



photo courtesy of Bill Tapia

photo courtesy of Richard Field Levine

photo courtesy of Aaron L. Archambault

To You SWEETHEART, *Aloha*

A Documentary
by
S. Leo Chiang and Mercedes Coats

USA, 2004, 60 minutes, video

World Premiere:
2004 Louis Vuitton Hawai'i International Film Festival
October 23 - 29, 2004

Sales & Publicity Contacts

Mercedes Coats, Producer/Director
Walking Iris Films
210 Upper Terrace, #4
San Francisco, CA 94117, USA
Tel/Fax +1 (415) 564-4502
USA Mobile +1 (415) 425-4125

S. Leo Chiang, Producer/Director
Walking Iris Films
831 S. Dunsmuir Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90036, USA
Tel/Fax +1 (323) 936-5476
USA Mobile +1 (323) 899-5556

Sales Update

All rights available
Pending USA Broadcast TV license option
to CPB

Publicity Photos

Please contact producers (or see enclosed
CD), or to view/download photos:
www.sweetheartaloha.com

TO YOU SWEETHEART, ALOHA (formerly known as *'Ukulele Man*)

After losing his wife and daughter, Bill Tapia, the colorful 94-year-old Hawai'i-born 'ukulele master, finds his muse in 26-year-old manager Alyssa. Through their unconventional friendship, Bill arrives unexpectedly at the pinnacle of his career, forging ahead after outliving everyone he loves.

Short Synopsis (55 words)

Mourning the recent deaths of his wife and only daughter, Bill Tapia, the colorful 94-year-old Hawai'i-born 'ukulele master, finds his muse in 26-year-old manager Alyssa Archambault. While navigating this unconventional friendship, Bill arrives unexpectedly at the pinnacle of his musical career and learns to forge a life for himself after having outlived everyone he loves.

Longer Synopsis (159 words)

To You Sweetheart, Aloha is a one-hour documentary which follows the 94th year in the life of the colorful Honolulu-born 'ukulele master Bill Tapia, exploring not only the charismatic musician and his unique stamp on the creation of Hawai'ian jazz, but also the consummate showman and the endearing storyteller who seeks the fountain of youth.

At the core of this narrative is a complex and sometimes bittersweet tale of an old man in the midst of a contemporary conflict, fighting to preserve his youthful spirit as he longs for days gone by. Mourning the recent death of his wife and only daughter, Bill finds his muse in 26-year-old Alyssa Archambault, his manager and friend who helps Bill reconnect to his past and rebuild a future in music. Through the journey of this unconventional friendship, Bill arrives unexpectedly at the pinnacle of his musical career and learns to forge an independent life for himself after having outlived everyone he loves.

TO YOU SWEETHEART, ALOHA

Characters

BILL TAPIA

Born on New Year's Day, 1908, Bill "Tappy" Tapia is a diminutive man of Portuguese decent with a thick Hawai'ian Pidgin accent, an iridescent smile, and a flamboyant wardrobe. At the tender age of 10, Bill was already a professional musician, playing a spirited interpretation of "Stars and Stripes Forever" for WWI troops in Hawai'i. In his long career as a jazz guitarist and 'ukulele player he has performed with such musical luminaries as Bing Crosby, Louis Armstrong, Elvis Presley and Hawai'ian legends like King Bennie Nawahi, Sol Ho'opi'i and Andy Iona. Bill is also often credited as the first musician to play jazz on the 'ukulele. At 94, Bill radiates charisma on stage and off. Out of his mouth comes one witty, and often naughty, remark after another, charming everyone around. His skillful playing and the contagious joy in his singing are mesmerizing.

ALYSSA ARCHAMBAULT

Enter Alyssa Kauanakinilani Archambault... a beautiful, soft-spoken, part-Hawai'ian woman from California. She found Bill while doing extensive research on her Hawai'ian family history (her great-grand-uncle Joseph Kekuku invented the influential Hawai'ian steel guitar). Alyssa's roots in this culture and music may be distant considering her youth, but they are incredibly strong. Thus, when the then 25-year-old Alyssa met the then 93-year-old Bill in his current home of Southern California in 2001, they hit it off immediately. While Alyssa provides support for Bill, he provides her a long-awaited window into her family's musical past and cultural heritage.

TOGETHER...

Bill's friendship with Alyssa becomes the focus his life because she clearly fills the void left after the recent death of his wife of 64 years, Bobbie, and only daughter, Cleo. Alyssa, an aspiring concert producer, has been instrumental in getting the semi-retired Bill back into performing, arranging for him to record his first ever CD, and introducing him to a new generation of audiences. Taking on the manager/caretaker role, she accompanies Bill as he travels to various parts of California and Hawai'i to perform. They have become inseparable, calling each other "best friends". The relationship, while genuine from both sides, is uneven. Alyssa cares for Bill a great deal, but she views their friendship as a mentor-mentee connection based on her profound respect for his achievement and experiences. To Bill, however, Alyssa is his confidant, his fountain of youth--his wife and daughter rolled into one. Neither Bill nor Alyssa is aware that his family is questioning the nature of their friendship. As his resurgent music career begins to thrive, Bill seems to be falling in love with Alyssa, needing constant companionship and emotional support from her. In spite of their naiveté, they are eventually forced to confront the outsider's view of their relationship. Alyssa learns of and struggles with Bill's feelings towards her, and Bill must come to terms with the possibility of losing yet another loved one in his life.

TO YOU SWEETHEART, ALOHA

Director's Statement

At the heart of *To You Sweetheart, Aloha* is a story about the genuine, quirky bonds that people make in order to endure life's journey.

As the guest of honor at a concert and film screening given by the Los Angeles Conservancy, we were introduced to Bill in mid-2002. It was one of the first performances he had done after several years of retirement. From the moment he stepped onstage, his personality and charm electrified everyone in the audience. Immediately, the idea of capturing this man's experience on film was all-consuming. After discussions with Bill and Alyssa, his manager, he agreed to let us film him. With only a layman's knowledge of Hawai'ian music and early jazz, we embarked on researching and drawing out all the amazing details of Bill's experiences – as a professional musician for most of the 20th century and more importantly, as an elderly man living out his remaining years with dramatic flair.

