

SONG COMPOSITION AND PERFORMANCE:  
EDUCATIONAL TOOLS OF PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT

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## ABSTRACT

Although a consensus exists that music is a powerful force and can be used as a vehicle to accomplish multiple endeavors—to express their identities; perpetuate histories and worldviews; and teach, conscientize, and mobilize others on a broad range of political and social issues—there is minimal research on how to actualize these endeavors in music classrooms. This study examines the process involved in guiding five students through the composition and performance of their songs in a Hawaiian Ensemble music class at Windward Community College. Using the case study approach, three overarching questions are examined

- Does the process of song composition empower students?
- Does the song composition itself empower students?
- In what ways are students empowered through the performance of their song compositions?

The analysis of data reveals that students feel empowered by the song composition process, the song itself, and the performances of their songs. In particular, this study finds that the song compositions are empowering because the students are able to identify multiple projects of empowerment in which their songs play roles. The students also note that the collaborative learning strategies used in the class give them senses of community without diminishing their senses of ownership over their compositions. They agree that the collaborative songwriting and performance activities help them become more confident in articulating their feelings about issues that impact their lives. As well, the participants talk about how their songs (composition and performance) can be used to conscientize others about issues important to them.

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# CHAPTER 1

## ‘ŌLAPA KA UILA I KĀNE‘OHE

### Introduction

‘Ōlapa ka uila i Kāne‘ohe

*The electricity flashes at Kāne‘ohe*

My study was conducted at Windward Community College in the district of Kāne‘ohe on the island O‘ahu. The title of this chapter comes from the song *Kāne‘ohe*<sup>1</sup> written by Abbie Kong and Johnny Noble that celebrates the arrival of electricity to the town. The line that I have chosen as the title of this chapter compares the electricity to lightning flashing in Kāne‘ohe. This flashing light or electricity brought the benefit of sustained light for the people who lived there at the time.

The image of the lights flashing in Kāne‘ohe is also metaphorical for the enlightening of students’ minds who attend Windward Community College and participate in music courses that teach song composition. The Hawaiian word ‘ōlapa means to “flash like lightning” and is an appropriate metaphor for the process that music students experience throughout the composition of their songs. They, too, have moments or flashes of enlightenment pertaining to new musical concepts or theories that they are learning to apply. When the students perform their compositions, they shed light on issues that are important and relevant to their lives. They become the “flashing lights” in Kāne‘ohe as they learn the process of song composition and performance. They realize that, like the people of Kāne‘ohe who benefitted from the introduction

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<sup>1</sup> *Kaneohe*, words and music attributed to Abbie Kong & Johnny Noble (Copyright 1937)

of electricity, they benefit from the opportunity to take part in an innovative music curriculum at Windward Community College.

### **Song Composition and Performance**

When I introduce the song composition project to my students, I categorize my students as follows. Those who

- are excited because writing a song is something that they have always wanted to do but just lacked the skills,
- are relieved by the song composition project under the notion that writing a song is much easier than writing a research paper,
- realize the big task at hand and look forward to the challenge of creating an original song composition, or
- are terrified to compose a song and would prefer to write a research paper.

With this variation in responses, my challenge is to get students to see that their original song composition projects are more than just assignments. I explain that their projects are educational tools to teach them about musical concepts and how to apply them. Composing songs helps students (1) better understand musical keys and the chords that coincide with the keys in which they choose to write their songs, and (2) better understand rhythm, meter, melody, and the wordsmithing that accompanies lyricism. I explain to my students that their projects are opportunities for them to have agency in their curriculum because they are allowed to compose songs on issues that they find to be relevant and interesting.

Kuh et al. (2006) argue that when students are engaged in the process of creating curriculum, desirable learning outcomes include enhanced critical thinking and higher levels of achievement. When students are given agency in their curriculum, they begin to understand that



they are not just receptacles of knowledge, but they are also contributing to the learning process and, thus, in a sense, are teachers as well (Freire, 2006). It is empowering when students begin to exercise their voices in curricular activities.

There are names for these curricular pedagogies of connection. Some of the names that are assigned are authentic learning (Pearce, 2016), connected learning (Ito et al., 2013), integrated curriculum (Kelly, 2001), and culturally-relevant education (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). All these pedagogies focus on the learners' involvement in curricula development and on connecting learners to the content that is being taught. There is also an emphasis on the collaboration of teachers and learners in the class.

Jagersma (2010, p. 3) writes about “student voice” in curriculum and says it is “the systematic inclusion and empowerment of students in the decision-making processes of schools.” The word empowerment is relevant here since my dissertation focuses on the empowerment of students through song composition and performance. Pinar (as cited in Fung, 2017, p. 19) states “the emphasis of curriculum should not be on narrowly formulated objectives and standardised testing but on empowering both students and teachers to develop and express their own identities, whereby ‘scholarship can enable them to speak.’” Garcia (2014, p. 10) echoes this sentiment, “the power and possibility of tapping into students’ passions are undeniable, particularly for students who often feel invisible or marginalized in mainstream educational discourse.”

As a music educator, igniting the passions of my students is something that I view as critical for their progress in learning music. Violinist Mark Wood adds to the conversation on the critical role that passion plays in music education. He says (as quoted in Templeton, 2017, para. 33):

Music is an emotional thing. So it needs to be taught emotionally. Yes, we have to teach the nuts-and-bolts of it, the tools a musician learns and uses. But tools aren't the engine. Your passion is the engine. So you first have to fire up a passion for music, then encourage them to learn all of those tools in making their music as good as it can possibly be.

I have experimented with different techniques to ignite the passions of my students and have found that the most successful tool is song composition. The song composition assignment is one that I use with my level two students at Windward Community College. Level two means that the students have successfully completed a semester of one of our introductory music performance courses. Many of the students who enter the level two course have been playing music for only one semester and, as such, are still at a relatively beginner level in their music studies.

In her book *‘Ōlelo Nō‘eau*, Pukui (1983, p. 227) cites the Hawaiian proverb “Ma ka hana ka ‘ike. *One learns by doing.*” Learning by doing is central to writing a song. My students are required to put the theoretical music concepts that they have learned in class into practice. By composing songs, they have opportunities to better understand the musical concepts of keys, along with the chords that coincide with those keys in which they choose to write their songs. I have found that composition helps them to better understand rhythm, meter, melody, and the wordsmithing that accompanies lyricism. All these mechanics of music are important when students are learning, but song composition also aids students to find their voices, solidify their identities, and provide them with platforms to be heard.

## **Personal Empowerment**

For the past four years, I have been experimenting with the role that song composition and performance play in providing curricular agency to students while at the same time linking class content to relevant issues, student interests, and opportunities. My experiences observing the nature of the musical and personal growth of my students during the process of composition and their performances are the impetus for my research.

The overarching question explored in my study is, “How does song composition and performance serve as a tool of empowerment for students?” I use the definition of empowerment by Lorraine Gutierrez (1995, p. 149)—“increasing personal, interpersonal or political power so that individuals can take action to improve their life situations.” My study, then, examines the different ways in which my students feel empowered by the song composition process, the composition itself, and the performance of their songs for others. My research analyzes the areas in which students are empowered, and the roles that their composition projects and performances play in that process.

In preliminary surveys, polls, and discussions with former students, a large number expressed that the composition assignment was one of the most difficult, yet fulfilling, in their college careers. They shared how they thought they were just writing songs but learned that their projects gave them voices and platforms to bring attention to issues that they wanted to start discussions on or bring visibility to. Students revealed that they were more comfortable talking about their selected issues after the composition process because of the meaningful research that they had done on their topic.

## **Projects of Empowerment**

In her book, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Smith (1999) includes a chapter titled, “Twenty-Five Indigenous Projects” (pp. 142-161). These projects focus on the act of empowering indigenous people to self-determine in all matters pertaining to their health and wellbeing. Many of the issues and projects described by Smith are applicable to any person or group seeking to be empowered on any issues deemed important. She explains that “The projects are not claimed to be entirely indigenous or to have been created by indigenous researchers” (p. 142). Since this research examines how song composition and performance can be tools of empowerment, I have selected ten of the projects as measuring tools for my students’ song compositions. As I mentioned, while Smith discusses these projects with an indigenous focus, I choose to examine them through a broader lens of any student who has the potential to be empowered through the composition and performance of music. In my research, I refer to these as “The projects of empowerment.” They are:

- Celebrating Survival
- Remembering
- Intervening
- Connecting
- Envisioning
- Networking
- Naming
- Protecting
- Creating
- Sharing

In my literature review, I define the nature of each project, especially its role and purpose. I also provide examples of existing songs to illustrate Smith's projects as they relate to personal empowerment. Since the students have agency over their song topics, self-identifying which project/projects of empowerment align with their songs is of critical importance.

As someone who has composed several songs and helped others compose songs, I have been empowered through the process of song composition and performance. From experience, I know that sometimes the empowerment is the completed song. Sometimes the process of writing the song has helped me to better articulate and express my feelings on issues that I care about. This process of song composition has made me a better problem solver and a more critical thinker. The concept of music composition helping with problem solving is supported by the research of Lupton and Bruce (2010, p. 7):

It seems that exploring ideas is particularly prominent and developed in the school-based music composition literature where trial and error and experimentation is actively encouraged, where composition is taught as 'creative problem-solving', and where the process is usually deemed more important than the product.

The process of song composition and "creative problem-solving" is what has helped me most in my own personal empowerment.

In this research, I position myself as someone who has been empowered through song composition and performance. In doing so, I add my own story of empowerment to those of the participants in my study. Writing my own story of empowerment demonstrates how song composition and performance are tools of empowerment for me.

## **Research Questions**

The overarching research questions for my study are

- Does the process of song composition empower students?

This question examines how the process of composing a song may empower students. The impetus for the empowerment may come from their ability to express their thoughts and ideas on issues that they care about. They may also feel empowered due to the curricular agency in the song composition process.

- Does the song composition itself empower students?

This question examines the ways in which the final composition can be empowering. My students' song compositions are analyzed to see how they fit into the projects of empowerment.

- In what ways are students empowered through the performance of their song compositions?

This question examines how students felt after they had the opportunity to perform their songs for others. This performative aspect not only refers to the performance of their final songs but to the times that they performed portions of their songs to their peers to receive feedback.

## **Outline of Chapters**

Chapter 1 provides a brief overview of the song composition project. The chapter introduces key terms and concepts defined during the class sessions, including empowerment, and the projects of empowerment.

Chapter 2 is autoethnographic in nature. Here, I reflect on my journey as a musician. I discuss different periods of my musical growth and the sense of empowerment that I acquired during each period. To best illustrate this, each period is represented by a song that was part of

my development as a musician. I also discuss my relationship to the research, including the research process, and I discuss my relationship to the participants in my study.

Chapter 3 presents examples of how music is used in many cultures as a powerful tool of expression. I then explain in detail each of the projects of empowerment and how music plays a role in each of them. After establishing the multifaceted nature of the power of music, I introduce the educational pedagogy of “connected learning” and discuss how this pedagogy is empowering and beneficial to students in academic achievement and in helping them bridge the gap between the acquisition of knowledge and real-world applications.

Chapter 4 gives an overview, including the curricular goals, of the music course that I teach at Windward Community College. I also discuss the procedural methods that I employ in the class to help students understand the purpose of the song composition project.

Chapter 5 presents the methodology and method for my study. I discuss why the case study method is an appropriate method for my research and how I have set up my study. I provide a profile of the participants in my study, and I describe the method I use for analyzing the data I gather on them. After discussing my research procedure, I present some of the data gathered on my students (i.e., pre-song composition survey, choice of three issues exercise, issue elaboration and narrowing, message of the song, lyrical approach, musical approach, three titles exercise, basic song outline, final lyrics, final video, post-song composition survey). My raw data on each of the five participants are presented in Appendixes A, B, C, D, and E. Last, I analyze the data gathered on each student to gain insight as these data relate to my research questions.

Chapter 6 offers insight into how the song composition project can be implemented in other music classrooms. I discuss themes and patterns that arose from my analysis of the data on each student. These patterns include ways that my participants were empowered by the song

composition and performance project. I also comment on ways that the study can be expanded (e.g., a focus on the use of song composition and performance to empower indigenous or other underrepresented communities).



## CHAPTER 2

### E ALA Ē

#### Introduction

The song, *E Ala Ē*<sup>2</sup> was first recorded by Hawaiian music icon Israel Kamakawiwo‘ole. The title can mean wake up, rise up, or mobilize. The word “ala” in the title can also mean “path.” The title of this chapter is appropriate because it explores my path of personal empowerment based on my musical experiences. I discuss key experiences and moments in my musical and educational career paths that caused me to arise, wake up, and mobilize.

This chapter also explores positionality in my approach to my research. Holmes (2020), says that when researchers examine their positionality, they examine their relationship to the subject being researched, the participants in the study, and the research process. He recommends that researchers take a reflexive approach and consistently analyze how their experiences influence and shape how they conceptualize, conduct, and disseminate their research. He says, “A reflexive approach suggests that, rather than trying to eliminate their effect, researchers should acknowledge and disclose their selves in their work, aiming to understand their influence on and in the research process” (p. 3). Researcher reflexivity allows for the contextualization of researchers’ positions and influences over the research procedures and data findings. Most importantly, it allows for an examination of the ethics or truthfulness of the researchers. Smith (1999) suggests that it is not possible to separate researchers’ positionalities from their findings, so a thorough exploration of their positionality is critical.

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<sup>2</sup> *E Ala Ē*, words and music by Leo Anderson Akana, recorded by Israel Kamakawiwo‘ole, *E Ala Ē*, (Big Boy Records, 1995).

This chapter starts with a description of my journey to empowerment through music. It ends with a discussion on how that journey affects my positionality in this research project.

### **Kamuela Boy**

Kamuela boy, my dear boy,

You no more hilahila

The song *Manuela Boy*<sup>3</sup> was the very first song my father taught to me on the ‘ukulele. I was seven years old at the time and he told me the song was called “Kamuela Boy” because it was written about me. I loved the song and played “my” song at family gatherings, and with my dad when he performed in Waikīkī. It was not until much later when I heard the song on the radio and confronted my dad about the lyrics that he finally came clean and let me know that the real name of the song was actually *Manuela Boy*. The second line of the first verse “You no more hilahila” perfectly describes me as a kid. Like the boy described in the song, I had no shame or hilahila. I was eager to perform for anyone who would give me the time. This song is representative of my early years of learning music.

Music has always been a big part of my family life because both my parents were music majors while in college. My mom is a talented pianist who plays the organ professionally for weddings and my dad is a professional Hawaiian musician who has been performing for over forty years throughout the islands. Under these circumstances, it is obvious that I was destined to play music. In these early years, I started down two paths of music, I learned the piano from my mom and the ‘ukulele from my both my mom and dad.

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<sup>3</sup> *Manuela Boy*, words and music by Johnny Noble (Copyright 1938).

My father was the bread winner of our family while my mom took care of five children. He worked as an airline baggage handler five days a week and played music six nights a week from nine at night until one in the morning. Because of his hectic work schedule, my mom was my main music teacher, and the piano was my primary instrument. My mom told us children that we could start piano lessons after our seventh birthday. I am the middle of five children and when I was young, I admired my two older sisters' abilities to play the piano because, to my ears, they were amazing. I could not wait until my seventh birthday.

When I finally turned seven, I had my first piano lessons and I loved the experience..., for about two weeks. It did not take long for me to realize that I hated playing the piano and that I wanted to return my birthday gift. I was not good at playing like my sisters and I felt as though I was on the trajectory to be the first non-musical child in our family. I begged my mom to let me quit. Not surprising, my mom developed an immunity to my pleadings and excuses for why I could not practice on any given day. It seemed as though the piano would be my life-long affliction. My whining, moaning, begging, and crying made each practice take much longer than it had to. I turned a five-minute task into what would sometimes take forty-five minutes to an hour.

At the age of twelve, my cries and pleas were finally heard. I said, "Mom, please let me quit playing the piano. I will try playing the 'ukulele and dad can teach me." After five years of her own frustration, she agreed. I had never felt such liberation. I was excited to never have to play another beginning piano song.

My experiences learning the 'ukulele were vastly different from my purgatory of playing the piano. I had no formal, sit down, 'ukulele lessons. There were a few times when I formally learned how to play some chords with my mom, dad, and older siblings, but my real lessons

began when I was allowed to go to work in Waikīkī with my dad to watch him play music.

Unlike my piano lessons, these experiences turned out to be everything I ever wanted. I would dress up like my dad with an aloha shirt, black pants, and dress shoes. I was his biggest fan and wanted to be just like him. I would take my ‘ukulele to his shows and beg him to let me play along on stage with him even though I knew only the chords, “F” and “C7.” When the crowds thinned out around 11 p.m., he would let me play with him. I proudly (and loudly) played my two chords for every song he played. I did not care if my chords were wrong or if I did not know the song, when he let me play my ‘ukulele on stage with him, I was in heaven.

I believe that it was this insistence on playing on stage that inspired my dad to teach me “Kamuela Boy”, his rendition of *Manuela Boy*. I was the embodiment of the boy who had no “hilahila.” I started to think that audiences were there not to see my dad play music but to see me. In my mind, my dad and his music partner were my back-up band. During their breaks, I would continue to “entertain” the people who were there and would have them watch me doing the splits or bending my toes all the back to touch my foot. I was truly a *Manuela Boy* because in hindsight, I cannot believe I was not embarrassed to do those things! Eventually, I started singing the song “Kamuela Boy” on stage with my dad. Being able to sing into the microphone only increased my desire to be on stage and perform. I did not have a lot of skill on the ‘ukulele, but I did know that I absolutely loved playing the ‘ukulele and performing with my dad. This really fueled my desire to learn and play music.

My educational experiences with the ‘ukulele were in sharp contrast to my educational experiences with the piano. In hindsight, I realize that the biggest difference was my “connection to the curriculum.” The piano songs did not interest me and I saw no future in playing the piano. On the other hand, with the ‘ukulele, I saw real world application for what I was learning. I

watched people clap and cheer my dad on as he played music. I had a list of my favorite songs that he performed and begged him to sing them every time I listened to him play music. I completely saw value in playing the ‘ukulele and Hawaiian music.

Faking my ‘ukulele skills on stage with my dad went on for a couple of years until one night when I was about eleven years old, I asked my dad to call me up to play on stage and he said, “Eh, you gotta start really learning the ‘ukulele! You are getting to the age where it isn’t cute any more for you to fake it.” I knew he was right and that my “Kamuela Boy” years were coming to an end. I wanted to continue playing with him so I made a plan to focus on the ‘ukulele.

### **Hawaiian Sup’pa Man**

When I first heard the song *Hawaiian Sup’pa Man*<sup>4</sup> recorded by Israel Kamakawiwo‘ole, it made me feel proud to be Hawaiian. One of the lines in the song that stood out to me was “before there was a Clark Kent, there was a Hawaiian Sup’pa Man.” As a pre-teen in Hawai‘i, all of the super heroes that I knew were from America or somewhere else. This song caused me to consider that there were “super heroes” from Hawai‘i of whom I should be more aware. As I had just started to officially learn the ‘ukulele, this was one of the first songs that I learned. To me, it was cool, it sounded good, and it made me proud to be Hawaiian. As well, I took my ‘ukulele with me everywhere. Every day at school during most of my recess periods, I found somewhere to play my ‘ukulele. This resulted in expanding my repertoire to play and sing songs in addition to *Manuela Boy*. Sometimes, my dad called me up to perform *Hawaiian Sup’pa Man*.

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<sup>4</sup> *Hawaiian Sup’pa Man*, words and music by Del Beazley, and first recorded by Israel Kamakawiwo‘ole, Facing Future (Mountain Apple, 1993).

My dad's music partner, Larry Reis, was an 'ukulele teacher with his own studio in Nānākuli. He saw that I wanted to learn the 'ukulele so one day he drew out a chord sheet with the chromatic scale or musical alphabet. The chord sheet had only sixteen chords on it. He told me that if I learned those sixteen chords and the chromatic scale, I could play any chord. At first, I was confused and thought, "What do you mean if I can play these chords, I can play any chord?" He explained to me that every chord position on the sheet could be moved up the fretboard until I ran out of frets. He told me to take the chord sheet home and practice. While I was practicing the next day, the chord sheet and his lesson started to make sense to me. I felt completely empowered to play the 'ukulele. Within a matter of two weeks, I knew how to find every chord on the 'ukulele. When I went to play music with my dad and Uncle Larry, I realized that I could play along with almost every song they played. I realized that if I really wanted to play music with them, I needed to learn how to play more music that incorporated the Hawaiian language. My dad and Uncle Larry were music students of Hawaiian music legend, Kahauanu Lake, so most of their musical repertoire was Hawaiian language music. By learning more Hawaiian language music, I became familiar with the songs that they played.

As I started learning more Hawaiian music, I became inspired to learn the Hawaiian language. I decided to take a Hawaiian language class as an elective course in intermediate school. It was important to understand and correctly pronounce the Hawaiian language songs that I wanted to perform. Because I was learning the Hawaiian language and Hawaiian music, I also became more aware of Hawaiian politics, especially issues of sovereignty. During my studies, I learned about the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom government, the banning of the Hawaiian language in schools, and the punishments Hawaiian children were subjected to if they spoke Hawaiian in school.

This awakening turned me into a sponge for knowledge. While I never took formal ‘ukulele lessons, I did try to learn from anybody who took the time to teach me. Most of my ‘ukulele lessons happened in the car with my dad while he was driving. I knew that if I played enough wrong notes that he would not be able to stand it and would teach me for his own sanity. At this period in my life, I played music all day long, and people in my house often became irritated when I would play music while they were trying to watch a television show. As a result, I was banished to my room to play music and my dad would sometimes come up with clever assignments for me. He would say, “Go play ‘ukulele in your room. Close the curtains and turn off the lights. This will help you play without looking at your hands.” Assignments like this were actually mutually beneficial because my family would not have to listen to me practicing and, at the same time, I got really good at playing the ‘ukulele without looking at my hands.

One night when I was thirteen years old, watching my dad play music in Waikīkī, Uncle Larry called me up to the stage during the group break. He finally thought that I was ready to learn how to sing the harmony for their Kahauanu Lake music repertoire. Right there during the break he recorded all my harmony parts on a cassette tape and told me to go home and practice. Before long, I felt as if I was a part of their group. My dreams had come true, I had progressed as a musician, and I was singing and playing music with my dad and uncle. Little did I know everything was about to change.

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, 1999, I came home from school on a beautiful afternoon. The phone rang and I heard my mom gasp, “Oh my goodness, what happened?” My mom listened for a minute while becoming visibly emotional and said, “Oh Kalā, I can’t believe it.” The conversation continued for a minute and when my mom hung up the phone, she let us know that Uncle Larry had passed away. Our whole family was in shock, he was only forty-three years old.

This experience was traumatic for me. Uncle Larry was not just someone who I loved; he was one of my main music teachers. It was his method of teaching that had opened my mind to understand the ‘ukulele. His passing had a major effect on me emotionally and musically. Now, when I teach ‘ukulele at the college level, I model my approach after his. I give my students the same chord sheet with sixteen chords that he gave me.

### **Holo Wa‘apā**

The song *Holo Wa‘apā*<sup>5</sup> was written by prolific Hawaiian music composer Lena Machado. The song is about a canoe riding experience of the composer. It is said that when she was young, she would watch the Waikīkī beach boys ride waves with their canoes and want to do that too. One day, surfing legend, Olympian, and famous beach boy Duke Kahanamoku took Machado to catch waves in his canoe. Later she wrote about the exhilaration she felt (Motta et al., 2006). In keeping with the fun she experienced, she used many metaphors within the song that were risqué in nature. It is said that if she thought the audience was right, she would use motions to help people better understand those metaphors. The audience would erupt in laughter (Motta et al., 2006).

Perfecting the art of watching is critical for any musician. Like Machado watching the canoes, I would watch my dad play music in Waikīkī and think, one day I am going to be like him. Shortly after the tragic passing of my Uncle Larry, my dad said I was ready to be his new music partner in Waikīkī. My uncle had prepared me by teaching me their arrangements and I had progressed musically enough to play along with all their songs. I decided that this was my opportunity to enter the music profession.

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<sup>5</sup> *Holo Wa‘apā*, words and music by Lena Machado (Copyright 1944).



Throughout my high school years, I spent my weekend evenings playing music with my dad in Waikīkī. I absolutely loved it. During these formative years, I met and played music with Hawaiian legends such as Mahi Beamer, Kahauanu Lake, Genoa Keawe, Leina‘ala Haili, Ledward Ka‘apana, and Dennis Kamakahi. Being able to play Hawaiian music with these people not only motivated me to expand my Hawaiian music repertoire, but it also helped solidify my identity as a Hawaiian and as a Hawaiian musician.

While attending high school, I often tried to encourage my friends to play music with me, but many of them cringed at the idea of playing “old” Hawaiian music. Reggae music was popular among my peers and my friends preferred playing this style. They would sing songs with Jamaican accents and musical qualities. I remember feeling irritation that they referred to this type of music as “roots,” and I would say to myself, “That is not my roots.” For a while, this stance made me less musically popular with my classmates who wanted to play island reggae music.

In 2000, my school friends and I formed a music group and we played both Hawaiian music and some island reggae music. That year, they convinced me that we should enter a statewide high school music contest called “Brown Bags to Stardom.” The other group members felt that we should play an island reggae song to be competitive. I begrudgingly agreed. We entered the contest and we did not even win our own school competition let alone the statewide competition. The next year, I was able to convince a group of friends to play a Hawaiian song for the “Brown Bags to Stardom” contest. The song that we chose to play was *Holo Wa‘apā*. We came up with a very clever arrangement that had four-part harmony and guitar solos, while musically painting a picture of the song’s subject. This time, we ended up winning the competition at our high school and were chosen to represent our school at the statewide

competition. In the statewide competition, we placed fourth. I noticed that we were the only group that performed a Hawaiian song. I felt sad that others my age did not play Hawaiian music.

Upon reflection, I realized that, among Hawaiian youth, Hawaiian music had not found a place. After the competition, a number of people from the audience told us they were proud of us for playing a Hawaiian song. They also said that they wished more young people our age played Hawaiian music. Their comments and my experience validated for me an understanding of the inextricable connections among identity, cultural values, and music.

### **Wailele ‘o ‘Akaka**

When I first started to play music professionally with my dad, one of the songs that I performed with him was *Wailele ‘o ‘Akaka*<sup>6</sup>. In all my Hawaiian music performances, I sang the correct words and melodies, however, my dad saw that I was missing the connection to the music. A few months after I started playing music with him, we went on a trip to the island of Hawai‘i. There, we visited ‘Akaka Falls. I had no idea what was going on and was under the assumption that we were just going sightseeing. As we stood there taking in all the surrounding beauty of ‘Akaka Falls, my dad saw a teaching moment and said, “Take a look at this waterfall, take a picture in your mind... and now when you play the song *‘Akaka Falls*, go to ‘Akaka Falls.”

My dad’s lesson touched my very soul. It was the moment of connection that forever changed the way that I connect to Hawaiian music. As I stood at the lookout, I soaked in every element my eyes could see, every scent my nose could smell, and every sound my ears could

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<sup>6</sup> *Wailele ‘o ‘Akaka*, words and music by Helen Parker (Copyright 1934).

hear. I breathed the air more deeply and deliberately as if to have it become a part of me. As the cooling mist touched my skin, I allowed the feeling to linger. The place became a part of me and I became a witness to the song. The words and melody of the song filled my mind.

Malihini ku‘u ‘ike ‘ana  
*As a stranger, I saw*

Kahi wailele ‘o ‘Akaka  
*The waterfall of ‘Akaka*

Kau mai lā i luna  
*From high above*

Lele hunehune mai lā i nā pali  
*The water flows gently down the cliff*<sup>7</sup>

Interestingly, the lyrics of this song describe the experience that I was having. Since my visit to the falls, I play and sing *‘Akaka Falls* with a feeling of special connection. Spiritually, I feel as though I am singing to the waterfall regardless of where I am in the world. All my senses recall how I felt in that place and on that day with my dad.

I made multiple connections through this song. The first connection I made was to the place and environment of ‘Akaka Falls. The second connection was to a special memory with my dad where he helped me understand that music is much more than lyrics, notes, and rhythm. The third connection was to the story of the song. I connected to the lyrics that document the experiences of a stranger seeing the waterfall for the first time. My fourth connection was to Helen Parker, who is the composer of the song. I realize that as I sing, *Wailele ‘o ‘Akaka* (commonly called *‘Akaka Falls*), I echo her experience. The lyrics of the song preserve her story,

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<sup>7</sup> Translation by Kā‘eo Kawa‘a

but the melody and rhythm embody the tone, and the voice used to tell her story. Now when I sing this song, Parker's experience and my dad's and my experiences are inextricably linked. Through this experience, I learned that music is about connecting to people, places, and stories.

When I entered college, I decided that I was going to be a music major. I was so excited to learn all the intricacies of music. Unfortunately, the experience was initially different from what I had hoped. I went from being one of the best musicians in high school to being surrounded by musicians who had much more technical ability than I had. At the time, I did not read music proficiently. In my life, I had only read music during the years when I was learning the piano from my mom. I was having horrible flashbacks and once again feeling like I was not as musically talented as the other students around me. Most of the other students read music proficiently and had years of experience with some of the theoretical music concepts that we were learning. I was musically illiterate since I had only ever played by ear. When we were told to clap rhythms that were written in our books, I would just copy those who were clapping around me often adding extra claps or claps that were out of time. I was embarrassed that I could not read music, but the embarrassment motivated me to put in extra effort to learn to read music.

Within a short time, I learned to read music enough to keep up with my classmates. While they were better at reading music, I was able to make up for my lesser reading skills by relying on my ear for music—a skill that I finetuned through playing music with my dad and others in the Hawaiian music scene. When we did ear training exercises, all those who would giggle when it was my turn to clap the rhythm for the class were no longer giggling. I very quickly made strides in my reading and technical musical abilities. I realized that reading music was empowering in the same way reading literature must have been empowering to common people after the invention of the printing press. I could now play music that others had written

without needing to hear it first. I could also musically notate songs so that others could read my music.

During my senior year, I had the opportunity to help arrange some Hawaiian songs for our college music program. The first song that I chose to arrange was *Wailele 'o 'Akaka*. With the help of music professor, Barlow Bradford, I was able to arrange the song in six-part harmony. My goal with the arrangement was to capture with music what I saw when I experienced 'Akaka falls with my dad. I arranged the song so that the listener could hear what I experienced. When we performed the song at a music showcase, the president of the school was in attendance, and he enjoyed the arrangement so much that he asked if we would perform it as a part of the school's jubilee event. We agreed to be a part of this large event that primarily featured the music faculty and the Honolulu Symphony. As a senior in college, playing *Wailele 'o 'Akaka* at this event was a wonderful culmination of my music schooling. I went from being the student in a music program who could not read music to a student who helped arrange a song for the Honolulu Symphony. As I sang and played my guitar with the Honolulu Symphony, I listened to notes that were the result of my ideas and reflections of my memories. Amidst all the sounds of the music, I could hear my dad saying, "When you play *'Akaka Falls*, go to *'Akaka Falls*."

