

Bruce Watson



www.brucewatsonmusic.com

brucewatsonmusic@gmail.com

Hapa Haole: Hawaii meets America

Workshop notes

Bruce Watson

This workshop explores the history and music of Hawaii; its colonisation by the USA, and the music that resulted from it, as island culture met with Tin Pan Alley creating the ukulele boom of the early 20th century. 'Hapa Haole' means half-foreign, and the blend of musical styles, language and cultures produced some wonderful songs, but it is not without its dark side.

- The ukulele's history is closely tied to Hawaii's colonial past. It is shorter, and far more international than most people realise.
- Hawaii was settled by Polynesians 1,000 years ago. Its music was mostly percussion and chanting.
- Following the first encounters with Europeans (James Cook, 1778), the islands were unified in 1795 by Kamehameha I, with European influence and weapons playing a role.
- In the 1800s, Hawaii's economy rapidly became dominated by American-owned sugar plantations, increasing U.S. political and military influence.
- To support the growing labour-hungry industry, thousands of Portuguese workers migrated from the poverty-stricken Portuguese islands from 1879. They brought small guitar-like instruments (machetes & braguinhas), which quickly evolved into the ukulele.
- King David Kalākaua (King from 1874-1891), became proficient on the ukulele and made it popular. It quickly became central to Hawaiian culture and music. Following his death, Queen Lili'uokalani, also a musician, continued this trajectory.
- Meanwhile, political power was increasingly stripped from the monarchy, culminating in its overthrow in 1893, and US annexation in 1898.
- As Hawaii was drawn into the US sphere in the early 20th century, ukulele-based music spread to the mainland. It was blended with popular music traditions, especially Tin Pan Alley. This led to "hapa haole", written in English often with some Hawaiian words and musical signposts. This was hugely commercially successful.
- World events, including World War I and Pearl Harbor eventually led to statehood – total incorporation of Hawaii into the USA.
- Hapa Haole music, while especially popular in the first half of the 20th century, continues to be written and played today. It reflects a mix of cultural exchange, colonisation, cultural appropriation, and adaptation.



King David Kalākaua



Queen Lili'uokalani



*A machete made on Madeira by
Octaviano Joao Nunes da Paixao 1812-1874*

SOME RESOURCES

The history of Hawaii and of the ukulele

[https://www.academia.edu/5974271/I II Remember You Nostalgia and Hapa Haole Music in Early Twenty first Century Hawai i](https://www.academia.edu/5974271/I_II_Remember_You_Nostalgia_and_Hapa_Haole_Music_in_Early_Twenty_firs_t_Century_Hawai_i)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Hawaii

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overthrow_of_the_Hawaiian_Kingdom

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Territory_of_Hawaii

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music_of_Hawaii

<https://ukulelemagazine.com/stories/the-birth-of-the-ukulele>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukulele>

<https://amykstillman.wordpress.com/2011/11/13/early-hapa-haole-songs>

The Story Behind *Aloha 'Oe*: <https://youtu.be/cPW6AT9eBig?si=VssGdi0qDwuc709>

Songlists

https://www.huapala.org/index_Hapa_Haole.html

<http://www.mele.com>

<http://squareone.org/Hapa>

Playlist – originals

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQgiL57jNZWQI0LwFIN6EmmWpGDHXSrZT&si=ecQD4du1bP_DmJZv

Playlist – with tutorials

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2u2PocMmVELdYDBb9UKPKotMdNc_Exkb&si=DLfb2KoobbVPjccq

Australian National Film & Sound Archive's section on Hawaiian Music in Australia:

<https://www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/curated/hawaiian-music-australia>

