

*Ki Ho Alu That's Slack Key Guitar.* A film by Susan Friedman



Winner of best Documentary audience award Hawaiian International Film Festival 2001 is a film about a uniquely Hawaiian sound and style of music, slack key guitar and what it reveals about the spirit. The film features master guitarist, Raymond Kane and highlights many other native Hawaiians that both perform and speak not only about the history and the music, but address the wider problems of cultural transformation, as well. Hawaiians believe this music is the soul of their culture, thus the term "Hawaiian soul music." Produced and directed by Susan Friedman this award winning film played theatrically all over the Northwest. Opening at the UA and Castro Theater in San Francisco. Featuring: Raymond Kane, Sonny Chillingworth, Ledward Kaapana, Leonard Kwan, Haunani Apoliona, Diana Aki and George Kahamoku Jr. This compelling look at Hawaiian Slack Key guitar unveils a cultural richness that is uniquely Hawaiian. The story is told not by a narrator, but by each artist telling their story in their own words, and the spirit and feeling that is within the culture of the Hawaiian people emerges.

The development of slack key corresponds to Hawaiian history, and tells of the changes within Hawaiian culture while preserving its tradition in form and verse. Slack Key guitar is a traditional solo fingerpicking style unique to Hawaii. Hawaiians have been playing slack key since the early 1800s when traditional guitars were brought to the islands by the Spanish cowboys. The Hawaiians tuned or "slacked" the strings to suit their own music. The tradition extends beyond the islands to influence many musicians including Ry Cooder and Chet Atkins. This film tells the story of slack key guitar through an intimate portrait of Raymond Kane, a man who holds a special place in the domain of traditional Hawaiian music. The style of the films reflects the "down home" feeling of the slack key guitar, and of Raymond Kane himself. "It's sweet, it's good for the soul" Raymond says. Over four years in the making, this film, with its infectious musical aspects that are specifically Hawaiian, its fascinating main character and its rich visual material and verité sequences, will be an important document of Hawaiian culture to share with contemporary audiences.