### **Mō ke kī la—Make**

After graduating from college with a degree in music, it felt great to have been trained in both western music and in Hawaiian music. The trainings were very different, yet both were extremely valuable to me. One day, I had a realization that I had a lot of musical and cultural knowledge but I was not using my knowledge in a way that was particularly empowering to me. I always felt that there was great power in music but realized that in my performances, I was

always telling other people's stories. While I was helping to keep their voices alive, I knew that there were issues that I wanted to give voice to with my music.

One way to lend my voice to issues that were relevant to me was to compose music. While working on my master's degree in education, I helped to form the Hawaiian music trio, Hi'ikua. We played plenty of classic Hawaiian music but we also wanted to leave music behind for those who would come after us. Our ancestors had left us a lot of music that helped us to understand how they viewed the world and relevant issues of their time, so when my music group was preparing to do our first recording, I knew I was going to compose a song on an issue that I was passionate about. I wanted to use my composition to share a message to those who would listen to our recording.

I decided to write a song with the people of Hawai'i as my intended audience. I wanted to write about issues that Native Hawaiians were facing—ways to overcome societal, governmental, and cultural oppression. I chose to write my song with a lot of kaona or multiple meanings. Like Machado in her writing of *Holo Wa'apā*, I chose to use a style of composition that would resonate with my intended audience. I knew they would be familiar with Hawaiian poetry and would be aware of the nuances carried in my words. The melody for my song was also part of the kaona because the playful sounding music disguised the serious undertones of the song's message.

I based my song on the Hawaiian literary story by Moses Nakuina called *Kalapana, Ke Keiki Ho'opāpā o Puna*. This is a story that I studied while taking a Hawaiian language class in college. It is about a boy named Kalapana who learns that his father was killed by a tyrannous chief named Kalaniali'iloa who lived on the island of Kaua'i. Kalaniali'iloa had a desire to build a fence around his home that was made of human bones. He planned for the bones of Kalapana's

father to be part of this construction. For the Hawaiian people, the use of human bones in this way is considered the highest form of desecration of a deceased person's body. Kalaniali'iloa was highly trained in the art of ho'opāpā, which is a battle of wits that uses riddles. Participants in this exchange use their knowledge of topics such as winds, flowers, rains, constellations, or fish to entangle their opponents—thereby making the loser appear ignorant. Kalaniali'iloa's strategy was to challenge to a battle of wits with the understanding that the loser would be killed. Due to his great skill, many people were killed because of losing to him and he used their bones to build his wall. One of the people who was killed was Kalapana's father.

Kalapana's mother's family members were the masters of ho'opāpā and it was her brothers who trained Kalaniali'iloa in this art. Before his father left on his journey to challenge Kalaniali'iloa, Kalapana's mother told her husband to see her oldest sister Kalaoa, since she was highly skilled in ho'opāpā and could provide him with the knowledge needed to defeat Kalaniali'iloa. Confident in his abilities, Kalapana's father ignored this advice and challenged Kalaniali'iloa and lost.

When his father died, Kalapana was a young boy. He decided that he would learn the art of ho'opāpā and challenge Kalaniali'iloa with the goal of restoring honor to his father's bones. Just like his father, Kalapana learned everything he could from his mother before she advised him to go see her oldest sister Kalaoa to learn how to beat Kalaniali'iloa. Unlike his father, Kalapana heeded the advice of his mother and met with Kalaoa and she provided him with the knowledge that he needed to defeat the chief.

When the people saw that Kalapana, a young boy, was the challenger, they laughed at him because they felt he had no chance of beating the highly skilled Kalaniali'iloa. Kalapana insisted, however, on the challenge even though he was warned that the consequence of losing

was death. Kalaniali‘iloa agreed to challenge. It did not take long for him realize that the boy challenger was a formidable opponent. Kalapana eventually won the battle of wits, but his victory was without repercussions. In the process, he had to kill his two uncles who trained Kalaniali‘iloa in the art of ho‘opāpā.

Due to kapu, Kalapana could not just kill Kalaniali‘iloa because chiefs were viewed as embodiments of akua, so he crafted a plan to demonstrate to the people that this chief was not a true ali‘i or deity. During their battle of wits, Kalaniali‘iloa became very hungry but could not leave the house in which they were having their contest. Kalapana had come prepared and offered Kalaniali‘iloa very rich foods like pig and poi. Before long, Kalaniali‘iloa had to use the bathroom. Kalapana said that he would allow Kalaniali‘iloa to go outside to use the bathroom as long as he ate his excrement. While Kalaniali‘iloa was engaged in eating his excrement, Kalapana called to the people to witness the event. When the people saw Kalaniali‘iloa eating his own excrement they knew that he was not an akua and so they took courage and killed him.

After this battle, the people of Kaua‘i were able to take down Kalaniali‘iloa’s wall and reclaim the bones of their ancestors. Kalapana accomplished his mission to restore honor to his father and reclaim his bones. At the end of the story it says, “He ulu iki ia no ka nekina, pā aku pā iho ha‘alulu ke kahua mai-ka,” which in essence is saying, “Surely the small stone without blemish will hit, knock down and shake the foundation” (He moolelo no ke keiki hoopapa o Hawaii, 1917).

### **Mō ke kī la—Ola**

When I read this story in college, I knew that I wanted to write a song about it to celebrate the strength of the Hawaiian people to rise from their subjugation by America. The song I wrote is called *Mō ke kī la—ola*. The story of Kalapana uses the line, “Mō ke kī la-make”



which means to sever the different parts of the body until death occurs (Nakuina, 1994). The title of my song plays off of that line using the ‘ōlelo no‘eau, “Ho‘okahi lele ‘ana, he make, Ho‘okahi lele ‘ana, he ola” (K. Krug, personal communication, 2009) This literally translates to “When one jumps, there is death, when one jumps, there is life.” This ‘ōlelo no‘eau poetically references the pueo or owl when it hunts. When it jumps or takes flight something will die, but, because something dies during the pueo’s hunt, the pueo lives. The title of my song suggests severing or removing the American occupation of Hawai‘i so that we can live our lives as we want—with the autonomy to preserve, perpetuate, and restore honor to our ancestral memories, worldviews, and social identities.

Here are the lyrics for my compositions with a brief explanation for each verse:

No Kalapana kahi kama,

i ka ‘īnea makua ‘ole.

‘O kai ‘imi aku

i ka iwi kaula‘i a Kaua‘i.

In the above verse, it says that Kalapana is a child who was born into the unfortunate circumstance of not having a father. It also says that the things that he would search for are the dried bones of Kaua‘i. This verse lets the audience know that Kalapana became aware of the injustice that was done to his father.

Metaphorically, Kalapana is representative of Native Hawaiians who are born under the illegal occupation of America. It suggests that we, like Kalapana, want to restore honor to our ancestors who suffered because of the injustices that were placed upon them.

He meha nō ka helena,

a i ke alo o Kalaoa,

‘O kai kanu iho

i ke kī hō‘ola makua.

This verse tells of Kalapana’s journey to find his Aunt Kalaoa, and gain the deep knowledge and strategy that was needed to defeat Kalaniali‘iloa in a ho‘opāpā contest and, in doing so, restore life and honor to his father. I wrote this verse as a metaphorical reference to the condition of modern-day Hawaiians and the importance of finding knowledge that would lead to liberation from American occupation. This verse also implies that the Hawaiian people cannot win against the physical might of America, so, we must use intellect and knowledge to restore honor and life to our ancestors and to ourselves.

Aia ke ali‘i loa i ka lani,

He lani ho‘omāino.

‘O kai kauoha a‘e,

‘o ia nō ia ‘o Maleka.

This verse compares the tyrannous Kalaniali‘iloa with America. In the first line “Aia ke ali‘i loa i ka lani” I purposefully jumble his name to dishonor him. I also continue the theme of comparing his behavior of dishonoring the bones of Kalapana’s father with the subjugating illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom government and eventual occupation.

A hiki mai ke kama,

ua ka‘a nō ka pōhaku,

‘O kai ‘ai ‘ia mai

e ka lani waha ‘ula.

This verse says the Kalapana came and the stones began to roll; and Kalaniali‘iloa with the brown mouth ate the stones. Kalapana is viewed as harmless, much like Hawai‘i is perceived

as a small group of islands. It goes on to say that the stones fell, meaning that all is not going well for Kalaniali‘iloa. This line is a play on the ‘ōlelo no‘eau “Kaka‘a ka pōhaku, ‘ula ka pali” (Judd, 1974, p. 7). This literally means that when the stones fall, the cliffs are brown as in a mudslide. This saying is also a graphic description of the buttocks and defecation. The verse says that the stones fell and that they were eaten by the chief with the brown mouth (instead of brown cliffs); Kalaniali‘iloa who was not a true ali‘i.

On another level, this verse is referencing the song *Kaulana nā Pua*<sup>8</sup> or *Mele ‘Ai Pohaku*. The line that says “Ua lawa mākou i ka pōhaku, I ka ‘ai kamaha‘o o ka ‘āina” suggests that the people of Hawai‘i would rather eat rocks than take the money of an oppressive government. This verse suggests that Native Hawaiians have been “eating the stones” for long enough and it is time for those who oppress us to eat stones.

A hua a pane a pane mai,

He Hawai‘i ke kama.

Ola nā iwi makua.

Ola i ka iki ‘ulu o Kanēkina.

The last verse uses the line from the story “A hua a pane a pane mai.” This saying has similar meaning to, “Riddle me this, riddle me that.” In this verse, I give listeners the key to understanding the intention of my song by informing them that Kalapana represents Hawai‘i. The verse implies that, like Kalapana, Hawaiians have learned the key to restoring honor to the

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<sup>8</sup> *Kaulana nā Pua*, words by Ellen Kekoaoihiwaikalani Wright Prendergast and Music by J. S.

Libornio, the lyrics published in Hawai‘i Holomua on March 25, 1893 are identical to the lyrics included in the sheet music published in 1895 by J. S. Libornio.

bones of our ancestors. The key to restore honor is not the use of force, rather, it is the use of intellect—such as understanding and implementing international laws that will return sovereignty to the Hawaiian people.

He kī, he kī, mō ke kī la make.

He i‘a kau i ka mokukele,

Ma ke kai ola o Puna,

He ola, he ola, mō ke kī la ola.

Throughout the song, this chorus emphasizes that the key to defeat Kalaniali‘iloa was the knowledge given to Kalapana by his Aunt Kalaoa. During the ho‘opāpā, Kalapana’s uncle, Halepaniho listed all of the different moku or islands in which there was life. He listed the major islands in the chain and some of the lesser-known ones. When he was done with his list, he was sure that Kalapana would lose and began to taunt him about his imminent death. Kalapana then went on to explain to his uncle that he missed one island that had life and met the requirements of a “moku” that his uncle set forth. He shared with his uncle that he did not mention Moku Ola of Puna. This was the beginning of the end for Kalaniali‘iloa because his teacher of ho‘opāpā was about to be killed and he would be left to challenge Kalapana on his own.

In this chorus, I purposefully left out reference to Mokuola because it was the secret of Kalapana to win the game of ho‘opāpā. This was a lyrical suggestion that in some instances, it can be advantageous to guard some of our cultural knowledge, and political strategies in our struggle for liberation and reclamation of self-governance.

In my professional career, composing this song allowed me to express my feelings about the unjust treatment of Hawaiians in our own land. Recording the song was empowering because

I gave voice to an issue that was important to me. Composing, recording, and performing my song continue to provide me with many opportunities to discuss its meaning and its intention.

### **Concluding Comment**

All my musical and educational experiences, struggles, and moments of empowerment influence how I position myself in my research. Holmes (2020) says that acknowledging positionality is important because no matter how reflexive researchers are, it is impossible to be completely objective in the conceptualization, conduct, analysis, and dissemination of research. His argument that researchers can never objectively describe reality is true in my case. This chapter details significant influential events in my life that have shaped my researcher lens—this includes my philosophical, personal, and theoretical beliefs and perspectives that shape how I view my research process, as well as the potential influences on my research (e.g., age, race, cultural beliefs, political beliefs, and social class). By acknowledging how my experiences, assumptions, and beliefs have shaped my role in my research, I am able to illustrate how I am a dynamic part of my research, especially how I might intentionally and unintentionally influence the outcome.

## CHAPTER 3

### KAULANA NĀ PUA

#### Introduction

The song *Kaulana nā Pua* was composed by Ellen Wright Prendergast at the request of members of the Royal Hawaiian Band who abhorred the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom. It is a fine example of a song composition that gives voice to a relevant issue at the time. While the original title of the song was *Mele ‘Ai Pohaku* or The Stone-eating Song, it is now most known as *Kaulana nā Pua*. This newer title is often translated to “Famous are the Children.”

This song title is appropriate for this chapter because the song was written to reinforce identity, speak truth to power, and protest the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom government by mobilizing the people of Hawai‘i to unite against those who were trying to oppress them. The song is a collective memory that teaches us today about the people of Hawai‘i at that time—how they felt about those who took part in the overthrow, to whom their loyalty was pledged, and how they felt about the attempt at annexation.

This chapter provides an overview of the literature that is pertinent to my study. It is presented in four sections under the following headings.

- The Power of Music
- Song Composition as a Tool
- Projects of Empowerment
- Connected Learning Pedagogy

## **The Power of Music**

### Introduction

Music is a powerful tool that can serve many different functions in society such as conscientizing, influencing, telling and preserving stories, mobilizing, and facilitating the creation and preservation of social and individual identities. It is no secret that there is power and influence in music. Nearly every religion and culture use songs and music in their practices because of this understanding. American composer de Azevedo has long been part of popular music and served as the musical director for performers such as Sonny and Cher, Michael Jackson, and The Osmonds. In his article (1985, para. 17) examining popular music he asks, “Who hasn’t had the experience of tapping his toe to a certain song without even realizing he was tapping until after the fact?” The implication is that music can influence people on both a conscious and subconscious level.

Throughout history there have been some who use music to speak truth to power, advocate for equality, and elevate the minds around them. There have also been less than noble uses where music was used to assist in subjugating and oppressing groups of people. During periods of colonization, dominant groups often used music as a tool to gain power and influence over those whom they were seeking to colonize. Lidskog (2016, p. 32) explains that “a cultural elite, by redefining a musical genre, drew boundaries between those who belonged to a dominant (national) culture and those who did not.”

In many cases when colonizers entered a country, they would suppress or ban the native music and replace it with music that promoted a message that they wished to ingrain into the minds of the colonized. McLean (1999) writes about how almost immediately after the Protestant missionaries came to Hawai‘i in 1820, they started singing schools. Hawaiians were very

intrigued with the new style of music and vocal production and within a matter of ten years, according to Kanahele (2012) who wrote the book, *Hawaiian Music and Musicians*, there were hundreds of singing schools throughout the island chain. It was no mistake that the music taught in these singing schools included hīmeni or Christian hymns. These hymns constituted effective tools used by missionaries to share their new belief system with the people of Hawai'i. According to Kanahele, by 1830, there were 52,000 hymn books printed and sold. It is not farfetched to assume that these books were shared among families and that this music was also performed or shared with those who did not own a copy of the hymn book, facilitating the spreading of Christianity among the Hawaiian people.

This new style of music challenged traditional Hawaiian music and was intended to replace it. Hawaiians were told their music was too sexual, endorsed polytheism, and therefore, should be set aside. As a partial result of this new style of music, many Hawaiians converted to Christianity and were quick to conform when told by missionaries that their traditional singing and dancing had to be abandoned (McLean, 1999). This form of proselytization had a detrimental effect on Native Hawaiian identity. For Hawaiians, music was the means to communicate with deity; it was a part of daily life; and it contained and preserved their worldview, history, genealogy, and identities. When their music and hula were banned, all the traditional knowledge and practices were immediately challenged. In essence, it became criminal to live, think, and worship in traditional Hawaiian ways.

### Identifying a Sense of Self

While it may seem that the link between identity and music is intuitive, it was not found in the literature of ethnomusicologists until the 1980s and was not thoroughly explored until the 1990s. Rice (2007) writes about the construction of identity and how it is linked to power



relations. He asserts that dominant society often decides which identities are valued and dignified. Those in power control education, standards, morality, literature, and media. In this way, dominant groups can assert their collective identity as the standard or proper way to view the world. In fact, the historical portrayal of non-dominant groups is often one of helplessness and reliance upon the dominant group.

Shortly after the arrival of the missionaries to Hawai‘i in the early 1800s, cultural practices such as hula, oli, and mele were highly discouraged and often met with punishments or fines for public performances. This paved the way for a new kind of music to take the stage as the “sound of Hawai‘i.” After the illegal overthrow of Hawai‘i, Hawaiian identity faced increased challenges. In 1896, it became illegal to teach the Hawaiian language in schools. This ban of the language in educational settings lasted four generations (Hawaii DOE: History of Hawaiian education, n.d.).

The gravity in subjugating the culture/language of a people is best expressed by Campbell (as cited in Wallace, 2009, para. 7), “Once a language dies, the knowledge dies with it. With a loss of language comes a lost link to the past.” Similarly, Wallace (2009, para. 10) writes that “tribal languages are seen as a threat to national loyalty and identity.” Thus, the attempt to eradicate the Hawaiian culture and language and insert English as the standard language of education made it easier for the illegal provisional government to assert a “unified, ‘national’ identity” (Wallace, 2009, para. 10). For cultures that have oral histories, many of the implications of language loss are exacerbated by the loss of musical identity. The music of these cultures carries their histories, collective memories, worldviews, and national and social identities. Like the loss of language, the loss of music impacts a non-dominant group’s link to the past.

Non-dominant groups have found ways to use music to challenge the identities that are sometimes forced on them by the dominant groups. Rice (2007, p. 31) asserts:

In some instances, music can literally give voice to the powerless to label themselves and to express their existence as a group and their “nature” in contexts where the powerful either do not acknowledge their existence or label and identify them in ways they find objectionable.

Hawai‘i in the 1970s was a time when the term “stupid kanak” was often used to describe Native Hawaiian people. During the early Hawaiian Renaissance, a period when Hawaiians began to awaken and reassert their cultural identity within the public consciousness, the term was sometimes used to label those who were trying to be Hawaiian and reclaim their identity (J. Santos, personal communication, April 29, 2021). Hawaiians were tired of being told who they were, how they should act, and that they should just accept the changes that were occurring on their islands.

Despite this renaissance, Hawaiians were portrayed as happy-go-lucky, passive, carefree, and lazy (Silva, 2006). This portrayal can easily be found in the Hapa-Haole music of the previous eras of Hawaiian music. One such song is *That’s the Hawaiian in Me*<sup>9</sup>, a song that reinforces the way that Hawaiians were being depicted:

I don’t like shoes upon my feet  
To be at ease is such a treat  
And smile to everyone I meet  
That’s the Hawaiian in me

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<sup>9</sup> *That’s the Hawaiian in Me*, words by Margarita Lane and music by Johnny Noble (Copyright 1936).

I love to sing and dance for you

And give a lei to cheer you thru

And with that goes a kiss or two

That's the Hawaiian in me

It's great to be in Hawai'i

And be a native too

But it's greater still to play around

And carry on as I do

So right out here in Hawai'i

Where everything is heavenly

I'm just as happy as can be

That's the Hawaiian in me

At the time of the publication of this song, the Hawai'i visitor industry was focused on promoting Hawai'i as a national and international tourist venue; as such, the myth of the passivity of Hawaiians was used to lure visitors to this land of aloha <sup>10</sup> (Ohnuma, 2008). While songs like this may seem inconsequential, the perpetual inculcation of ideas like these greatly affected Hawaiian identity.

In El Alto, Bolivia, the indigenous music group called Wayna Rap uses hip-hop music for social change and revolution. In the indigenous language of Aymara, Wayna means "young."

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<sup>10</sup> The Aloha Week Festivals started in 1946 and promoted the idea of welcoming visitors by singing, dancing, and having unconditional aloha for them (About Aloha Festivals, 2019). When the United States of America officially claimed Hawai'i as the 50th state, the state officially passed legislation to deem Hawai'i "The Aloha State."

The young members of this group use music to preserve their language, culture, identity, and to challenge the identity assigned to them by a hegemonic educational system. Wayna Rap's compositions provide a platform to begin dialogue about critical issues impacting the Aymara people and to possibly mobilize them to join their cause; "Education turns us submissive, turned our parents submissive, it turns us shy, afraid, now we want our education to be one that spreads the pride of being who you are, with our songs we tried to revalorize that pride" (attributed to a member of Wayna Rap as cited by Tarifa, 2012, p. 410). With this same idea, award winning musician and Hawaiian activist, Santos, wrote a song called *O Malia*. He explains that the message to Hawaiian people in this song is that:

This is our home, this is where we are from, this is what we have, we are special in this context and we need to be proud of that. And no matter what they do to the surface of the land, as long as there is a connection between your spirit and the place that's your home, there will always be a sense of hope and the sense of, I can achieve. (J. Santos, personal communication, December 8, 2008)

Shelemay (2006) suggests that music facilitates the construction of social identity and social memory. These collective memories help non-dominant groups to maintain their unique identities in a world that encourages globalization and assimilation. Music has a way of saying it is okay to be proud of your language, your culture, your history, and your land, even though a project of engineered assimilation has been promoted for generations.

#### Perpetuating History and Worldview

Current Hawaiian musician and composer Kainani Kahaunaele (2021, p. 127) touches on the cultural value embodied in our music when she writes:

Mele—Hawaiian songs and chants—are our primary sources, literature, and vehicles to celebrate, revere, grieve, recount, love, and request. The carefully woven lyrics are primary, holding Hawaiian language knowledge and worldview, pearls of wisdom from our ancestors, and experiences of the haku mele, or composer.

Many of the songs that we label as traditional were written at a time when western music was still new to Hawai‘i. McLean (1999) states that this generation of Hawaiians found ways to put its rhythmic patterns, along with its singing styles, into this new music that was brought by the early missionaries. As they grew in their understanding of western music, they used music as a tool of empowerment and began to compose western music in the Hawaiian language. This helped to perpetuate not only the Hawaiian language and compositional techniques, but also the worldview that permeated the Hawaiian community at that time. The lyrics of a songs provide a glimpse into what life was like for the composers and how they viewed the world and the relevant issues impacting their lives. Hawaiian language lyrics were a way of mitigating the pernicious effects of colonization.

Hawaiians were not the only people to use music to preserve culture and resist colonization. Other examples can be found within the histories of the Rastafarians as well as the people of Trinidad. Aho (1987) writes about how the people of Trinidad were not allowed to play their music so, like the Hawaiian people, they adapted and played new instruments while maintaining their traditional beats. These innovations resulted in the creation of the steel drum which is now now an iconic instrument of Trinidad.

Lidskog (2016, p. 25) points out that “Music not only functions to express and maintain pre-existing identities, it also provides resources for contesting and negotiating identities and

constructing new ones.” As cultural groups are increasingly exposure to new ideas, practices, and beliefs, their music is increasingly reflective of that exposure. The music becomes a timestamp reflecting how the people of the time dealt with the circumstances and ideals to which they were exposed. Lidskog (p.32) adds, “Several studies stress that collective memories are formed, preserved, and defended through music.” Kahaunaale (2021) writes that music is the housing for Hawaiian literature. This is especially true of cultures whose histories are primarily oral.

These histories are best comprehended by those who are a part of the culture, or group, within which these musical memories are contained. The depth of these histories is understood by those fluent in the language and imbued with the cultural experiences necessary to decode the meanings, messages, stories, and memories memorialized in the songs. Campbell (1991, p. 101) says, “...music is not a universal language: it communicates fully only to those who know the unique treatment of its components.” Lidskog (2016, p. 32) writes about music to “transfer a historical consciousness over generations and maintain and shape a diasporic consciousness, which becomes an important part of a group’s cultural identity.” His research defines diaspora in a general sense as groups that are displaced from their geographical roots. This transfer of consciousness or worldview can span multiple generations in a way that allows future generations to experience, albeit vicariously, both the successes and struggles of their ancestors.

### Music and Social Mobilization

Dunu and Uzochukwu (2015, p. 12) write about how social media can facilitate social mobilization. In their article, social mobilization is defined as “a means of inspiring people to active action and engagement concerning social issues. The key for mobilization is to inspire and motivate individuals to go from the comfort of their homes to engage in development actions.” During the Hawaiian Renaissance, Hawaiians used music as a means of getting communities

involved in social issues. George Helm, a Hawaiian musician and activist, says, “What we needed was to get Hawaiians active and off their ass. Music is the easiest way I know because people tune into music...that’s what I use music for” (as cited in Lewis, 1991, p. 54). Fayoyin and Nieuwoudt (2017, p. 2) write, “While essentialists and poets portray music as a universal language and part of humanity’s code of narration, it has also been instrumentalized, harnessed as a tool of mass communication.” Okeke (2019, p.33) argues that this mass communication means that it can also be harnessed as a tool of social mobilization.

It is not always necessary for the music itself to be political in nature for it to be an effective tool for mobilization. In some instances, the music can be used merely to attract an audience. This strategy is often employed for rallies, protests, and political movements.

Musician, Jerry Santos was a part of many movements during the Hawaiian renaissance of the 1970s. He used his music to mobilize people in movements like the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana, the water rights issues of Waiāhole and Waikāne, and the forming of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA). Santos recalls that when OHA was formed, he and his group played music at many of the meetings that were held to spread information and garner support for the initiative. He says their music was an effective way of attracting people to the event, where they would become aware of what was happening, and become involved in effecting a successful result for the initiative. The music was a more effective and attractive device that operated at a deeper level to promote active involvement rather than merely saying, “Come to a political meeting so we can give you some information” (J. Santos, personal communication, December 8, 2008).

The current polarizing issue in Hawai‘i is the construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope on the summit of Mauna Kea. Many Native Hawaiians consider Mauna Kea sacred and feel the telescope will desecrate that sacred space. On July 17, 2019, 33 kūpuna were arrested on the

slopes of Mauna Kea for blocking the construction crews from accessing the the upper slopes. While the kūpuna were being arrested, the people witnessing the arrests continuously sang songs in the Hawaiian language to strengthen each other to remain in a state of peace so that they could adhere to a practice referred to as Kapu Aloha. The people who were mobilized as part of the resistance realized that any aggression or agitation on their part would provide law enforcement with cause to forcefully remove them. The music gave them support, kept them strong, and allowed them to focus on the purpose of their protest.

Keola Donaghy was able to locate 62 songs that were written “within the first five months or so after the arrests” (K. Donaghy, personal communication, April 27, 2021). Some of the songs call on people to stand and protect the mountain, some speak of pride for the Hawaiian nation, others remind listeners that we have seen this type of behavior before, and some capture the pain and trauma of the transpiring events. Hawaiians have long used songs to express their feelings on issues like this. Songs like *Kaulana nā Pua*, *All Hawai‘i Stand Together*<sup>11</sup>, *Nānākuli Blues*<sup>12</sup>, *O Malia*<sup>13</sup>, and *We are the Children*<sup>14</sup> are examples of songs that were written to document the existence, power, and pride of the Hawaiian people.

Within this context, we can understand why Hawaiians immediately began to compose songs for Mauna Kea when they needed people to join in the cause. This mobilization technique was one that had already been proven successful. On August 11, 2019, a group of Hawaiian musicians organized a worldwide “Jam 4 Mauna Kea.” The idea was that at 11:11a.m. on that day, anyone who supported the cause of stopping the construction of the telescope would play

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<sup>11</sup> *All Hawai‘i Stands Together*, words and music by Liko Martin (Copyright 1976).

<sup>12</sup> *Nānākuli Blues*, words and music by Thor Wold and Liko Martin (Copyright Aug. 16, 1973).

<sup>13</sup> *O Malia*, words and music by Gerald K. Santos (Copyright Feb. 2, 1976)

<sup>14</sup> *We are the Children*, words and music by Liko Martin (Copyright Aug. 16, 1973)



the same song at the same time. Thousands of people participated from more than one hundred different locations around the world. Some of the places with participants were Australia, Canada, Italy, Germany, Aotearoa, Belgium, Japan, Taiwan, New York, California, Utah, Virginia, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, Illinois, Nevada, North Carolina, South Carolina, Montana, Missouri, and Maryland. Many famous local artists performed in the “Jam”. They also helped to promote it and mobilize participants.

### Public Pedagogy

Music’s inherent performative nature makes it a great vehicle for mass communication. Rice (2007) adds that besides the capacity music has for promoting mass communication it can also act as a public pedagogy. Sandlin et al. (2010, p. 1) define public pedagogy as “spaces, sites, and languages of education and learning that exist outside of the walls of the institution of schools.” Music facilitates the sharing, disseminating and learning of information in settings outside of formal education. Haycock (2015, p. 427) suggests that protest musicians can be thought of as “radical adult educators” whose audiences or consumers are adult learners. He maintains that even in a capitalistic culture, music can give “voice to alternate views in and of society, offering possibilities for individuals to think critically and learn about the world in which they live, and possibly act to change it.” Williams (2010, p. 221) writes that hip-hop music can be “a springboard for discourse” allowing non-dominant groups to chime in on issues of identity, hegemony, and social justice. This actually applies to all forms of music that is socially conscious.

Santos (personal communication, December 8, 2008) says that as a musician during the Hawaiian Renaissance, his group Olomana was very popular in the islands, and because of their notoriety, a member of the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana reached out to him and asked if his group

would use that notoriety to help spread information about Kaho‘olawe and why it was important that the United States military discontinue their bombing of that island. Santos was specifically asked if Olomana could sing the song *Mele o Kaho‘olawe*<sup>15</sup> at their shows. The song speaks of the significance and value of Kaho‘olawe to Hawaiians and would be influential in supporting the cause. It suggests that the people of Hawai‘i should stand together in an effort to grant the land peace. Not only did Olomana perform the song, but they recorded it and became more actively involved in helping to give voice to the movement. In effect, they became public educators who conscientized the public by using their platform as popular musicians.

Santos recalled that, after his performances, people would often come up to him and ask him for more information on the issues he was presenting. One of his biggest inspirations and mentors, Aunty Emma DeFries, told him, “Music is a way of gently getting people to listen to what perhaps they wouldn’t listen to in a different context” (as cited by J. Santos, personal communication, December 8, 2008). Santos explains that this phenomenon occurs because, “Music has that ability to touch people’s emotions and their spirits and present information, all at the same time” (personal communication, December 8, 2008). In explaining how music presents information, Haycock (2015, p. 436) writes:

Protest music texts become not only the vehicle for the transfer of knowledge, but also the texts and pedagogy made available to audiences for learning. Protest music texts come to represent, contain and are the vehicle for the explicit encodings and transmission of meanings, values, ideologies, constructions of teachings.