Some key songs

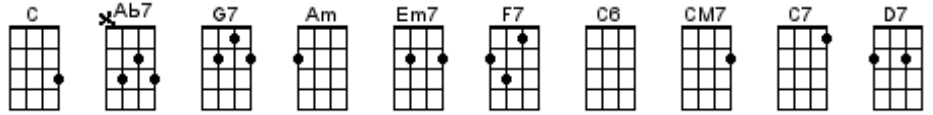
Aloha Week Hula	Maui Nola Ka Oi
Beyond the Reef	Meiji Hula
Blue Hawaii	Mele Kalikimaka
Coral Isle	My Yellow Ginger Lei (yodeling)
Do the Hula	Oh! How She Could Yacki Hacki Wicki Wacki Woo (That's Love in Honolulu)
Don't Sing Aloha When I Go	On A Coconut Island
Don't Kolohe Me	On the Beach at Waikiki
E Naughty Naughty Mai Nei	Our Love and Aloha
Hanalei Moon	Pearly Shells
Hawaii Calls	Song of old Hawaii
Hilo Hatti does the Hilo hop	Sophisticated Hula
(Honolulu) I'm Coming Back Again	Sweet Leilani
Hukilau	That's the Hawaiian in Me
Hukilau	(There Goes) Kealoha
I Had to Lova and Leava on the Lava	They Call Her Sadie
I Wanna Go Back to My Little Grass Shack	U'ilani - Heavenly Beauty
I Wonder Where My Little Hula Girl Has Gone	Ukulele Lady
It's just an old Hawaiian custom	Waikiki
Little Brown Girl	You're at the Lu'au Now
Lovely hula hands	

Some popular artists associated with Hapa Haole music:

- R. Alex Anderson: A Honolulu-based songwriter known for "Lovely Hula Hands".
- Harry Owens: His orchestra often featured Hilo Hattie, and he was known for "Sweet Leilani"
- Alfred Apaka and The Makaha Sons: Recorded popular songs like "Yaaka Hula Hickey Dula" and "My Isles of Golden Dreams".
- Sol Bright: Another Honolulu-based songwriter and a key figure in the genre.
- Jack Pitman: Wrote the song "Beyond the Reef"

UKULELE LADY

Richard Whiting & Gus Kahn (1925)



C **Ab7 G7 C**
I saw the splendour of the moonlight on Hono lu lu Bay
C **Ab7 G7 C**
There something tender in the moonlight on Hono lu lu Bay
Am **Em7**
And all the beaches are full of peaches who bring their 'ukes' along
C **F7 G7**
And in the glimmer of the moonlight they love to sing this song

Chorus:

C Cmaj7 C6 Cmaj7
If you like-a Ukulele Lady
C Cmaj7 C6 Cmaj7
Ukulele Lady like-a you
F G7 F G7
If you like to linger where it's shady
F G7 C (G7)
Ukulele Lady linger too
C Cmaj7 C6 Cmaj7
If you kiss a Ukulele Lady
C Cmaj7 C6 Cmaj7
While you promise ever to be true
F G7 F G7
And she see another Ukulele
F G7 C (C7)
Lady fool around with you

F C
Maybe she'll sigh, maybe she'll cry
D7 G G7
Maybe she'll find somebody else by and by
C Cmaj7 C6 Cmaj7
To sing to when it's cool and shady
C Cmaj7 C6 Cmaj7
Where the tricky Wicki Wackies woo
F G7 F G7
If you like a Ukulele Lady
F G7 C
Ukulele Lady like a you

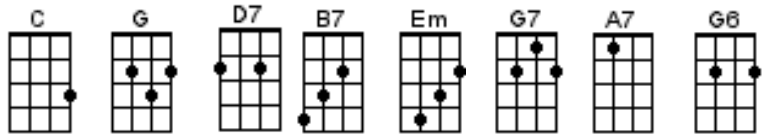
C **Ab7 G7 C**
She used to sing to me by moonlight on Hono lu lu Bay
C **Ab7 G7 C**
Fond mem'rys cling to me by moonlight, although I'm far a way
Am **Em7**
Someday I'm going where eyes are glowing and lips are made to kiss
C **F7 G7**
To see somebody in the moonlight and hear the song I miss

CHORUS (end with **G7 C**)

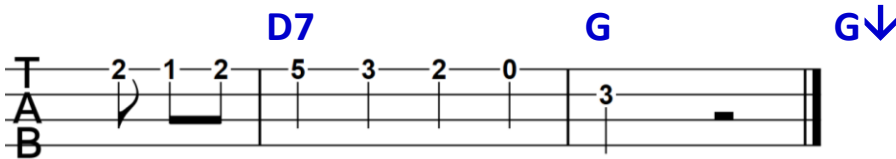
Lyricist Gus Kahn, known for his sentimental and place-based songs such as "Carolina in the Morning" (1922) and "It Had to Be You" (1924), drew on these escapist motifs to craft "Ukulele Lady," aligning with the post-World War I demand for uplifting narratives that transported listeners to sunnier emotional shores. Kahn's style was honed through collaborations with Tin Pan Alley. Central to the song's inspiration was the exotic allure of a romanticized vision of moonlight shimmering on Honolulu Bay, capturing the era's fascination with Hawaii as an idyllic escape. https://gropedia.com/page/ukulele_lady

