



**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Mike Smola

[mismola@missionhouses.org](mailto:mismola@missionhouses.org)

808-447-3914 (w)

808-778-4513 (c)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**ARCHIVES AND INQUIRY VIRTUAL SPEAKER SERIES TO CONTINUE DECEMBER 21, 2021  
at 12PM HST.**

(Honolulu, HI) Hawaiian Mission Houses Historic Site and Archives

The Hawaiian Mission Houses Historic Site and Archives is continuing its bimonthly virtual speaker series to highlight the discoveries and work of diverse history and humanities scholars that work with Hawaiian Mission Houses' extensive archives that inform our contemporary world. *The Hawaiian Mission Houses' speaker series: Archives and Inquiry*, an hour long discussion, will begin with the guest speaker and end with a Q& A from the audience.

The presentation to be held on December 21, 2021 from 12pm HST to 1pm HST is entitled “Royal Hawaiian Troubadours: Acoustic Architects of the Electric Age” and will feature Kilin Reece, Luthier, and President/Founder of the Kealakai Center for Pacific Strings.

The main presentation will be a multi-media virtual tour of *Kaula Piko - The Source of Strings*, a collaborative exhibition mounted last year at Bishop Museum curated by Mr. Reece and Bishop Museum historian DeSoto Brown. Kilin Reece will unravel the origins of the world's most iconic modern stringed instrument designs, tracing them to their origins in the vibrant, cosmopolitan musical community of the 19th century Hawaiian Kingdom. Featuring a pre-recorded musical performance by members of String Ensemble of the Royal Hawaiian Band, joined by members of the Sovereign Strings under the direction of Maestro Aaron Mahi.

The Hawaiian Mission Houses Archives hold valuable musical collections that include Hawaiian language hymnals from several eras, including the original 1823 Nā Himeni Hawaii and the 1834 Nā Himeni Hawaii – which was the first hymnal to include musical notes printed on the page, Milo Calkin's 1840 hymnal for use among the foreign population of Hawai'i, collections of music by Charles E. King and Johnny Noble, programs from Kamehameha Schools Founder's Day musical performances, the Peterson System of Playing Steel Guitar in the Hawaiian Manner from 1916 and a collection of Steel Guitar Solos from the very early 20<sup>th</sup> century. These collections show the breadth and depth of Hawaiian music in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries; and the influences that led to new developments by Hawaiian musicians that changed music throughout the world.

Kilin Reece is Hawai'i's premier restoration specialist for vintage acoustic string instruments. A Grammy-nominated musician and writer, Kilin (pronounced KY-lin) for over a decade was the lead singer and guitarist in Hawai'i's longest-running bluegrass band, The Saloon Pilots. In 2019, he founded the Kealakai

Center for Pacific Strings, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to the research and celebration of Hawai'i and the Pacific region's enduring legacy in the musical arts. His research has led to *The Honolulu Students—Royal Hawaiian Troubadours Historic Recordings circa 1904*, a collaborative release with American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. He has produced the acclaimed concert series *A Night of Sovereign Strings—Celebrating the Musical Legacy of Mekia Kealakai*, which traces the music of Hawai'i from the monarchy period through WWII and features an award-winning ensemble led by Maestro Aaron Mahi and joined by members of the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra, Hawai'i's Opera community and leading members of the Jazz and traditional Hawaiian music worlds. Kilin is currently working with the C.F. Martin Guitar Company on a documentary film illuminating the long running collaborations between Hawaiian musicians and America's oldest string instrument manufacturer.

The talk will be livestreamed and be available afterwards via the Hawaiian Mission House website [www.missionhouses.org](http://www.missionhouses.org). The Hawaiian Mission Houses Archives are open to the public, including free digital access to over 100,000 pages of historical documents and pictures at <https://hmha.missionhouses.org/>

###

Hawaiian Mission Houses Historic Site and Archives (HMH), an active site for Hawaii's history since 1820, is a National Historic Landmark (listed in 1965) and accredited by the American Alliance of Museums (last re-accredited in 2010). HMH graces a one-acre site in the Historic Capital district in downtown Honolulu. HMH preserves Hawai'i's oldest Western-style house, the 1821 Mission House, as well as the 1831 Chamberlain House, the 1841 Bedroom Annex, a cemetery, a collections storage vault, a gift shop, and multi-purpose space. The library, which holds both English and Hawaiian archival material, welcomes researchers on site as well as from around the globe through the digital collection. A coral-and-grass performance arena was added in 2011, hosting theater and mele (music) performances throughout the year, and a reconstructed hale pili, built using cultural practitioner leadership and designed with sources from journals in the HMH archives, was added in 2021. HMH offers school field trips, tours, historical theater performances and has been awarded over 15 Po'okela Awards for Excellence in theatrical performance, writing, and direction. The HMH historical archive holds over 80,000 digital pieces and is home to one of the largest collections of Hawaiian language books in the world.