Like Santos, socially conscious musicians use their platform and popularity to give voice

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<sup>15</sup> *Mele O Kaho‘olawe*, words and music by Harry Kunihi Mitchell (Copyright 1977).

to non-dominant groups. They realize that their sole function is not merely entertainment. Berger (2000, p. 57) writes about protest musicians and their function “to educate, motivate, and raise consciousness...both emotionally and intellectually.” Recordings, streaming, social media, and concerts, all serve to expand the reach music enjoys within a community. Musicians no longer must hope that their song can make it onto mainstream radio stations that often pander to non-political, feel-good music. The “classrooms” of musical artists have expanded and technology has made their “curriculum” more available to the world.

### Conscientizing

Having established music as a public pedagogy, it is important to understand its role in mass conscientization and why it is an effective medium for disseminating information, particularly to groups who might not have the means or desire to access knowledge in traditional educational settings. In many cases, traditional venues of learning have failed them. Tarifa (2012, p. 403) writes that since music is “free and accessible to all, this performative art is a key element in an informal education practice.” She asserts that the lyrics in songs can support the movements undertaken by groups seeking their human rights. She also explains (p. 404) that, “Rather than using violence, the movement uses art to transmit thoughts and raise social awareness.” Sometimes repeated lyrics can help drive home a message or an idea with the melody acting as a mnemonic device, effectuating a reliable transmission of the message.

Music is also a great tool for conscientization because it can defamiliarize the context of a message. Elizabeth R. Romanow (2013, p. 2) says, “defamiliarization causes the audience to confront an object on a different level, elevating and transforming it from something ordinary or practical into something extraordinary, which is considered art.” Santos (personal communication, April 29, 2021) claims that in many political movements, it is easy for speakers

to become impassioned or aggressive in their speech resulting in the message being lost in the delivery. He claims that many people who are not directly affected by the issues will tune out the message either because of the delivery or because of message fatigue. Music provides a way to defamiliarize the context of the message and present the message in a way that is more palatable (Kong, 1995).

Haycock (2015, p. 427) theorizes that while popular culture is often a result of hegemony, “protest music has potential counter-hegemonic effects and influences in public consciousness.” This defamiliarized way of sharing socially conscious messages can help to shift societal consciousness vis-à-vis important issues of inequality. Haycock (p. 427) further explains that music can cause people to “think critically and learn about the world in which they live, and possibly act to change it.” Music’s ability to stay in our minds, or to bring back memories, helps listeners not only to become engaged, but to stay engaged. Most people have at least one song that carries with it specific memories; such a song allows one to relive moments in the past whenever the song is heard. The memory may be a school dance, a first date, or a night with friends, but when that song is heard, the listener is immediately taken to that moment. When socially conscious music is used in this way, the memories elicited by the song can help people to remain conscientized and involved in transformative action.

### **Song Composition as a Tool for Personal Empowerment**

Song composition and performance are forms of storytelling, and storytelling has always been important for people to maintain cultural continuity. Kong (1995, pp. 450-451) says:

...lyrics are not the only ways in which meanings are communicated through songs.

Indeed, music may convey its meanings and values through visuals, rhythms, titles

of songs and albums, the timing of releases and sometimes through the lifestyles of the performers.

Music adds multiple layers of meaning to the stories that are told in songs because the chords, melody, rhythm, and even key signature can give insight to the storyteller's mindset. Musical conventions help preserve the way a composer wants to tell the story. If a story is just written in a book or as a narrative, it is up to the reader to try to recreate the author's voice. With music, composers, who are also storytellers, put the songs to a meter, tempo, and melody all of which ensure that no matter who is telling the story, if their song is performed as the composer intended, the listener can hear and interpret the story as the storyteller intended. Because of a song's melodic structure, even if a composer has passed away or is not the one performing the song, an audience can always hear the composer's voice in the interpretation of the story. The musical structure memorializes the voice the composer intended in the presentation of the story. That is, a song does not merely preserve the story itself—it preserves the way in which it is told.

Stories record instances, events, or feelings that have, in many cases, been passed down for generations. A story that is put to music has the potential to spread its message more broadly, ultimately reaching a wider audience. The music adds emotion to the story, which allows people to connect to it on multiple levels. Waterman (1998), a social, cultural, and political geographer, explains that music is a form of social communication and can be a form of social intercourse. He infers that music can encourage discussions between people who espouse varied social, cultural, or political beliefs. He says, "...music has always been reflective of cleavages within society, an important component of cultural politics" (p. 257). The ability of song compositions to preserve stories, tell stories, articulate circumstances, and create social discourse is powerful.

Throughout history, many composers have used their songs to initiate dialogue, mobilize communities, and to offer information to their listeners about relevant issues that impact their lives. The impact and influence of many songs will outlive their composers. The article, “They Couldn’t Kill His Songs,” speaks about Victor Jara, a popular folk hero and composer from Chile. Jara, who was known for his political lyrics and his guitar playing, exemplifies composers who use music to inform, influence, and mobilize the masses (1998, n.p.). He harnessed the power of his music to become a revolutionary force for articulating the struggle and needs of his countrymen. His music encouraged the people of Chile to become politically active and to challenge the actions of the ruling elite. Many of his songs spoke of the governmentally sanctioned injustices committed against the people of Chile. Jara and his music played an essential part in organizing Chile’s Democratic Popular Unity government under the direction of Salvador Allende in 1970. This kindled a burning enmity towards Jara within the Chilean elite.

On September 11, 1973, Jara was assassinated in a military coup. After his death, many composers wrote songs about his lasting influence. Singer songwriter Near (2002) wrote a verse about Jara in one of her songs called, *It Could Have Been Me*:

The junta broke the fingers on Victor Jara’s hands  
They said to the gentle poet "play your guitar now if you can"  
Victor started singing but they brought his body down  
You can kill that man but not his song  
When it’s sung the whole world round.

As implied in this verse, thoughts, stories, and people can be immortalized through song composition and performance. Volosky (2019) writes that the performances of songs constitute a system of sharing knowledge and experiences. He calls it the “...performance epistemology” (p.

70). He argues that the performance of song compositions can challenge the narratives and histories peddled by the mainstream media and dominant society.

### **Projects of Empowerment**

In renowned indigenous scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (1999, p.142) book, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, she includes a section called "Twenty-five Indigenous Projects." These projects are recommended as ways to empower indigenous communities. She argues that, in the pursuit of empowerment, an important task is finding ways to elevate and amplify the voices, concerns, and relevant issues of groups. While Smith's projects are written specifically to empower indigenous peoples, they also resonate with non-indigenous individuals and groups seeking empowerment.

In creating a framework for my study, I drew on Smith's "Twenty-five Indigenous Projects" and chose ten that music could support. In this research they are referred to as "Projects of Empowerment." The projects are defined in this chapter and examples are given of the link between song composition and performance and personal power. I conduct a lyrical analysis of sample songs here and explain the roles they play in the empowerment of people. Defining the scope of each project and providing examples of the music employed in each is designed to help readers to understand the data and findings of this study. Understanding how the projects are defined is crucial when I analyze how students' song compositions fit into projects, and if they saw themselves as empowered in the song composition process and performance.

### **Celebrating Survival**

Celebrating survival includes celebrating the strength and growth that are born out of struggle, poverty, or adversity of any sort. The celebration can be that of an individual, a group, or a community. The celebration of survival should not be thought of as "getting out" or being

“set apart from” or “leaving behind” those who may have had similar struggles. Rather it is the ability to thrive and find strength while remaining true to and celebrating one’s identity. A person’s ability to understand and celebrate his or her unique strengths that were born out of those struggles helps to avoid victimization (Travis & Bowman, 2011). Many songs have been written to celebrate survival.

One song that exemplifies the celebration of survival was made popular by the Bee Gees called *Stayin’ Alive*<sup>16</sup>. The song was written by three brothers Barry, Robin, and Maurice Gibb. An author of the *Rock Cellar Magazine*, Frank Mastropolo (2020), says that although the song has an upbeat feel, the message of the song is serious in nature and is about surviving the streets of New York. Barry Gibb (as cited in Mastropolo, 2020, para. 7) explains why he thinks the song resonates with listeners. He says:

People crying out for help. Desperate songs... Everybody struggles against the world, fighting all the bullshit and things that can drag you down. And it really is a victory just to survive. But when you climb back on top and win bigger than ever before — well, that’s something everybody reacts to. Everybody.

A second example that clearly fits into the project of “Celebrating Survival” is Gloria Gaynor’s song of women’s empowerment, *I Will Survive*<sup>17</sup>. Before this song was recorded, Gloria Gaynor was a successful singer who was already signed by Columbia Records. The song *I Will Survive* was presented to her during a hard time in her life. A few months prior, during a concert, she fell off the stage and ended up paralyzed from the waist down. Shortly after that, she

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<sup>16</sup> *Stayin Alive*, words and music by Barry Gibb, Robin Gibb, and Maurice Gibb (Copyright 1977).

<sup>17</sup> *I Will Survive*, words and music by Dino Fekaris and Frederick J. Perren (Copyright 1978).



became concerned that her record company was going to nullify the contract for non-performance. Luckily, she had major back surgery and was able to regain mobility. She explains that:

When you hear me sing on my recording of “I Will Survive,” I was actually at the mic in a back brace, believing the song would save my career — and it did. I still love singing it in concert, and on tour I save it for last. Even at home, I sing the song to myself every time I face a problem. It works. (as cited in Mastropolo, 2020, para. 16)

The song speaks about a relationship gone bad and perfectly represents the idea of celebrating survival and becoming stronger. One portion of the lyrics say:

Weren't you the one who tried to hurt me with goodbye

Do you think I'd crumble?

Did you think I'd lay down and die?

Oh no, not I, I will survive

Oh, as long as I know how to love, I know I'll stay alive

I've got all my life to live

And I've got all my love to give and I'll survive

I will survive.

One song that is familiar in Hawai'i is the song, *He Hawai'i au*. Written by Ron Rosha, Alice Namakelua, and Peter Moon, this song is an example of someone who is celebrating his own personal growth. Many people connect to this song because it speaks about wandering away

from home or taking one's home or culture for granted. The composer has an epiphany and celebrates this new appreciation and understanding of his self-identity. The lyrics<sup>18</sup> are:

I kēia pō eia au me 'oe  
*Tonight I am here with you*

Kēia pō ua ho'i mai au  
*Tonight, I have returned*

He loa ka helena ma ke ala hele  
*Long was my journey on the path*

E huli i wahi ma kēia ao  
*To seek a place in this world*

Maopopo a ua 'ike ho'i  
*I now clearly see and understand*

Ka home i loko o ku'u pu'uwai  
*The home within my heart*

Ua ho'i mai au, ke 'ike nei au  
*I returned when I realized this*

'A'ole au e 'auana hou  
*I will not wander again*

Ke maopopo he Hawai'i au  
*For I understand, I am Hawaiian*

This project calls for individuals to celebrate survival after struggle and hardship, with the realization that in many instances, this survival results in strength, fortitude, a better understanding of self, and continued perseverance.

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<sup>18</sup> Translation by A. Namakelua

## Remembering

Smith (1999, p. 146) says that the project of “remembering” is related “...not so much to an idealized remembering of a golden past but more specifically to the remembering of a painful past and, importantly, people’s responses to that pain.” Remembering a painful past is not something that people generally enjoy doing, but it is important in recognizing the way people respond to pain. Aydin (2017, p. 125) proposes that, while remembering is important, individuals or groups who have experienced trauma need to find ways to “banish the trauma” do that it ceases to paralyze them. While these thoughts seem on the surface to be contradictory, they are not. He refers to this process of banishing the trauma as “active forgetting.” He says:

On the one hand, through customs, habits, or rituals, the trauma is remembered in the strongest sense of the word; namely, by making it part of the identity of the victimized culture. On the other hand, through the very same practices of culturally incorporating it, the trauma is also forgotten. (p. 124)

This refers to remembering the painful past while removing the natural traumatic responses that attend those memories.

With regard to remembering and forgetting, music plays an important role in both processes. Feudi (2018, p. 89) says:

Music influences the way the world remembers many events, especially traumatic events. People have the ability to actively forget forms of trauma, meaning that while they cannot completely erase the memories, they can turn them into a heuristic resource so they can continue to prosper.

Feudi (2018) mentions that there were numerous songs written in the 1960s and 1970s about civil rights and about the Vietnam war. Her research suggests that music helped to shape

the memories of that time. The people in her study still remembered the hardships and trauma they endured in the past, but when they listened to the music from that era, they said it took them to a happy place and helped them to push past the trauma.

In the project of remembering, it is important that songs be written about the current circumstances, hardships, and inequalities going on in the world, and not just about past events. Every composer of today will someday be a composer of the past, and thus the songs of today must capture current issues that are relevant. The song compositions can be a way to help those who experience trauma to remember what happened, to respond to it in healthy ways, and to find ways to use it as a catalyst for improvement and growth.

One song that is familiar to people in Hawai‘i is *Hawaiian Soul*<sup>19</sup> written by Hawaiian music lifetime achievement award winners, Jon Osorio and Randy Borden. The song was written for George Helm of the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana (PKO). George Helm went missing at sea while swimming back to the island of Maui with Kimo Mitchell after an unsuccessful attempt to locate Walter Ritte and Richard Sawyer who were hiding on the island of Kaho‘olawe. Helm’s disappearance was a devastating blow to the PKO movement. Helm was not only a well-respected musician, he was also a main spokesperson for the PKO. *Hawaiian Soul* was written to help the PKO and the Hawaiian community to find strength in the loss of Helm and to facilitate working through the trauma that they were experiencing. The song commemorates and remembers all that Helm gave to the PKO. Some of the lyrics are:

I can recall the way your voice would fill the room

And we would all be stilled by your melody

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<sup>19</sup> *Hawaiian Soul*, words and music by Jon Osorio and Randy Borden (Copyright 1979).

But now your voice is gone and to the sea belongs

All of the gentle songs that you had harbored

The lyrics articulate the collective pain that was felt by the composers and the Hawaiian community. The first two lines are clearly an instance of remembering Helm and his role as a leader in the Kaho‘olawe movement. The last two lines recognize that both his musical voice and his voice of leadership within the PKO are now gone. Like many song compositions, there are duplicate meanings that can be derived due to the poeticism in the lyrics.

On face value, the first two lines of the lyrics could be remembering Helm’s versatile and powerful singing voice that had the ability to command the room. Another possible meaning of this verse could be referencing his political voice and ideas that would fill the room and resonate with an audience. Poetically, the “melody” could be the way in which his words and actions were in harmony with each other and organized like a song. In music, the “melody” leads the “song,” and thus the melody could be referencing Helm as the leader or “voice” of the “song”, a possible metaphor for the PKO Movement itself. The last two lines are the realization that his voice and leadership were lost and they would have to find a new collective voice and carry on. The first stanza of the chorus continues:

Hawaiian soul

How could you leave us?

You’ve not been lost at sea

You’re only wandering

Helm is poetically referred to in the chorus as “Hawaiian soul.” The chorus demonstrates the trauma of Helm’s disappearance. The label “Hawaiian soul” can be understood many different ways, from the implication that Helm was the “soul” of the movement, to the idea that Helm

exemplified the soul of all Hawaiians. In the last two lines, the composers try to work out how to cope with this trauma, perhaps in denial of Helm being gone and a hope that, one day, he would return or be found. Another interpretation of these lines can be that not all was lost at sea and that using a spiritual lens, Helm was not lost at all because he was following the calls of his ancestors.

Hawaiian soul

We sing your melody

And send them out to sea

You know the harmony

In the second stanza of the chorus, the composers begin to deal with the trauma of losing Helm and realize that they will have to lead the charge and carry the metaphorical melody that he established. Other voices would need to step forward to lead the movement and now Helm would only be able to support them from a spiritual realm and thus, poetically, he becomes “the harmony.” The loss of Helm was traumatic for many people who were involved with the PKO movement. Remembering his sacrifice ultimately helped to galvanize the people and they looked at him as an example of someone who sacrificed everything to protect the sacred island of Kaho‘olawe.

The role of composition in the project of remembering allows people who are now more than forty years removed from Helm’s disappearance to understand how those in the 70s felt during that traumatic time. It not only provides younger generations with a model for how to deal with trauma but also valorize those who persevere through traumatic times, as exemplified by the PKO movement. Whether it be culture or language loss, challenges to identity, inequality, or

struggle of any sort, song composition helps individuals and groups to articulate those struggles and traumas to find solutions and strength.

### Intervening

The project of intervening is explained by Smith (1999, p.147) as, “the process of being proactive and of becoming involved as an interested worker for change.” Music, particularly song composition, is an effective way to inspire and activate people to bring about changes in their circumstances or the circumstances of others. Kong (1995, p. 448) explains how music has been used to intervene, sometimes for betterment of peoples and sometimes not;

Music is used by the ruling elite to perpetuate certain ideologies aimed at political socialization and the development of a sense of national identity or to inculcate a civil religion that directs favor and fervor towards the ‘nation’. On the other hand, music is a form of cultural resistance, both against state policies and certain socio-cultural norms.

If music can be used for governmental and political socialization, it can be used as a tool for cultural resistance. If composers want to emphasize messages in their songs, they will often have lyrics that repeat throughout the song. The repeated lyrics increase the music’s ability to inculcate ideas into the mind and plays a role in intervening.

One song that has been associated with many social movements over the years is *Get up, Stand up*<sup>20</sup> by Bob Marley and Peter Tosh. The chorus of this song encourages people to intervene while the music itself is intervening by moving people to action through the repetition

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<sup>20</sup> *Get Up, Stand Up*, words and music by Peter Tosh and Bob Marley (Copyright 1973).

of the message to “Get up” and “stand up for your rights.” The chorus is very catchy because not only do the lyrics repeat, but the melody of the lines is also repetitious;

Get up, stand up: stand up for your rights!

Get up, stand up: stand up for your rights!

Get up, stand up: stand up for your rights!

Get up, stand up: don’t give up the fight!

The chorus lyrics repeat the same line three times without any differences. This repetition ensures that the audience hears the message and remembers it. The music makes it easy for the audience to sing along after hearing it just one time. The only difference in the lyrics is in the second half of the fourth line. The lyrics change from “stand up for your rights” to “don’t give up the fight.” The lyrics suggest that the fight for human rights will not be easy, and that people should give up on or become complacent in their efforts. Conscientization will ultimately transform them into agents of transformative action.

### Connecting

Smith (1999) explains that the project of connecting deals with connecting people, not only to one another, but to places and to the environment. Music’s ability to connect people to each other and to places is well documented in many world cultures. Listening to music at events, parties, and concerts allows people from different backgrounds, cultures, socio-economic statuses, and places to connect to one another through a shared experience. Walter Ritte (personal communication, November 9, 2014), one of the leaders of the PKO during the Hawaiian Renaissance says:

While we were fighting to stop the bombing of Kaho‘olawe, music was the honey and the glue that kept us all together. We didn’t care if people were brown, white,



Hawaiian or not Hawaiian. If they wanted to protect Kaho‘olawe we wanted them on our side. The music played a big role in connecting them to us and to our sacred island.

Waterman (1998, p. 256) argues that music “...is often presented as a universal and universalizing art form, transcending social and cultural fault lines, appreciated, if not understood, by all.” In my own performances, I have seen people who do not understand the lyrics of a Hawaiian song cry just because of how the melody made them feel. This emotion demonstrates that the connection does not always happen because of the lyrics or message of a song but sometimes it is because of the feelings and emotive powers of music and the performance of music. Waterman (pp. 256-257) continues:

Although music also emerges from, and contributes to, social and cultural identities, it can be ambivalent in terms of identity. After all, this ambivalence, this cultural hybridity, entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy and offers itself as an alternative to multiculturalism.

Music can reinforce our cultural and social identities, and at the same time it can remove some of the cultural barriers and obstacles that prevent groups from connecting. The song *Ka Na‘i Aupuni*<sup>21</sup>, for example, was used to connect the people of Hawai‘i. It was first published shortly after the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom. The title of the song honors Kamehameha the Great, who was actually referred to as Ka Na‘i Aupuni. Kamehameha conquered and then governmentally united all the islands. The song title, *Ka Na‘i Aupuni* would have already caused

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<sup>21</sup> *Ka Na‘i Aupuni*, often attributed to Samuel K. Kamakaia since it was first published in the newspaper, Ke Aloha ‘Āina by him on August 21, 1897.

listeners to remember Kamehameha and his work to unite all of the islands. The first verse<sup>22</sup> calls out to all of Hawai‘i:

E Hawai‘i nui kuauli  
*Oh Great green-backed Hawai‘i*

E nā hono a‘o Pi‘ilani  
*The bays of Pi‘ilani*

O‘ahu o Kākuhihewa  
*O‘ahu of Kākuhihewa*

Kaua‘i o Manokalanipō  
*Kaua‘i of Manokalanipō*

This verse starts off by using the people’s aloha for their land and their famous chiefs to connect them all as Hawaiians. Before the conquests of Kamehameha, the people in the Hawaiian island chain would not have thought of themselves as “Hawaiians.” They would have more readily identified themselves as this first verse does by connecting them to their famous chiefs and islands. According to the book, *He Mele Aloha*, one later variation would have the first line of the song as “E Hawai‘i moku o Keawe.” This line would have kept the consistency of calling each island by its famous chief.

Kamehameha connected all of the islands into what became known as the Kingdom of Hawai‘i and it was only after this that the people started to identify themselves as “Hawaiians” rather than by their islands and chiefs. Those who heard the song would have understood that the song was calling for all the individual islands to come together collectively for the betterment of their kingdom, the one that Kamehameha established.

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<sup>22</sup> Translation by P. Nogelmeier

The chorus continues<sup>23</sup>:

E na‘i wale nō ‘oukou  
*Strive indeed, all of you*

I ku‘u pono ‘a‘ole pau  
*Toward the good I have done, boundless*

I ke kumu pono o Hawai‘i  
*Toward the solid foundation of Hawai‘i*

E mau ke ea o ka ‘āina i ka pono  
*The land shall live on through righteousness*

The chorus of this composition calls out for all of Hawai‘i to continue to work towards the good that had been started by Kamehameha. The first two lines of the chorus are said to be the last words of Kamehameha on his deathbed. The “good” that Kamehameha did would have been his uniting of the people of Hawai‘i. While these are the last words of Kamehameha in 1819, this song was published in 1897 after the illegal overthrow. To those who were Hawaiian nationals, they could have recognized the messaging for the islands to connect and restore what Kamehameha had built. They may have also understood that the last line of the chorus reflects the words spoken by Kamehameha III after the British restored the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i back to him in 1843.

The last line of the song could have had many meanings for the people of Hawai‘i. The word “ea” can be and is often translated to “life.” An alternate meaning of “ea” is “sovereignty.” The last line could be translated, “The sovereignty of the of the land is perpetuated in

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<sup>23</sup> Translation by P. Nogelmeier

righteousness.” The word “pono” is most commonly translated to English as “righteousness”, although this word can also be calqued as “Goodness, ... well-being, ... benefit ... in perfect order” to name a few (Puku‘i et al, 1986, p. 340). With these definitions this last line could mean, “The sovereignty of the land should be continued by re-establishing the goodness, well-being, benefit, and order that I have initiated.” This line could be a call to the people of Hawai‘i to restore the pono spoken of, or it could be understood that the sovereignty of the Hawaiian people will be restored if the United States is pono.

The last verse<sup>24</sup> is probably the clearest call to connect with one another:

I ho‘okahi kahi ka mana‘o  
*Let the minds be one*

I ho‘okahi kahi pu‘uwai  
*Let the hearts be united*

I ho‘okahi kahi ke aloha  
*Let the same love be shared*

E mau ke ea o ka ‘āina i ka pono  
*The land shall live on through righteousness*

This verse calls on the people of Hawai‘i to unite their thoughts, hearts, and aloha so that they can help to restore pono to the Kingdom of Hawai‘i.

This song illustrates the project of connecting. It connects members of its audience one to the other, to their community, and to their homeland.

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<sup>24</sup> Translation by P. Nogelmeier

## Envisioning

Without the act of envisioning, there can be no clear direction on ways to improve personal, interpersonal, or political circumstances. Smith's (1999, p. 152) section on envisioning says:

One of the strategies which indigenous peoples have employed effectively to bind people together politically is a strategy which asks that people imagine a future, that they rise above present day situations which are generally depressing, dream a new dream and set a new vision.

Graham Smith (2003, para. 2), echoes this sentiment of envisioning in a keynote address and says this project;

...calls for a 'freeing-up' of the indigenous imagination and thinking, given that one of the important elements of colonization is the diminishment of the indigenous ability to actually imagine freedom or a utopian vision free of the oppressor. Thus a critical element in the 'revolution' has to be the struggle for our minds.

In legendary reggae musician Bob Marley's composition, *Redemption Song*<sup>25</sup>, the lyrics say to "Emancipate yourself from mental slavery, none but ourselves can free our minds." Cooper (1995, p. 124) says that this line in the song encourages liberating one's self from passivity and "...the instinctive posture of automatic subservience that continues to cripple the neo-colonised." Hewitt (2015, p. 183), also comments on Marley's lyrics and says:

The aftermath of colonialism and slavery has left unhealed wounds of human development that have not been attended. Under the scars are psychologically

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<sup>25</sup> *Redemption Song*, words and music by Bob Marley (Copyright 1980).

damaged persons who are still experiencing mental forms of enslavement through socio-economic underdevelopment that breeds hopelessness. The call to emancipate is an invitation for intentional proactive resistance that is rooted in taking full responsibility for one's own liberative development because it will not come as a gift from others.

This emancipation of the mind is a project that music can have a role in. Tarifa (2012, p. 400) says that the youth in Bolivia use their hip-hop compositions to “break traditional anti-indigenous or racist views by proposing new visions of an egalitarian society.”

One popular song that demonstrates the project of envisioning is the song, *Imagine*<sup>26</sup>, by John Lennon and Yoko Ono. Both in the title of the song and within the lyrics, envisioning is clearly demonstrated:

Imagine there's no heaven, it's easy if you try

No hell below us, above us only sky

Imagine all the people, living for today

This verse encourages the listeners to remove from their minds the concept of heaven and hell. The ideas of both heaven and hell represent in a broader sense good and evil, or moral and immoral. These ideologies require moral judgements of what is good and what is bad. They are usually constructed by a dominant segment of society. One of the great tendencies of humans is to be judgmental towards those who think, look, act, worship, or believe differently. If they view people as different, members of the dominant society have the capacity to place them in the

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<sup>26</sup> *Imagine*, words and music by John Lennon (Copyright 1971).

“bad” category. This verse is a plea to all of society to refrain from making such judgements, i.e., we are all the same.

An interpretation of the last line is that the actions of people are too often driven by the belief in the existence of some future reward or punishment (heaven or hell), based on their present actions. The line envisions a society wherein people focus on being kind in the hopes that others will reciprocate kindness without expectation of some future heavenly reward.

The next verse reads:

Imagine there's no countries, it isn't hard to do

Nothing to kill or die for, and no religion too

Imagine all the people, living life in peace

The theme of this verse speaks about unity. It asks listeners to imagine if all the things that divide us, like countries and religions, were gone. This verse does not suggest that countries and religions should be removed from our consciousness, but rather the judgements that are based on separate countries or religions, if removed, would make the world a more peaceful place.

The chorus of the song reads:

You may say that I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one

I hope someday you'll join us, and the world will be as one

The use of the word “dreamer” here suggests that the composer understands the uphill battle he faces, and that his solution might be viewed as implausible, but it also asserts that there are others with the same aspirations. The song envisions that, one day, more people will join this ideology for peace, one that imagines a world without judgement.

When composers act as public pedagogues and take the time to articulate a mindset of liberation, their music plays a role in the project of envisioning. The messages of their songs have the potential to embed themselves in the societal consciousness.

### Networking

The project of networking or working with others is essential for individuals or groups seeking empowerment. When I play music, I always hope that my music connects with at least some members of the audience and will inspire them to expand their thinking. I also hope that the message of my music connects emotionally in a way that encourages productive dialogue. This creation of dialogue within groups of people (such as audiences) is what is meant here by “networking.” Smith (1999, p. 156) says, “Networking has become an efficient medium for stimulating information flows, educating people quickly about issues and creating extensive international talking circles.” Songs are a great way to network because there are many platforms where a song can be shared such as social media, concerts, and recordings. These types of performance allow composers to reach diverse audiences in a short period of time. The song itself helps to inform listeners and often makes the information more palatable to the audience.

One night at a performance in Waikīkī, there was a man in my audience from New York whose name is Don Wade. He came up to the stage and requested the song *Hawai‘i ’78*<sup>27</sup>. It was curious to me that as a non-Hawaiian, he requested this particular song which laments the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom, and imagines the reactions our monarchs of that time would have if they were to come back to Hawai‘i today and see all of the development that has

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<sup>27</sup> *Hawai‘i ’78*, words and music attributed to Mickey Ioane, Clayton Kua, Abe Keala and Kawika Crowley. Recorded by the Makaha Sons of Ni‘ihau on the album “Live,” (Ohana Productions, 1989).



taken place on sacred land. It purports that our land, our language, and our beliefs as a people have all been stripped away through systemic racism and colonization.

Hawaiian music icon Israel Kamakawiwo‘ole recorded the most popular version of the song in 1993. Because of the popularity of Kamakawiwo‘ole, people still listen to this song around the world. His recording facilitated the spread of its message via his extensive network of fans. In an interview with Wade, I asked him how he had first heard the song, what connected him to it, and how it had affected him. He confessed that the first thing that drew him in was the music itself. Later, he learned what the song was about and the history that accompanied it. He said:

The story felt like a plaintive cry of sorrow over deep loss, and was quite moving.

I had read enough about Hawaii’s history to understand those losses, but the music made me feel them in a way my readings had not. I felt empathy and shared the feeling of loss. (D. Wade, personal communication, February 22, 2014)

Wade also admitted that he was so touched by the song that he learned to play it with his daughter and played it at a family reunion in the continental United States. About playing the song for his family he said:

The response was astounding to us. There was a cessation of all small talk, and keen interest, followed by an unusual amount of applause, even accompanied by a few tears! It has been a heavily requested song each year since, and we were also pressed into doing it at my wife’s birthday party for family and friends. I think everyone who hears the song gets the same “chicken skin” as I did, regardless of the amount of knowledge of Hawaiian history. (D. Wade, personal communication, February 22, 2014)

This suggests that the song continues to be a tool for networking and is still a part of the public pedagogy. Wade is an example of someone who heard a song from an artist and then learned it and started performing it for his network of friends. Songs like this disseminate information while also providing opportunities for conscientization. This song has facilitated teaching people about the history of the indigenous people of Hawai‘i.

While *Hawai‘i ‘78* is a good example of a song that was used in the networking project, this particular project of empowerment is less about the specific song and lyrics as it is about the role of performance in networking. It is about using music to spread awareness for the relevant issues that people are passionate about and affected by. The music can provide a more palatable form of what otherwise might be a painful message that could preclude its own transmission.

