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Encore: Kamakahi & Inglis' Kalaupapa tribute, Poke Run with Sean Na'auao

The poignant songs and haunting stories of Kalaupapa – the isolated peninsula of Moloka'i that was a place of exile for some 8,000 people with leprosy (known today as Hansen's disease today) – provided the climax of the recent West Coast concert series by slack key musicians **Dennis Kamakahi** and **Stephen Inglis**, touring with fellow Hawaiian music virtuosos George Kahumoku Jr. and Richard Ho'opi'i. But those who wanted to hear more (or who missed the performances the first time around) are in luck: Kamakahi and Inglis, the former teacher and student who collaborated on the recent Kalaupapa-inspired album "[Waimaka O Helelei](#)," return to Northern California this week as headliners of a new set of gigs, with special guest (and producer) **Patrick Landeza**.

The three slack key artists/singer-songwriters perform Thursday (April 12) in Concord, Friday in Point Reyes Station, Saturday in Monterey, Sunday in Redwood City, April 19 in Berkeley, April 20 in Grass Valley, April 21 in Sacramento and April 22 in Sonoma; visit www.landezapresents.com for details and tickets.



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All three have special connections to *Moloka'i nui a Hina*. As Inglis explains in the album notes (and in concert):

Many a Sunday of my youth was spent at Hale Mohalu, a residential treatment facility for Hansen's disease patients in Pearl City on Oahu. By the 1970s, Hale Mohalu had become a gathering place and melting pot for activists with deep concern for human rights, dignity for Hansen's patients, Hawaiian rights and the grand dream of world peace. This was our church. Many of my aunts and uncles who now called Hale Mohalu home had spent much of their lives in Kalaupapa. I would not realize how profound the experience of Hale Mohalu had been until I began my regular visits to Kalaupapa as a 30-year-old.

Kamakahi, an ordained minister who says his Moloka'i-born grandfather "was the head of a mule train who used to bring the mail and taro out of Hālawā Valley," shares the experience of having performed regularly for Hansen's disease patients. His concerts began at Kalaupapa, which had become a leper colony in 1866, although it offered little more than a place to die for those who first arrived there. With the advocacy of St. Damien, the soon-to-be-canonized Mother Marianne Cope and Hawaiian monarchs and religious leaders, conditions gradually improved; with the advent of curative drugs in 1946, those with Hansen's disease could be treated instead at Hale Mohalu. Still, another 40 people were admitted to Kalaupapa between 1949 and 1969, when the quarantine policy officially ended, according to [Ka 'Ohana 'O Kalaupapa](#). Those who remained were given the right to live out their lives at the settlement even after the remote enclave became a [national historical park](#) in 1980; fewer than 10 were still alive when Kamakahi visited last year.

The song "[Waimaka O Helelei](#)" ("Tears Falling From Heaven," see video below) was inspired by a visit by Kamakahi in 1975, when he played for a terminally ill patient. "She had no arms, no nose, but a bright smile, and when I finished singing a song to her, she smiled and applauded with what was left of her arms, which were two stumps," Kamakahi said at the recent Yoshi's concert, adding that she died later that day. As he elaborates in the liner notes, "...the sound of her applause was louder than the sound of thunder. I was overcome and burst into tears. She had shown me that she accepted her deformity and her soul was about to be released. She passed away that day. And so the song is a joyous one because I knew that in the next world she would be whole again. That changed my life. There is no sadness in a place built on it. There is only hope and faith."

Landeza, whose new album *Kama'alu* includes Kamakahi's "Pūpūkani oe," is related to "Uncle Dennis" on his Moloka'i-born mother's side. The Berkeley native has recently been bringing Hawaiian musicians – including Kamakahi, Inglis and [Cyril Pahinui](#) – to the island to perform at the Hotel Moloka'i under the auspices of the recently formed [Ho'olupa Hawaiian Cultural Foundation](#), which he co-founded. Landeza will head back to Kaunakakai for another free performance on May

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19. “I’m honored to be able to give back to this community, which has taken me in over the past few months,” Landeza said. “I feel that this is my second home.”

And speaking of encore performances, tickets go on sale today for the second annual Poke Run, which takes place from 4 to 7 p.m. May 20 at Newark Pavilion. The event includes a poke contest with famed chef **Sam Choy** and **Bruddah Derrick De Motta** as celebrity judges and samples for all; a three-course “island dinner”; music by the Bay Area’s **Ka Nalu** and a grand finale by beloved recording artist **Sean Na’auao**. Tickets are \$40 in advance, \$45 at the door (although it’s expected to sell out); go to www.kanaluproductions.com for ticket outlet locations.

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Y_P_W 4:36 PM on April 10, 2012

Kalaupapa was recently the answer to a quiz on a national park website that I check out regularly.

<http://www.nationalparkstraveler.com/item/national-park-mystery-spot-39-revealed-saintly-father-lived-and-died-there>

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