DON'T SING ALOHA WHEN I GO

Walter Smith, Ben Black, Neil Moret (1926)

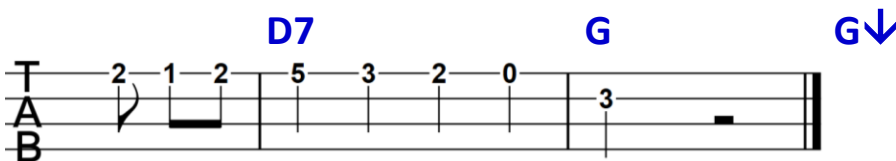


INTRO

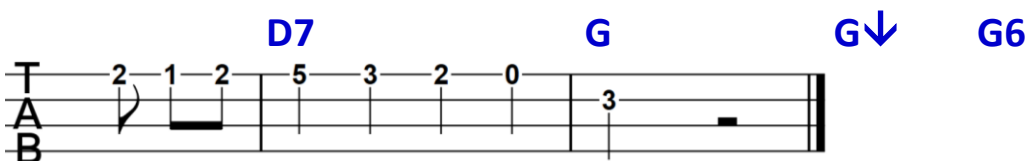


[no chord] Don't sing a-[C]-loha when I [G] go
Because I'm [D7] coming back you [G] know [G7]*
Don't sing a-[C]-loha though I [G] cry
Our parting [D7] does not mean good-[G]-bye [G]↓
I'll dream of [B7] you in Waiki-[Em]-ki
That's where I'll [A7] always long to [D7] be [D7] ↓
Just smile and [C] say you'll miss me [G] so
Don't sing a-[D7]-loha when I [G] go [G]↓

[G7]* = optional



[no chord] Don't sing a-[C]-loha when I [G] go
Because I'm [D7] coming back you [G] know [G7]*
Don't sing a-[C]-loha though I [G] cry
Our parting [D7] does not mean good-[G]-bye [G]↓
I'll dream of [B7] you in Waiki-[Em]-ki
That's where I'll [A7] always long to [D7] be [D7] ↓
Just smile and [C] say you'll miss me [G] so
Don't sing a-[D7]-loha when I [G] go [G]↓
Don't sing a-[D7]-loha when I [G] go [G]↓

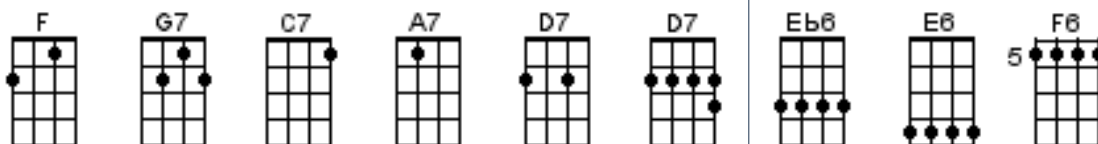


I can find very little information about this song, except that it was made most famous by American Country singer Marty Robbins many years after it was written. Robbins had a love for South Seas music stemming from his time as a sailor during WW2.

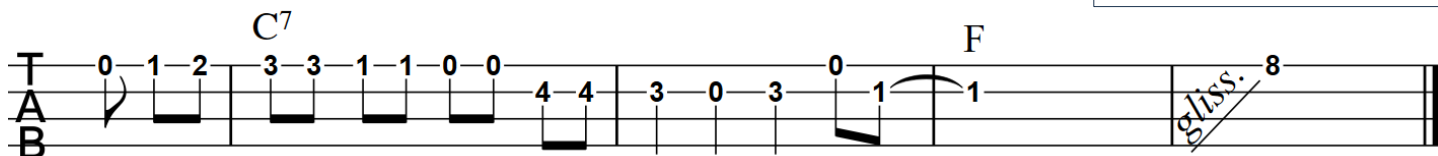
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LITTLE GRASS SHACK

Tommy Harrison, Bill Cogswell, and Johnny Noble (1933)



INTRO:



I wanna go [F] back to my little grass shack in Kealakekua, Ha-[G7]wai'i
 I wanna [C7] be with all the kānes and wahines that I knew so long [F] ago
 I can [A7] hear those guitars playing
 On the [D7] beach at Hōnaunau
 I can [G7] hear those Hawaiians saying,
 "Komo [C7]↓ mai no kāua i ka hale welakahau"