To You Sweetheart, Aloha brings to the screen a story from two areas underrepresented in the media today—the elderly and Hawai'ian musical history. Through Bill's story, *To You Sweetheart, Aloha* reveals issues concerning the elderly such as the increasing loss of independence and the growing loneliness that arises from losing loved ones. Bill is an uncommonly youthful 94-year-old man, but he nevertheless struggles with the universal obstacles of aging and loss. *To You Sweetheart, Aloha* speaks to the elderly community by providing characters that both older and younger generations can identify with and, therefore, encourages a deeper understanding for all on issues of aging. In addition, Bill's musical journey through much of 20th-century Hawai'i and California provides a rare glimpse into the history of Hawai'ian music, an influential strand of American roots music that is often dismissed as novelty. *To You Sweetheart, Aloha* serves the Hawai'ian and Californian communities by helping to give proper credit to Bill's accomplishments as a rediscovered 'ukulele jazz pioneer.

When we began to make the film, we found ourselves fascinated by Bill's storytelling and instant charisma, wanting to know more about this "undiscovered jewel" of 'ukulele jazz. However, as we spent the many days and months with him, we discovered a new and more important reason for making the film. Here was an open-hearted, hilarious, goofy and often very vulnerable Bill – the man behind the music, behind the personality, and behind the legend...

We have been allowed incredible access to follow Bill's life and the ups and downs of his friendship with Alyssa over the past two years, including a 6 month-long break up. What results is a humorous and touching study of a man in search of something to fill the emptiness that old age brings. Ultimately, the film is an intricate, dramatic, cross-generational relationship set against the beautiful backdrop of California and Hawai'i, in the nostalgic world of old-time jazz and traditional Hawai'ian music.

After meeting in graduate film school at USC School of Cinema-Television in 1995, we have often collaborated through our company Walking Iris Films.

Mercedes Coats and S. Leo Chiang

TO YOU SWEETHEART, ALOHA Producer/Director's Bio

MERCEDES COATS (Director/Producer/Sound Recordist) has directed and produced the award-winning documentaries *Little Stars*, about the unpredictable and challenging world of child actors, and *Seoul II Soul*, about a Korean/African-American family in post-riot Los Angeles (National PBS premiere presented by NAATA, Feb 2002). *Mastermind*, a children's television pilot, earned her the prestigious Alfred P. Sloan Film Award and a production grant from Entertainment Weekly magazine. She was also the recipient of the Women in Film/Paramount Pictures Crystal Award in 1998.

Recently, Mercedes was Director of Creative Affairs at Lin Oliver Productions, a company focused on creating quality family entertainment. She worked on the company's production of *Trumpet of the Swan*, an animated feature film based on the classic E.B. White novel for Sony/Columbia TriStar. She was the key production consultant to Lin Oliver (Producer) on *Finding Buck McHenry*, a movie for Showtime starring Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee. In addition to her work in family films, Mercedes has produced and directed several non-fiction educational documentaries for clients such as The Rossier School of Education at USC and Big Sisters of Los Angeles. She has also produced several industrials and promotional videos for clients such as Edmark (div of IBM) and California Science Center. Mercedes is currently producing and directing the full-length documentary, *To You Sweetheart, Aloha*, about 94-year-old Hawai'ian 'ukulele legend, Bill Tapia.

Born in Australia, raised in Spain, England and the US, Mercedes holds a BA in Theatre from Occidental College in Los Angeles, and an MFA in Film Production from the University of Southern California.

Filmography:

Current	<i>To You Sweetheart, Aloha</i> (DIRECTOR/PRODUCER)
2001	<i>Trumpet of the Swan</i> (EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE PRODUCER) Sony Pictures/Columbia Tri-Star
2001	<i>EdConnect Launch</i> (CO-PRODUCER) Edmark Corp, a div of IBM
2001	<i>Finding Buck McHenry</i> (PRODUCTION CONSULTANT) Showtime Inc.
2000	<i>Eugenia</i> (DIRECTOR) Big Sisters of Los Angeles
1999	<i>Enhancing the Field Trip</i> , Exemplary Teaching Series (DIRECTOR/CO-PRODUCER) USC Rossier School of Education
1998	<i>Think Science!</i> (DIRECTOR/CO-PRODUCER) California Science Center
1998	<i>Mastermind</i> (DIRECTOR/CO-PRODUCER) Mastermind Productions
1997	<i>Little Stars</i> (DIRECTOR)
1996	<i>Seoul II Soul</i> (PRODUCER) My Tall Father Productions
1995	<i>Food For Thought</i> (DIRECTOR)

TO YOU SWEETHEART, ALOHA Producer/Director's Bio

S. LEO CHIANG (Director/Producer/Cinematographer) is an award-winning filmmaker of both documentary and narrative films. His previous short films, *Match Point* and *Reunited*, were screened at festivals across the country. In 1998, Directors Guild of America commissioned Leo to direct and edit *Directing: How to Get There*, for which he documented early careers of several well-known filmmakers including Robert Wise, Norman Jewison, and Steven Spielberg. Leo received the 1999 Shenkin Fellowship from Yale School of Art to make *Safe Journey*, a narrative short mentored by director Robert Zemeckis. He went on to produce and direct *One + One*, a documentary about mixed HIV-status couples that won the CINE Golden Eagle Award (2002) and the Cable Positive Award (2001 Silver Lake Film Festival). Leo then produced an episode for the Discovery Health Channel series, *Medical Diary*, and recently directed the Bravo series *Boy Meets Boy* and episodes of *Switched* for ABC Family Channel. Leo is currently producing two full-length documentaries, *Limited Partnerships*, about bi-national gay and lesbian couples and their struggles with US immigration laws, and *To You Sweetheart, Aloha*, about 94-year-old Hawai'ian 'ukulele legend, Bill Tapia.