### Naming

For indigenous groups, the project of “naming” is often about reclamation. It is about appreciating the stories and worldviews of the past. Smith (1999, p. 157) describes this project as “naming the world using the original indigenous names... Indigenous names carried histories of people, places and events...by ‘naming the world’ people name their realities.” In Hawai‘i, music is often used to honor people, the names of places, names of winds, names of rains, and the naming of circumstances.

Native Hawaiians are actively pushing to restore traditional names for areas like trails, sites, and beaches that have been renamed over time. Many of these traditional names are being forgotten due to the popularization of newer English names. Places like China Man’s Hat (Mokoli‘i), Tantalus (Pu‘u ‘Ōhi‘a), Sunset Beach (Paumalu), and the Kailua Pillbox Ridge (Ka‘iwa) have all obviously experienced a name change over the years. Each one of these traditional names holds a part of the history of that place. Smith (1999, p. 157) says that “...by

naming the world, people name their realities.” The displacement of names facilitates the displacement of people. For many, their names connect them to the places from which they hail. When the name change is less obvious, it becomes even more likely that people will forget the traditional names. Such is the case with the town Ka‘ōhao which many now refer to as Lanikai.

In the 1920s a developer named Charles Frasier had 300 acres of land to develop and he decided to name the area he was developing, Lanikai. Frasier gave the area the name “Lanikai” because the ocean there was “heavenly.” If people today Google the definition of the word Lanikai, it will say “heavenly ocean.” Unfortunately, the name “Lanikai” is actually grammatically incorrect and does not mean heavenly ocean but rather “Marine Heaven.” The district of Lanikai already had the name Ka‘ōhao that commemorates a story associated with the area (Pukui et al., 1989).

To perpetuate the histories contained in names, composers have written songs to preserve traditional names of places. Award winning Hawaiian composer and historian, Kīhei de Silva, wrote a song for the town of Ka‘ōhao. He wrote the song because he was frustrated that the original names of the landmarks in Ka‘ōhao were being forgotten and going unspoken. The song is a means to preserve the names for posterity, and so that his descendants will have access to the names and accompanying histories. De Silva (2006) recalls the day he wrote the song *Hanohano Wailea*<sup>28</sup> and says;

I composed “Hanohano Wailea” in 1984 after a walk to the beach. I went there to cool off after a day of yard work, but I came home quickly, far from cooled-off, with a mele stewing in my head. I’ve said elsewhere that I was inspired by the

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<sup>28</sup> *Hanohano Wailea*, words by Kīhei de Silva and music by Wilfred Moe Keale. First recorded by Moe Keale, Aloha is a part of me, a part of you (MDL producers INC, 1986).

beauty of what I saw, but I was, in fact, aggravated by the pālaualelo of what I'd heard. I wrote "Hanohano Wailea" in response to a self-styled keiki o ka 'āina who had been giving his house guests a quick lesson in Lanikai landmarks. "That over there," he said, "is Smith's Point. Behind us is Pillbox Hill and to the north is Mid-Pac Knoll. And those twin islands out there are the Mokes."

As a native person, de Silva was upset that the names of these places were being forgotten and being substituted with names that were very shallow and lacking in historical meaning. Each verse in this song reclaims the names of the places, shares the history, and tells a modern story of love.

Verse 1<sup>29</sup>:

Hanohano Wailea i ka'u 'ike lā  
*I hold Wailea in high regard; she is glorious in my sight*

Ka wahine kia'i 'au i ke kai  
*She is the guardian-woman who reaches into the sea*

In this verse, de Silva reasserts the name of Wailea as opposed to "Smith's Point." He says that Wailea is held in high regard. In the book, *Place Names of Hawaii*, by Pukui et al. (1989, p. 224) we learn that Wailea means "waters of Lea" and that, "Lea is the canoe maker's goddess; also, the name of a fish god that stands on this point." This verse only has two lines, but the lyrics hold quite a bit of meaning and history about Wailea.

Verse 2<sup>30</sup>:

Pūnāwai 'ili'ili nehe i ke kai lā  
*The pebbles of Pūnāwai clatter in the tide*

'Auana ka wai 'olu i ka ulu hala

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<sup>29</sup> Translation by K. de Silva

<sup>30</sup> Translation by K. de Silva

*Its cool waters wander through the hala grove.*

In this verse, de Silva attempts to restore honor to what was once a vibrant stream that had hala trees growing along its banks. People who are new to the area would have no idea of the history of Pūnāwai. If you look at where Pūnāwai is now, there is just a drainage ditch, but it is said that as the stream met the ocean, there were ‘ili‘ili stones that rhythmically clattered on the shore.

For de Silva, this verse takes on additional meaning. He revealed that he and his wife named their home “Pūnāwai” and that, like the hala trees that were present on the river, their home has seven hala trees in the yard. With this verse, de Silva honors the name of the place while connecting his own family story to Pūnāwai.

De Silva and his wife are kumu hula and he explains that, metaphorically, the verse references their hula dancers who are the ‘ili‘ili or clattering stones there in Punawai. While the words “‘ili‘ili” and “‘auana” are used in the verse to describe the movement of water and the stones, the words are likely to capture the attention of those who practice the tradition of hula. ‘Ili‘ili stones are hula implements that are often used when dancing hula kahiko or ancient hula. The word ‘auana is used to describe the modern style of hula that uses western instruments. This verse can function to connect the old with the new. This connection happens at the composer’s home, “Pūnāwai,” when both hula kahiko and hula ‘auana are taught.

Verse 3 <sup>31</sup>:

Halakau ‘o Ka‘iwa i luna lilo lā  
*Ka‘iwa rests high above*

Ne‘e mai ‘o Ahiki i ke kualono  
*Ahiki moves closer to her, to her mountain ridge*

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<sup>31</sup> Translation by K. de Silva

This verse speaks of the Ka‘iwa ridge which is now often referred to as Lanikai Pillbox hill. This verse not only reasserts the name of Ka‘iwa but also relates the history of the place. Ka‘iwa ridge was named for chiefess Ka‘iwa who once lived there. The verse also contains the name of another mountain peak called Ahiki. This peak was named after the konohiki (leader of a land division) of the Kawainui and Ka‘elepulu fishponds. De Silva (2006, p. 4) explains that “he [Ahiki] was so taken with the chiefess Ka‘iwa that he rose up and pulled himself away from his brother peaks in order to be closer to her.” This verse preserves the traditional names while also informing the listener of the accompanying history.

Like the previous verse, de Silva ties his family history to the history of Ka‘ōhao. De Silva grew up in Maunawili which is in the district of Ahiki. His wife grew up in the district of Ka‘ōhao in the shadow of Ka‘iwa. Because of his love for his wife, like Ahiki, he moved to Ka‘ōhao to be closer to her.

Verse 4 <sup>32</sup>:

Ho‘olono Ka‘ōhao i kēia mele lā  
*Ka‘ōhao attends to this mele*

O ku‘u ‘āina nani e waiho nei.  
*Of my beautiful land spread out below*

This verse speaks directly to the district of Ka‘ōhao and asks that the land hear or acknowledge this song. Another interpretation could be that the name, Ka‘ōhao is once again heard in this mele. The intention of this verse might be to exclaim “your name ‘Ka‘ōhao’ will once again be spoken and heard.” My lyrical interpretation of the last verse is “With this song, I have laid the beauty and history of my home, Ka‘ōhao, before you.”

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<sup>32</sup> Translation by K. de Silva

Songs like this bring awareness to traditional place names and their histories. The district of Ka'ōhāo, for example, was restored to its rightful position in 2017, as the traditional Hawaiian name of the area. There was enough awareness, support, and encouragement from the community to act on this reawakening to rename Lanikai Elementary School, which was built and named as such in 1964, as Ka'ōhāo Elementary School. While I will not go so far as to say that the song was the reason the name of the school was changed, I will say that it was a part of the conscientization of the community. De Silva (2006) writes that for years *Hanohano Wailea* was Lanikai Elementary's school song and that the students would be quick to tell you that the real name of the area is Ka'ōhāo.

### Protecting

Because of music's ability to play a role in social mobilization, public pedagogy, and conscientization, it is well suited for the project of protecting. Smith (2009, p. 158) explains that this project is about “protecting peoples, communities, languages, customs and beliefs, art and ideas, natural resources and the things indigenous peoples produce...It can be as real as land and as abstract as a belief about the spiritual essence of the land.” While Smith speaks specifically about indigenous people, this project can relate to any group that needs to be protected.

Music supports the project of protecting communities, cultures, resources, and beliefs because of its ability to teach. In the Native Hawaiian battle for Mauna Kea, those who opposed the building of the telescope at its peak, asserted that they did not want to be referred to as “protesters” since that word sometimes has negative connotations and is often connected to the word “radicals.” Instead, those who stood in opposition to the construction reengineered the public perception of their cause by insisting that they were actually “protectors” instead of “protestors.” This shift in terminology served to cast the movement in a positive light. With this

idea in mind, I will examine music here that is often described as “protest music,” and shift the paradigm to assert that the music is being used not to protest but to “protect.” Haycock (2015, p. 435), who studied musicians who engaged in the creation of what was traditionally referred to as protest music, says that music is “not only for pleasure or entertainment but also for resistance, to express oppositional politics, highlight injustices and possibly move audiences to social action.” Kong (1995, p. 448) says music can be used “to act as a rallying call to others so as to establish and reinforce group identity; and to voice dissatisfaction with society, including social norms and political conditions.” The music text itself can be used an instrument of protection. Haycock (2015, p. 436) articulates the following position:

Protest music texts become not only the vehicle for the transfer of knowledge, but also the texts and pedagogy made available to audiences for learning. Protest music texts come to represent, contain and are the vehicle for the explicit encodings and transmission of meanings, values, ideologies, constructions of teachings.

One song used in Hawai‘i for the project of protecting is *Kū Ha ‘aheo e Ku ‘u Hawai ‘i*<sup>33</sup> by Hinaleimoana Wong. The lyrics call out to all those who call Hawai‘i their home to stand proudly. It acknowledges the political turmoil that is occurring, and it calls people from all of the islands to “drink the bitter waters” or persevere through hard times and give their all to the nation of Hawai‘i so that the people, traditions, languages, art forms, and sacred spaces are preserved and perpetuated. Since the song was written, it has been used in many of the Native Hawaiian movements that are trying to protect land and sacred spaces<sup>34</sup>.

Kū ha ‘aheo e ku ‘u Hawai ‘i  
*Stand tall my Hawai ‘i*

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<sup>33</sup> *Kū Ha ‘aheo e Ku ‘u Hawai ‘i*, words and music by Hinaleimoana Wong (Copyright 2007).

<sup>34</sup> Translation by H. Wong



Māmakakaua o ku‘u ‘āina  
*Band of warriors of my land*

‘O ke ehu kakahiaka o nā ‘ōiwi o Hawai‘i nei  
*The new dawn for our people of Hawai‘i is upon us*

No ku‘u lāhui e hā‘awi pau a i ola mau  
*For my nation I give my all so that our legacy lives on*

Kaiko‘o ka moana kā i lana nei Hawai‘i  
*The sea of Hawai‘i surges in turmoil*

Nāueue a halulu ka honua a Haumea  
*The earth of Haumea rumbles and shakes*

Nākulukulu e ka lani ki‘eki‘e kau mai i luna  
*The highest heavens shudder up above*

Auē ke aloha ‘ole a ka malihini  
*Alas! Woeful indeed are the heartless foreigners*

‘Auhea wale ‘oukou pū‘ali koa o Keawe  
*Where are you soldiers of Keawe*

Me ko Kamalālāwalu lā me Kākuhihewa  
*Along with those of Maui and O‘ahu*

Alu mai pualu mai me ko Manokalanipō  
*Unite, join together with those of Kaua‘i*

Ka‘i mai ana me nā kama a Kahelelani  
*Marching alongside the descendants of Ni‘ihau*

E naue i mua e nā pōki‘i a e inu wai ‘awa‘awa  
*Move forward young ones and drink of the bitter waters*

E wiwo ‘ole a ho‘okūpa‘a ‘a‘ohe hope e ho‘i mai ai  
*Be fearless, steadfast for there is no turning back*

A na'i wale nō kākou kaukoe mau i ke ala  
*Let's press onward straight on the path of victory*

Auē ke aloha 'ole a ka malihini  
*Alas! Woeful are the heartless foreigners!*

E lei mau i lei mau kākou e nā mamo aloha  
*Be honored always oh beloved descendants of the land*

I lei wehi 'a'ali'i wehi nani o ku'u 'āina  
*Let us wear the honored 'a'ali'i of our beloved land*

Hoe a mau hoe a mau no ka pono sivila  
*Paddle on in our pursuit of civil justice*

A ho'iho'i hou 'ia mai ke kū'oko'a  
*Until our dignity and independence is restored*

The lyrics of this song demonstrate how music can be used in the project of protecting. This song is about social mobilization and uniting against all those who challenge the identities, language, and sacred spaces of Native Hawaiians. Like the song *Ka Na 'i Aupuni*, this song calls on all the islands to unite. It also references Kamehameha when it says "...i mua e nā pōki'i a e inu wai 'awa'awa," since Kamehameha is said to have used this call before going into battle to rally his warriors. This song invokes the idea of standing strong in war. Although the war might not be a physical one waged against an opposing army, it is a call to fight for the things that Hawaiians hold sacred, retaking them from a colonizer.

Because music is a tool of social mobilization, it is a tool that composers can use when there are worthwhile things or ideas that need protection.

### Creating

At its root, song composition is essentially "creating." But the project of creating is more than just fashioning a song or piece of music. This project plays an important role in both

individual and community empowerment. Smith (1999, p. 158) says, “Imagination enables people to rise above their own circumstances, to dream new visions and hold onto old ones.” In this regard, she argues that creativity is not only employed to create something new, foreign, or unfamiliar, but is a way to figure out how to bring forth individual and cultural identities to handle whatever circumstances we find ourselves in. She continues, “Creating is not the exclusive domain of the rich nor of the technologically superior, but of the imaginative. Creating is about channeling collective creativity to produce solutions to indigenous problems” (p. 158). Creating is different from envisioning in the context of this project. It is less about describing ideal realities and more about creating the path to realize those ideal realities. It is about figuring out how to maintain identities and worldviews, while mobilizing, teaching, and conscientizing people.

Travis and Bowman (2011, p. 674) write about hip-hop music’s ability to “...be a catalyst for both envisioning positive change and inspiring action to create positive change within social networks, cultural groups, and neighborhoods.” An example of a song that represents the project of creating is Michael Jackson’s recording of *Man in the Mirror*<sup>35</sup>. The lyrics in the song suggest that each person can help to change the world and that the process for accomplishing this change begins with individuals taking a careful look at themselves to find ways to either overcome prejudice or attend to the well-being of others.

I’m gonna make a change  
For once in my life  
It’s gonna feel real good  
Gonna make a difference  
Gonna make it right

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<sup>35</sup> *Man in the Mirror*, words and music by Siedah Garrett and Glen Ballard (Copyright 1988).

As I, turn up the collar on  
My favorite winter coat  
This wind is blowing my mind

I see the kids in the streets  
With not enough to eat  
Who am I to be blind?  
Pretending not to see their needs

A summer disregard, a broken bottle top  
And a one man soul  
They follow each other on the wind ya' know  
'Cause they got nowhere to go  
That's why I want you to know

I'm starting with the man in the mirror  
I'm asking him to change his ways  
And no message could have been any clearer  
If you want to make the world a better place  
Take a look at yourself, and then make a change

I've been a victim of a selfish kind of love  
It's time that I realize  
That there are some with no home, not a nickel to loan  
Could it be really me, pretending that they're not alone?

A willow deeply scarred, somebody's broken heart  
And a washed-out dream  
They follow the pattern of the wind ya' see  
'Cause they got no place to be  
That's why I'm starting with me

I'm starting with the man in the mirror  
I'm asking him to change his ways  
And no message could've been any clearer  
If you want to make the world a better place  
Take a look at yourself and then make that  
Change!

This song, and others like it, present both issue and solution. This type of creating is valuable in terms of avoiding the trap set by a victim mindset. The capacity to solve issues for oneself, even though fabricated through musical creativity, promotes a sense of self assuredness to tackle real issues as they arise.

### Sharing

When people creatively articulate their plan for realizing their envisioned realities, sharing the plan broadly becomes the next important step. The project of sharing, like the project of networking, is more connected to performance than to the songs themselves. The performance of a song is what initiates dialogue about the song and its composition. Smith (1999, p. 160) says this project is about "...sharing knowledge between indigenous peoples, around the networks and across the world of indigenous peoples." She goes on to talk about how the project of sharing can be thought of as like the dissemination of research and that it can be "very boring to the non-researchers, very technical and very cold. For indigenous researchers sharing is about demystifying knowledge and information and speaking in plain terms to the community" (p.

161). Music provides a great opportunity for the sharing and disseminating of information and solutions in ways that are less boring, technical, and cold.

Gershon (2010, p. 635) explains that music can take an audience and move “them through their senses.” It not only presents the information, but it also helps listeners to empathize with the struggles and battles that others are engaged in.

An example of a song that played a role in sharing is *Mele o Kaho‘olawe*. The song speaks of aloha ‘āina and the spiritual connection that Hawaiians have to their land. The song itself was also used as a medium to disseminate information about the island of Kaho‘olawe. The lyrics point directly at the nine people from the group, Hui Alaloa, who were a part of the first illegal access to the island of Kaho‘olawe. The lyrics say that these nine people were bringing peace to the land.

Harry Kunihi Mitchell, the composer of *Mele o Kaho‘olawe* uses the song as a way to teach his listeners that the island of Kaho‘olawe was previously known by the name “Kanaloa<sup>36</sup>.” Jerry Santos (personal communication, December 8, 2008) says that “Uncle Harry specifically put things in [the song] to touch every aspect of what was happening at that time and what people needed to know.” Mitchell’s song composition was multifaceted in the sense that it was not only written to inform people about the situation that was going on, but it was also a rallying cry for Hawaiians to unite and become conscientized on the issue of Kaho‘olawe.

Sharing the song provided a means to draw people into active participation. In contrast with what Smith (1999) says about sharing, in the form of the dissemination of academic research, being very boring and cold, Santos says the song was a way to “touch people’s

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<sup>36</sup> Kanaloa is one of the four major Hawaiian deities. The fact that Kaho‘olawe was once called Kanaloa demonstrates a level of reverence for the island.

emotions, so you're not just asking them to intellectually absorb what you're saying, but you put a feeling to it" (personal communication, December 8, 2008).

The matter of Kaho'olawe was an issue that angered many Hawaiians. This anger often drove them to deliver or share their messages on Kaho'olawe to those who were not familiar with the situation, and to do so in an angry manner and tone. That type of delivery or "sharing" not only caused people to tune out the message and information, it also had the more adverse effect of engendering opposition to their efforts, to their movement. Santos says that, in that context, the use of song as a medium for sharing:

...touched people emotionally and made them stop to ask, "What exactly are you talking about? Oh, I'll go look." When people heard the song and felt the song it caused them to ask, "What is Kaho'olawe? What are they doing there? What are these people angry about?" (personal communication, December 8, 2008)

Santos shares an experience that he had while performing this song at the Vancouver Folk Music Festival for more than 30,000 people. While the folk music festival was happening, many people in Vancouver were actively protesting the United States' military submarines coming into their port. Santos says that these circumstances made for a very good opportunity for his group to perform the song *Mele o Kaho'olawe* and educate the audience about what was going on in Hawai'i. During that performance he said, "While you are protesting the United States' nuclear submarines going into your port, the Canadian Navy is taking part in RIMPAC [Rim of the Pacific Exercise] in Honolulu and bombing an island that is very important to us" (personal communication, December 8, 2008). He then performed the song with his band Olomana and with the composer Harry Mitchell. Santos says that this was significant for those in attendance because, "...many people suddenly went, 'Wait a minute, is that really happening?'

You know they didn't know that it was happening" (personal communication, December 8, 2008).

Performing the song *Mele o Kaho'olawe* allowed Santos to share with audiences what was happening to the island of Kaho'olawe. The performance of the song was also a means to generate dialogue and thoughts about whether bombing the island was a good thing. The song provided information and invited listeners to join together to help bring peace to the island and stop the bombing, in large part, because it made the information palatable, even for those who were not directly involved with or affected by Kaho'olawe.

In this way, song composition can easily assist in the project of sharing because of its ability to disseminate information while also mobilizing people. It presents the information in a way that is engaging, palatable, and more readily accepted.

### **Connecting the Projects of Empowerment to the Curriculum**

Knowing the projects of empowerment and how the power of music can facilitate those projects is beneficial only if an educator knows how to connect this understanding to a curriculum. As a music teacher, I emphasize the way that music can be used as a tool and not just as an aesthetic artform for the purpose of entertainment. To connect the curriculum to students, a teacher must try to find real-world applications. Being that I teach at a community college where music is often taken as an elective, very few of my students will go on to become professional musicians. If students are not planning to play music professionally, it can be challenging to convince them that they should fully engage with the curriculum. I know that if my curriculum relates to their passions, desires, and real-life circumstances, they will be more fully engaged in the assignments. Student engagement is a critical prerequisite for academic success. Kuh et al. (2006, p. 19) who wrote an article on the links between student engagement and student learning,



supports this and says “student engagement is linked positively to desirable learning outcomes such as critical thinking and grades.”

By using the Projects of Empowerment as a guide for song composition, students become engaged in creating a better society because they are allowed to celebrate their struggles, their personal power to deal with them, and their overall experience of survival. They can remember where they come from and envision where they want to be. They know that they can be agents of change, that they have the capacity to intervene in and effect positive changes in their experience and protect the important things they love and hold sacred. Students know that, with their creativity, they can find a network of like-minded people who share similar experiences. This is how they find their passion. This is how they become engaged in the curriculum.

### **Connected Learning Pedagogy**

The pedagogy of Connected Learning asks educators to be aware of their students’ life situations, struggles, goals, and needs. The educators take this knowledge and figure out ways to connect their curricula to real world circumstances. This means that teachers revamp and revise their curricula each term to tap into their students’ passions.

Fung (2017, p. 6), who has written extensively on the Connected Curriculum pedagogy says, “Students need to be able to connect academic learning explicitly with the areas of knowledge, skills and approaches needed both for professional work and for lifelong learning.” If students do not see the application in what they are learning the tendency will be to do only what is required (Garcia, 2014). Even just doing what is required will feel laborious for the very fact that there is lack of engagement and connection. Some students can thrive under these learning expectations but there are many who struggle with formal education, not because they

are unintelligent, but because they do not see the value or relevance of what is being taught and its connection to the real life.

In the book, *The Primary Program: Growing and Learning in the Heartland*, Kelly (2001, p. 555), states:

If experiences are to engage children, they need to be shaped by children's interest and enthusiasm. This means choosing themes, topics, projects, or areas of study based on the knowledge children have and constructing a plan which is driven by the children's curiosity.

In this curriculum model, teachers must figure out what interests and excites their students. Teachers must then strategize how to make the curriculum applicable to those interests. The curriculum will be driven by interest and inquiry rather than imposed standards that might be irrelevant to their lives. When curriculum is based on inquiry, the method of teaching and learning is different. Rather than being forced to learn content in a one size fits all model, teachers and students work together to strategize and discuss the topics that they will cover to meet the course learning outcomes.

In a music classroom, when students connect to the music they are learning, they become interested in and open to learning why the songs are structured the way they are. They become interested in learning the musical concepts, progressions, and techniques that the song employs. Pearce (2016, para. 3), says, "Authentic learning is learning designed to connect what students are taught in school to real-world issues, problems, and applications; learning experiences should mirror the complexities and ambiguities of real life."

Antero Garcia (2014) suggests that students realize the most success in their learning when that learning is driven by their interests. Although this seems like it would be common

sense, many educational institutions and settings still use rote learning methods of instruction rather than methods that align with student interest and inquiry. Garcia (p. 10) asserts that “students will gain more knowledge and skills at higher levels of intellectual rigor when their learning originates from issues or activities that innately captivate them.” In my experiences in both learning and teaching, when students are interested in and connected to the content, they work harder, and they are less cognizant of how hard they are working.

### Benefits of a Connected Curriculum

One of the benefits of a connected curriculum is that students are empowered by the increased level of agency that they enjoy. The possibility of involving community and of disseminating knowledge beyond the walls of the classroom is naturally supported by this type of curriculum. Garcia (2014, p. 11) continues, “Once a fire is lit under students, they easily pursue further opportunities to support peers, find shared purpose, network and produce with others, and connect their passions to academic achievement.” When students are connected to the curriculum and their learning communities, Fung (2017, p. 5) says students will “...be encouraged to start to formulate their own research questions and empowered to explore and critique what might be described as the edge of knowledge in their discipline(s) of study.”

Students who create their own research questions based on real-life circumstances are more likely to discuss the applications of their inquiry with their communities. These discussions become critical in helping to conscientize communities on the issues that are relevant to them (Fung, 2017). These conversations empower students to realize that their voices and thoughts on issues are important. This understanding supports a more intimate engagement in civic discourse (Fung, 2017). A connected curriculum also helps support students in learning how to conduct research. Once students learn how to conduct research in one subject, the skills readily transfer to

research in general, transcending the single discipline and applying across many different disciplines (Kelly, 2001).

Landson-Billings (1995), writes that a connected curriculum can benefit students when the connection is based on cultural relevance. She says that when educators utilize culturally relevant tactics, students are empowered "...to recognize, understand, and critique current and social inequalities" (p. 476). The empowerment that derives from these types of educational skills and activities is beneficial to a wider range of students, including those whose cultural values deviate from those of the mainstream. Landson-Billings (1994, pp. 16-17) says that when educators use this approach for their curriculum it "...empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes." For educators in culturally diverse settings, this is an effective pedagogy for connecting students to the curriculum. Involving students in the creation of curriculum and giving them agency to conduct research on subjects that are relevant to them not only engages them in learning but assists them in finding applications for the content being taught and solutions for their real-life circumstances.

### Implementation of Connected Learning Pedagogy

Research indicates that there are many effective methods to implement a connected learning pedagogy. In this section, I discuss the methods that are applicable to my study and to music instruction.

### *Making a Plan*

To implement a connected learning curriculum, the first thing that educators must do is come up with a plan to integrate and connect the curriculum to students in authentic and culturally relevant ways. Kelly (2001, p. 555) says, "This does not mean an undirected, ever-

changing scavenger hunt in search of answers to the question of the day.” The idea is to choose activities, themes, and issues that are focused on the interests and curiosities of students. Pearce (2016, para. 19) recommends that the three goals of learning should be “...acquisition, making meaning, and transfer.” This suggests that students should not only learn course content and learning objectives but also real-world applications for the lessons.

In their book on connected learning, Gutiérrez et al. (2013) suggest three important elements for connected learning to take place. The first suggestion is that the learning should be “peer-supported” (p. 12). This peer-support can take on many different forms. One example could be having class discussions on course content. The discussions allow each student to experience taking the positions of both learner and teacher. As the discussions occur, the feedback given by students to each other represents informal assessments that they are making about the content of the project. The instructor can use these discussions to make formative assessments and find ways to address areas where they have gaps in their knowledge. In this application, the role of the instructor is to ensure that all students are heard and that the topics of discussion are engaging and academically focused (Kelly, 2001). There are many ways to create a “peer-supported” curriculum. According to Fung (2017), “These activities may include not only undertaking investigations and formulating related critical arguments and findings, but also peer review, dissemination of knowledge and public engagement” (p. 20).

This leads to the next element in facilitating connected learning. Gutiérrez et al. (2013, p. 12) suggest that the learning should be “interest-powered.” They say, “...interest-based participation that drives connected learning is grounded in young people having a stake and a voice in collective activity” (p. 60). Moreover, when students realize they have a stake in the curriculum, they more readily participate and “contribute to collective and civic goals, even if

they are not explicitly political in nature” (p. 60). Facilitating the realization of voice, stakes, and ability to contribute are critical steps towards empowering students.

The third element that Gutiérrez et al. (2013, p. 12) suggest is that the curriculum should be “academically oriented.” This portion of the responsibility falls largely on the instructor. The instructor must find ways to deliver content, meet learning objectives, and maintain rigor while using student interests as the means to accomplish these benchmarks.

When the curriculum is peer-supported, interest-powered, and academically oriented, students will undergo a more holistic educational experience that can be integrated into their real-life circumstances. This method of curriculum creation allows the instructor and the students to both learn and teach across multiple disciplines. Pearce (2016, para. 7) supports this assertion saying, “Neither our lives, nor our jobs, are compartmentalised and sectioned into subjects. In order to reflect the real world, authentic learning takes a truly cross-curricular approach in its design as well as implementation in the classroom.”

The connected learning pedagogy takes a lot of strategizing and re-strategizing when creating the curriculum. It requires that the instructors be well rounded and multidimensional in their world experiences (Aronson & Laughter, 2016). Ito et al. (2013, p. 63), articulate the primary goal of connected learning, that it “...seeks to integrate three spheres of learning that are often disconnected and at war with each other in young people’s lives: peer culture, interests, and academic content.”

### *Getting Student Buy-In*

Getting students to buy-in to a curriculum can be accomplished in many ways. This discussion focuses on some of the methods contained within the scope of my study but are applicable to music instruction in general. One technique to gain student buy-in could be to

create curriculum that is culturally-relevant and interest-powered. Music is a great tool for creating culturally relevant curriculum. In Barton's (2018) book, *Music Learning and Teaching in Culturally and Socially Diverse Contexts: Implications for Classroom Practice*, she defines culture as knowledge and behavior that is learned and shared. With this definition in mind, it is not hard to see how music fits into culture. Barton explains in depth how music reflects culture and society, and how music and culture have a symbiotic relationship. She writes that culture can affect music and music can affect culture. Given this assertion, having a music classroom that is culturally relevant and connected to students' interests should not be hard to accomplish. If educators put thought and intention into their music curricula, cultural relevance should naturally fall into place. Gay (2010, p. 31), says teachers can use "the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them [students]." A music teacher can use all of these tools with relative ease since music is inextricably linked to culture.

Another way to get students to buy-in to a connected curriculum is using class programs and activities. In doing so, the instructor can establish the terms, guidelines, learning outcomes, and benchmarks, while allowing the students to determine the specific subject matter that they will explore for their projects. Fung (2017, p. 6) says that the project or activity should be:

designed in such a way that students experience a connected sequence of learning activities that empower them, step by step, to apply the skills and dispositions needed to undertake investigations. The right balance is needed between compulsory and optional modules (or units of study), so that students can make critical, creative connections between apparently disparate elements of their learning.

She goes on to explain that the activities are not restricted to researching topics but may include creating arguments, analyzing each other's work, or sharing their research with the broader community.