It won't be [F] long till my ship will be sailing back to [G7] Kona
 It's a [C7] grand old place that's always fair to [A7] see
 I'm [D7] just a little Hawaiian and a homesick island boy
 I [G7] wanna go back to my fish and poi

I want to go [F] back to my little grass shack in Kealakekua, Ha-[G7]wai'i
 Where the [C7] humu-humu-nuku-nuku-apua'a go swimming [F] by
 Where the [C7] humu-humu-nuku-nuku-apua'a go swimming [F] by

REPEAT ALL WORDS

To finish, after last line, play these chords (quickly): [Eb6] [E6] [F6]

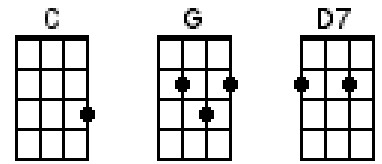
kānes and wahines = men & women
 humu-humu-nuku-nuku-apua'a = Reef Triggerfish, Hawaii's state fish
 Poi = a traditional food made from taro root
 "Komo mai no kāua i ka hale welakahao" = "Come into our house. we're gonna party!"

Written by Tommy Harrison, Bill Cogswell, and Johnny Noble in Hawaii for Kona's 4th July celebration. It was debuted at Kealakekua Bay accompanied by hula dancers. Kealakekua is where Captain James Cook was killed in 1779. Cogswell was from Montana, working in Honolulu when he wrote the lyrics, a parody of a 1924 song, "Back in Hackensack, New Jersey". Composer Harrison, who composed the music, worked with the Hawaiian songwriter and band leader Johnny Noble, a leading figure in hapa haole music to differentiate it from that song, but the similarities are still very strong. The song solidified and perpetuated US caricatures of Hawaii as a place of grass shacks, white sandy beaches, lovely hula maidens, and happy dancing natives.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/My_Little_Grass_Shack_in_Kealakekua,_Hawaii

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ALOHA 'OE (Chorus only)

Lili'uokalani 1878



Strumming pattern (with swing):

1	&	2	&	3	&	4	&	1	&	2	&	3	&	4	&
↓		↓		↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑	↓

Simple melody:

Chords: C G D7 G

T: 0 3 3 0 2 3 2 3 2 0 2 3 2 0 2 3 2

A: 2 0 3 0 2 3 2 3 2 0 2 3 2 0 2 3 2

B: 2 0 3 0 2 3 2 3 2 0 2 3 2 0 2 3 2

Fancy melody:

Chords: C G D7 G

T: 0 3 3 0 2 3 2 3 2 0 2 3 2 0 2 3 2

A: 0 3 3 0 2 3 2 3 2 0 2 3 2 0 2 3 2

B: 0 3 3 0 2 3 2 3 2 0 2 3 2 0 2 3 2

A lo-ha-'oe, A-lo-ha-'oe E-ke o-na-o-na no-ho i ka li-po, One
Fare-well to you, Fare-well to you, The charming one who dwells in shaded bowers, One

Chords: C G D7 G

T: 0 3 3 0 2 3 2 3 2 0 2 3 2 0 2 3 2

A: 0 3 3 0 2 3 2 3 2 0 2 3 2 0 2 3 2

B: 0 3 3 0 2 3 2 3 2 0 2 3 2 0 2 3 2

Chords: C G D7 G

T: 0 3 3 0 2 3 2 3 2 0 2 3 2 0 2 3 2

A: 0 3 3 0 2 3 2 3 2 0 2 3 2 0 2 3 2

B: 0 3 3 0 2 3 2 3 2 0 2 3 2 0 2 3 2

fond em-brace A ho'i a'e au, Un-til we meet a-gain
fond em-brace 'ere I de-part, Un-til we meet a-gain

SOPHISTICATED HULA

Sol Bright (Full name: Solomon Kamaluhiakekipikeali'ika'apunikukealaokamahanahana Bright Sr)
(1937)

Intro: [C] [C] [A7] [A7] [D7] [G7] [C] [G7]

[C] Hands on your [C7] hips

[F] Do your hula [Fm] dips

[C] Sophisticated hula [G7] is the talk of the [C] town [G7]

[C] Swing your partner [C7] round

[F] Soon you'll come [Fm] around

[C] Sophisticated hula [G7] is the talk of the [C] town [C7]

[Em] The lovely hula maidens they love to dance

[B7] They do their dance to the [Em] beating of drums

[G] Sophisticated hula now is your chance

[G] So do your dance while the [G7] melody runs

So [C] dance to the music [C7] sweet

[F] Then you will re[Fm]peat

[C] Sophisticated hula [G7] is the talk of the [C] town [G7]

