

# Slack Key guitarists honor legends of the style

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THE GARDEN ISLAND

HANAIEI —Picture watching an idyllic sunset over Hanalei while listening to gentle slack key guitar and hearing stories of days long past, just like the paniolos would have back in that late 1800s.

That's what to expect during Doug and Sandy McMaster's Legends of Slack Key Guitar concerts.

The concerts are held

from 4 to 6 p.m. Fridays and 3 to 5 p.m. Sundays at the Hale Halawai 'Ohana in Hanalei and from 5 to 7 p.m. Saturdays at the Children of the Land Cultural Center in Kapa'a.

The concerts are \$20 per person, or \$15 for people over 50 or under 18. Keiki under 6 are free. Tickets can be reserved at [www.McMaster-SlackKey.com](http://www.McMaster-SlackKey.com) online.

The McMasters just released a new CD titled, "Poina 'Ole," on Feb. 2. The

title means, "Never to be Forgotten" and features 16 tracks honoring kupuna and ancestors who guided them on the slack key guitar path.

Having been named "Official Best Slack Key Guitar" in Hawai'i was a huge honor for the couple who have been performing on Kaua'i since moving here from Moloka'i in 1999.

Doug learned how to play guitar when he was 6 years old and has been playing ki ho'alu, or slack key guitar

ever since. He met Sandy when she was in college and he taught her how to play slack key guitar.

"I play 'ukulele," Sandy said, "but I'm not the one with the talent."

She said Doug is the keeper of the music and she's the keeper of the stories.

While living on Moloka'i, Doug became known as the "slack key guy" after working with local slack key master Kelii Mawae, who told Doug, "You and me are

the same. We play old style. It's up to you to make sure it lives on. As long as people hear the songs and stories, they can take it around the world and it will survive."

To date, the McMasters have performed in 1,475 concerts and released 10 CDs of slack key guitar music and an additional CD that is a guided meditation using slack key guitar.

The experience of hearing slack key guitar is a special one, Sandy said. It's an ex-

perience so soothing that it often helps people to sleep.

To that end, the McMasters started on a CD to help babies sleep, "But we realized adults need help too," Sandy said.

The couple developed a CD titled, "Sweet Hawaiian Dreams," to help people sleep better.

Sandy has developed around 20 different themes for concerts, so each show is

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Contributed photos

**Top:** Audiences are seen from a past performance. **Above:** Doug and Sandy McMaster perform Legends of Slack Key Guitar from 4 to 6 p.m. Fridays and 3 to 5 p.m. Sundays at the Hale Halawai 'Ohana in Hanalei and from 5 to 7 p.m., Saturdays at the Children of the Land Cultural Center in Kapa'a.

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unique.

One theme might focus on endangered species inspired by turtles, whales and birds.

Another theme focuses

on honoring Ray Kane, who "rooted Doug's feet to the slack key path," Sandy said, "Ray's songs and his stories will live on in people's hearts."

She's been known to change themes mid-concert to fit the feel of the audience, so every night is a new experience that helps

people "get back on Kaua'i time."

"They leave more relaxed than when they came," she said.

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