In *The Primary Program: Growing and Learning in the Heartland*, Kelly (2001, p. 253) provides a list of considerations for instructors who are working to get students to buy into a connected curriculum. The curriculum can include:

- Experiences to develop children's attitudes, skills, and knowledge, and to help them make connections across the curriculum
- Activities that are designed to develop or strengthen a range of abilities
- Activities that are both teacher-initiated and directed and child-initiated and directed
- Whole class, small group, and individual experiences
- Opportunities for critical and creative thinking
- Teacher, peer, and self-assessment
- Opportunities to experience learning as a meaningful whole

Similarly, Pearce (2016) gives suggestions for projects and activities that can facilitate a connected learning curriculum, and many of these suggestions can be implemented in a music classroom. The suggestions that I consider important for a music project or activity are:

- Real life relevance- The content and skills students learn in the project are applicable in real-world situations and in the professional field of music.
- Collaboration- Students' network and collaborate with each other as well as with relevant community members during the conduct of their project.



- Reflection- Students identify issues in their lives that are important, they focus on better understanding that issue, engage in relevant social discourse, and develop appropriate solutions.
- Interdisciplinary perspective- Students make use of knowledge from across disciplines in executing their projects.
- Polished product- Students create a product within a specified time frame that is well thought out and deliverable.

All the suggestions listed above can be used in song composition to empower students. When educators give proper attention to interest and relevance, they will create projects, activities, and curricula that are beneficial to the educational advancement of their students.

### Assessment

Knowing what to assess, how to assess, and when to assess with regards to a project or activity in a connected curriculum is critical to the success of the program and of the students. Fung (2017) suggests assessment strategies for a connected curriculum such as creating a “personal learning story” or portfolio (p. 60). The portfolio should have elements that capture progress, growth, and understanding of the learning objectives for the class activity under consideration. When creating the different assessments, the learning portfolio should present the arch of concepts covered. She advises that everything assessed should be linked to the end goal of the project or activity.

Fung goes on to recommend that the instructor should try to include multiple forms of assessment that can test the understanding of both theory and praxis. The types of assignment to be assessed might include reflections, essays, videos, presentations, peer reviews, self-

assessments, and the final products. Furthermore, in a connected curriculum the instructor should be offering frequent and constructive feedback.

### **Concluding Comment**

This review of the literature demonstrates that music can be a powerful tool to foster personal, interpersonal, and political relationships, and to validate their ways of knowing and doing. If educators are aware of this power and the role it can play in promoting personal empowerment, they can create connected curricula that encourage engagement from students and give them skills that they can use to help improve their life situations. The skills gained within these curricular activities will not be limited to the course content but will be transferable across disciplines and applicable to real-life situations.

## CHAPTER 4

### KE ALAULA

“Ke Alaula” translates to “flaming road” or “flaming pathway,” and is a reference to the early light of dawn. The song *Ke Alaula*<sup>37</sup> is about opening or creating a pathway of enlightenment for generations of people who live in Hawai‘i. The light of dawn can also represent hope for a brighter future and better days.

Because this chapter details my college level music class, I have entitled it “Ke Alaula” in order to represent what I hope my class will become for my students—the beginning of their music journeys. I am aware that when students complete the course, they will not know everything there is to know about music. Upon completion, however, students should experience “flashes of musical understanding” as they move along their individual pathways toward empowerment. Empowerment will ultimately be realized via the application of the concepts and skills that stem from such understandings.

In Chapter 3, I documented my personal experiences in music that have been part of my own “flaming pathway”; now I discuss how I have synthesized these experiences of personal empowerment into the design and development of the course, as embodied in the customized instructional methods.

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<sup>37</sup> *Ke Alaula*, words by William Panui and music by Louis “Moon” Kauakahi (Copyright 1993).

## **MUS 211: Hawaiian Ensemble**

The participants in this study are students in my MUS 211: Hawaiian Ensemble course. The student learning outcomes (SLOs) for this course are as follows. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- discuss the history of Hawaiian music.
- demonstrate basic concepts, such as rhythm, notation, dynamics, and expression in accurate performances.
- demonstrate professional performance practices.

I draw attention to the title of the course and the SLOs—neither mention song composition. In most music programs, song composition is considered a separate subject or course that acts as a capstone for the entire program. There is a widely held perception that students are not fully capable of song composition until they have sufficient musical knowledge. In my course, however, I challenge the idea that (1) song composition needs to be taught as a stand-alone, capstone course and (2) composition is only for those who have achieved some prescribed level of musical expertise. By designing a class curriculum wherein song composition and performance are utilized to meet the SLOs, student empowerment becomes a primary byproduct.

### **Course Challenges**

The only prerequisite for students to take my MUS 211 course is the completion of either the beginning 'ukulele course or the beginning slack key course. Because of this, my MUS 211 course is largely made up of students with varying levels of musical experience. Some students have been playing the 'ukulele or guitar for years, while others have only completed one semester of music. These varying levels of musical experience require that I differentiate

instruction, tailoring it to accommodate the diverse backgrounds of the students, in order to maintain their engagement.

Another issue that I face in this course is that many of the students are not particularly interested in Hawaiian music. While most of the course content deals with learning and performing Hawaiian music, I know that a singular focus on Hawaiian music will result in decreasing engagement with and connection to the curriculum. Over the years, I have developed multiple strategies for connecting students to my unique curriculum.

### **Connecting Students to the Curriculum**

When I first started teaching music, I found myself experimenting with different ways to connect students to the course curriculum and to the musical techniques that I was teaching. The following are some of the strategies I use to engage my students in the curriculum.

#### Group Song Project

One approach that I use is to assign students to small groups comprised of members with varying levels of musical experience. Mixing my advanced students with my beginning students enables them to learn from each other and teach each other. Each group of students chooses a Hawaiian song that the members would like to learn. They collaborate with one another to come up with a group arrangement and with ideas for presentation. They get to choose the key and the tempo that they will learn and perform the song in. My role in their group song project is to guide them in their arrangement and to help bring their ideas to life. When groups cannot come up with ideas for their songs, I provide them with options for their arrangements and let them choose the style or option they like the best. Each group collectively chooses a group leader to manage their class practices and to follow up on group assignments.

This group project allows me to teach individual students content that is appropriate for their individual musical experiences. Students who are less experienced playing their instruments are assigned to do strumming parts with basic chords, which prevents them from becoming overwhelmed while learning the song. When they become comfortable with their assigned parts, I give them the option to add to the level of difficulty, either by adding alternate chords or some simple picking. Most students choose to learn more difficult tasks once they master the simpler parts. Students of more advanced musical experience usually end up singing for their group or doing instrumental solos during the song.

Throughout this assignment, I check in with each of the groups to make sure they are making progress and to help them with any of the parts of the arrangement with which they might be struggling. As I become aware of the challenges faced by each group, I prepare class lessons and discussions to address those challenges. When possible, I have them teach each other. This collaboration with classmates sets me up in the course as a facilitator of the discussion rather than a lecturer. It is part of my teaching philosophy that students will better understand the course material as they try to explain it to one another. If we come to a musical problem that everyone is struggling with, then I take the lead in the discussion to raise the collective understanding of the class. After instances like this, I usually encourage students to attempt once again to explain to each other what I just taught.

Throughout the group song assignment, each group will play its chosen song multiple times for the class. I purposefully have them perform the song before it is stage ready because this allows them to hear that each group has areas in its performance that could be improved. Their imperfect song performances help to create a safe and comfortable classroom space. When students first come into my course, they seem very hesitant to make mistakes in front of others. I

hypothesize that this hesitancy is related to social media and its merciless tendency to exploit imperfections in human behavior. This assignment helps students to realize that it is okay to make mistakes. These performances serve as informal assessments for me as the teacher, because I am privy to both excellence and imperfection. I do not grade my students on these informal performances because I want them to be comfortable and I am trying to desensitize them to the fear and stress of performing.

The students are very supportive of one another, and this type of constant collaboration turns a small group project into a connected class project because each group is invested in both its own song and the songs of their classmates. This assignment fosters the idea that we are not just a class, but a learning community.

By the end of the semester, students are sufficiently comfortable to perform their group songs in our campus theatre as part of a final concert. The agency they enjoy in selecting their song and in arranging it as they please connects them to the curriculum. Their collaboration throughout the group song assignments connects them to each other.

#### Kani nā Pua Ko‘olau

Another aspect of my course that fosters connection to the curriculum is a kanikapila or jam session that happens once a semester and occurs outside of our typical class time. The name of this kanikapila series is, Kani nā Pua Ko‘olau, which is a play on words from a composition by Queen Lili‘uokalani titled *Nani nā Pua Ko‘olau*<sup>38</sup>. The name of this kanikapila series asserts that the children of Ko‘olau are sounding out. Since Windward Community College is nestled

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<sup>38</sup> *Nani nā Pua Ko‘olau*, words and music by Lydia Kamaka‘eha Pākī, first published in 1867.

near the Ko‘olau mountain range, my students and members of the community who join us, would be considered in this case, the children of Ko‘olau.

For each kanikapila, I invite a professional award-winning Hawaiian music artist to lead the jam session and to participate in a question-and-answer sessions throughout the event. I was fortunate as a young musician to have played music with many award-winning musicians when they came to watch my dad play music in Waikīkī. Those experiences had a great impact on my relationship with and connection to Hawaiian music because I realized that these famous musicians had similar island experiences and upbringings and that they were not just on television but were accessible to me in person. I realize that most young Hawaiian musicians do not have access to award-winning musicians, so this class activity is set up to duplicate the opportunities that I had growing up, to play music with and learn from legends of Hawaiian music.

Each kanikapila attendee, whether a student or not, is encouraged to bring an instrument in order to play along with the guest artists. There is an emphasis, in the promotion of the kanikapila, that the event is not a concert, and that attendees are expected to come prepared to play along and participate. Unlike my learning experience of sitting on the side of the stage trying my best to keep up with the chords, each kanikapila participant is given the music for the songs that will be performed by our guest artist. While the chord sheets may take away some of the “jam session” feel, it is provided because the goal of this activity is to ensure that my students enjoy a memorable, and invaluable, experience playing Hawaiian music with the guest artist, one that promotes a positive connection to Hawaiian music.

During the “talk story” part of the event, participants get a peek behind the stage curtains. For many who attend, this is their first opportunity to actually interact with the artists as opposed



to simply watching them perform at a concert. The artists share stories of their upbringing, struggles, favorite experiences, and future goals. These discussions humanize the artists and perhaps allow my students to see similarities between their lives and those of the artists.

At a typical kanikapila, there are more than one hundred participants that are made up of students and community members. At the end of the event, participants are allowed to come up and meet and take pictures with the artist. This event connects and networks my students with the community, professional Hawaiian music artists, and Hawaiian music.

### Hanauna Mele

I use the final concert of my class to connect my students to the curriculum, each other, Hawaiian music artists, and to the community. The name of our final concert is reflective of the curricular goals of the class. The concert is called, Hanauna Mele, which like most Hawaiian names, has multiple meanings. One meaning is “generational or ancestral music or music that spans different generations of Hawaiian music.” Through the performance of Hawaiian music, the concert links generations together. Each song that is performed, links the performers to the composers whose stories they perpetuate through song.

Another intended meaning of the title is hidden within the words “Hanauna Mele.” When broken up, the title can also be heard as, Hānau nā Mele. The word “hānau” means to give birth, or, to be born. The word “mele” refers to song, and when preceded by “nā” it becomes pluralized as songs. The birthing of songs happens as my students perform their songs in the concert, and they themselves are “born” into musicianship and performance. For many of my students, it is their first time performing in front of an audience, and in a formal setting, as such, the experience effectively represents their birth into the world of performance. “Hānau nā Mele” is also intended to represent the birthing, or the debut of my students’ original compositions.

This final concert is intended to transform my students from being learners of music into being doers of music. Their performances not only allow them to demonstrate the skills and concepts that they learned in the class, but their performances also provide them an opportunity to learn in what could be considered their last class. Students learn how to perform for an audience and the difference between rehearsing a song and performing it, they learn how to play music with a sound system, how to block out distractions such as applause or lighting, and ultimately, they learn how personally rewarding making music can be. Students who present their original compositions learn how empowering it can be to share the issues that they care about, through those compositions, with a supportive audience made up largely of family and friends.

Like the kanikapila, professional Hawaiian musicians are invited to perform with my students at their final concert. These are award-winning Hawaiian artists with whom my students are either already familiar or from whom we have learned during the semester. Unlike the kanikapila, which is informal and where mistakes do not matter, for this concert my students learn and rehearsed a couple of the songs arranged by these artists. The opportunity to play music and interact with these professional artists allows the students to connect with the music on a different, more personal level. It also opens a line of communication to the artists themselves, from whom they might receive future guidance and mentorship. Not unlike the value of these newly acquired mentors, the acquired proficiency as a result of the process is emblematic of acquired empowerment.

After the pre-show rehearsal, the artists take time to talk to the students before the audience arrives. Students are encouraged to prepare questions for the artists concerning their career paths, learning experiences, and helpful tips for aspiring musicians. Typically, the artists

are very open and they willingly share the wisdom they have gained through years of experience. Because this sharing occurs, the concert facilitates intergenerational knowledge transfer which is important for groups who have been traditionally disempowered and who are seeking to effect a change in their current situation. This intergenerational sharing of knowledge ensures that upcoming generations can learn from both the hardships and triumphs of those who came before and who are blazing a trail for future generations to follow. Even if Hawaiian music is not their favorite style of music, after this concert my students find themselves connected to it. Moreover, the next time they listen to the radio and hear the artist's songs playing they will be able to say, "Hey, I played music with that artist." The final concert serves to complete the connection between my students and the curriculum. They connect to the new repertoire, they connect to the professional musicians, they connect to the audience, and they connect to each other via their shared experiences of performance and exposure to the original compositions of other students.

### **Song Composition Project**

In MUS 211, one of the requirements is to compose a song. As previously mentioned in this chapter, song composition is not a part of the course title or the SLOs. Song composition, however, is a critical tool that I use in the course to meet the other SLOs while connecting my students to the curriculum. I use the song composition assignment so that, upon completion of the course students will be able to, "Demonstrate basic concepts, such as rhythm, notation, dynamics, and expression in accurate performances." I use song composition not only to cover and teach these topics, but as a way to engage my students, connect them to the curriculum, and to empower them through music. Being that most of my students have never composed a song before this music course, I set up parameters in the assignment to help them to be successful and to ensure that I will be able to cover various musical concepts throughout the process.

Before we begin the song composition assignment, we discuss the power of music and how music can be used as a tool, with function, and not just for its aesthetic value. Because the course is called “Hawaiian Ensemble,” we discuss some of the more traditional uses of music in Hawai‘i and how, before western contact, our music (organized sound) was functional. We discuss the projects of empowerment and how music can play a role in each project. Students are then “activated” and told that they are to become agents for change, with song composition being their primary tool.

For the song composition assignment, each student is required to write a song on an issue of his or her choice. I recommend that they choose issues that they are passionate about, enjoy researching, and that they want to give voice to, or start dialogue about. Because of our discussions on the power of music, students are told that in this composition assignment, they are not allowed to write love songs unless they find an issue about love that they want to give voice to.

An example of this would be when one of my students wrote a song for his dad to tell him that he loved him. While that seems like a love song, his dad had just been diagnosed with cancer and only had a few months to live. He explained that his relationship with his dad was not always great and that he wanted to use the song to encourage people to mend their relationships, and to say that they love their family members before it is too late. Fortunately for him, he was able to sing his song composition to his dad before his dad passed away.

The issues about my students have composed songs are diverse, and tend to range from very serious matters like abuse, suicide, addiction, overdevelopment in Hawai‘i, to less weighty issues such as pot holes, dogs that do not listen, and being socially awkward. The main thing that

is emphasized is that whatever issue they choose, they should be passionate about it or be experienced with the subject matter.

The composition assignment is structured to minimize the projection of my own ideological and musical thoughts on their compositions. Just like with positionality, it is almost impossible to eliminate my input and influence on their compositions when guiding them through the process, but music research suggests that cooperative and collaborative compositions are beneficial to music students. Music scholar and professor, Margaret J. Barret (2006), says that collaboration during song composition creates a "...thought community" that can help the student to better realize their musical ideas (p. 195). Barret (2006) suggests that the teacher's job is to draw out the voices of the students in their song compositions. Throughout the song composition process, I facilitate several class activities where students collaborate, and both give and receive constructive feedback on their compositions.

### **Layout of Assignments**

The song composition assignment is structured to be similar to a parent who is teaching a child to ride a bicycle without training wheels. I metaphorically walk or run beside them while holding their bike seats, with the hopes that when I let go, they will not notice or realize that they are riding a bike, or in this case, composing a song. I scaffold the assignments in a way that takes students from ideas, to trying to realize those same ideas in their songs. The structure is critical to avoid surprising, or perhaps even overwhelming students with the realization that they are actually writing a song.

#### Pre-Song Composition Survey

The first assignment given in the song composition process is for students to tell me about themselves and their musical experience. While this assignment may seem unrelated to

song composition, it is important for me to have a good idea of their music backgrounds to gain specific insight into where each student may need support in the song composition process. This assignment also helps me recognize if family members or friends of the student can help during the composition process. Here is the pre-song composition survey assignment that I give my students:

Thoroughly answer each question.

- *Where did you grow up?* With this question, I glean information about my students' surroundings while growing up, and possibly find ways to demonstrate how we are connected. This connection may occur because I am familiar with their hometown, or we may have people we know in common. At the very least, it allows me to learn more about where they are from.
- *Does anyone in your family play music? If so, what is the relationship?* This question gives me an understanding of the role that music may play in their family. It also helps me to understand who students may turn to if they need help or get stuck in the composition process.
- *Do you have a favorite song that is connected to an event in your life?* This question is used to help the students realize that certain songs are tied to specific memories. This question helps them understand the impact that a song can have, which may motivate them to be more thoughtful in their own song compositions.
- *What is your favorite genre of music and why?* This question helps me to understand their musical taste so that I can guide them to write a song that musically interests them. I also ask students to consider why the genre is their favorite, because this awareness allows them to implement elements of their favorite genre into their songs.

- *Did you learn any type of music before taking this college course? If yes, what instruments or type of lessons did you take?* Once again, this question helps me to understand their music experience. Understanding their music experience helps me to communicate effectively with them because I can use musical terms that they may be familiar with. For example, a student who took band all through high school will understand terms that someone who took private ‘ukulele lessons in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade might not.
- *Did you enjoy those music lessons? Why or why not?* This question allows me to tailor my curriculum and lessons so that I use the methods of teaching that they enjoy, like, and perhaps have prior experience with, while trying to avoid some of the methods that they did not enjoy.
- *Explain how those lessons were conducted?* This gives me a baseline understanding for how my students are accustomed to receiving music instruction. With this question, I get a pretty good idea as to how my course may be different for them. I also get an idea of how “formal” those lessons were.
- *What made you want to take a college music course?* This question helps me to understand their motives for taking my course. It also causes them to reflect on why they took the course. This is useful for me as an educator because I can make sure that students know when we are covering specific material that they were interested in learning.
- *Have you composed a song before? What was it about?* These questions give me insight into how foreign the song composition process will be to them, and how much support and help each student will need in the composition process.

- *In what ways does music play a role in your life?* This question is purposefully broad because I want students to think and share any ways that they feel music has a role in their lives. This question, like some of the other questions, can make students aware of music's potential impact. If they realize the role that music has had in their lives, the hope is that they will also understand the role that their song composition can have in the lives of others.

### Choose Three Issues

After I get an idea of the range of levels that my students occupy with regard to musical experience, the next step of the process is for my students to identify three possible issues on which they might compose a song. I ask them to write a little bit about each issue and why they chose it. I suggest to my students that they choose issues that they are comfortable discussing with the class. This suggestion helps students to realize that if they are not comfortable discussing the issue with the class, they should probably not write a song about it for this assignment.

The reason I have students start off by choosing three issues as opposed to just one is because I will use their three issues in a class activity that immediately establishes collaboration and feedback throughout the composition process. It is critical that students feel safe to share their issues with the class, so I tell them that our role is not to debate the issues that other students want to write about, but to ask questions, and give feedback, so that students can more clearly articulate what they want to compose in their songs.

While this may seem insignificant, it is important to establish early in the process that feedback is good, welcome, and helpful. Students take turns reading aloud their three issues and then the class and I give feedback and ask questions about their issues. In this part of the



assignment, students have agency to choose issues that are relevant to them. Here is the assignment that I give my students:

*What are three issues that you would like to give voice to or are passionate about?*

*You should write 3-5 sentences explaining each issue and why you want to write a song about it.*

Sometimes the issues that my students want to write about are too broad. I explain that if their topic is too broad, the message of the composition will be lost, and the listeners will not understand the issue that they are trying to give voice to. Sometimes their issue is too broad in the sense that they want to cover too many issues in their songs. This tends to lead to a lack of focus and power in their composition. One common response to this assignment that is an example of an issue that is too broad is when students say that they want to write about Native Hawaiian issues. While as the teacher I agree that there are many issues that Native Hawaiians face, the song has the potential to be more impactful if they choose to focus on specific issues that the Native Hawaiian community deals with. I guide them to think of the issues that they care most about or that they feel need voice. This will usually result in their writing about issues like over development, language loss, or self-governance. The idea is not to limit the range or breadth of issues on which they might compose a song, but is rather to provide them with focal points for their composition so that, at the end of the song, the audience has a clear understanding of what particular issue is being given voice.

On the other hand, if the chosen issue is too narrow, students will have a difficult time creating a whole song about it and may end up being stuck after writing a verse or two. Having a topic that is too narrow is where a lot of students get “stuck” in song compositions. Finding ways to broaden narrow issues allows the composer more room for creative expression. I offer

expertise in helping them to choose and refine one of their three issues so that they can successfully compose a song about it. One semester I had a student who wanted to write about how he hates when slow drivers are in the left lane. While the issue is valid, I helped him see that he would have a hard time writing a whole song about that narrow issue. He ended up expanding his issue by writing a song about all his driving pet peeves. The expansion of his issue made it easier for him to have multiple verses in his song while still addressing his enmity for slow drivers in the left lane.

### Elaborate on Your Chosen Issue

In this assignment, students are empowered to choose an issue that they are passionate about, as a topic for song composition. They articulate the specific struggles in their chosen issue that they want to address. They use this assignment to share any pertinent information relating to their issue. They explain to me in detail some of the feelings they have about their topic, why they chose it, and how they connect to it. This assignment helps me understand the topics that they would like to cover in their compositions. It also enables me to guide my students without overly injecting my own thoughts and ideas into their songs.

Although I am the only one who reads this assignment in totality, each student takes time in class to indicate which of the three issues has been selected as the topic for song composition. Each student also provides more information on why that particular issue was selected. The thought process behind the choice is explained to the other students, as well as the feelings and the personal connections to the issue. The purpose of this activity is, once again, to encourage a “thought community” and to bolster the level of comfort in discussing their personal issues.

Another purpose is to ensure that when we collaborate, we keep in mind the primary purpose the student might have for writing the song. This activity fosters group sensitivity

toward the student who has agreed to expose personal thoughts in the composition process. The more we know about why they chose the issue, the more our collaboration will ensure that composers say what they want to say without projecting our own ideas into their songs. This safeguards the creative control the composer enjoys in the composition process. Here is the assignment that is given:

*Write one page on your chosen issue. Use this assignment to tell me and the class as much as possible about how you feel about your issue. This write up should have enough detail so that we will be able to help you craft your issue into a song without inserting our thoughts on your issue.*

#### Narrow the Issue to One Sentence

After going through the process of elaborating on the issue, students are then asked to reduce the issue to a sentence that is like a thesis statement. In the same way a thesis statement gives focus to a research project, this statement provides students with a defined focus for their songs. Periodically, if students start going off on a tangent in their compositions, I will ask them to read this assignment to me. They often realize that they have strayed from their issue and will reevaluate the direction their composition is taking. Here is the assignment given:

*Narrow the issue to one sentence. The process of reducing the issue to a sentence allows you to have a focus point for your song. You can use this short sentence not only to tell people what your song is about, but also to make sure that during the composition process, you keep the issue clear.*

#### Message of the Song

In this part of the composition process, students differentiate between the issue presented in their song and the overall message of the song. The message is what composers hope the

audience will hear or learn from their song. This is the part of the process that is intended to empower students to consider carefully the message they want to present to the listener.

Often the message and the issue will be very different; for example, a student may choose to write a song on the issue of domestic violence, but the message could be that those who are abused are strong enough to leave the abuser and make a new life. In this part of the process, the students begin to consider who their target audience is. Knowing the audience and the message facilitates the choice of melody, lyrics, tempo, and rhythm that support and strengthen the main message. Here is the assignment given to the students:

*What is the message of your song? The message is what the listener or your audience should get out of your song. It is very important that as a composer you are always mindful of what you want your audience to get out of your song. This focus will allow you to use the melody, lyrics, and other musical conventions to strengthen your message.*

### Lyrical Approach

After deciding on the message their songs promote, students must determine which lyrical approach is the most appropriate for both their issues and messages. At this point in the process, students are not yet writing lyrics, they are only asked to think about and decide what style of lyrics best fits. Here is the assignment given to my students:

*What kind of lyrical approach will be using for your song? This choice should reflect your issue and the message that you are trying to convey. You are deciding if the style of your lyrics will be funny, satirical, sarcastic, metaphorical, angry, in story form, or literal. Explain why you are choosing that approach.*

### Musical Approach

This assignment asks my students to explain how they will musically approach their song compositions. Like the lyrical approach, students are not yet writing the music, they are only writing down how they envision the sound of their song. They are also asked to explain why they are choosing the musical approach that they are, and how it will strengthen the message of their song. All this information helps me to guide students toward the realization of their musical vision without overly projecting my own musical ideas.

Because my students are relatively new to music, I encourage them not to worry about their musical abilities when deciding the musical approach for their compositions. I reassure my students with less musical experience that I can help them with their song structures when the time comes and that the more information they provide, the more I can help them to create the sound that they envision. Here is the assignment that I give my students:

*What kind of musical approach will you be using in your song? Explaining your desired musical approach helps me to know what you imagine your song sounding like. You may share a style such as reggae, jazz, blues, rock, or Hawaiian that you envision your song sounding like. You may also choose to give examples of songs that stylistically reflect what you want your song to sound and feel like. Explain why you chose your musical approach and how it will strengthen the message of your song.*

### Three Titles

After completing all the above processes, students come up with three potential titles for their songs. Although the task of creating titles sounds simple enough, this part of the song composition requires a lot of thought. The titles should match the lyrical and musical approach of

their songs while also giving the audience a glimpse into what the song is about. This is the first part in the composition process where the students have to create something artistic for their songs.

This portion of the song composition process utilizes peer collaboration. Students share their title ideas with the class to get feedback and critique. This collaboration is also helpful for everyone involved since it allows all students to practice thinking about song titles for all types of subject matter. By the end of this activity, students usually understand how they want to craft their song titles. Here is the assignment that I give to my students:

*Create three titles that match both the lyrical and musical approach of your composition. The titles should give the audience a glimpse into what the song is about.*

Most of the time the titles that my students share in this activity are not actually the titles that they end up settling on. This assignment introduces students to the concept of “wordsmithing.” Titles are crucial for a song because a clear and concise title gives the audience both something to remember and insight into the idea behind the song.

### Basic Outline

After creating a title, students create a basic outline of their song. This allows them to strategize the development of both the musical and lyrical themes of their song. Students come up with a basic structure for their song by figuring out how many verses their song will have, if there will be a chorus or a bridge, and the topics or themes of each musical section of the song. This activity allows students to formulate how they will move from introducing and explaining their selected issues to promoting their messages. In essence, these activities create a story board

for them to follow. Creating this outline ensures that the students present the message that they intend to present through their song.

The outline also helps students to navigate some of the challenges relating to what is commonly referred to as “writer’s block.” While writing the song, students are bound to get stuck at some point during the writing process, and sometimes the best thing to do is to leave that section and work on a different part of the song. Without an outline, the students cannot skip ahead to the next part of the song because the next verse will be dependent on the verse that precedes it, i.e., the verse on which they are stuck. With an outline, the students can start working on other parts of the song because they already know the arch of their song. Here is the assignment that I give my students:

*Write an outline for your song. It should show how you are going to share the story you want to tell. You should show how you plan on getting from explaining the issue to sharing the message of the song.*

Typically, students find the outline to be very helpful for them in constructing a frame for their song. In this part of the course, we use song composition to discuss the different parts that are common in songs. We discuss the difference between a song that is strophic (i.e., every verse has the same melody and chords, as opposed to a song that is through composed, i.e., does not have a repeating chord structure). We discuss the function of a chorus and bridge in a song, and how those sections can be used to emphasize the message of the song or to change the sound of the music to keep the audience engaged with the music.

As students figure out formats for their compositions, they begin to understand how many different musical ideas there are to consider. If a song is strophic and has repeating verses without a chorus, then the student realizes that it is sufficient to create a single chord structure

and melody for the song. If the song has a verse, chorus, and bridge, then the student will have to create chords and melodies for each of those musical sections. In my experience, this part of the process is essential for beginning music students since it prevents their being overwhelmed in the process. The outline breaks the songs into small, achievable sections, and releases the student from having to dwell on the idea of composing an entire song.

### Create a Chord Structure

At this point in the composition process, students begin to create their songs. Leading up to this assignment, we cover several musical concepts with which students must be familiar in order to compose their songs. Because the students know that the musical concepts that they are learning will be applied in their compositions, they engage with the material and ask meaningful questions. We cover the music concepts of meter, key signatures, scales, rhythm, tempo, circle of fourths and fifths, and chord relationships. With these tools, there now exists valuable application for class lessons that transcends mere repetition and opens up the possibility for creativity.

After covering this material, students come up with chord combinations that they like or that they feel match their musical approach. In this part of the composition process, if students get stuck, I guide them with ideas for chords that match their chosen musical approach. This part can be overwhelming for some of the less advanced students, so I offer to meet with them during my office hours to work on ideas for chord construction. For the students who are really struggling, I have them record me playing some different chord options for them. I tell them to listen to the recordings and decide which one sounds most like what they imagined in their musical approach. I remind students that they are free to change anything that I record for them if they do not like it or if it does not match their musical approach. I also tell them that the chords



that I give them are just a boost, or a start, and that they should consider ways to add to it or make it their own.

Students record their chords and submit them to me online. After listening to their recordings, I give them feedback on their chords and discuss with them strategies for amplifying their message in the music. I tell students throughout the entire creative process, that all my thoughts are just suggestions and that they will not be downgraded for not utilizing my ideas. The students know that they have artistic control over their song compositions. Here is the assignment that I give them:

*Using what we discussed in class (meter, tempo, rhythm, scales, and chord relationships) create a chord structure for your song. Record yourself playing the chords for each musical section of your song. You do not need to play the song in totality. You can play the chords for your verse, then stop and play the chords for your chorus or bridge if you have one. Do not worry about a melody yet because that is our next step.*

#### Create a Melody

After students receive my feedback on their chords and settle on the basic chord structure of their songs, the next assignment is to create a melody that suitable to those chords. Before they create a melody, we cover musical concepts like intervals, dynamics, and expression. We also discuss the difference between a conjunct and a disjunct melody and how each melodic style can be used by students to highlight the message of their songs. Here is the assignment that I give them:

*Create a melody that matches the chord structure of your song. You can use the scale of your chosen key signature to help you choose notes that fit. Once you find*

*a melody that you like, be prepared to share your melody in class. You should be ready to hum or sing the melody with “la” while you play your chords.*

When students share their melodies with the class, sometimes there are notes that do not fit with their chord structures. As a class, we give feedback to each person with regard to melody, and I often use parts of the melody that need correcting to teach or reinforce certain musical concepts. This activity gives me insight into their understanding of harmonic structure and key signatures. At this point in the process, I emphasize that their songs are only drafts and that, as they write the lyrics, they may choose to alter parts of their melodies in order to add meaning to the words. Keeping my students in “draft mode” keeps them more open to feedback and critique as we start to add more layers to their songs.