[C] Swing your partner [C7] round

[F] Soon you'll come [Fm] around

[C] Sophisticated hula [G7] is the talk of the [C] town [C7]

[Em] The lovely hula maidens they love to dance

[B7] They do their dance to the [Em] beating of drums

[G] Sophisticated hula now is your chance

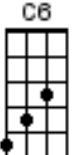
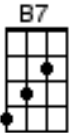
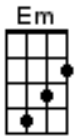
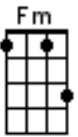
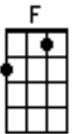
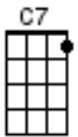
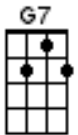
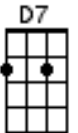
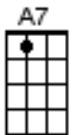
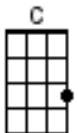
[G] So do your dance while the [G7] melody runs

So [C] dance to the music [C7] sweet

[F] Then you will re[Fm]peat

[C] Sophisticated hula [G7] is the talk of the [C] town [A7]

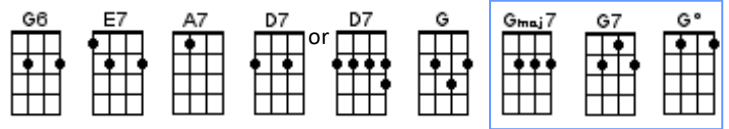
[D7] Sophisticated hula [G7] is the talk of the [C6] town [B7] [C6alt]



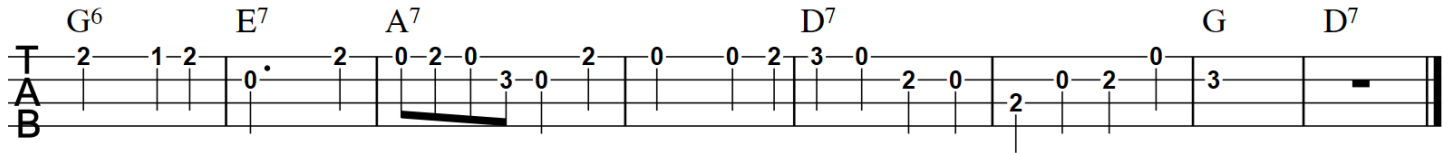
While the song appears to be patronising, implying that the hula as done by 'lovely hula maidens' is unsophisticated, it may be significant that Bright was one of Hawaii's greatest musicians. Bright was born in Honolulu, one of 14 children. He had his own band, appeared in films, and produced Hawaiian-themed shows, especially after serving in the U.S. Merchant Marines during World War II. (I should note that I changed the word 'native' to 'lovely' to confirm with contemporary sensibilities). BW *Kamaluhiakekipikeali'ika'apunikukealaokamahanahana* means 'Warm green tea leaves'
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sol_K._Bright_Sr.

I WONDER WHERE MY LITTLE HULA GIRL HAS GONE

Johnny Noble, Treve Bluett, W. Donaldson (1938)



INTRO:



CHORUS:

[G6] I wonder [E7] where my [A7] little hula girl has gone
She's no [D7] longer on the beach at Waiki[G]ki [D7]

[G6] I've combed the [E7] beach, I've [A7] watched the surf below the palms
And I [D7] looked around as far as I could [G] see /D7 /G Gmaj7 /G7 /

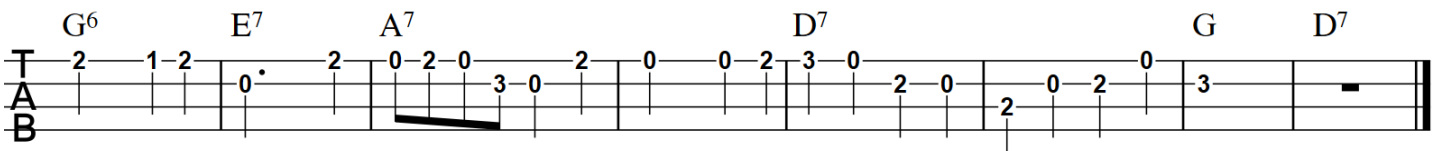
She [C] flew to the East
She [G] flew to the West
[A7] I'll get no rest

Till I [D7]↓ find her back in my little grass shack [D7]

The rapid chord turn-arounds in light blue can be ignored, and you can go straight from the G to the C in the next line.

