

DRAFT VERSION 170921

Mele Aloha O Moloka‘i



Beloved Songs of Moloka‘i



A collection compiled, transcribed & edited by Robert M. Mondoy

Cover:
Pu'ukapele
Photograph by Robert M. Mondoy, 2007



Moloka'i nō ka heke
Moloka'i is the best, a common expression in Moloka'i songs

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Mele Aloha O Moloka‘i Beloved Songs of Moloka‘i

(compiled , transcribed & edited from various sources by Robert M. Mondoy)

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Preface

The charming beauty of Hawaiian language songs claims a loyal following locally and abroad. Many of us who grew up in Hawai'i and those of us who vacationed there were profoundly gifted by the aloha of Hawai'i's people, awed by its natural beauty, enriched by its culture, and humbled by its history. Moreover, the joy of singing Hawaiian songs and performing hula is prevalent in our familial and social gatherings here in Hawai'i, as well it should be; music and hula are heart-felt expressions of joy and pride, a powerful connection to our island home and to Hawaiian culture in general.

In order to make music-making possible at our familial and social gatherings our own families' musicians and singers purchased Hawaiian songbooks, transcribed and collected favorite songs over the years, and generously shared their binders with others. In 2003, the appearance of *He Mele Aloha*¹ filled the need for a practical, informative and more accurate Hawaiian songbook. It became a hit, inspiring us all to dust off and re-string our long-dormant instruments, re-learn our chords, and come together with friends and family to re-live the joyful hours of yesteryear's kani ka pila. The 2006 publication of *Lena Machado Songbird of Hawai'i*² proffered a specific composer's biography and her works; with its notated scores of melody, historical narrative and photography it illuminated the history and music of Lena's times and provided for a richer appreciation of her songs. These two works have been models for this very publication.

Mele Aloha O Moloka'i is a compilation of songs about Moloka'i, a songbook meant for music-making. It aims to preserve our favorite songs about Moloka'i and re-introduce little-known Moloka'i songs. It was intended for your musical enjoyment and edification whether making music by yourself or with colleagues in a musical jam session.

I am a local musician fortunate to be from Moloka'i. I am fond of these Moloka'i songs because they were and continue to be a rich tradition at our family gatherings and communal music-making. I savor the stories, legends and places celebrated in Moloka'i's songs. Singing them is the next-best thing to physically being there. I know there are many of you who share this same strong sentiment. May this book prove instructive, entertaining and enjoyable, trusting that it honors with humble gratitude all of the folks present and those gone before us who have created and preserved these songs, and allows us to enthusiastically re-connect again and again to the wonder and beauty of our island home of Moloka'i, its history, and its people.

¹ Wilcox, Carol; Hussey, Kimo; Hollinger, Vicky; Nogelmeier, Puakea, *He Mele Aloha, A Hawaiian Songbook*, Honolulu, Hawai'i, 'Oli'oli Productions, 2003 (There are several re-print editions).

² Motta, Pi'olani with De Silva, Kihei, *Lena Machado Songbird of Hawai'i*, Honolulu, Hawai'i, Kamehameha Schools, 2006. Robert M. Mondoy created the notation typesets for the publication.

Acknowledgments

Mahalo to all the composers for their generosity including their works in this publication, and to all the folks I met in my journey of research; old-timers and newly-made friends alike who graciously trusted me to share their family's memories and stories, photographs and insights. Mahalo to the numerous staff members of The University of Hawai'i libraries and the Hawai'i State Library, The Bishop Museum and other archival institutions who generously provided invaluable direction and access to historical resources. Mahalo to those many entertainers, musicians, and knowledgeable afficiandos of Hawaiian music who whole-heartedly shared their mana'o with me and helped guide me in my research endeavors. Mahalo pumehana to those colleagues and friends who helped edit musical, language, and layout concerns; in particular Puakea Nogelmeier, Calvin Liu, and Kainoa Fukumoto. Mahalo pau 'ole to my family and all of Moloka'i's people, who helped nurture in me a true love for our island home, its history and its natural beauty. Moloka'i nō ka heke.



Mahalo piha, Robert M. Mondoy

Introduction

Mele Aloha O Moloka'i was created to encourage singing and music-making, and to offer insight into the songs' content and the songs' composers. Its layout of side-by-side pages intentionally makes it easy for an ensemble of musicians and singers to huddle around a single book, with the left page's enlarged text and colored chord symbols for some, and the right page's melodic notation of all the lyrics for others. The Hawaiian texts and translations are as accurate as they can be, given the many variants that are part of the Hawaiian song-sharing process. The melodic notation of the songs may prove to be an invaluable assist, for both memory reasons and towards an informed performance of all the lyrics. For the most part, I chose to transcribe an early form of the melody from available recordings, while still acknowledging other existing sources. At times the "evolved" form of the melody proved better to proffer, since each generation's ownership of the tune sometimes involves altering the original melody somewhat. The translations and information about the songs and songs' composers is intended to enrich the understanding and appreciation of each song. Often more is being said in the lyrics beyond initial glance; such is the nature of a worthwhile song and the rich tradition of Hawaiian lyrical text.

For the most part, these songs are presented in chronological order. The titles of each of the sections was created arbitrarily - they are not actual historical epochs, but are just a way of grouping the songs. I began by selecting songs only in the Hawaiian language, but later decided to include a few in English for the sake of the historical "narrative" of this songbook. I could not include every researched song in this collection. Therefore I included a thematic index of (almost) all of the songs about Moloka'i. There is also a strum-chart, using terminology and strumming patterns gleaned from earlier publications and recordings, as well as those currently in vogue.

There is also an attendant website; www.mondoymusic.com; look for links to "Mele Aloha O Moloka'i". There you can locate further historical and musical information of individual songs and additional mo'olelo, photos and videos of Moloka'i. The material at the website will also post the latest errata and corrections. For both the actual publication and the website, please know that all errors are my own and are open to correction - your input is always welcomed. This collection and its attendant website is intended for educational use only. If you wish to do any recording for any reason (even for non-profit), it is appropriate to contact the songs' owners for permission.

May Mele Aloha O Moloka'i prove to be useful and pleasurable in your music-making. When we use our songs at homes, parties, and gatherings we are keeping alive our Hawaiian language, traditions, and stories. May the music live on in our voices and in our memories, and may our jam sessions prove to be spontaneously rich, endowed with joyful singing, hula, and camaraderie. E kani ka pila kākou!