Leo is also an experienced editor and cinematographer of non-fiction projects. He edited *True-Hearted Vixens*, an ITVS-funded project about a women's tackle football league. *True-Hearted Vixens* was shown as a part of the 2001 P.O.V. series on PBS. He also edited *Freestyle*, a feature-length documentary that chronicles the history of freestyle hip-hop. It won awards at the LA Independent Film Festival, Woodstock Film Festival, and Urbanworld Film Festival. Leo's work as a cinematographer has been broadcast nationally on HBO, Discovery, Travel Channel, Learning Channel, AMC, and others.

Leo holds a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering and received his MFA in film production from University of Southern California.

Filmography:

Current	<i>To You Sweetheart, Aloha</i> (DIRECTOR/PRODUCER)
Current	<i>Limited Partnerships</i> (PRODUCER/CINEMATOGRAPHER)
2003	<i>Gil & David – Switched</i> (DIRECTOR) ABC Family Channel/Evolution Film & Tape
2003	<i>Boy Meets Boy</i> (DIRECTOR) Bravo/Evolution Film & Tape
2003	<i>Operation Smile</i> (DIRECTOR/CINEMATOGRAPHER) Annenberg Center for Communications
2001	<i>Ruth's Story – Medical Diaries</i> (PRODUCER) Discovery Health Channel/GRB Productions
2001	<i>One + One</i> (PRODUCER/DIRECTOR)
2000	<i>Safe Journey</i> (WRITER/DIRECTOR)
1998	<i>Directing: How to Get There</i> (DIRECTOR/EDITOR) Directors Guild Of America
1996	<i>Reunited</i> (WRITER/PRODUCER/DIRECTOR)
1995	<i>Match Point</i> (PRODUCER/DIRECTOR)

TO YOU SWEETHEART, ALOHA Key Crew Credits & Bios

DEBORAH LUM (Editor) is an award-winning editor of non-fiction films and videos. Her credits as an editor or editorial consultant include *Refugee* (d. Spencer Nakasako); *First Person Plural* (Sundance Film Festival, National PBS Broadcast on *P.O.V.*); *Kelly Loves Tony* (Nominee for Best Feature Documentary by IDA, National PBS Broadcast on *P.O.V.*); *AKA Don Bonus* (Winner-National Emmy, Golden Gate Award for Best Bay Area Documentary at SF Int'l Film Festival, Berlin Film Festival, National PBS Broadcast on *P.O.V.*); and *Jim Dine, Self Portrait on the Walls* (Academy Award nomination for Best Documentary Short).

JOAN HUANG (Executive Producer) founded Cherry Sky Films LLC in 2001, and co-produced Justin Lin's BETTER LUCK TOMORROW, which debuted at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival and was nominated for an IFP Independent Spirit Award. Working with MTV Films, she helped produce the film's website, as well as strategize and execute the grass roots and internet marketing/outreach campaign for BLT's 2003 theatrical release. Joan returned to Sundance in 2004 with Academy Award winning filmmaker Jessica Yu's feature documentary IN THE REALMS OF THE UNREAL, an exploration into the life and work of Henry Darger. Most recently, Joan was the Casting Director and Associate Producer for ETHAN MAO, an independent feature by writer/director Quentin Lee. Currently, Joan is producing the second year of a themed short films series by independent filmmakers; the first year skyPod series featuring iPods are making the rounds on the festival circuit. <http://www.cherryskyfilms.com>

COREY TONG (Project Consultant) is an independent producer and creative consultant on feature films, int'l acquisitions and festival programming. He is also chief creative exec for Hawai'i-based Makai Motion Pictures. The former Director of Special Projects for IFFCON's Asia-Pacific Partnership and former director of the San Francisco Int'l Asian American Film Festival, Corey is a producer of the new Fijian feature 'The Land Has Eyes' and is in development on two new features from the Asia-Pacific region. He grew up in Hilo.

EMUNAH YUKA EDINBURGH (Associate Producer) received her BA in Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity from Stanford University. She has worked with several community organizations on creating media and arts programs – most recently working with the award-winning documentary filmmaker, Spencer Nakasako.

VANESSA KANESHIRO (Associate Producer) received her MA in Journalism at University of California at Berkeley. Her documentary experience includes work at MTV/News & Documentary, KCTS/Seattle PBS Station, KPLU/Seattle NPR Radio, and *r s l interactive*.

BYRON K. YASUI (Advisor) has been on the University of Hawai'i at Manoa Music faculty since 1972, and was recently the chair the music graduate studies program. He has been a commissioner on the Honolulu Mayor's Commission on Culture and the Arts since 1993. In addition to being an award-winning composer of classical art music of international repute, he remains active as a freelance multi-instrumentalist, often with the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra. He is also a co-organizer of *The Art of Solo 'Ukulele*, the name of a 2000 Hawai'i public TV special which lead to a compact disc released in April, 2002.

ALAN BAKER (Advisor) was Executive Producer of Cultural Programming for KCET (PBS) prior to being Vice President of Syndication Programming for both Paramount Television and Fox Television. He has led major press and public relations campaigns, including managing promotion and press for the 1984 Olympic Arts Festival in Los Angeles. He received his bachelor's degree from University of Hawai'i at Manoa. Alan currently serves as Vice Dean at the USC School of Cinema-Television.

TO YOU SWEETHEART, ALOHA
Production Credits

Director/Producers

S. Leo Chiang & Mercedes Coats

Editor

Debbie Lum

Cinematographer

S. Leo Chiang

Sound Recordist

Mercedes Coats

Executive Producer

Joan Huang / Cherry Sky Films

Associate Producers

Emunah Yuka Edinburgh
Vanessa Kaneshiro

Project Consultant

Corey Tong

Additional Camera

Bryan Donnell
Sergio Goes
David Greenspan
Chindy Lee
Sarah Levy
Ken Libby

Additional Sound Recordists

Chad Grochowski
Josh Newman

Graphic Designer

Erin Shigaki / Purple Gate Design

Graphics Animator

Brian Rulapaugh

Online Editor

Joe Hoffman / Jump House Design

Sound Designer

Kenny Klimak / BarkingDogSound.com

Production Assistants

Gerard Dawson
Ryan Kim
Joan Malloch
Chris Nyguen

Music Clearance

The Rights Workshop / www.RightsWorkshop.com

Legal Consultants

Jay Lin, Esq.
Sara Rutenberg, Esq.

