keali'i Reichel and HAPA, and cutting two albums, it's no wonder that Jim Harrington of the *Oakland Tribune* noted that "Patrick Landeza's mastery of Hawaiian slack key guitar" keeps him in heavy demand.

Noted pianist and *ki ho'alu* player George Winston, who has recorded and played with some of the greatest slack key musicians, says "Patrick Landeza is one of the best and most dedicated of the new generation of slack key players."

Hawaiian slack key guitar first evolved in the 1830s (predating the steel guitar genre by more than 60 years), when Mexican and Spanish cowboys, hired by King Kamehameha III to teach Hawaiians better ranching methods, brought guitars to entertain themselves. The Hawaiian cowboys, or *paniolo*, quickly adopted the guitar into their culture, calling it *ki ho'alu*, which literally translates into "loosen the key."

A century-and-a-half later, *ki ho'alu* would spellbind Patrick as a teenager growing up in Berkeley, California. Patrick's parents, Danny Landeza, Jr. of O'ahu, and Frances Kawaipulou Kuakini O'Sullivan of Moloka'i, moved to the mainland in the 1950s, but kept close ties to what so many Hawaiian songs call "ku'u one hanau," or "beloved sands of my birth."

It's fitting that Patrick, who is of Hawaiian, Filipino, Chinese and Irish ancestry, would be drawn to a musical genre evolved from a similarly rich combination of heritages.

A few years after being first introduced to slack key at age 15 by two uncles, Patrick discovered the *ki ho'alu* recordings of slack key master Raymond Kane. "He was my idol," said Patrick. "I listened to him religiously." The two would soon meet at one of Raymond's concerts in Berkeley, only two blocks from Patrick's house.

Taken by Patrick's passion for slack key, Raymond took the young man as student. Patrick would travel to Hawai'i and pick up pointers from Raymond, as well as other slack key masters such as George Kuo, Dennis Kamakahi and the late Sonny Chillingworth. "Patrick is a fine slack key player!" beamed Kane.

Nineteen-year-old Patrick started playing solo in 1992, opening tours for Hawaiian artists like Israel "Bruddah Iz" Kamakawiwo'ole, Cecilio & Kaponu, Keali'i Reichel and HAPA. Patrick would join backstage jam sessions with slack key masters who were also on tour. Known simply as "The Kid," he would often be mistaken for an underage fan and prevented from entering venues. "They had to remind the venue that I was a performer," recalls Patrick.

In 1995, 1996, and 2003, Patrick was the only mainland performer to be invited to the annual Bank of Hawai'i Ki ho'alu Festival, considered the "grand-daddy" of all slack key events. "Playing the slack key fest was a dream come true for me," said Patrick. In 1996, Patrick would venture further across the Pacific in a tour throughout the Philippine Islands.

1998 would be a big year for Patrick. His original composition, *Mahealani*, written for 1997 Miss Universe Brook Mahealani Lee, was featured on her half-hour television special that aired before the 1998 Miss Universe Pageant.

Later that year, Patrick released his first album, "Pu'unauē" ("to share"), in which he mixes original compositions along with traditional Hawaiian music. His special guests included Martin Pahinui, George Kuo, Dennis Kamakahi, and Pekelo Cosma.

One of the few mainlanders accepted into the close-knit circle of Hawaiian slack key artists, "many people believe that Landeza is on his way to becoming the mainland's leading players of *ki ho'alu*," wrote Sandy Miranda of the *San Francisco Sunday Examiner & Chronicle* in 1998.

In December 2001, Patrick released "Christmas to Me." Revealing his numerous facets as an artist, Patrick's second album takes the listener on a journey through many different musical forms and styles, tying it all together with the common bond of acoustic *ki ho'alu*. Among the talented guest artists on the album is legendary steel guitarist Bobby Black, who has played with such bands as Commander Cody, New Riders of the Purple Sage, Asleep at the Wheel and Barbara Mandrell.

Although a slack key artist for more than a decade, *ki ho'alu* has been more of a passion than a profession for Patrick, a former middle school vice-principal. Now, at 31, Patrick tours the nation regularly with other slack key artists such as Cyril Pahinui and Dennis Kamakahi. "A true innovator of Hawaiian Music and a vocalist of pure *nahenahe* (sweet sounding) quality," Kamahahi says.

Patrick also teaches *ki ho'alu* through workshops and private lessons. "Trying to get a lesson with Landeza is like trying to get admitted to Stanford," joked the Oakland Tribune's Harrington.

Patrick has guest lectured on slack key and on Asian Pacific American issues at Stanford University, University of California-Berkeley, University of California-Santa Barbara, University of California-Monterey and his alma mater California State University, Hayward.

In 2004, Patrick is wearing different hats covering all aspects of being a full-time musician with the release of his instructional DVD, "Hawaiian Slack Key Guitar Made Easy" (Lamb Productions), to making appearances as an instructor at various workshops around the nation such as the prestigious Swannanoa Gathering in North Carolina and the Healdsburg Guitar Festival. In addition, his lessons will be published in Acoustic Guitar Magazine as a guest clinician.

As a producer, Landezapresents continues to bring slack key to different markets introducing a variety of artists. From "*Hawaiian Music's Next Generation*", (Keoki Kahumoku, Herb Ohta Jr., David Kamakahi, Patrick Landeza) to "*The Slack Key All-Stars*" (Landeza, Kawika Kahiapo, Mike Kaawa, Jeff Peterson, Milton Lau) and this year introducing "*The Women of Slack Key*".

Musically, Landeza is currently working on his third CD to be released in Fall 2004 entitled "*Slack Key World*" with special guest appearances from George Winston, Cyril Pahinui, Sally Van Meter, Raymond Kane, Bobby Black, Dennis and David Kamakahi and others.

"I am so grateful for the privilege of learning *ki ho'alu* from the masters and being able to entertain so many people with that gift," said Patrick. "Now it's time for me to share the *mana'o*, or knowledge and understanding, with others."

Photos available upon request: Promotions/Publicity
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