### Write Your Song Lyrics

The last step that my students take before turning in their composition drafts is to create the lyrics. Because they typically have not been playing music for very long, and are not music majors, the lyrics are the last thing that they create. Of all the requirements for composing a song, composition of language is the forte of most students. They are much more capable of adapting the lyrics of their songs to fit their melodies than they are of adapting their music to fit their lyrics since their music experiences are limited. In this part of the class, we discuss phrasing and wordsmithing. We discuss how putting too many words in a musical line can diminish the ability of the listener to hear and understand the words. This ultimately weakens the messages and detracts from the overall value of the song. I remind my students that if the audience cannot hear the lyrics, they will not understand the message.

This is the portion of the process where students tend to separate and write at their own pace. From this point, students are given assignments with a minimal number of lyrics that must

be created in order to remain on schedule. For example, I may require that they turn in two verses by the next class. Students are told that it is okay if they get on a roll and finish a draft of their lyrics all at once because the more times we hear the song, the more feedback we can give to refine it.

After each lyric assignment deadline, students perform their songs for the class. This helps with editing the lyrics because class members will listen to them and subsequently apprise the composer of parts of the lyrics that might sound good and make sense to the composer, but that are lost and fall flat on the ears of the audience. As a class, it is a collective effort to help each other wordsmith their songs. During the sharing, we often review the issue and message intended by the composer so that we can ensure they are being represented accurately by the lyrics. If there are lyrics that do not make sense to someone in the class, this exercise allows the students to ask the composer to explain the thoughts behind a particular lyric. It is also an opportunity for the class to make suggestions designed to clarify the point.

Performing the song for the class also serves the purpose of helping the composer become more confident in performing the song. Most of my students have never composed a song, let alone performed one in front of a group of people, so these mini performances allow them to build enough confidence to be comfortable in sharing their songs. This process of writing and performing is repeated at least three times. As students refine the lyrics, melodies, and dynamics of their songs, the message of their songs will become clearer to their audiences.

### Final Recording

At the end of the semester, the students submit a recording of themselves performing their compositions. As mentioned in previous chapters, the research suggests that if students are connected to the content, they are more likely to add intellectual rigor to their assignments

(Garcia, 2014). I find this to be true because many of my students' recordings go above and beyond what is required for the assignment. Being that my class is only the second semester of music for some students, in their recordings, the only requirement is to play their instrument and sing their song. Some of my students, however, add multiple instruments, with vocal harmonies, and lead instruments.

### Post-Song Composition Survey

After they turn in the final song compositions, my students are given a survey and are asked to reflect on their work and the related processes, the performance of the song, and on the curriculum. Here is the post-composition survey that I give my students:

#### Song Composition

*In class, you learned about music concepts such as rhythm, notation, keys, wordsmithing, intervals, dynamics, and expression.*

- *Share what your song is about and the parts that you think are most impactful.*
- *Discuss in detail how you applied at least three of these concepts in your song composition.*
- *Discuss what you learned about the power of music and song composition during class instruction time. Provide two or three detailed examples.*
- *Discuss what you learned about song composition during the process of composing and performing your song. Provide two or three detailed examples.*
- *How do you feel about the song that you composed? Provide a detailed analysis.*
- *How does your song fit into the 10 projects of empowerment? Is it the same project that you intended to write on? Can you see other projects that your song fits into? Explain.*

- *Discuss the feeling of composing a song on an issue of your choice.*

### Song Performance

- *Who is the intended audience for your song? How do you think they will receive it?*
- *Explain the feelings you had when you were performing your own song composition.*
- *How do you intend to use your song in the future?*
- *How do you intend to use song composition in the future?*

### Curriculum

*In class, you learned about musical concepts such as rhythm, notation, keys, wordsmithing, intervals, dynamics, and expression.*

- *Discuss the benefits of collaboration on this project.*
- *How did the song composition project help you to better understand music?*

### *TEN PROJECTS OF EMPOWERMENT*

- *Put an “X” in each project of empowerment that your song fits into*

Improving Life situation by increasing:	Celebrating Survival	Remembering	Intervening	Connecting	Envisioning	Networking	Naming	Protecting	Creating	Sharing
Personal Power										
Interpersonal power										
Political Power										

Of all the assignments that I use to connect my students to the curriculum, the song composition project is by far the most successful in achieving the goals of connecting students to the curriculum, and in teaching course content. When my students have completed their compositions, many of them have indicated to me that the feeling of completion is one of the most rewarding feelings in their educational careers. This is the goal. Find your voice. Use your

voice. Use what you learn in the classroom to improve your communities, your social situations, and your quality of life.

### **Concluding Comment**

According to the learning outcomes of MUS 211, song composition is not required, however, it has become an absolute staple for me when I teach the course. By composing their own songs, my students better understand Hawaiian music and gain a greater appreciation for composers of all styles of music. Students also get to apply what they learn in the course to real-life issues that are relevant to them. Seeing the joy of my students, and reactions to the song composition assignment, was the impetus for this research. I have former students who now play music professionally and continue to write their own songs.

In preliminary research, this assignment has given my students a platform to share their voices on relevant issues in their lives. One student who wrote a song about the rise of violent crime in Hawai‘i had his song featured on two local news stations. This student claimed that having his song heard and featured on the news was an amazing feeling because the issue that he cares about was brought into public consciousness.

This is the power of song composition, performance, and a connected curriculum. This is what happens when students are personally connected to the music they play. Fung (2017) says this type of curriculum is “...about empowering students to use enquiry to develop their own coherent story of who they are, what they can do and where they want to go” (p. 61). I realized early on in my teaching career that if I want my students to connect to music, I should have them create their own songs. The purpose of writing a song is not always to compose a song that will be popular on radio. For some, composing a song can be a medium to learn music, discover their voices, and to share their thoughts on ways to improve their lives and society through musical

engagement. As an educator, my thought is that students are inclined to connect to music that they themselves compose.

## CHAPTER 5

### E HŌ MAI

E hō mai ka ‘ike mai luna mai e  
O nā mea huna no‘eau o nā mele e  
E hō mai, e hō mai, e hō mai e

The chant *E Hō Mai*<sup>39</sup> is commonplace in many Hawaiian contexts. It asks that knowledge be granted from above and demonstrates a willingness and readiness to learn on the parts of the chanters. This knowledge might incorporate all aspects of life—such as spirituality, history, cultural practices, social interactions, language, and healing. *E Hō Mai* is an extremely meaningful choice for the title of Chapter 5 because my participants’ songs carry their wisdom and because I include their voices in my analysis of how they feel empowered through their song composition and performance projects.

#### Methodology

As a Native Hawaiian musician, educator, and researcher, I am drawn to the topic of empowerment and the role that research plays in defining knowledge and epistemologies. My personal stance has motivated me to conduct research that is beneficial to people interested in personal empowerment. On the subject of power in research, Smith (1999, p. 193) argues “When indigenous people become the researchers and not merely the researched, the activity of research is transformed. Questions are framed differently, priorities are ranked differently, problems are defined differently, people participate on different terms.” For years, outsiders have researched

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<sup>39</sup> *E Hō Mai*, words Edith Kanaka‘ole (n.d.).



indigenous peoples for the purpose of harvesting information on our beliefs, practices, customs, and cultures. This demand for information has had more to do with wanting “knowledge for knowledge sake” than it has had to do with empowering indigenous peoples (or “the researched” as Smith refers to our indigenous peoples who find themselves under the microscopes of non-indigenous researchers). According to Smith, a much-needed power shift occurs when researchers have experiences, beliefs, aspirations like those who are the focus of research projects. These relationships result in mutual understandings of what should be studied, how and where studies should take place, how the findings should be analyzed and disseminated, and how improvements should be made based on the findings.

In keeping with Smith’s stance that indigenous peoples have the right to self-determine in all matters pertaining to their health and well being, I am interested in understanding the nature of personal power, how there are shifts in power depending on circumstances, and how power is used for self-enhancement or for the enhancement of others. In order to develop a keen understanding of my position as researcher, I have placed my own experiences as a Hawaiian educator, musician, and researcher under a microscope in Chapter 2: E Ala Ē. According to Holmes (2020, pp. 1-2) the term positionality both

describes an individual’s world view and the position they adopt about a research task and its social and political context. The individual’s world view or ‘where the researcher is coming from’ concerns ontological assumptions (an individual’s beliefs about the nature of social reality and what is knowable about the world), epistemological assumptions (an individual’s beliefs about the nature of knowledge) and assumptions about human nature and agency (individual’s assumptions about the way we interact with our environment and relate to it). These

assumptions are colored by an individual's values and beliefs that are shaped by their political allegiance, religious faith, gender, sexuality, historical and geographical location, ethnicity, race, social class, and status, (dis)abilities and so on.

Savin-Baden and Major's (2013) argument that positionality relates to the stance that a researcher chooses to adopt within a given research study is in keeping with Holmes and Smith's argument. Further, Holmes (p. 2) argues that positionality is normally identified by "locating the researcher about three areas: (1) the subject under investigation, (2) the research participants, and (3) the research context and process." In my study, (1) song composition and performance as educational tools of empowerment are the subject under investigation, (2) community college students with a range of musical expertise and experiences are the participants, and (3) my MUS 211: Hawaiian Ensemble class that focuses on the exploration of basic principles of history and development of ensemble performance with students learning to play while singing are my research context and process. These elements, then, have evolved from my inextricably linked experiences as a Hawaiian musician (performer and composer), a music educator (K-higher education), and a researcher.

### **Case Study Research**

According to Flipp (2014), the word "case" can be defined as an event, problem, process, activity, program, a single person, or several people. This definition makes the case study method ideal for a research project that has the objective of better understanding specific situations, trends, or phenomena. Similarly, Shuttleworth (2008, para.3), describes the case study method as "...especially useful for trying to test theoretical models by using them in real world

situations.” Yin (2012, p. 4) echoes this position in describing case study research as a vehicle to learn “about real world behavior and its meaning.”

Case study research has become popular in fields such as the social sciences, education, and healthcare and is now widely accepted as a viable approach to conducting research because it incorporates qualitative methods, quantitative methods and mixed methods in the gathering and analysis of data. The article, “The Case Study Method” (n.d., p. 1) argues that “case studies allow a researcher to investigate a topic in far more detail than might be possible if they were trying to deal with a large number of research participants (nomothetic approach) with the aim of ‘averaging’”. In keeping, Yin (2012) argues that if the objective of a study is to look at how or why something happens, then the case study method is an appropriate vehicle for this study.

The phenomena that I am studying takes place in my MUS 211 course at Windward Community College. Students in my course are required to compose songs on issues to which they want to draw attention. My research focuses on three questions:

- Does the process of song composition empower students?
- Does the song composition itself empower students?
- In what ways are students empowered through the performance of their song compositions?

One of the first things that I did in embarking on my study was to define the case. This included creating a bounded system. If projects are well defined and bounded, researchers can gather data that pertains to the research questions (Shuttleworth, 2008). My case study is bound within one semester of my MUS 211 college course that teaches song composition. I chose this approach because it allowed me to maintain control over the method of instruction and the data collection. This control removed any variables in data collection and method of instruction that

might skew any patterns or themes in the data collected. I also use the embedded method for data collection and analysis. That is, the data collection and analysis focused specifically on the individual participants within my class in which other students participate (but who were not participants in my study).

## **Setting**

The data for this study were collected during the Fall 2020 semester (over a four-month period) at the University of Hawai‘i Windward Community College.

Windward Community College is a public community college in Kāne‘ohe, Hawai‘i. It is part of the University of Hawai‘i system and is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges. Created in 1972, Windward Community College primarily serves the Windward Oahu region, offering college courses, non-credit classes, and community activities. Windward CC's strengths are in Hawaiian studies, natural sciences, fine arts, veterinary technology, and vocational training.<sup>40</sup>

## **Participants**

The five participants in this study were selected from my MUS 211: Hawaiian Ensemble course that had an enrollment of eleven students. The course was synchronous and conducted completely online using the ZOOM platform. When selecting the participants for my study, I carefully considered the objective of my research (as reflected in my research questions). Creswell (2007, p. 125), refers to this selection process as creating a “Purposeful Sampling Strategy.” In qualitative research, when sampling is purposeful, Patton (2002, p. 235) says that

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<sup>40</sup> Reference: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Windward\\_Community\\_College](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Windward_Community_College)

the research "...yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations." Creswell (2007, p. 126) provides four categories of things that can be sampled, "events, settings, actors, and artifacts." Researchers are not limited to choosing just one of the above categories, but rather may skillfully find ways to sample multiple aspects of the case by using various modes of data collection.

While this study collects data from five case studies only, a sampling strategy was used to gain a degree of variation in the data collected (Patton, 2002, p. 235). Researchers who focus on variation in their typically identify ways to maximize this variation according to the goal of their specific study. Some common variances are gender, age, employment, and ethnicity. In this study I created variance using gender, musical experience, and high school experiences (i.e., private, public, homeschool, and Hawaiian immersion). I chose these variations because they give me the greatest insight into the experiences that might shape the feelings of personal empowerment in my participants.

Three of the participants are female and two are male. They have varying levels of musical experience and attended different types of high schools. Each participant is profiled to provide an understanding of why they were selected for the study. Because this project deals with the intellectual property of the participants, they chose to be identified. All of the participants are over the age of eighteen, were briefed on the nature of the study, and agreed to participate. The following participant profiles include factual information, as well as observations based on my interactions with them in settings other than the setting of this study.

## Participant Profiles

### Lilia Morgan

Lilia Morgan is a female student who grew up on the windward side of the island of O‘ahu, Hawai‘i. She has an aunty and uncle who are professional musicians. Many of her family gatherings consist of the family playing music together. Between grades four and six, Morgan was a part of her elementary school’s ‘ukulele band and performed for school assemblies and community events. From grades nine through eleven, she was a member of her high school’s Polynesian Music program. Morgan noted that her favorite musical style is R&B or songs that are emotive. From my observations, she appeared to like country music as well. Morgan said that there are songs in her life that connect her to specific memories with family and friends.

Previously, Morgan was enrolled in my MUS 121Z: Ukulele 1 course. During her first semester, she was very reserved and quiet, and she did not readily volunteer information about the fact that she already knew how to play the ‘ukulele. I noticed that she picked up things very quickly and that she had musical talent. When her group was learning its first song, she was hesitant to take a leadership role, but later took on that responsibility. By the end of the first semester, she had grown musically.

Two semesters later, Morgan enrolled in both my slack key and Hawaiian ensemble classes. She did a great job in her first song composition project. She wrote about connecting to her grandfather whom she had never met and yet she felt like she knew. Morgan did very well in both classes and is preparing to complete the Hawaiian Music certificate that consists of a minimum of twenty-five college music credits.

### Ka‘ula Krug

Krug is a male student who grew up on the Leeward Coast of O‘ahu, Hawai‘i. His first language is Hawaiian and he grew up in a very musical family that is committed to the perpetuation of Hawaiian practices, language, and music.

From a very young age, Krug and his siblings sang Hawaiian songs in three-part harmony in various venues, including that of Waikīkī. Before taking my college class, Krug had no formal music training. He began learning the ‘ukulele from his father around the age of eight but said that he was not really confident in his playing until he was about fifteen years old. In addition to the ‘ukulele, Krug plays the guitar and bass. He and his family are involved in issues that deal with Native Hawaiians and they can often be found at protests focusing on Native Hawaiian rights. Recently, they released a recording called *I Kulāiwi*<sup>41</sup> that can be heard on local radio stations. Due to his upbringing, it is not surprising that Hawaiian music is Krug’s favorite genre of music. Hawaiian music plays a large role in his life because it is a part of his family’s legacy.

Krug attends the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa and is majoring in Hawaiian Language. Because of his musical experiences and abilities, I did not require him to take courses that are prerequisites for MUS 211. When asked if he had ever composed a song, Krug said that he previously composed several songs for school and classes that he had taken. He said that most of his compositions had to do with his hometown.

Krug has a fun and light-hearted disposition which makes him personable to his classmates. As a student, he does all the assignments well and turns them in on time. Typically, he is a student who does not volunteer answers but if called upon, he shares his thoughts and

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<sup>41</sup> “*I Kulāiwi*” was released on January 21, 2021.

demonstrates that he is a high-level thinker. When speaking about cultural matters, he has a wealth of knowledge and experience, and that he is accustomed to having those types of conversations.

### Sienna Bruno

Bruno is a female student who grew up on the north shore of O‘ahu. When asked about family members who play music, she mentioned one cousin who plays the guitar. Bruno was home schooled for high school and graduated at the age of sixteen. Just before she graduated Bruno began taking voice lessons. She said she always loved to listen to music but after she graduated from high school, she started to have an interest in learning music formally.

When Bruno was asked about her favorite genre of music, she said that she did not prefer one style. However, she did say that she liked acoustic music that is not overly produced. When asked if she had a favorite song, she mentioned that there are songs that she associates with singing milestones but none that really connect to a specific event in her life.

When Bruno first attended Windward Community College, she enrolled in voice classes and piano. Later, I informed Bruno of the music certificates that are offered at Windward Community College. On hearing this information, she decided to declare general music as a secondary major so that she could complete the music certificate. Bruno went on to take a number of courses from me including Music Theory, ‘Ukulele, and Introduction to Hawaiian Music. In all the classes, Bruno excelled. She was fully committed to learning everything she could to become a better musician. As a teacher, it was very rewarding for me to watch Bruno transition from someone who enjoyed music, to a student who would graduate with a music certificate.



Bruno is a very confident student. Her assignments are typically well done and turned in on time. Even though she is relatively new to music instruction, she thinks about her music like an artist who has been performing for a while. She has a keen sense for how to help her audiences feel and connect to the message in her songs.

### Matthew Lattore

Lattore is a male student who grew up on the windward side of the island of O‘ahu, Hawai‘i. He grew up in a family that has a lot of people who play music. He says that at his family’s parties, playing music is a regular occurrence. Being surrounded by music from a young age eventually motivated him to start learning how to play the guitar in high school. Even though Lattore has several family members who play music, he learned primarily from YouTube and a music class at the public high school he attended. Lattore really enjoyed his high school music classes but when he began attending college to become a firefighter, he had no plans to continue formal music lessons.

Lattore was introduced to my college music classes after attending an end of semester concert class put on by one of my classes. His home college campus is actually Honolulu Community College but he decided to take my class at Windward Community College. When Lattore was in my entry level slack key guitar class, he was very motivated to learn. It was obvious that he went home and practiced after every class session and that he had musical talent.

Lattore first registered for my MUS 211 course the semester before this study took place. During this class, he wrote a song about violent crime in Hawai‘i. His song was intitled *Throw a Shaka, Not a Fist*<sup>42</sup>. The recording of his song was played on the Windward Community

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<sup>42</sup> *Throw a Shaka, Not a Fist*, words and music by Matthew Lattore (2020)  
Hyperlink: <https://youtu.be/mn06vRURisk>

College's social media platforms and caught the attention of two local news stations that broadcast Lattore's song, talked about the song's message, and showed a clip of him explaining the song. This gave Lattore first-hand experience of the power of song composition. His song message was amplified and heard state-wide on the news stations. He realized that his voice and thoughts had reached far more people than if he had only talked or written about the issue. During the period of this study, Lattore was taking MUS 211 for the second time. I observed that he had a whole new level of confidence in his ability to compose a song. He was still nervous to sing in front of others, but his trepidation for the song composition project was replaced by excitement.

Lattore's favorite genres of music are Hawaiian and reggae. He said that while he cannot think of any songs that connect to specific experiences in his life, most of his memories with his family include music. He shared that he feels that music is a great tool for self-expression and to spread positivity. As a student, Lattore's personality is generally jovial and happy. He seems to perk up when we cover new course material. He generally seems to get along well with all his classmates.

#### Rachel Faith Javier

Rachel Faith Javier is a female student who grew up on the island of O'ahu in the districts of Ewa Beach and Āliamanu. She attended Sacred Hearts Academy which is a private school located in Honolulu. Her father plays the drums for his church choir and Javier grew up singing with church groups. Her uncle also plays the drums in his own band. She has also been involved with musical theatre since she was eight years old. It was in these settings that she fell in love with singing and performing.

Before taking my college course, Javier had no formal lessons in music and was self-taught using YouTube and experimentation. When she entered my class, she could play the ‘ukulele well enough that she was able to get a prerequisite override to go straight into my MUS 211 course. She also plays a little guitar and piano. Javier is a very talented student who performs professionally throughout the island as the lead singer for a local pop-rock group. When she performs as a solo artist, she plays the ‘ukulele and sings.

Javier was extremely invested in all the class assignments that had to do with the song composition. She was happy and involved with all of the lessons. She said that before the class she had composed a lot of pieces for songs but that she had not really completed any of her own songs. She was not only attentive, but appreciative when we covered concepts that helped her to complete her own songs. Javier said that she enjoys all genres of music but that her favorite genre is musical theater. She likes musical theater because she can watch the performance while she listens to it. Her taste in musical theater is reflected in her own expressive performance style.

### **Data Collection**

All participant data collected for this case study comes from class assignments<sup>43</sup> associated with the song composition project and performance. Before the participants began the composition assignment, they did a pre-survey that required them to write about their musical interests and experience. The participants also submitted videos throughout the song composition process. These documented the nature of the progress, particularly the kinds of decisions made by the participants as they experimented with their ideas. The final videos are culminations of their experimentations.

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<sup>43</sup> In chapter four, I describe each of the assignments that are associated with the song composition and performance project.

After the participants completed their final video, they submitted a post-song composition survey in which they reflected on the concepts they learned, the process of composing a song, their feelings about sharing their song with others, and their thoughts about how they felt empowered by the process of composing their songs and finally performing them. With regard to the process involved in the song composition, Merriam (1998, p. 19), writes, “The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation.” Thus, I discuss in depth the process of composition and the themes discovered in the data.

In the case study research, researchers use many different methods for data collection. According to Yin (2012, p. 10), six common methods of data collection are “direct observation, interviews, archival records, documents, participant observation, and physical artifacts.” This study uses a multi-modal approach for data collection since several the common methods of data collection are built into my class curriculum. Each method of data collection offers a different insight into the phenomenon of interest. In this study, I used the following methods:

#### Direct Observations

As the instructor of the MUS 211: Hawaiian Ensemble course, I had many opportunities to observe the participants in my study. Yin (2012, p. 11) says that when making observations and taking field notes, the researcher is “creating a narrative based on what you might have seen.” Throughout the course of the semester, students performed their songs multiple times for their classmates. They turned in video assignments to document the development of their songs. The videos allowed me to observe the progression of their songs so that I could track any changes, struggles, and physical ques. Barrett and Gromko (2007), who completed a case study on students learning music composition, videotaped participants as they worked on their pieces

of music. The note, “Prior analysis of the video footage informed the interviews, and reference to specific instances of video footage was made by the interviewer as a means to prompt recall of a session and focus the dialogue” (p. 217). I used the videos of my students to help me recall how their songs changed as well as to help me understand their thoughts and struggles throughout the song composition process.

### Interviews

One of the things that researchers should do before interviewing participants is create an interview protocol (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). As such, I conducted both pre-song composition and post-composition surveys in an interview format. I chose to do the surveys this way because I felt that students would take more time to be thoughtful about their answers. I also conducted the interviews this way because all the students in my class complete these assignments. Hancock and Algozzine (2017) state that the comfort of participants allows them to discuss more openly their experiences. Conducting the interviews with these assignments ensure that the participants’ thoughts are accurately recorded.

Other interviews beyond the assignments were non-structured and informal. Yin (2012, p. 12) says that non-structured interviews can be used “to reveal how case study participants construct reality and think about situations, not just to provide the answers to a researcher’s specific questions and own implicit construction of reality.” The non-structured interviews were conducted in class during periods of collaboration—these interviews gathered data on the song writing and performance processes.

### Documents

My participants submitted digital composition portfolios that included all of the assignments associated with the song composition project i.e. pre-composition survey, choose

three issues, elaborate of your chosen issue, narrow the issue to one sentence, message of the song, lyrical approach, musical approach, three titles, basic song outline, final lyrics, final recording, and post-composition survey. These assignments allowed me to understand the choices my participants made when selecting an issue to write on for their songs. Like the direct observations, these documents helped me to generate questions that would result in the gathering of data pertaining to my study.

### Artifacts

In the discipline of music, recordings of songs are considered artifacts. The act of listening and observing performances are primary forms of gathering qualitative data. Observing for a research project requires focused attention to patterns and anomalies in observed behaviors specific to the research questions. As well, making sense of what they observe, researchers must also be aware of possible biases that they may bring to their gathering and analyses of data.

Being that my study focuses on personal empowerment through song composition and performance, the decision to amplify the voices of the participants by sharing their song recordings makes perfect sense. In doing so, listeners of the songs are provided opportunities to hear and see my participants' first-hand accounts of how they feel about their issues.

At the end of the semester, the participants submitted digital portfolios containing the various assignments described here.

### **Data Analysis**

Because of the volume of data that is typically collected in case studies, researchers must be able to draw out clear themes. Patton (2002, p. 453) says "...content analysis is used to refer to any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings." Yin (2012, p. 15) further

explains that the researcher “will be the one who must define the codes to be used and the procedure for logically piecing together the coded evidence in to broader themes.” Hancock and Algozzine (2017, p. 62) write that case study research is different from most other types of qualitative research because the researcher needs to be constantly examining and interpreting the data throughout the research project to “refine the research questions” and to “reach tentative conclusions.” They emphasize the idea that during the analysis of the data, the researcher must stay focused on the research questions of the project. Case study research often comes with a large amount of data and if the researcher does not remain focused on the questions, there will likely be tangents in the data that do not relate to the intended research.

Similarly, Creswell (2007, p. 163) suggests, “If the case presents a chronology of events, I then recommend analyzing the multiple sources of data to determine evidence for each step or phase in the evolution of the case.” Being that my case study has to do with empowerment that happens during the process of composing a song, understanding the chronology of the data can be meaningful to understand how the case evolves. To understand the evolution of the case during the process, researchers may choose to jot down preliminary interpretations of the data to help to recall initial reactions to information (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). During this process, researchers must maintain what Zucker (2009, para. 1) refers to as the “Focus of the analysis” (Focus of the Analysis section). She explains that when researchers can maintain the focus of the research it “...enhances the analysis and increases the clarity of reasoning.”

With regard to the analysis of case study data, Creswell (2007) talks about direct interpretation or the examination of single instances or pieces of data within the case and breaking them down to look for meaning. The pieces are then put back together in ways that relate to the focus of the research. My use of the “projects of empowerment” matrix or

framework (see below) enabled me to gather and analyse the data gathered on my participants' feelings of self empowerment through their song composition and performance. As mentioned earlier, Gutierrez (1995, p. 149) says that empowerment is "increasing personal, interpersonal or political power so that individuals can take action to improve their life situations."

Projects of Empowerment

Improving Life situation by increasing:	Celebrating Survival	Remembering	Intervening	Connecting	Envisioning	Networking	Naming	Protecting	Creating	Sharing
Personal Power										
Interpersonal power										
Political Power										

This matrix allows me to code which projects of empowerment align with my participants' songs, as well as the ways in which the participants feel empowered through the song composition process.

Finally, for each song composition, I conducted a lyrical analysis (my interpretation) on where the participants' songs align with the projects of empowerment.

## Findings and Discussion

### Lilia Morgan Data Analysis and Discussion

#### Did the Process of Song Composition Empower Morgan?

An examination of the assignments associated with Morgan's song composition indicates her unique stance. Throughout the whole process, Morgan maintains agency over the topic of her song, its sound, and the message that she chooses to share.

*One part that choosing my own issue helped with was that I really wanted to write my song, and I wanted to write it good. I feel like, because I was so connected*



*to the song, I enjoyed and looked forward to the process. It was also nice to have so much control over how I told the stories of my tutu, how the song sounded.*

It is clear that Morgan was motivated to compose her song well so that she could feel pride in her efforts. Because she chose to write a song about her grandmother who suffers from dementia, Morgan said that she looked forward to working on celebrating stories about her grandmother. Because Morgan enjoyed working on the assignment, there were instances when I was able to help her understand and apply musical concepts. One example of this is when she asked if I could help her with the chords of her song. While she had some good ideas, we both agreed that the transitions between the chords needed to fit better. I spent ten minutes talking to her about how some chord progressions naturally lead to the next chord. Before our next class, she asked if she could show me what she had worked on, and I was happy to see that she had completely found appropriate ways to apply the concept that I had discussed with her. If it was not for her enjoying the process, I suspect that she would not have cared about her chords or spent time to understand and apply the concept of chord relationships.

As part of the process of song composition, the participants in this study, along with other students in class, had many opportunities to give and receive feedback on their song compositions. Morgan said that the collaboration

*...helped me realize that everyone had small areas that they needed feedback and help on. Knowing this made me feel more comfortable to share where I was struggling.*

The combination of enjoying the process of composing a song on an issue of her choice and feeling comfortable to ask for help from both myself and other classmates seemed to

positively affect Morgan's musical growth and achievement. There were numerous times throughout the semester when she would stay after class or set up meetings with me to help her with her song. During our meetings, we covered chord progressions, melodic structure, rhythm, timing, dynamics, and lyricism. Because she was able to take all these concepts and immediately apply them to her song composition, the concepts were no longer abstract lessons but were immediately applicable to her song.

In her post-song composition survey, Morgan stated that she learned a lot about music theory in the process of composing her song, but the thing that she found most valuable was the understanding that she could tell her own stories using music. She explained that she already knew that music could be used to tell stories, but that she did not think she would be able to use music to tell her own stories. The song composition process taught Morgan that there is a systematic way to compose a song and that she can bring awareness to issues that are meaningful and relevant to her.

In the process of composing her song, Morgan also learned some skills that are considered transferable and beneficial across all academic disciplines and in life. She said that when she got stuck on a line or had a mental block, she would just move on, look at the song outline that she had made, or ask for help. Knowing how to overcome mental blocks and figuring out how to continue to move forward is an important skill for song composers to develop.