Still Photographers

Aaron L. Archambault
Richard Field Levine

Advisors

Byron Yasui
Alan Baker

Funding Provided By

Pacific Islanders in Communications
Cherry Sky Films
Fleishhacker Foundation
Atherton Family Foundation
'Ukulele Hall of Fame Museum

Project Fiscal Sponsor

Bay Area Video Coalition

Special Thanks to...

The Broughton Family	Clay Westervelt
The Archambault Family	Ako & Tom Shimozato
The Chiang Family	Jim & Liz Beloff
The Coats Family	Niisa Carter
Hiro Shimozato	Emi Macuaga
Jonathan Reid	Evy Mayer
Joe Hoffman	William R. Sturgeon
Brian Rulapaugh	Robbert VanRenesse

•
Thelma Kam / Royal Hawai'ian Hotel
Michael Spengler / MoonRoom Records

Thanks to...

Joe Aki	Joel Engardio
Gary Anderson	Pat Enos
Nathan Anean	The Essential Resophonics
Andy & Pam Andrews	Tom Freund
Charles W. Aresta	John Garcia
Gabe & Rose Baltazar	Pattie & John Gerrie
Marguerite Bettencourt	Dennis Graue
Marlene Booth	Tony Graziano
Tim Bostock	Amy Happ
Geraud Brisson	Keith & Carmen Haugen
Benny Chong	Mahri Holt
Sharon Cole	Peter Hurm, Esq.
Cristi Delgado	Hannah Guggenheim
Katherine Dogali	Mariko & Cathy Ishikawa
Jim Duron	Michael Jerome

Stacey & Gregg Klein	Troy Ozama
Reid Kapō Ku	Angel Pablo
Richard Lee	Jeannette Paulsen-Hereniko
Lisa Leeman	Barry & Susan Pearlman
Margo King Lenson	Ben Peeler
"Uncle" Ahi & Bula Logan	Ernest Provencher
Gerry & Christa Long	Ed Ransford
Hubbard Lucas	Geoffrey R. Rezek
Makana	Lyle Ritz
Gordon Mark	Tom Shepard
Fran Maxwell	Kevin Shine
Porter Miller	The Souza / Aki / Ibarra Families
Wes Miller & Family	Mark Steen
Anne Misawa	Johnny Symons
Marie K. Morohoshi	Steve Talbert
Denny "King Kukulele" Moynahan	Bob Tomei
Tommy Nguyen	Kim Turrisi & Bridget Smith
Leslie Nunes	Jim "Kimo" West
Kekoa Ornellas	Ian Whitcomb



Audio Resource Honolulu

DeSoto Brown / Bishop Museum Archives

Bob Morita / Bob's Hawai'ian Style Okazu Ya

Joe Campana / Campana Music

Ali Mazarei / Cole's Restaurant

Don Ho & Haumea Hebenstreit / Don Ho Enterprises

Ellen Chase Verdries / Folk Music Center of Claremont

Howard & Roz Larman & Barbara Adler / FolkScene

Tom Campbell / Guacamole Fund

Katherine T. Kawaguchi / Hawai'i Dept. of Education

Randy Brandt & John Yasunaga / Hawai'i Moving Company

Burton White / The Hawai'i Theater

John Berger / *Hawai'i Star-Bulletin*

Dave Stewart / Indigo Restaurant

Sam Kamaka Jr. / Kamaka 'Ukulele Factory

Manu Boyd / *Ka Wai Ola* Newspaper

Sarah Spitz / KCRW Radio

Michael Schuster & J.W. Junker / KHPR Radio

Michael Perry & Larry Price / KSSK Radio

Mike Buck & Juliet Rae Delanoza / KVHV Radio

Louis Vuitton Hawai'i International Film Festival

Lyman Ashikawa / Lymana 'Ukuleles

McCabe's Guitar Shop

John De Mello, Leah Bernstein & Suzi Mechler / Mountain Apple Records

Dave McGuire / Pacific Island Cultural Associations

Ed McNulty / PBS Hawai'i

Tony Cappa / The Oasis 'Ukulele Club

Dave Lynch / Sacred Grounds Café

The Santa Cruz 'Ukulele Club

B.J. Whitman / Sheraton Waikiki

Susan McCormick / Southern California 'Ukulele Festival

Jim Filipan / Stevens Steakhouse

Talbert Medical Group

Michael Chock / 'Ukulele Guild of Hawai'i

Jason Verlinde / *'Ukulele Occasional*

Waikiki Beach Marriott Hotel
Nancy Ghafarshad / Walter's Restaurant

Archival Photography

Bill Tapia Collection
Alyssa Archambault Collection
Photo of Joseph Kekuku: Courtesy of
The Special Collections Dept., University of Iowa Libraries

All Music Performed by Bill Tapia (except where noted)
Bill Tapia Courtesy of MoonRoom Records

To You Sweetheart, Aloha
Written by Harry Owens
Courtesy of Royal Music Publishers / Tim Owens

Stars and Stripes Forever
Written by John Phillip Souza
Traditional

You Are My Sunshine
Written by Jimmie Davis
Courtesy of Peer Music (APRS)

Sweet Leilani
Written by Harry Owens
Courtesy of Royal Music Publishers / Tim Owens

Manuela Boy
Written by John Noble Avery
Courtesy of EMI Miller & EMI April Music

Happy Birthday
Written by Mildred & Patty Hill
Courtesy of Warner Chapel Music

Hilo March
Written by Joseph Kapaeau Ae'a
Courtesy of Bill Tapia & Byron Yasui

Happy Hawai'ian Blues
Written by Hawai'ian Songbirds
Performed by Happy Hawai'ian Songbirds
Courtesy of Shanachie Records

Lovely Hula Hands
Written by Alex Anderson
Courtesy of Lychelle Music Co & EMI

My Name Is Jorge
Written by James Smith
Performed by The Gourds
Courtesy of Slosinger Redberry Publishing

Hilo March from March Medley
Written by Joseph Kapaeau Ae'a
Performed by Byron Yasui
Courtesy of Byron Yasui & J.W. Junker

All of Me
Written by Gerald Marks & Seymour Simon
Courtesy of Music Sales/Marlong Music Corp & Bourne Music Co.