[G6] I wonder [E7] where my [A7] little hula girl has gone
She's no [D7] longer on the beach at Waiki[G]ki [D7]

INSTRUMENTAL:



She [C] flew to the East
She [G] flew to the West
[A7] I'll get no rest

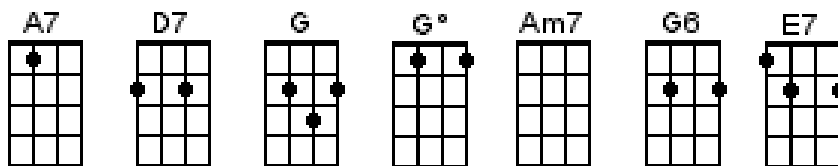
Till I [D7]↓ find her back in my little grass shack [D7]

[G6] I wonder [E7] where my [A7] little hula girl has gone
She's no [D7] longer on the beach at Waiki[G]ki /G /D7 /G G°/ G6 /

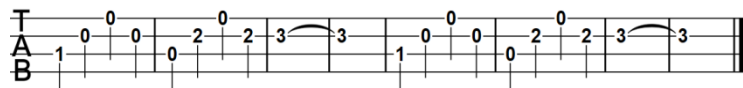
Johnny Noble was of mixed Hawaiian and American descent, and a famous Hawaiian musician. . He is the one who 'Hawaiianised 'Little Grass Shack'- and he namechecks it in this song. I can't find much other background information about this song

HANALEI MOON

Bob Nelson (1974)



INTRO: **A7 D7 G G A7 D7 G**



G° & **E7** chords are optional

When you see Ha-na-lei by moon-light

Am7 D7 G6 D7

You will be in heaven by the sea

G G° G A7

Every breeze, every wave will whisper,

Am7 D7 G D7

You are mine, don't ever go a-way

Hanalei is on the Island of Kauai, Hawaii
"Aloha no wau iā 'oe" means "I truly love you"

CHORUS: **G E7 A7**

Ha-na-lei, Ha-na-lei moon,

D7 C G D7

Is lighting be-lov-ed Kau - a - i

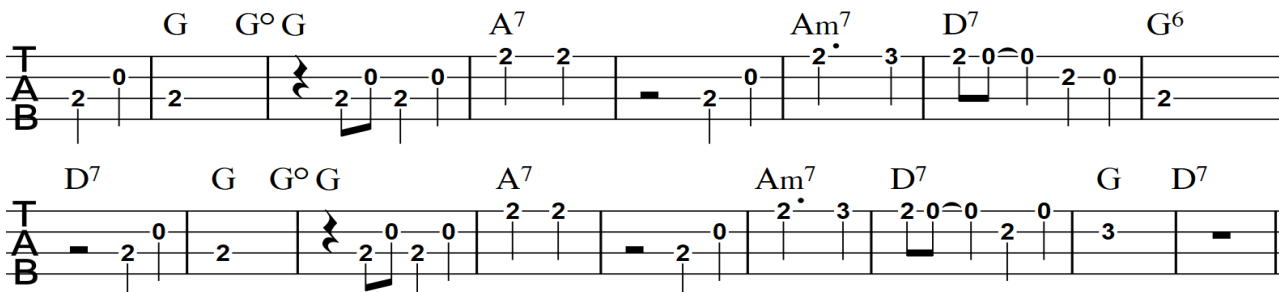
G E7 A7

Ha-na-lei, Ha-na-lei moon,

D7 G D7 G

A-lo- ha no wau-i-ā 'o-e

REPEAT VERSE (or INSTRUMENTAL)



CHORUS: **G E7 A7**

Ha-na-lei, Ha-na-lei moon,

D7 C G D7

Is lighting be-lov-ed Kau - a - i

G E7 A7

Ha-na-lei, Ha-na-lei moon,

D7 G D7 G

A-lo- ha no wau-i-ā 'o-e

D7 G G6

Ending (slower): A- lo- ha no wau-i-ā 'o-e

This is an example of more recent Hapa Haole music, rather than the Tim Pan Alley era. As a more recent song, this one contains less of the superficial, semi-racist stereotypes of Hawaiian culture, and is obviously written with deep affection. Bob Nelson was a Hawaiian songwriter, composer, pianist, and singer from Maui. He was a staunch defender of the copyrights and royalties of Hawaiian songwriters. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bob_Nelson_\(songwriter\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bob_Nelson_(songwriter))

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