### Did the Song Composition Itself Empower Morgan?

In the post song composition survey, Morgan identified her song as empowering her in the following ways:

Improving Life situation by increasing:	Celebrating Survival	Remembering	Intervening	Connecting	Envisioning	networking	Naming	Protecting	Creating	Sharing
Personal Power		X		X				X		X
Interpersonal power		X		X						X
Political Power										

Because Morgan's song is about her grandmother suffering from dementia, she said that her song plays a role in the project of remembering. She explained that the song is used to help her and her family members to remember who their grandmother was before she had dementia. Morgan also noted that one of the main purposes for writing the song was to help her grandmother remember important things about herself. In this way, Morgan's song also plays a role in protecting her memories and feelings about her grandmother. On several occasions, Morgan brought up how family members sometimes get frustrated with the behaviors associated with onset dementia, particularly memory loss. She also talked about the depression elderly people experience, especially because they feel like burdens for their families. She said that the song was a reminder to herself and everyone else that their grandma was not always this way and that they need to continue to be compassionate and patient with her.

Morgan also noted that the song illustrates the project of connecting. She hoped that the song would help to keep her connected to her grandmother, and that it would also one day help her own children and grandchildren to connect with her grandmother. At the very least, she hoped the song would help her future family understand how much she cares for and loves her grandmother.

The last project of empowerment that Morgan connects her song with is that of sharing. She said that she chose sharing because the song is not just about remembering who her grandmother is but sharing some of the memories that she has with her grandmother and other members of her family. As well, Morgan's song has the power to make her intended audiences more sensitive about the nature of dementia and more compassion for those who suffer from it. As such, Morgan said that it felt good to compose her song for her grandmother

*I feel like maybe it feels as good for me to sing it as it will for her to hear it. It makes me happy to know that I captured some of our happy memories and feelings.*

#### In What Ways Was Morgan Empowered Through the Performance of Her Song Composition?

The process of writing the song and the actual song composition can be empowering for musicians, however, to use the song as a tool, it must be performed. For Morgan, the final performance of her song is not just an end in itself, it is a culmination of the activities and energy that went into her final creation. As a teacher, I was fascinated by Morgan's growth in confidence as she shared her song with the other students. By nature, Morgan is somewhat of a quiet student and when she first started sharing her song, she had doubts about its worth,

*I don't know, my song is kind of junk right now.*

As she continued finetuning her song and practicing the performance of it, she became much more willing to share it with her classmates and with me. It was clear that her confidence grew, in large part, because of the opportunities she had to share sections of her song at a time. The

little performances built her confidence until she was ready to perform her song in its entirety for the class.

Morgan commented that by the time she finished her song, she was very proud of it. She said her experience performing the final version of song and hearing everyone else perform theirs was both exciting and rewarding,

*When we shared our videos with the class, it felt really cool to hear all of our final products. It was like we got to witness firsthand, everyone's growth. In a way, I was excited for everyone to see how my song turned out.*

The feeling of community gave Morgan confidence to both share her song and to be proud and excited for her classmates to hear it. While this is important, the song meets the full potential of its power when it is shared for its intended audience. Morgan said that, like many families during quarantine, her family felt more distant and separated and that her song was a way for them to connect to each other and to their grandmother. In the post-song composition survey, Morgan said,

*...my favorite performance of this song will be when I sing it for my tutu. Then the song will have met its purpose.*

She explained that she did not write the song to be famous, but wrote it with her grandmother specifically in mind. In a follow-up conversation, Morgan told me that when she had the opportunity to show her grandmother the song that she wrote, her grandmother cried and felt so special and loved. She said that after this experience, the song fulfilled its main purpose. Morgan said that she will one day share the song with her future children.

### Summary

Morgan was empowered through song composition and performance because she was able to choose an issue that she wanted to give voice to. She added that an important part of the process was being able to take the time to clearly express her feelings on her issue. As noted previously, Morgan was able to use the song to capture her feelings, preserve her favorite memories of her grandmother, connect herself and her family to her Tūtū Pua.

The process of the song composition allowed Morgan to choose her song topic, message, melody, chords, and lyrics while still providing her opportunities to meet the student learning objectives of MUS 211, which requires learning music theory, mechanics, and performance techniques. In this way, Morgan was empowered academically and personally during the song composition process.

*It is really cool to know that I have this tool if needed that I can express myself.*

Last, Morgan said she felt empowered because she had acquired the skills and knowledge necessary to successfully compose and perform a song on an issue of her choice.

### Lyrics of Morgan's Song "Tūtū Pua" and Video Hyperlink

#### Verse 1

When I think of happy times

You were always there

Whether driving around town

Or fixing up your hair

Tutu I need to tell you

There's something you should know

In the memories held in my heart

That you are always beautiful

Chorus

Your eyes they shine brighter than

Stars in the windward sky

The way you laugh, the way you love

And that smile is one of a kind

And every night when I speak to God above

I pray you know that you are loved

Verse 2

It seems like just yesterday

We would drive down to your house

In the early morning and in the night

You would answer in you gown

You would hold me tight

Like I was one of your own

Even three thousand miles away

You've always felt like home

Chorus

Your eyes they shine brighter than

Stars in the windward sky

The way you laugh, the way you love

And that smile is one of a kind

And every night when I speak to God above

I pray you know that you are loved

Verse 3

There are times when you get sad

When you don't remember my name

Don't mind the things you can't control

Because to me you're still the same

Tutu I need to tell you

When your memory starts to fade

And you ask me about who you were

This is what I'll say

Chorus

Your eyes they shine brighter than

Stars in the windward sky

The way you laugh, the way you love

And that smile is one of a kind

And every night when I speak to God above

I pray you know that you are loved

You know that you are loved

Hyperlink: <b><u>Tūtū Pua: By Lilia Morgan</u></b>
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*Lyrical Analysis of Morgan's Song*

The first thing of interest to me is that Morgan titled her song "Tūtū Pua," and not one of the three titles that she initially was thinking of when she completed the song title assignment.

She really struggled throughout the class to settle on a title for her song, and when I would ask



her what her song was called, she would say that she was not happy with any of her titles and that she had not yet decided. It was not until she realized that her intended audience was her tūtū and her family, that she finally settled on the title “Tūtū Pua.” She explained that she had decided on this title because “Pua” is her tūtū’s name. She said that naming her grandmother in the title advertised the special relationship that the two of them have. Morgan also added that because her main audience for the song was her family, it was appropriate to be specific with the song title.

The first verse of Morgan’s song speaks about happy memories that she has about her grandmother. One line that stands out is, “In the memories held in my heart, you are always beautiful.” This lyric captures a fun memory of her grandmother’s habit of asking how she looks and Morgan and family members replying, “Beautiful.” I like that this line captures that memory while also implying that in Morgan’s memories her grandmother is always beautiful.

The chorus starts with the line, “Your eyes they shine brighter than stars in the windward sky.” Not only does this line describe her grandmother’s beauty, it also tells the listener that, for the majority of her life, her grandmother’s home was on the windward side of the island of O’ahu. The windward sky represents the sky that Morgan’s grandmother would be most familiar with. The chorus ends with the line, “And every night when I speak to God above, I pray you know that you are loved.” This line is a beautiful way of telling her grandmother that she is not a burden on their family and that they love her. Although not an explicit reference, this line also reflects the impact of COVID-19 on family units. Morgan’s grandmother, who currently lives in Las Vegas, is separated from her family, and because of this, they have limited contact with her. Morgan expresses her heart’s desire that her grandmother know that she is very much in their thoughts and prayers, and that she is loved by them.

In the second verse, Morgan describes her grandmother as well-dressed regardless of the time of day. She also reminisces fondly on how her grandmother's tight hugs make her grandchildren feel like they are valued members of the family. Morgan ends the verse with the line, "Even three thousand miles away, you've always felt like home." This line states that her grandmother is such a strong presence that, despite the enormous physical separation, Morgan's family in Hawai'i feel her closeness. The line also says that home is less about physical presence and more about emotional presence. Another way this could be interpreted is that anywhere her grandmother is feels like home to Morgan.

The third and final verse, Morgan talks about the sadness she feels when her grandmother struggles to remember her name. Morgan uses this verse to reassure her grandmother that it is okay if she is unable to remember certain details. She assures her grandmother that she will not love her any less because of her memory loss. The verse ends with Morgan telling her grandmother that when she starts to forget who she is, this song can help to remind her. It also can be interpreted that even if her grandmother forgets everything, Morgan and her family will preserve her memories and stories.

The song ends with the chorus that tells Morgan's grandmother about who she is and reminds her that she is loved. Morgan explained that telling her grandmother that she is loved is the most important part of the song and that she wanted it to be the last lyric in the song that her grandma will hear. Therefore, the last line of the chorus changes from, "I pray you know that you are loved" to "You know that you are loved." The last line emphasizes the idea that, "If you forget everything else, remember that you are loved."

In summary, Morgan's lyrics are effective in remembering her grandmother and preserving memories of her. The lyrics also capture how Morgan feels about her grandmother during the time of the song composition project.

### **Ka'ula Krug Data Analysis and Discussion**

#### Did the Process of Song Composition Empower Krug?

Ka'ula Krug is the son of an award-winning composer of Hawaiian music so he grew up watching his father compose songs with seeming ease. Seeing this sometimes made him feel that song composition was out of reach for him or that he did not have a gift for song composition.

*Growing up, I didn't see much talent in myself for composing music until maybe this year when I really started to understand a different process for composing a song.*

In fact, Krug had watched his father compose song after song without realizing that there is a composition process that he could follow to compose his own music.

One of the benefits of the song composition process for Krug was that he became aware of the many pieces that go into a song composition. He benefitted from the way that the project was scaffolded to guide the students in the class through the process of song composition. The first step was choosing an issue that was meaningful to him. It is interesting that, while Krug comes from such a politically active family, he chose to write a non-political song. Instead, he chose to compose a song for his grandmother.

*If I wasn't so interested in the issue then I would not have cared much about composing the song. ....People need to honor and preserve the memories of their loved ones while they are still around.*

Krug's message is that people should not waste time on unimportant things because what is truly important is cherishing loved ones while they are still around. He identified his grandmother as one of the most important people in his life. The process of choosing his topic gave him the opportunity to consider what mattered most to him.

The song composition process helped Krug understand how the melody of his song helps to add meaning and feeling to his story. He said that the melody is critical because many of the people who will listen to his song are not able to understand the Hawaiian language. He recognizes that after introducing his song at a performance, the melody will help the listener to understand what the song is about. Krug also recognizes that the intended audience for his song is his family and that they will be able to enjoy the full picture of the song because they will understand the language, recognize his grandmother's quotes, and appreciate the melody that accentuate the importance of his story.

Because Krug wrote his song in the Hawaiian language, most of his classmates were unable to give him feedback on his lyrics. As such, most of the feedback given to Krug pertained to melodic ideas, as well as ideas for his poetical approach to his song. However, one example of collaboration is when it was suggested that he have falsetto cracks in his melody so that it would sound like a bird singing. This is because Krug's grandmother's nickname is Tūtū Manunui, and in the song he compares her to a bird or "manu." He took many of the class suggestions and incorporated them into his song. He mentioned that the process of collaboration helped him to

feel comfortable during the composition process. Krug also said that he enjoyed helping others with their songs,

*I also learned a lot by helping my classmates with their songs. It was good practice to think about composing songs on all these different topics.*

Learning and going through the song composition process empowered Krug because he realized that he could replicate the process and write more songs,

*I used what I learned in this project and it helped me compose more songs about things that I have much passion for.*

The process of song composition is a tool that Krug can continue to use to tell the stories that he considers important.

#### Did the Song Composition Itself Empower Krug?

In the post song composition survey, Krug identified his song as empowering him in the following ways:

Improving Life situation by increasing:	Celebrating Survival	Remembering	Intervening	Connecting	Envisioning	networking	Naming	Protecting	Creating	Sharing
Personal Power	X	X		X						X
Interpersonal power	X	X		X						X
Political Power										

Krug noted that during the stress of a global pandemic it can be difficult to find things to celebrate. Despite this, he stated that he and his family are able to celebrate their tūtū who is still around and healthy. Krug also classified his song as an act of remembering some of his grandmother's personality traits and sayings. His song connects his family and him to their grandmother,

*I feel happy about the outcome of the song because it serves its purpose of drawing an image of my grandma. Her quotes made their way into the song, her well-known habits of going back in forth from her house to ours. Her yapping mouth was recognized in the mele as well LOL. Even though the song has a lot of teasing in it, I feel that I accomplished my goal to honor her with my song.*

Krug stated that he felt that his song meets the goal of honoring his grandmother by perpetuating some of her sayings and habits; as such, he was happy with the final version. He also said that his song plays a role in the project of sharing because it serves as a vehicle to share the unique relationship that he has with his frandmother.

In What Ways Was Krug Empowered Through the Performance of His Song Composition?

While Krug said that he believes that anyone can enjoy his composition, he explained that the main audience is his grandmother, his family, and those who know his grandmother. When he performed his song for his classmates, the response from them was overwhelmingly positive in large part just because of the melody and energy of the song. Many remarked that it sounded like a song that could be professionally recorded. I could see that Krug felt good about how his song was received,

*I felt really happy singing the song I wrote for my grandmother because it made me go on a journey down memory lane. I have the opportunity to reminisce about all the fun we had with Tūtū Manunui growing up.*

He also mentioned that performing the song made him feel happy because of all the memories it elicited. He said that he planned to give the song to his grandmother as a Christmas gift. In a personal conversation that followed, he said that his grandmother loved the song and felt very honored that he would take the time to compose a song about her (and for her). Interestingly, Krug's grandmother does not speak Hawaiian fluently, so he shared that after he sang the song for her, he explained all the lyrics. She thought the song was not only funny, but special.

Krug was very happy that he wrote his song on a topic that meant so much to him and that he had mastered the art of composition and performance.

*it's really cool to sing a song that is yours because you know that all the words, chords, and melodies were your ideas.*

#### Summary

Krug said he felt empowered through the process of composing his song and performing it because he was able to create a song on an issue that was important for him at the time of the assignment. In a musical sense, Krug felt empowered because the experience left him with a strong understanding of the importance, relevance, and applications of the musical mechanics that he learned in the class such as chord structure, melodic structure, rhythm, lyricism, and dynamics.

#### Lyrics of Krug's Song "Tūtū Manunui" and Video Hyperlink

##### Verse 1

Tūtū Manunui, kupunahine Pukikī

‘A‘ole o kana mai kou leo kanikani

‘A‘ohe nō he lua e like aku ai

Kou aloha pūlama mo‘opuna

### Verse 2

Lele aku lele mai e ka pāo‘o lēhei hale

Halehale ke aloha noho ana i ka poli

Ua holo ka ulua ho‘olei kīpuka ‘ili

Mau nō ka ‘u‘ina o ka uepa

### Verse 3

Pū‘ā ‘ia ke aloha, ke aloha kūpuna

Pa‘ē mai ka leo, ka leo kupuna

Punalau ka wai wīneka ‘aka‘akai

Mā‘ana i ke aloha o ke kupuna

### Bridge

He aha ke kani a Tūtū Manunui

“Eh babooze go feed da damn dogs”

He aha ke kani a Tūtū Manunui

“For the love of Mary, Joseph, me Francis”

### Verse 4

Ha‘ina ‘ia mai ana ka puana

A hui hou “see ya layda alligatah”

‘A‘ohe nō he lua e like aku ai

Kou aloha pūlama mo‘opuna

Hyperlink: <b><u>Tūtū Manunui: By Ka‘ula Krug</u></b>
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### *Lyrical Analysis of Krug's song*

The first verse of Krug's song establishes the nature of the relationship that he has with his grandmother. The verse starts by calling her name, "Tūtū Manunui," and then refers to her as "Kupunahine Pukikī," or Portuguese grandmother. The next line says that this bird is always chattering or making noise. While this line may seem pejorative in nature, it serves the role of expressing how his grandmother loves to talk about anything and everything. At the same time, Krug's choice of lyrics reveal the fun relationship that he has with his grandmother. The next line says that there are no others like her. He ends the verse by saying that her love is cherished by her grandchildren. This verse starts with a bit of teasing but ends with Krug saying poetically that there are no other "birds" like her and that her love is treasured. When I hear this verse, I hear a grandchild who is saying that while this bird is always singing or making noise, one day this bird will be missed, and the grandchild will long for the sound of its chatter.

The second verse explains that Krug's grandmother lives next door to him and that she is always jumping from house to house. In this verse, Krug compares her to the pāo'o fish that is known for its ability to jump across rocky shorelines. While the lyrics reference a fish, Krug adds a layer of meaning because Pāo'o is also a Hawaiian name from his grandmother's genealogy. He says in the second line that he has a great amount of love for her that dwells in his heart. The third line references Krug's grandfather who passed away years ago and who grew up on a cattle farm. The verse explains that although his grandfather has left them, the sound of his whip can still be heard. These lines point to the idea that Krug's grandmother comes over to the house a lot because she can still see and hear her departed husband in the voices, faces, actions, and even teasing of her son and grandchildren.

The third verse describes how Krug's grandmother feeds them a healthy diet of love. This line also references how she constantly overfed them when they were growing up. He said that she always cooked enough for an army to eat. This line recognizes that her cooking was a symbol of her love for them. The next line says that because Krug's grandmother fed them her love, he was able to faintly hear and feel the love of his ancestors through her. The last lines poke fun at the idea that there seems to be a never-ending supply of pickled onions at her house. Krug's grandmother is known for this delicacy and he wants to capture that memory in the song. The final line says that he is full because of all the aloha that his grandmother feeds him.

The bridge of the composition asks what kind of song the bird Tūtū Manunui sings. Each time he asks that question in the song, Krug answers with one of her famous quotes. For anyone who knows his grandmother and her sayings, this part of the song is especially funny. The last verse of the song reiterates Krug's message from his first verse—that there is no other person like his grandmother and that she is cherished by her grandchildren.

Overall, this song captures well Krug's feelings about his grandmother, as well as the playful nature of his relationship with her. The song preserves her story, allows Krug to identify his feelings for her, and provides him a medium to celebrate her funny behaviors with his audience.

### **Sienna Bruno Data Analysis and Discussion**

#### Did the Process of Song Composition Empower Bruno?

Although Bruno does not come from a particularly musical family, by the time she enrolled in MUS 211, she had taken a number of college music courses and had accumulated quite a bit of theoretical knowledge on music,

*I took music theory before this class but a lot of the concepts were just that, theories. The song composition project helped me to make applications for the musical concepts that I learned. I feel that "Knowledge unused is not real knowledge at all." With this project I felt like I finally had the opportunity to use everything I learned about music.*

The song composition process allowed Bruno to apply the theoretical concepts that she had learned previously into her song. In doing so, she recognized why certain musical concepts were important to understand even if their usefulness was not readily apparent to her when she learned them. I noticed that when Bruno connected her knowledge to real-life applications, she seemed to gain a better grasp of the concepts.

Like the previous participants, Bruno enjoyed the agency of being able to choose her song topic,

*It was awesome to be able to choose what I wanted to write my song about. I liked all three of my topics and feel that because I was choosing what I wanted to compose my song about that I really enjoyed the process. It felt good to write about something that is important and interesting to me. It made me feel like all the assignments were engaging.*

Student engagement is something that educators desire because when engaged, students tend to submit better work, grasp concepts more easily, and participate more readily. Bruno said that

being able to choose her song topic made the class assignments for their composition feel engaging.

The issue that Bruno chose to compose her song on is the opioid crisis. Although the issue is one with which she had no personal experience, it is an issue that she considered very interesting and in need of public attention. However, Bruno felt that some teachers would have discouraged her from writing about the topic,

*Kumu gave us a lot of creative freedom in the assignment and I chose to write about the opioid crisis, which is not a very popular topic and honestly is even a little dark. I feel like some classes may have discouraged me from writing about it. It was really positive to write about something that I was interested in, and I was excited to give voice to the issue. It was definitely an empowering and enjoyable experience as a musician, both to write and perform a song on this topic.*

Bruno noted that writing a song about an issue of her choice was not only enjoyable but empowering. She felt good that she was able to shed light on the opioid crisis. As she shared information on her topic during the class discussions, there were many students who were unfamiliar with the topic and who asked her clarifying questions. Bruno had opportunities to elaborate on some of the information she had gathered through her research on drug addiction.

During the periods of collaboration, Bruno shared that it was very helpful for her to get feedback from her classmates and me

*...some of the ideas were really good and really helpful. It would often be just enough to keep me going on my composition.*

This comment suggests that, while the feedback was helpful, she maintained control of her song. She said that her classmates provided just enough help for her to continue, and not so much that she felt that she had lost ownership of her song.

Bruno stated that the most impactful thing she learned during the process was that she could take everything she had learned and apply it to other musical endeavors. For Bruno, making connections to events outside of the classroom setting held great value.

*I also know that I am capable to write a song on issues that I care about or that*

*I just want to express. It was therapeutic in a way.*

From the experience, Bruno learned that she could write songs about any issue that that she deemed important—this freedom of expression was therapeutic for her. She learned that, not only were songs designed to provide enjoyment, they could also be designed to educate and help people,

*I hope I can compose more songs to help people.*

In the process of her song composition, Bruno said that she used metaphors in her song because this style of expression would allow more people to connect with her message. She realized that if she were overly specific in her choice and arrangement of lyrics dealing with the opioid crisis, there might only be a small group who would connect with her song. She said that the metaphors help the song to be more general and that they allow people with any sort of addiction to connect to the song.

### Did the Song Composition Itself Empower Bruno?

In the post song composition survey, Bruno identified her song as empowering her in the following ways:

Improving Life situation by increasing:	Celebrating Survival	Remembering	Intervening	Connecting	Envisioning	networking	Naming	Protecting	Creating	Sharing
Personal Power										X
Interpersonal power			X							X
Political Power										

According to Bruno, the song had an element of interention to help individuals addicted to drugs as captured in the lines

*I hope someone will hear it and think, 'Gosh I don't ever want that to be me.' Or maybe they will hear it and see how their addictions control them and they may want to make life changes.*

Bruno noted that the idea of sharing is central because she felt personally empowered to draw attention to a social issue that is now recognized as a national crisis—drug addiction. On the interpersonal level, she felt empowered to reach out to those caught up in the grip of addiction an encourage them to turn their lives around. Her song paints a grim picture for those who are unable to break from the hold that drugs have on them.

Bruno noted that on completion of her song composition, she felt proud and satisfied with her effort and accomplishment. She said that employing the use of metaphors and symbolism added a strong creative element. I observed that her satisfaction with her song had much to do with the energy and effort she put into the development of her unique writing style. During the

composition process there were times where the class did not understand some of her metaphors, so she adjusted each one until it was more understandable to her listeners.

In What Ways Was Bruno Empowered Through the Performance of Her Song Composition?

Throughout the song composition process, Bruno's performances were well received by her peers in the MUS 211 course. They seemed to notice many of the things that she was trying to accomplish by using music to magnify the message of her song. In Krug's post-song composition survey, he observed,

*Sienna's song was really powerful just because of the melody and the rhythm.*

I noted that several students tried to add depth to their stories after listening to Bruno's composition. This involved adding more musical elements. Because Bruno had previously studied voice at the college, she was more aware of how musical expression helps audiences to connect with songs;

*I enjoyed knowing what all the metaphors of my song were about. Sometimes when you perform other people's music, you have to guess what they are really trying to say and find the proper expression and dynamic for the song but because this was my own song, it was awesome to not have to guess and to do it exactly how I feel... It was definitely an empowering and enjoyable experience as a musician, both to write and perform a song on this topic.*

In the post-song composition survey, Bruno described the experience of performing her song as both empowering and enjoyable. It was musically empowering because she knew that her

performance would accentuate her intended message. Interestingly, in the post-song composition survey when Bruno was asked how she would use her song in the future, she said:

*Honestly, I don't know how often I will share my song. I may never play it again.*

*It was cool to write a song that I wasn't trying to be famous for but to just express my thoughts on an issue that interests me. For me, it is actually less about the song and more about the process of expressing myself through music.*

Bruno said that she is not certain how or if she will use her song composition in the future but that by performing it, she realized the power of being able to express herself through music.

### Summary

Bruno was empowered by song composition and performance because she was able to write a song on an issue about which she was concerned. She researched the musical tools she needed in order to best express herself through her music. In the song composition process, Bruno learned the applications for many of the music theory concepts that she already knew.

### Lyrics of Bruno's Song "Blinding Faith" and Video Hyperlink

#### Verse 1

Dealt an unfair hand

Born in rags

It was so cold, muddy, and slippery

I fell down the slope and suddenly hit rock bottom

Then I heard a heavenly sound

As I whispered

#### Chorus



He is my god

He is my savior

The giver of all ecstasy

Verse 2

Born again in sixty-six

Life was crumbling it needed a fix

I look up at the window

The sun begins to fall

or rise who knows anymore

I look down at the mirror

to see a stranger

Oh learn from me don't be naive

I just crave your love

Verse 3

Until I'm in church

with knees bruised and lips burnt

Singing the harrowing praise of god

Until I'm exalted and mother Mary couldn't see me

Holding the hand of my intoxicating god

Chorus

He is my god

He is my savior

The giver of all ecstasy

### Bridge

Until and only when his divine power comes in can I fly Higher, Higher, Higher, Higher

### Verse 4

Then the sun melted the wax

Eagles wings collapse

Leaving my body

Six feet under

Laying, Sleeping, Oh god take me to a higher place

Where is thy comfort... thy hand

Where is my family

Then the veil of faith rose from the grave with antlers

What god has antlers

Only a false, a fake, a phony, a fraud

But

### Chorus

He was my god,

He was my savior

The giver of all ecstasy

### Verse 5

Oh learn from me don't be naive,

I just crave a breath

Hyperlink: <b><u><a href="#">Blinding Faith: By Sienna Bruno</a></u></b>
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### Lyrical Analysis

The first verse of Bruno's song uses metaphor to describe some of the reasons why people become addicted to opioids. One reason that she identifies is that people feel that life is unfair. In our class discussions, Bruno shared that the "unfair hand" could be related to challenges in the family, at work, or in society. She also suggested that being born into poverty might be a cause for someone to turn to opioids for comfort. Regarding the line where she talks about it being cold, muddy, and slippery, she explained that while this could be associated with poverty, it is also metaphorical for how an addict may view the world as "cold" or "dirty" and corrupt. She then identifies that this line of thinking can be a slippery slope. The verse explains that when individuals hit rock bottom, they are looking for comfort from anywhere and anything. In the verse, she says that the person who fell, heard a "Heavenly sound." In her song's metaphors, Bruno often uses religious references for addiction. Much of Christianity thinks of heaven as above us and hell as beneath us, so in this line, the "heavenly sound" is the temptation to get high to remove some sort of pain.

The chorus of Bruno's song depicts the addict as viewing opioids as god, savior, and the giver of ecstasy. Bruno says that the chorus of her song is comparing addiction to religion in the way that addicts look for hope and comfort in their addictions. The one indication that the chorus is not speaking about religion is when it says that this god and savior is the giver of all ecstasy, referencing the drug called ecstasy. On the word ecstasy, Bruno's melody suddenly goes high and then gradually comes back down. This is meant to represent someone who gets high and then experiences the slow let down of the post high crash.

The second starts off with the line,

*Born again in sixty-six.*

This line is a Christian reference to starting a new life as a follower of Jesus. Bruno transition to what appears to be a year when she says “Sixty-six”; however, to many in Christianity the number six is the devil’s number. This line is saying that the person was “born again” or starting a new life following the devil. She continues that the addict’s life was crumbling and “needed a fix.” Next, there is mention to looking up at a window—the lyrics implying that the addict no longer has a grasp on time he cannot figure out if the sun is rising or falling. It is interesting that Bruno uses the word “fall” as opposed to “set” in her lyrics. The word fall is used to emphasize that there is a lack of control on the part of the addict. At this point the addict “looks down at the mirror” and sees a “stranger.” The reason Bruno says, “at the mirror” and not just “in the mirror” is because the mirror reflects the addict’s image as unrecognizable and thus a stranger.

Verse three portrays an addict who has truly made addiction a central part of his life, particularly his identity. The addict is now consumed by this “god” or drugs. Bruno shared in class discussions that the line,

*Until I’m exalted and mother Mary couldn’t see me holding the hand of my  
intoxicating god*

She uses the word “exalted” to represent the person getting so high that not even mother Mary is able to save him. This line also represents how an addict will sometimes use drugs to block out the judgements of society. In the Roman Catholic faith, members of the church often say “Hail Mary” prayers which are used for penance and for purity. The idea that Mother Mary could not see him is also indicative that the addict in her song believes that he is beyond saving and grace. “Holding the hand of my intoxicating god” also implies that the addict is of a “different faith” and that he is very distant from Mother Mary.

The bridge of the song is the addict saying that only when he is on drugs can he really be endowed with power. Interestingly, in this verse Bruno says the word “higher” four times and for the first three times the word is sung, the melody goes up. On the fourth time, the melody comes down. This melodic movement is a representation of the addict’s physiological state—on the fourth repetition of the word, the melody comes down creating an aural “picture” of the addict peaking and then coming off his high. Bruno uses the melody to foreshadow what happens in the next verse.

Bruno’s first line in verse four says, “The sun melted the wax.” This is a reference to the story of Icarus in Greek mythology. Icarus’ father Daedalus made wings out of feathers and wax so that they could escape from Crete. In the story, Daedalus warns Icarus to avoid flying too low, or too high and close to the sun. Icarus enjoys flying so much that he does not realize how “high” or close he is to the sun. The wax on his wings melts and he tumbles to the sea below where he drowns. At this point in the song, Bruno portrays the addict as about to create his own tragic story. Metaphorically, this could be where the addict overdoses because he is “too high.”

Bruno explains that the next line in the fourth verse “Eagle’s wings collapse,” is from the bible in Isaiah 40:31, where it says that those who serve God will be strengthened and will “mount up with wings as eagles.” Not only does this tie into the story of Icarus but it also alludes to the addict, who was once serving his God, now feeling as though his wings are collapsing. The verse continues that the addict is now “six feet under” and seeking to head to heaven to be with those members of his family who have preceeded him in death. Here, Bruno introduces the image of antlers in association with the devil and the addict realizing that this is what he has been worshipping. Bruno said that she chose the word “antlers” for a description of the devil because there are so many ways that he will stab you. She explained that this metaphor represents all of

the different types of addictions and opioids that exist. This is the point where the addict realizes that the “religion” that he is embracing will not bring him any sort of lasting joy and peace.

The chorus repeats as a message from the grave saying in past tense, “He was my god, he was my savior, the giver of all ecstasy.” The fact that the addict speaks in past tense suggests that he realizes that his addictions turned out to not save him at all. The last two lines play on the last two lines of the second verse. It says now, “Oh learn from me, don’t be naïve, I just crave breath,” as opposed to the second verse that says, “I just crave your love.” These last two lines suggest that some addicts will not understand the damage that they are doing to themselves until they die.