Tiny Bubbles
Written by Leon Pober
Performed by Don Ho
Courtesy of Granite Music

Crazy
Written by Willie Nelson
Courtesy of Sony/ATV

My Little Grass Shack in Kealakekua Hawai'i
Written by Johnny Cogswell, Thomas Harrison, & Johnny Noble
Courtesy of EMI April Music

Our deep gratitude to...

Bill Tapia
Alyssa Archambault

© 2004 Walking Iris Films

www.SweetheartAloha.com

TO YOU SWEETHEART, ALOHA Additional Materials

Press Clippings: Full press clippings can be found at www.SweetheartAloha.com

- **Honolulu Star-Bulletin**, Oct 22, 2004 – "'Aloha' Fills Generation Gap" (review of film)
- **Los Angeles Magazine**, July 2004 – "The Return of the Ukulele Man"
- **Los Angeles Times**, California Section Front Page, April 1, 2004 – "At 96, a Uke Legend Still Has Plenty of Pluck"
- **Orange County Register**, Front Page, April 24, 2004 – "A Vintage Sound"

Publicity Photos CD: B & W thumbnails shown

-  **Bill Tapia (main)**
Caption: 'Ukulele jazz master Bill Tapia, age 94'
File Name: "1_UkuleleBill"
File Type: JPEG, Color, 300 dpi
Credits: Richard Field Levine
-  **Bill Tapia & Alyssa Archambault**
Caption: 'Ukulele jazz master Bill Tapia, age 94, and his manager Alyssa Archambault'
File Name: "2_BillAlyssa"
File Type: JPEG, Color, 300 dpi
Credits: Aaron L. Archambault
-  **Bill with 'Uke Behind Head, 1940's**
Caption: 'Ukulele jazz master Bill Tapia, in his youth'
File Name: "3_BehindHead"
File Type: JPEG, B & W, 300 dpi
Credits: Bill Tapia Collection
-  **Bill with Letters**
Caption: 'Ukulele jazz master Bill Tapia, age 94'
File Name: "4_BillLetters"
File Type: JPEG, Color, 300 dpi
Credits: Aaron L. Archambault
-  **Bill On Stage with BackLights**
Caption: 'Ukulele jazz master Bill Tapia, age 94'
File Name: "5_BillBacklit"
File Type: JPEG, Color, 300 dpi
Credits: Aaron L. Archambault
-  **S. Leo Chiang, Director/Producer**
Caption: "To You Sweetheart, Aloha" director/producer, S. Leo Chiang
File Name: "6_SLC Headshot"
File Type: JPEG, Color, 300 dpi
Credits: Sarah Levy
-  **Mercedes Coats, Director/Producer**
Caption: "To You Sweetheart, Aloha" director/producer, S. Leo Chiang
File Name: "7_MJC Headshot"
File Type: JPEG, Color, 300 dpi
Credits: S. Leo Chiang

Sample Music CD: More information on Bill Tapia's music can be found at www.billtapia.com or www.moonroomrecords.com

Three tracks from Bill Tapia's recent album, TROPICAL SWING (released by MoonRoom Records)

1. Hapa Haole Hula Girl, 2002
2. Stars & Stripes, 1936
3. Tropical Swing, 1936

week end

at the fest

John Berger | jberger@starbulletin.com

'Aloha' fills generation gap

Film examines the rich legacy of ukulele virtuoso Bill Tapia

NINETY-SIX years old and still a concert-caliber performer, ukulele virtuoso Bill Tapia is not your typical old-time Hawaiian musician. Born in Honolulu on New Year's Day 1908, he's been playing the ukulele for 89 years, and playing professionally for almost that long.

But there's more, however, to Tapia's current high profile as a concert act and recording artist than longevity and good health, and filmmakers Mercedes Coats and S. Leo Chiang approach his experiences from a perspective that makes their documentary film, "To You Sweetheart, Aloha" much more than the standard retrospective on the life and times of a venerable musical legend. The resulting film is a fascinating portrait of a colorful and talented man that also raises broader issues outside of the man and the music.

Academic talking-head types are conspicuously absent from the narrative, with little time spent addressing how Tapia's playing style may differ from those currently in vogue, and surprisingly little information is provided on Tapia's first 90 years. One reason for that may be because he spent most of his life playing jazz and swing music, and because he left Hawaii for good in 1948 — out of sight, out of mind, as far as the local music scene was concerned.

ANOTHER REASON could be because Tapia did not do much as a Hawaiian recording artist. He made a legendary recording of "Stars and Stripes Forever" in the mid-1930s that was apparently not commercially released until 2004.

Coats and Chiang include recent footage of Tapia playing here with Byron Yasui, Benny Chong and Lyle Ritz, but his significance as an innovator in the



COURTESY OF LVHIFF

Bill Tapia is a pioneer of the little stringed instrument.

1920s and '30s isn't emphasized. (Yasui told the Star-Bulletin in 2002 that Tapia came up with ideas that were subsequently popularized by others.)

WHERE THE filmmakers excel is in their nonjudgmental documentation of Tapia's controversial relationship with his friend and sometime manager, Alyssa Kauanakinilani Archambault — a 28-year-old woman young enough to be his granddaughter — whose friendship was the

catalyst that renewed his interest in life after the death of both his beloved wife, Barbie, and his only daughter, Cleo, in 2001. Archambault met Tapia while researching her Hawaiian ancestors' musical legacy and encouraged him to resume playing the ukulele and sharing his music once again. She booked performances for him, promoted him on her radio show, set up recording sessions that eventually resulted in the release of his first CD, "Tropical

Swing," earlier this year, and assumed the roles of manager and caretaker when he traveled.

