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Honolulu Star - Advertiser

August 17, 2017 Thursday

## **Masters share stage with teens at Hawaiian Slack Key Fest**

**BYLINE:** John Berger

**LENGTH:** 945 words

**DATELINE:** Honolulu, Hawaii

### **FULL TEXT**

CRAIG T. KOJIMA / CKOJIMA@STARADVERTISER.COM Jonah Domingo, 14, will be the youngest guitarist at this year's Slack Key Festival. He attends the Kamehameha Schools.

CRAIG T. KOJIMA / CKOJIMA@STARADVERTISER.COM Noe Hussey will perform at this year's Slack Key Festival. She attends the Kamehameha Schools.

Some of Hawaii's masters of slack key are sharing the stage with young artists this weekend as slack key promoter Milton Lau presents the 35th Annual Hawaiian Slack Key Festival "Waikiki Style" Sunday afternoon at the Kapiolani Park Bandstand.

Slack key fans can preview the festival lineup Friday when Lau and Luana Maitland, director of music and cultural programs for the Outrigger Reef Waikiki Beach Resort, present "Slack Key Jam 4" at the Kani Ka Pila Grille.

The master guitarists on the bill this week include soft-spoken George Kuo, whose credentials include an innovative Hoku Award-winning album with steel guitarist Barney Isaacs; "Brother Noland" Conjugacion, famous for "Coconut Girl," "Pua Lane" and "Look What They've Done," the song he wrote in the 1970s about out-of-control building in Waikiki ("no more Hawaiian style"); Glen Smith, slack key guitarist of Ho'okena; and "Uncle Bobby" Moderow Jr., protege of slack key master Raymond Kane and leader of Maunaloa.

### **35TH HAWAIIAN SLACK KEY FESTIVAL**

>> **Where:** Kapiolani Park Bandstand

>> **When:** Noon-6 p.m. Sunday

>> **Admission:** Free

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### **SLACK KEY JAM 4**

>> **Where:** Kani Ka Pila Grille, Outrigger Reef Waikiki Beach Resort

>> **When:** 5:30- 9:30 p.m. Friday

>> **Cost:** Free

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>> **Note:** Validated valet parking at the Outrigger Reef Waikiki Beach Resort

>> **Info:** slackkeyfestival.com

A look at some of the other names shows that a passing of the torch is in effect as well.

For instance, Kamuela Kahoano is the son of iconic showroom veteran and "Hawaii Stars" co-host Kimo Kahoano.

And has it really been 11 years since the release of teenage slack key guitarist Danny Carvalho's aptly titled debut album, "Slack Key Journey - On My Way," on the Lava Rock Music label?

Yes, it has, and Carvalho is only a few years short of 30.

Fourteen-year-old Kamehameha Schools sophomore Jonah Domingo takes over the spot for the youngest guitarist in the slack key festival this year. Like many island musicians, Jonah's first instrument was the ukulele; when his first teacher, multi-instrumentalist Moon Kahele, suggested that Jonah try guitar, he took it up too. Jonah has since studied with Duke Domingo (no relation) and slack key master Ozzie Kotani.

Jonah's musical interests embrace both "island reggae" as played by groups like Kolohe Kai and "Hawaiian music, traditional and contemporary, like Keauhou," he said. He took an advanced ukulele class at Kamehameha last year and is learning Hawaiian. He also enjoys surfing.

Jonah expects to be playing solo on Sunday and open the concert with a three-song program of "Opihi Moemoe," "Pua Lilia" and "Hi'ilawe" - the last one in tribute to Cyril Pahinui, whose father, Gabby Pahinui, popularized the song more than 60 years ago.

(Lau is dedicating the entire festival to Cyril; a tireless promoter of his father's legacy and a slack key master in his own right. Cyril is not expected to attend.)

This will be Jonah's fourth slack key festival. His first public performance was for a crowd of more than 300 people at a baby luau when he was 9.

"I wasn't really nervous 'cause I prepared pretty well for it," he said during an interview last week, visiting the newsroom along with his father, Jeremy Domingo.

Jonah has since performed in the latest version of the old Brown Bags to Stardom talent contest, and won a Kamaka ukulele for taking first place in his age category in the Duke's Uke competition at Duke's Waikiki. In 2015 he also won the competition's Showmanship category, which was open to all ages.

Next year he wants to participate in the summer talent contest at Kani Ka Pila Grille.

For playing slack key, his instrument of choice is a Taylor GS Mini.

"My teacher, uncle Duke Domingo, took me to Ozzie Kotani's house, and then one of the guitars he had over there was a GS Mini and I tried it out and I really liked it, and he recommended that I get one," Jonah related. "I like the size of it, because I'm kinda smaller, and for its size it really produces a good sound that can compete with all the higher-end models."

Looking ahead several years Jonah wants to record, but "I'm not really in a rush for that," he said.

"I still have a lot to learn."

Also in learning mode is Noe Hussey, almost exactly a year younger than Jonah, and the youngest performer at this year's "Waikiki Style" festival. Noe has been a Kamehameha student since kindergarten. She loves to sing.

"I've been singing since I've been talking, and going to Kamehameha kind of enhanced it," Noe said,

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stopping by the newsroom after a day on campus. "I've been involved in musical things in school - musical performances and choirs - and really enjoyed it."

Noe plans to sing "Sweet Memory," which was written by her uncle Brian Hussey, Cyril Pahinui and Larry Lindsey Kimura; "Sunday Morning" by Maroon 5; "Hawaiian Lullaby"; and "Ahi Wela." ("Hawaiian Lullaby" doesn't have those words in its lyrics and so is known to many people as "Where I Live There Are Rainbows." "Ahi Wela" is a classic from the monarchy era.)

Noe says that most of her favorite songs are pop, "but recently I've started to appreciate Hawaiian (songs) more."

The expectations that can come with being part of a musical family are "a handful to live up to, but I hope I can represent," she said. "Eventually I want to record (professionally), but not yet."

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**COMPANY-NUMBER:** NAICS: 523991

**ACC-NO:** 196159

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**DOCUMENT-TYPE:** News

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Magazine

**JOURNAL-CODE:** 196159

**SUBJECT:** SINGERS & MUSICIANS (91%); FESTIVALS (90%); ADOLESCENTS (90%); STRINGED INSTRUMENTS (90%); BEACHES (88%); POP & ROCK (78%); ARTISTS & PERFORMERS (76%); SONG WRITING (69%) Schools; Ukulele music; Festivals

**COMPANY:** Kamehameha Schools

**CITY:** HONOLULU, HI, USA (79%)

**STATE:** HAWAII, USA (98%)

**COUNTRY:** UNITED STATES (98%)

**REGION:** Hawaii

**LOAD-DATE:** August 19, 2017

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