The two agree that they spend more time with each other than with anyone else. Tapia also says that he loves Archambault like his loves his grandchildren and says "If I was younger, I'd marry her in a minute."

Chiang and Coats also show that comments like those made some of Tapia's grandchildren uneasy. They all seem to agree that Tapia has recovered from his grief and is happy with Archambault in his life, but some express vague fears that she is somehow taking advantage of him. No one is particularly clear about what they think she's doing, but one of them explains that "She's not defining the parameters of the relationship clearly enough for him."

BUT WHAT ARE the parameters of this relationship? The level of intimacy that may have developed between Tapia and Archambault remains enigmatic. The amount of money — if any — that Archambault stands to make as his manager, or might inherit as his widow, is not specified. It's clear, however, that Tapia is much happier when Archambault is in his life than when she's not.

One of the documentary's lighter moments is when Tapia and Archambault visit Sereno Street in Lihua and he describes how the neighborhood looked when he was growing up there 80 years ago.

There's also ample performance footage that captures the magic of Tapia's musical artistry. At a time when some young virtuosos approach the ukulele from a rock 'n' roll perspective, Tapia is a living link to the pioneer players of a century ago. "To You Sweetheart, Aloha" is also a very moving and personal story about a remarkable man who, even though he has outlived his wife and only child, has been fortunate enough to find new reasons to embrace life, share his music with a new generation of fans, and go on living.

"To You Sweetheart, Aloha"

USA, part of the festival's Hawaii Panorama 8 showcase. Playing at 8:30 p.m. tomorrow on Sunset on the Beach in Waikiki and 7:15 p.m. Sunday at the Dolo Cannery complex.





CULTURE

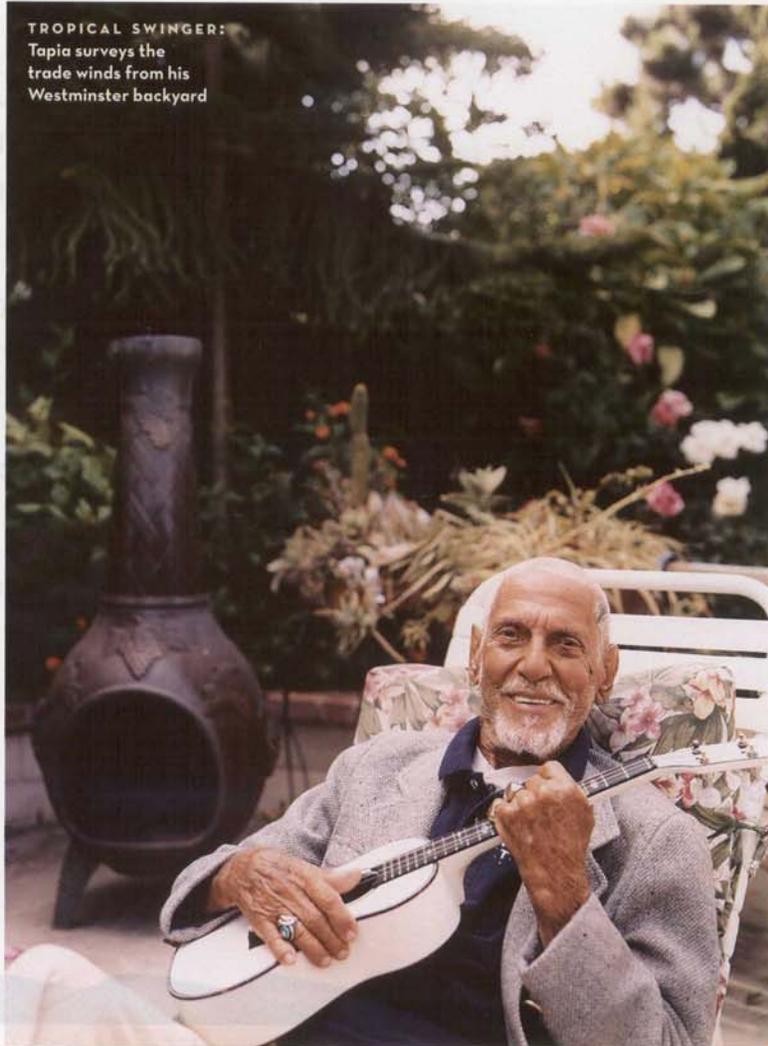
The Return of the Ukulele Man

EIGHT DECADES AFTER HE FIRST LAUNCHED COUNTLESS HULA FANTASIES, IT LOOKS LIKE BILL TAPIA FINALLY HAS A HIT BY ALEX HALBERSTADT

TO GET TO BILL TAPIA'S HOME from Sunset Boulevard, you have to drive south on the 405, take the Brookhurst exit in Westminster, coast several miles down a six-lane thoroughfare skirted by strip malls and Vietnamese-language billboards, then follow a frontage road to a circular driveway that leads to a small ranch-style house. "It's got a souped-up PT Cruiser sitting in front, you can't miss it," Tapia told me on the phone. When we met, he was sunning himself on a deck ringed with bougainvillea and large pink roses. A slight smiling man with a shock of white hair and a Roman nose, outfitted in a floral-print shirt and a matching panama hat, a navy blazer, turquoise-and-gold rings, and swimming-pool-blue argyle socks, he looked like a Latin character actor who had retired here after a lifetime of Raoul Walsh pirate films.

As he spoke about his life, Tapia narrowed his eyes, cocked his head, and embellished stories with his hands, relishing the role of the bon vivant. He has a flawless memory and recalls events that took place 75 years ago as effortlessly as someone might recall paying a previous week's parking ticket. When he was finished, Tapia picked up a ukulele and started in on "My Little Grass Shack (in Kealakekua Hawaii)," the vaudeville-era ballad, singing in a soft, slightly unsteady baritone. He teased the meaning out of the sentimental lyrics, piled chords on top of the melody, and leaned into the beat with the unhurried sense of swing that vanished from American music soon after bebop came along. You could be forgiven for thinking you were listening to a musician of the 1920s, a side-

TROPICAL SWINGER: Tapia surveys the trade winds from his Westminster backyard



At 96, a Uke Legend Still Has Plenty of Pluck

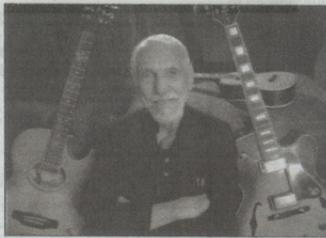
Bill Tapia rides a wave of new interest in the instrument. He also plays to ease sadness.

By STEVE CHAWKINS
Times Staff Writer

Bill Tapia is so intense about his gigs that he once played with a newly broken wrist. Over his many years of protests, he ripped off his cast, strode to the front of the hall, hunched over his ukulele and, in exquisite pain, made beautiful music.

But he was younger then, a mere 94.

Today, at 96, his ukulele passion is unabated. His first CD was just released and another is due out in May. He



LIFELONG MUSICIAN: Bill Tapia with a couple of his guitars and a ukulele at his home in Westminster. He will soon be inducted into the Ukulele Hall of Fame.

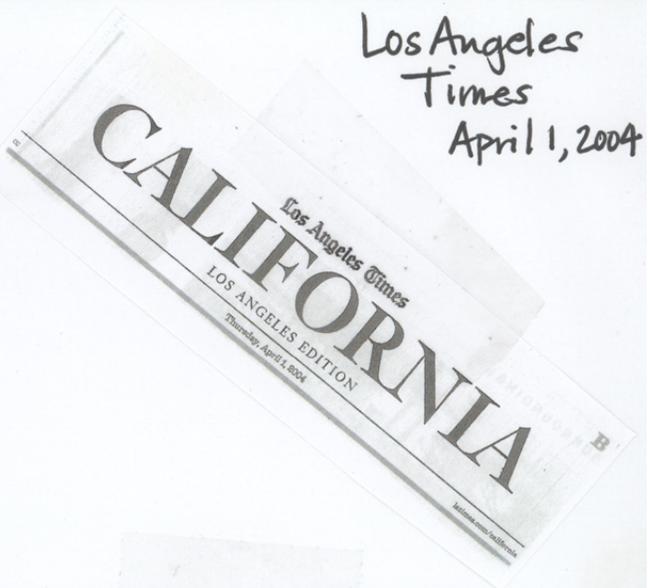
still performs in music store back rooms and Hawaiian restaurant jam sessions, at ukulele conventions and in concert halls. Each week, he gives lessons to 20 or so rapid students at his Westminster home. This month, he will be inducted into the Ukulele Hall of Fame.

"He was one of the first to play jazz standards and improvise on the ukulele, and he

was doing it when both jazz and the ukulele were new," said Byron Yasui, a jazz bassist and director of graduate studies in music at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

"Bill's a ukulele virtuoso." A trim man with a white beard and a fondness for pl-stripes, Tapia has been a musician all his life. As a kid in Honolulu, he entertained

[See Tapia, Page B8]



B8 THURSDAY, APRIL 1, 2004

LOS ANGELES TIMES

CALIFORNIA

Legend Enjoying New Interest in Ukulele

[Tapia, from Page B1]

sailors riding out World War I at Pearl Harbor. During his long musical career on the mainland, he sat in with the likes of Louis Armstrong and taught ukulele to such stars as Clark Gable and Jimmy Durante. Now he is surfing a wave of interest in the ukulele as he resists an undertow of lingering sadness from the deaths, in the last few years, of his wife and daughter.

"Thank God I can still play," he said recently, sitting in the sunshine on the patio of the house he shares with a woman who assists him. "It helps me forget a little."

But he doesn't forget much.

As a kid, he strummed for tips on the streets of Oahu, wooing the tourists by holding his ukulele behind his neck and offering up his trademark, fast-paced "Stars and Stripes Forever."

When he was 12, his mother reluctantly let him leave school to make money for the family on the Honolulu vaudeville circuit.

"I was hanging out with musicians twice my age and didn't need school," Tapia recalled. "I thought I was pretty hot stuff."

At 16, he was offered a job with a dance band on a steamship bound for California. His family threatened him with reform school if he accepted, but he did.

"In the middle of the ocean, I sent my mother a telegram," he said. "Don't worry, I told her. 'I'll be OK.'"

That trip was just his first. Over the next couple of decades, he hopped between the islands and the mainland, filling ever more in love with jazz. His popularity rose.

Tapia played ukulele and guitar with top bands and had his own group, Tapia's Island Swingers. During World War II, he led a 14-piece band in a "blackout ballroom," where couples danced in the dark as a precaution against enemy bombing

raids. For all that, Hawaii was no place for an ambitious jazzman. When the war ended, Tapia settled on the mainland for good. But big bands didn't want ukuleles, so he played the guitar, working for such swing luminaries as Charlie Barnet. Eventually settling near San Francisco, he carved out a niche teaching, doing studio sessions, playing in TV orchestras and working as a sideman in band after band.

For more than 50 years, he

retary who, Tapia said, "sang like Billie Holiday."

Then Cleo died of cancer at 60. Soon she was followed by Barbie, Tapia's wife of 64 years.

"I lost everybody I loved," he said. "I still cry almost every day."

Depressed, he wandered into a music store one day in 2001. He figured he would get his old guitar fixed and maybe teach his great-grandchildren a few chords. But he started fooling around with a ukulele, throwing elegant jazz riffs into tunes like "Little Grass Shack." The crew at the store was transfixed.

"They said, 'Who are you?'" he recalled.

The ukulele was surging back into favor. Ukulele clubs had taken root, and students started treating it as a folk instrument instead of a gag.

"We have much more serious players now," Yasui, of the University of Hawaii at Manoa, said. "It's not guys in raccoon coats strumming and singing silly songs."

Urged by friends, Tapia started attending ukulele sessions at a senior center and teaching again. At a Fullerton museum show about Hawaii, he ran into Buck Giles, leader of a Hawaiian band called the Essential Resophonics.

"Ever hear of Bill Tapia?" Tapia asked slyly.

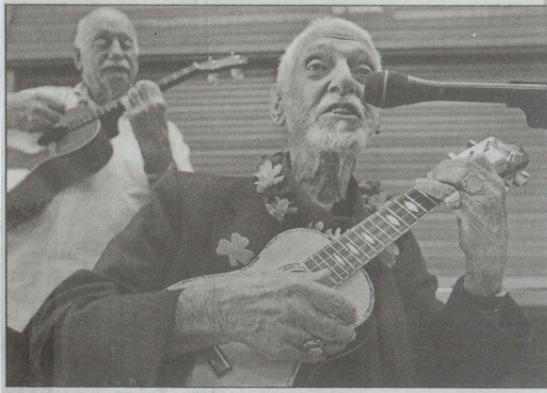
"I think he's already passed away," Giles responded.

Tapia let him know otherwise. He took Giles up on his invitation to sit in for a song or two and quickly became the star attraction.

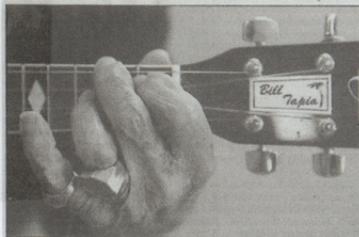
"We just gave him the stage," Giles said.

The two hit it off so well that the group backed up Tapia on his current CD, "Tropical Swing," a production of a small Hawaiian label called Moon Room Records.

In 2002, Tapia's friend and former manager, Alyssa Archambault, arranged for him to play at the 75th anniversary of



STILL STRUMMING: Bill Tapia performs before a gathering of ukulele players at the Oasis Senior Center in Newport Beach. Accompanying him on a baritone ukulele is Bill Brough.



EXPERIENCED HAND: Tapia, who took up the ukulele as a child, once performed at 94 despite a freshly broken wrist.

the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, the grande dame of Waikiki hostilities.

"He's amazing," said Archambault, 27, who got to know Tapia while tracing her family's Hawaiian roots. "He'll tell you he's not the best singer, but he'll look at some lady in the audience and just melt her heart."

At the hotel celebration, Tapia was the only musician who had played at the Royal Hawaiian's grand opening in 1927. Reporters flocked to him for reminiscences of the Jazz Age crowd in their tuxes and gowns. "We didn't get dinner in 1927," he told the Honolulu Star-Bulletin. "This time, we got fed!"

Tapia had been one of the Royal Hawaiian's half a dozen "musical drivers," uniformed chauffeurs who conveyed wealthy guests around the island in gleaming Packards. With Diamond Head as a backdrop, the drivers would break out their instruments and croon Hawaiian songs to their delighted passengers.

Back at the hotel, Tapia made extra money giving lessons to stars like Gable, Durante and Buster Crabbe. "They just wanted to learn a few chords so they could clown around at parties," he said.

Tapia said he even gave a few lessons to Arthur Godfrey.

Later, Godfrey became a popular TV talk-show host whose trademark was his ukulele.

This month, Tapia will be admitted to the Ukulele Hall of Fame at a convention in Santa Cruz.

"He just seemed a natural," said Sue Abbotson, a college English teacher in Rhode Island and a director of the Ukulele Hall of Fame Museum.

Seeking a permanent site, the museum is a collection of instruments, sheet music, aging photos and ukulele whatnots scattered among its directors' homes.

A portrait of Tapia has been commissioned; one day it will hang next to those of Godfrey and other ukulele celebrities, such as Manuel Nunes.

Nunes was a Portuguese craftsman who brought the fore-runner of the ukulele to Hawaii in 1872. When he was a boy, Tapia said, he lived across a dirt lane from Nunes and bought his first ukulele from him for 75 cents.

Connections like that make Tapia yearn for the islands.

"When I lived there, I couldn't wait to go live on the mainland," he said. "But I was a fool. I'd love to go back and look out at the beach, and rest under the coconut trees and watch the pretty girls pass by."

To hear an audio of Bill Tapia on the ukulele, go to la-times.com/tapia.

FRIDAY
April 23, 2004

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Price:
50¢

Orange County's information source since 1905 • For breaking news, visit us online at www.ocregister.com

Ukulele ace has got the world on a string



PAUL E. RODRIGUEZ, THE REGISTER

FOREVER YOUNG: Bill Tapia of Westminster beams as student Ben Patao of Los Angeles plays a piece on the ukulele during a lesson.

A VINTAGE SOUND

Bill Tapia will play gigs all weekend and be inducted into the Ukulele Hall of Fame. Not bad for 96.

By **TOM BERG**
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

WESTMINSTER
Think you're busy? Try keeping up with Bill Tapia, 96, who took a break from giving private ukulele lessons this week to hit the road performing in five cities in three days. Nine-hundred miles round trip. Oh, and tonight he'll be inducted in the Ukulele Hall of Fame.

"It's crazy," Tapia said Thursday from a cell phone in his souped-up PT

Cruiser heading to Santa Cruz. "They think I'm 16 years old."

Maybe because he acts that way.

Beside him in the car sat a friend called King Kukulele, a sort-of comic Tiki minstrel.

"This weekend, I'm going to hear a lot of ukulele players," said the king, a ukuleleist named Denny Moynahan, 39, formerly of Buena Park. "But I

SEE UKULELE • PAGE 4

More about ukuleles

- Bill Tapia will be inducted into Ukulele Hall of Fame tonight at Uke Fest West, which continues through Sunday in Santa Cruz. For information, see www.billtapia.com.

- You can listen to Tapia's music at www.ocregister.com/audio/news/tapia/.

- Hall of Fame Museum was founded in 1996 in Duxbury, Mass. www.ukulele.org

- Information on "Ukulele Man" documentary on Bill Tapia produced by Walking Iris Films is at www.walking-iris.com/films/UkuleleMan.html

- Ukulele player tunes instrument to song "My Dog Has Fleas." Tuning of strings is G/C/E/A.