Bruno’s song is an excellent example of using music to tell a story. Conceptually, she wanted her song to sound dark in its representation of an addict. To do this, she wrote her song in the key of D minor. This key choice is interesting because in early religious music, the key of D minor was used for requiems. Bruno says that she chose to have the rhythm of her ‘ukulele be fast while the words of her song would be slower to depict how for addicts, time seems to accelerate while they seem to be stagnant in life. Another interesting artistic choice that Bruno makes in her composition is that none of her verses have the same number of lines. She said that she wanted her song to feel unpredictable so that listeners would hear an addict’s sporadic behavior. The only melodically consistent part is the chorus, which is used to highlight the idea that perhaps the only predictable thing about the addict is the desire to “worship.”

Overall, Bruno’s song is well thought out and she is able to insert a lot of meaning by using both metaphor and musical conventions such as key selection, rhythm, and melodic structure. Because of the number of metaphors used by Bruno, the song leaves room for interpretation by people who either struggle themselves with addiction or who know someone

who struggles with addiction. Being that Bruno explains that her song plays a role in sharing, after review, it seems that her song empowers her to personally express her feelings and also allows her to share those feelings with those who hear her song.

### **Matt Lattore Data Analysis and Discussion**

#### Did the Process of Song Composition Empower Lattore?

Lattore is a student who, at the time of this study, had already taken my MUS 211 course in a previous semester. In that semester, Lattore composed a song about the rise in violent crime in Hawai'i and was featured on two different news stations in Hawai'i. With this experience, Lattore had already gone through the process of writing a song, and was ready to go through the systematic steps to compose another one. On the first day of class, Lattore told me about some of the issues that he was thinking of addressing in his new song composition. Eventually, Lattore decided to write his song on the issue of over-fishing in Hawai'i. He chose this topic because he noticed that when he went diving, there were fewer fish in the water. Lattore said he feared that there would be no fish for future generations to catch if restrictions were not put in place. As someone who catches fish to help feed his family, the issue of overfishing concerned to him. He was happy to be able to write a song to give voice to this issue;

*Being able to compose a song on an issue of our choice was very empowering and gave us the opportunity to create it exactly how we wanted it. It is our issues that we think are a problem, and feel a certain way about. No one else told us how to write it, what genre, tempo, chord progressions, no one told us anything, it was totally up to us and that is very empowering.*

Lattore stated that the process of composing his song was empowering. He said that he felt empowered because he was able to choose a topic that he cared about. He also felt empowered by the process because he had leeway to choose how he told his story with music.

While Lattore says that “No one told us anything,” it is important to note that he clarifies his statement in his post-composition survey. In the song composition process, each student received feedback from their classmates about their song composition. Lattore commented on the benefit of collaboration on his project saying:

*Collaborating with my peers and kumu on this project was beneficial for all of us.*

*Everyone was able to share their ideas for their original songs and we could all give each other feedback on something that we liked, things that could be improved,*

*or any other thoughts that we had for that person. Kumu, with his musical*

*background and knowledge, was able to also listen to all of our ideas and help*

*guide us if we ever hit a writing block or just couldn't think of anything to say.*

*We were then able to take all the suggestions and use them to compose better songs.*

*I like how it was really stressed that everything said by other people in the*

*collaboration was just suggestions and that we could make the final decisions on*

*our songs.*

He noted that the collaboration helped students to compose better songs because they received ideas on how to finetune their compositions. Lattore clarified that while everyone received



feedback, he liked how students were in control of their own songs and that they could also choose to disregard any feedback.

Lattore shared that in the process of composing his song, he learned more about music;

*Song composition helped me to better understand music because I learned all the parts that make up a song. Breaking down a song and putting it together like a puzzle taught me all the steps needed to make music. I didn't know how many steps go into making a song, but now that I do, I understand music and the structure of it a lot better.*

Within the song composition process, Lattore learned a lot about the different pieces that go into song structures. Once he had a good understanding of the structure of music, Lattore said he had the ability to listen to music more critically. When he heard a song, he could determine the reasons why it moved him in a particular way. He explained that good songs connect with their audiences;

*...it is okay to take some time when composing your song and really think about who your target audience is and what you are trying to express to this audience. If you can connect with your audience then you can make them feel the same emotions that you may feel towards what you are portraying, which could make for a good song.*

Lattore felt that the composition project was a way to express himself. When speaking about composing his song he said

*For me, I can say that it is very therapeutic, music calms me and song composition gives you a lot of power to create something very special.*

The song composition process allowed Lattore to think about his issue, refine his thoughts, envision solutions, and share all of these thoughts with his intended audience.

### Did the Song Composition Itself Empower Lattore?

In the post-song composition survey, Lattore identified his song as empowering him in the following ways:

Improving Life situation by increasing:	Celebrating Survival	Remembering	Intervening	Connecting	Envisioning	networking	Naming	Protecting	Creating	Sharing
Personal Power					X			X		X
Interpersonal power			X		X			X		X
Political Power								X		X

According to Lattore, his song related to four the study's projects of empowerment. He said that his song plays a role in the project of intervening by persuading people to not catch more fish than they need. He hoped that people would think about his song when they are fishing or hunting and resist the temptation to be greedy.

Lattore also noted that his song plays a role in the envisioning project.

*I am envisioning a better place where people will remember the ways our kūpuna taught us. Envisioning an ocean full of fish and life, that we can then share with the next generation and beyond."*

For those who embrace the need for the conservation of natural resources, the type of ocean that Lattore envisions in his song would resonate with them. For others, hearing the message in Lattore's song might cause them to stop and think about how they can collectively work to create healthier oceans.

Latorre also said that his song had a message of protection, especially because he feels that Hawai'i's natural resources are under attack by people who do not realize the impact that their actions have on the island's ecosystem;

*I am trying to get people to stop overfishing and only take what they need. Also, protecting what we have now, so they will still be there, and plentiful in the future.*

*Some people are also getting greedy, selfish, and taking more than they should, only thinking about themselves. I am trying to protect the fish that people do catch, there are plenty of fish in the sea, so let the little ones go and let them grow.*

When Latorre said he was concerned about the island's ecosystem, he elaborated on the importance of protecting this way of life for his future family. He explained in his pre-song composition survey that he has fond memories of fishing with his grandfather and cousins—by protecting the ocean, he understood that he could have these memories with his future children and grandchildren. Interestingly, Lattore said he felt an increase in political power in the project of protecting. In class discussions, he said he was in favor of legislation to help protect the ocean's ecosystem.

The fourth project of empowerment that Lattore related to is the act of sharing. In his song, he laid out his personal fears, hopes, feelings, and solutions in the hope that others would hear the song and be conscientized to take action on the issue of overfishing;

*...I am sharing the message of my song in the hopes that they will think about it  
and do something about it.*

In this way, Latorre made a connection between the project of sharing and the project of protecting. He realized that unless he shared his song with others, he would not be able to help to protect the ocean in any way.

### In What Ways Was Lattore Empowered Through the Performance of His Song Composition?

Being that Lattore's first song composition was broadcast on two local news stations, he understood the power and reach that the performance of his song composition could have. In the post-composition survey, Lattore wrote that music is a great way to spread positivity and to shed light on issues that need to be addressed. In the song that he wrote as a participant in this study, Lattore does not use it to complain only; rather, he uses it to suggest positive solutions to the issue of overfishing.

Lattore says that the intended audience of his song are people of all ages who live in Hawai'i and fish, dive, hunt, or depend on the land and sea as a food source. He felt that people with these interests would enjoy his song and relate to its message. Lattore also hoped that his targeted group would enjoy the island reggae feel of his song. Writing his song with a reggae beat was strategic to get his target audience to listen to his message.

As was the case in the first class that Lattore took from me, he was again hesitant to perform in front of people. As this semester progressed however, his confidence grew and he became more comfortable performing in front of his peers. By the ending of the semester, he said he enjoyed performing his song for his classmates;

*I felt great performing my song because I was very prepared for it. We did the composition of the song in parts so that it wouldn't be one huge project at the end. When we broke down each part and did them week by week it helped to slowly put it together for us and made for a better performance of the song. If you're ever nervous then you were not prepared enough, and with the help of my peers and kumu, I was ready to rock.*

Typically, throughout the song composition project, I have my students perform pieces of their songs, not only to get feedback and help, but to gain confidence in their abilities to perform in front of audiences. The goal is that by the end of the semester, performing for classmates is not a daunting task.

Lattore embraced the message he conveyed because of its critical nature. Because of this, he added rigor to the assignment by recording his song with multiple tracks that included vocal harmony parts, ukulele, guitar, bass, percussion, and keyboards. This was far more work and rigor than what I expected of the students. I was impressed by the extra work Lattore put into his project and how good it sounded. The feedback he received from his classmates was very positive.

After he performed his song for the class, received our feedback, and made edits, Lattore was ready to share his song with his family and friends;

*I will use this song to show my friends and family and they will probably pass it on to their friends and families, that is a way that my message can get around.*

*More needs to be said about overfishing, by spreading my song around more people will hear it and the next time they think of catching more or keeping small fish, they'll hear my song in their head and let the fish go and grow.*

This comment demonstrates that Lattore was cognizant of the power in his song and that it could be used effectively to make people aware of his efforts in environmental conservation. He understood that the best way to get his song's message out into the world was to share his song with his family and friends in the hopes that they would be mobilized to speak up on the issue of overfishing.

#### Summary

Lattore was empowered through song composition and performance because his song played a role in multiple projects of empowerment; this helped him to take time to identify his issue, share his feelings on the issue, and mobilize people to help spread awareness further. His goal was to make people aware of the issue of overfishing and take action to prevent it. He also experienced a growth in confidence that culminated in a successful song composition and performance;

*Whenever I come across something that I feel needs attention or if I have a connection to a certain person, place or thing I can write a song about it. Then I can share those songs with my family about the memories or stories we may have had.*

Lattore realized that he could apply the process that he learned to write songs on any issues that he wanted to give voice to. He also demonstrated his understanding that music can be used to

perpetuate and preserve memories. Lattore came to the awareness that songs can motivate people to act on important issues.

*Lyrics of Lattore's Song "Let 'Em Grow" and Video Hyperlink*

Verse 1

Listen up can you hear me  
Cause what I am about to say  
I hope you agree  
This one goes out to the people  
Who live off of the sea  
Been silent for too long  
We need change for this I pray  
So believe me when I say

Verse 2

The water don't feel like it used to  
Some feel the same  
But most have no clue  
About this new enemy  
Shooting everything he sees  
And the pain he puts us thru  
We've been silent for too long  
We need change for this I pray  
So hear me when I say

Chorus

Why can't you just take what you need

And not what you don't, nooo

Theres plenty fish in the sea

Just let em go and let them grow

Just let em grow

### Verse 3

So many times when I'm

Lying in my bed at night

Scrolling through my phone and I

See something that doesn't sit right

And then I feelin that I might do something out of spite

I take a deep breath, relax

Because every little thing

Is going to be alright

### Verse 1 (Repeat)

Listen up can you hear me

What I am about to say

I hope you agree

This ones goes out to the people

Who live off of the sea

Been silent for too long

We need change for this I pray

So believe me when I say



Verse 2 (Repeat)

The water don't feel like it used to

Some feel the same

But most have no clue

About this new enemy

Shooting everything he sees

And the pain he puts us thru

We've been silent for too long

We need change

For this I pray

So hear me when I say

Chorus

Why can't you just take what you need

And not what you don't, nooo

There plenty of fish in the sea

Just let em go and let them grow

Just let em grow

Bridge

We were taught to take only what you need

But there is so many now that share the common greed

Pulling the trigger at every shot they see

Keep this up, there will be no more I guarantee

Chorus

Why can't you just take what you need

And not what you don't, nooo

There's plenty more fish in the sea

Just let um go and let um grow

We've been silent for too long

We need change for this I pray

And this is why I say

Let em grow

Hyperlink: **Let 'em Grow: By Matt Lattore**

### *Lyrical Analysis*

Because of the urgent nature of the political and social message that Lattore hopes to encourage with his song composition, his lyrics are not veiled by the use of metaphor. Rather they speak directly about the issue of overfishing. The first verse begins by asking people to listen to what he is about to say about the issue. He calls out to “the people who live off the sea” and encourages them to raise their voices in order to bring about change and the ways in which people think of and treat the ocean.

The second verse notes that those who live off the sea are aware that the ocean is an endangered environment. He says that most people are not aware of this endangerment; rather, they do not see beyond the perception that the ocean is a scenic spot or a place in which to swim and play. Lattore says that for those who are in the ocean to feed their families, they notice that fish are becoming more and more difficult to find. He says that the new enemy are those fishermen who spear everything that they see. During class discussions, he mentioned that it is

common to see people on social media boasting about their excessive catch of forty to fifty fish. In the end of the verse, he once again calls on fishermen to speak up about overfishing in order to curb the greed.

After the second verse, Lattore expresses what needs to change. He encourages people to take only what they need to eat when fishing. He also raises the issue that people are catching a lot of undersized fish; a practice that is also impacting the fish population in a negative way. In class discussions, Lattore stated there is a cyclic problem—because there are fewer fish in the ocean, fishermen are catching anything and everything, regardless of how small. He said that the only way for fish to get bigger is to let them grow.

In verse three, Lattore once again sings about how it is becoming common to see people boasting about their excessive catches on social media. He expresses that this angers him to the point that he feels he will do something that he will regret. He then realizes that he needs to “take a deep breath” and relax. It could be argued that this part of the song is therapeutic for Lattore because he realizes that he cannot let his anger get the better of him. The last line of the verse is a quote from Bob Marley: “Because every little thing is going to be alright.” In these words, he understands that everything will be alright if conservation-minded fishermen help people understand the consequences that come as a result of exploiting ocean resources.

The song then goes on to repeat verses one and two. This repetition is common in political music because it helps to reinforce the message of a song. After the repetition, the song goes to a bridge and speaks about how his family was taught to catch only what they needed. He says that nowadays people are greedy and spear everything that they see in the ocean. The last line of the bridge warns that if people keep fishing in this way, there will be no more fish in the ocean. After the bridge, the song goes back to the chorus one more time to reinforce the

suggestion that people need to only take what they need, and that fisherman need to speak up and educate those fishermen on the issue of overfishing. He finishes the song with a plea in the last line to “Let em grow.”

The music of Lattore’s song is stylistically written with a reggae feel that is catchy. He said that the melody and the lyrics enabled him to make a powerful comment on overfishing;

*I really would just like people to hear my song and remember it the next time they go fishing, hunting, or anything game-related.*

### **Rachel Faith Javier Data Analysis and Discussion**

#### Did the Process of Song Composition Empower Javier?

Javier came into my MUS 211 class as a student who was already performing professionally. In the pre-song composition survey, she mentioned that she had written parts of songs before, but that she had never composed a complete song. She said that she was not excited about taking an online college music class because COVID restrictions had already ruined so many of her life plans, including her high school graduation ceremony and party. Her initial lack of enthusiasm for online learning made me think that she would be a good participant for my study because I was interested in whether the process of song composition and performance would be powerful enough to lift her level of enthusiasm for schooling. At the end of the semester, Javier shared that she gained much more from the class than she had initially expected that she would;

*...the power of music keeps people together no matter the distance. My initial thoughts of online music class weren’t all that positive at first, mainly because of COVID ruining a lot of my plans for the future. Eventually I found myself really*

*enjoying the context we were learning in, honestly this class is the only class I really enjoy attending. I've been in many music classes and have created strong bonds with many of my teachers, but this class never seems to bore me.*

The process of composing the song in my course allowed Javier to enjoy a sense of community allowing her to connect with the curriculum and with her classmates in meaningful ways, even within the online distance learning format.

One of the ways that the song composition process empowered Javier was it gave her the ability to apply what she learned in class to her real-life situations;

*This class has shown me how I can incorporate life into my music every day, when it comes to writing. The song composition project really helped me to understand where I stood as a writer and how I can continue to practice music in a way that works for me and allows me to express myself.*

Javier recognized that she could compose songs about issues that are meaningful to her. She also said that, over the semester, she built confidence in her ability to compose her own music as a way to express herself. Understanding that music is an outlet for expression helped to keep Javier motivated during the class. She said

*I learned that it's really helpful to have a 'why' for your song. For me, knowing why I was writing my song really helped me to stay motivated and to make the song as good as possible.*

Her understanding of “why” she wanted to write her song on her chosen issue helped her stay motivated throughout the semester. This motivation was critical because in her post-song composition survey, Javier said that she put a lot of thought into her song, but that at one point, she felt like everything was scattered and that her song was not going to come together. Without her personal connection to the substance of the song, Javier said that she might not have had the drive to complete the project.

The class collaboration also played a role in Javier’s empowerment. In the post-song composition survey she said:

*The peer reviews and collaboration seemed to boost my confidence on finishing this song. Since most of you enjoyed what I prepared even though deep down I thought I could do better, I kept pushing myself on trying to make it work out and one day it all just fell into place.*

In any sort of performative art, self-confidence plays a role in achievement and in the willingness to create new content and to push perceived limitations. Javier’s song deals with feeling confidence in herself. Her song is about being confident enough to stand up for herself and to trust her own creative vision. In her assignment to elaborate on her song issue, Javier shared how her family and mentors would criticize her performances if she did not perform the songs that they told her to. This led to her feeling less confident in her musical abilities.

*I would be feeling happy about my performance and then they would pick apart my performance and almost look for flaws so that I would just sing what they*

*want me to sing. These interactions started to mentally affect me. My self-consciousness almost became fear over what they would say.*

The fact that she mentioned that the collaboration helped to build her confidence demonstrates that in her process of writing the song, her issue with self-confidence was directly addressed and she experienced empowerment.

Javier also said that having the class as a sounding board really helped to refine her song composition. She also enjoyed being able to help other students with their song compositions and realized that it was good practice for all of them. The collaboration helped each student feel invested in each other's songs;

*It made us all feel like we were working together and not competing with each other. We all wanted each of our songs to be the best they possibly could be.*

Javier was also empowered by the song composition process because it helped her to better grasp musical concepts and ideas. As the class discussed concepts like dynamics, rhythm, melodic structure, and wordsmithing, I observed that Javier adjusted her song approach to utilize the concepts that we were learning in the class;

*I learned a lot about music just by composing my song. I learned about all the thought that goes into every decision to make a song more impactful. I realize how critical it is to choose a good melody, tempo, and chords for your song. I also learned how important the lyrics are. It was amazing to me how much impact changing one word in a line can have.*

While Javier mentioned that lyrics were changed to add impact and meaning to her song, this idea is explored further in the lyrical analysis of her song. Javier said that the project

*...helped me understand how important all the different aspects are. The project also really made me appreciate other composers. When I listen to music now, I find myself listening more to the words and how everything works together.*

As Javier learned more about writing songs and about the mechanics of music, she realized everything she was learning was applicable to her desire to be a professional musician;

*This class really helped me see the structure that can help to finish some of my songs. I want to do a recording soon so I plan to compose a lot more songs using what I learned in this class.*

For Javier, the course curriculum and process of the song composition project connected to her real-life issues, it connected her to her peers, and it helped her to find applications for the musical concepts that she was learning in the class.

#### Did the Song Composition Itself Empower Javier?

In the post-song composition survey, Javier identified her song as empowering her in the following ways:

Improving Life situation by increasing:	Celebrating Survival	Remembering	Intervening	Connecting	Envisioning	networking	Naming	Protecting	Creating	Sharing
Personal Power	X		X					X		X
Interpersonal power	X		X					X		X
Political Power										



According to Javier, four of the projects of empowerment are reflected in her song. One project is that of celebrating survival. She recognized that she has survived periods of verbal and emotional abuse and that she has found her voice to stand up for herself. One of the ways that she is standing up for herself and celebrating her survival is by

*Writing it all in a song.*

She also said that her song can help others to celebrate survival because any type of abusive relationship is detrimental. Javier added that her song plays a role in the project of protecting. She said:

*It is about protecting myself from things or people that try to get in my way.*

I observed that her song seems to be about becoming her own person and making her own choices. In class discussions, Javier said that while the song is written from her point of view, she hoped that people will hear their own struggles in the song and that they too will use their voices to stand up for themselves. For this reason, Javier felt that her song plays a role in the project of intervening.

Last, Javier saw her song playing a sharing role. She said

*It can play a role in sharing because the song shares the message that you have to be willing to speak up for yourself because you are worth fighting for.*

Javier felt that this message is important for anyone who is experiencing any kind of abuse. She hopes that people would believe that they deserve to live healthy lives.

When asked how it felt to write a song on an issue of her choice, Javier reflected on her experience;

*The feeling of writing a song like this is like a roller coaster ride. When you have an issue, it is typically something important to you, if not, it wouldn't have your attention so much to even be considered an issue. As for myself, I found this process comforting at first to the issue that I had chosen to write about, but, as I continued to find the right words and feelings, I really had to tap into the issue myself. Without personally connecting to a song, I feel as if there is no meaning to the person singing or performing it. There were definitely some struggles trying to get all the words for lyrics out because it felt like I was bringing back old memories. But what I realized was that through that process of looking back at old memories and making peace with it by putting it in a song, it only made me see the potential I could possibly have in writing songs that the people can connect to.*

Javier realized that composing her song allowed her to tap into her emotions. She also said that working out her feelings while composing her song allowed her to make peace with her experiences.

In What Ways Was Javier Empowered Through the Performance of Her Song Composition?

Javier said that performing her finished song made her feel great. She was empowered by performance because she said her song spoke up for her. When asked how she would use her song composition, Javier said

*I want to work it into my shows. I think that people can relate to the message since most people have something or someone holding them back.*

It is clear that she understands that her song can be a tool to empower and strengthen others who may be dealing with similar situations of abuse and self-doubt.

Javier said that the intended audience for her song is teens or adults in Hawai'i, probably because she performs for local audiences and views her professional engagements as opportunities to spread her message;

*I'm hoping that the locals enjoy my song and find it empowering.*

When Javier performed her song for her peers in the class, she received a lot of positive feedback. This helped to build her confidence in her abilities and in the message that she was sharing. In Krug's post-song composition survey, he specifically identified Javier's song as "powerful." If Javier chooses to perform her song at shows, I have no doubt that she will continue to be empowered by her song as she reinforces her message of self-worth.

### Summary

Javier was empowered by her song composition because was able to name her circumstance while calling on individuals to mobilize and take steps to improve their own life situations. By performing her song, she will be able to reinforce her beliefs about her self-worth. She will also be able to inspire others to speak up to improve their life situations. Javier was also

empowered because she has built up her confidence so that she is able to write songs on issues that matter to her.

*Lyrics of Javier's Song "Back Up" and Video Hyperlink*

Verse 1

You say want to fix us, but it's just too late

The words that you said were more than enough, so what's there left to say

How could you do this? You slowly ripped me to shreds

I smiled through the pain, but I know it won't last

so you best be on your way

Chorus

Back up back up (back up off me)

you had your chance had your time

I know my worth

and you just ain't right

Back up back up (back up off me)

just want you out of my sight

it's been long enough

and I'm done wasting time

Back up, Alright?!?

Verse 2

I'm just so tired of playing games

you know my mind starts tumblin' tumblin', but my heart keeps numbin' the pain

All I did was trust in you, but your light turned into shade

The love that we shared was just enough.

so what's left to gain

### Chorus

Back up back up (back up off me)

you had your chance had your time

I know my worth

and you just ain't right

back up back up (back up off me)

just want you out of my sight

I was never enough

but that ain't for you to decide

Back up, Alright?!?

### Bridge

And now that you're gone

I finally feel free

to just do me

sucks to say

that you got away

but you set me free

### Rap

I'm done with arguing

I'm done with your "last words"

Tired of constant back and forth bout the past

So don't coming back after I picked up your slack  
cause I'm movin' on and I'm gone  
I'm finally done with this  
I'm finally done with that  
so don't go thinking that I'm coming back  
finally found my voice, that you tried to hold back  
so I wrote it all in a song

#### Chorus

Back up back up (back up off me)  
you had your chance had your time  
I know my worth  
and you just ain't right  
Back up back up (back up off me)  
just want you out of my sight  
I was never enough  
but that ain't for you to decide

#### Chorus (Repeat)

Back up back up (back up off me)  
you had your chance had your time  
I know my worth  
and you just ain't right  
back up back up (back up off me)  
just want you out of my sight

I was always enough

I know my worth and I'm worth the fight

Back up, Alright?!?

Hyperlink: **[Back Up: By Rachel Faith Javier](#)**

### *Lyrical Analysis*

Javier's song uses a straightforward lyrical approach. Her song is designed to sound forceful and strong. The first verse speaks about someone who is an abuser expressing the desire to fix a relationship with the abused party. Javier believes that victims of abuse often feel as though words spoken in anger cannot be taken back

*How could you do this? You slowly ripped me to shreds*

When explaining the line "You slowly ripped me to shreds," Javier says that her relationship felt like slowly taking off a band aid because the abusive person always had negative things to say about her. She also laments the fact that it is often very difficult to remove abusers from the lives of those being abused. She said that so much of her life was spent with this type of negativity that it slowly ate away at her. In reflecting on her relationship, Javier realizes that she had smiled through the pain for too long and was not going to endure it any more.

The song then goes to a chorus in which Javier is forceful in her lyrics with lines like, "Back up, back up, back up off me" and "just want you out of my sight." She also has lines like "I'm done wasting time," and "I know my worth." While the chorus may sound aggressive, it

captures the strength of an abused person putting her foot down and saying that the abuse will no longer be tolerated.

In verse two, the abused person expresses being fatigued by the relationship. Javier initially wrote the lyrics, “My mind starts tumblin’ tumblin’, but my words keep numbing the pain.” At the time, she explained that “words keep numbing the pain” reflected her fear of speaking up for herself. After receiving feedback from her classmates, she changed the lyric “words” to “heart.” As such, the line was changed to “My mind starts tumblin’ tumblin’, but my heart keeps numbing the pain.” Javier liked this suggestion because it accurately captured that her heart was blinding her to the abuse that she was suffering and made her not want to speak up for herself. This is what Javier referred to when she recognized that changing one word can really make a difference to the message of a song. In a class discussion, Javier shared that the lyrics “...tumblin’ tumblin’” is a reference to a revolution taking place in her mind. Javier says the next line, “All I did was trust in you, but your light turned to shade,” refers to people in her life who are supposed to have her best interest at heart, but do not.

The song then repeats the chorus which is followed by a bridge that speaks about how removing abusive people from her life helped to liberate her so that she could carve out her own identity and path.

This portion of the song is about how Javier is moving on in life. She acknowledges that by moving on, she has found, through music, the voice that has been held back. She also reassures her audience that the submissive, victimized person that she once was is not “coming back.” This line is designed to remind the people who have abused her that she has removed them from her life and has no intention of depending on them in the future.



The song repeats the chorus two times. Each chorus in the song except for the last one ends with the line “I was never enough, but that ain’t for you to decide.” The last chorus ends with the powerful realization, “I was always enough, I know my worth and I’m worth the fight.” Ending the song with this line is a powerful way for her to share her new found self-confidence. Javier says that “...it represents what most people realize after the end of every toxic relationship—whether it be a relationship with your friends, family, co-workers, teachers, etc.”

Javier’s song allowed her to identify and name her situation as abusive. It also allowed her to express herself in a way that her song sounded like she was fighting for herself. Ultimately, Javier achieved the objective of her song by sharing the message that those in abusive relationships need to speak up for themselves. By composing her song, she actually gives an example of what speaking up can look like.

## CHAPTER 6

### UA ‘Ā KA UILA A‘I KĀNE‘OHE

Ha‘ina ‘ia mai ana ka puana

Ua ‘ā ka uila a‘i Kāne‘ohe

“Ha‘ina ia mai ana ka puana” is often translated as “Tell the refrain” or “Let the story be told” and it is a standard way to end a Hawaiian song. The line usually precedes some reiteration of the song’s theme or what was mentioned in verse one. This research project follows that same model because the title of Chapter 1 references the first verse in the song “Kāne‘ohe” when it speaks about the flashing lights or the arrival of electricity to the town. This final chapter or the “Ha‘ina” references the lines from the last verse of the same song which says, “Ua ‘ā ka uila i Kāne‘ohe.” This line can be interpreted as “The lights are on in Kāne‘ohe” or “The lights are shining in Kāne‘ohe.” In this research, the referenced “light” is a symbol of readers’ understanding of the outcomes of this study. Most people have some sense that music has power, but they may not understand that composing and performing songs are empowering activities as well. After a thorough discussion of the literature and an analysis of the data provided in this case study, “The lights should be on” for those who examine this research. The empowering effects of song composition and performance should now be readily apparent.

This “lights being on” not only represents an understanding of the phenomenon, but it also represents how my participants were empowered to shed light on issues that were important and relevant to them by participating in the song composition project. In this way, “The lights are shining in Kāne‘ohe.”

## Final Discussion

Chapter 5 analyzes each participant's data. This chapter aggregates the data and discusses the themes and patterns that arise from the participants to answer the questions of this research.

### Does the Process of Song Composition Empower Students?

After a careful study each participant's data, one theme that arises on how the process of song composition empowers participants is that being able to choose the issues or topics of their songs was empowering to them in several ways. The participants appreciated that the process gave them agency to shed light on issues that were important, relevant, and interesting to them. This agency led them to care more about their class projects and even helped motivate them to write better songs and to give extra effort to the process of composition.

Another theme that arises from the data about the process of song composition being empowering is that the participants benefited from the collaborative opportunities in the process. They mentioned that the collaboration helped to build their confidence because they felt that there was a team supporting them during the song composition process. The collaboration was also empowering because they helped others write their songs. Not only was helping others good practice for them, but it also empowered them to take turns being in the role of both "teacher" and "student" throughout the process. The participants were able to work together collectively to help their peers to complete their songs. By helping each other, they were able to recognize that they had the skills needed to compose their own songs. I observed that the participants sometimes got stuck on their own songs because they were overly fixated on an idea or part of their song which caused them to have writer's block. It was as if they were too close to the issue and needed outside help to see how they could move on with the composition of their songs. In a way, the participants helped each other as editors. As the participants helped their classmates

with their compositions, they were able to see the solutions for the problems that they were encountering in their own song compositions.

The participants also mentioned that the song composition process helped them to better grasp the music theory concepts taught in the class. They learned that writing a song required an understanding of the concepts of keys, chord structure, rhythm, meter, dynamics, and expression. Not only did the process help them to understand these concepts, it gave them opportunities to both apply and experiment with them.

One key theme that each participant mentioned as important is the enjoyment they experienced working on their songs. Getting enjoyment from a class project could be considered “improving one’s life circumstance” or empowering. Because the participants cared about their issues and understood that the musical concepts they were learning would enable them to give voice to those issues, they were happy to do the assignments and often even added rigor to the assignments by doing more than what was asked of them. Part of the enjoyment for the participants and their classmates was the realization that they could duplicate the composition process to write songs on any future issues that they want to give voice to.

#### Does the Song Composition Itself Empower Students?

The song compositions were empowering for participants because each one was able to identify multiple projects of empowerment that their songs could play a role in. One theme that was interesting was that each participant identified that his or her song participated in the project of sharing. This commonality suggests that because music is intended to be shared, it is a great tool to disseminate ideas on issues or topics that are important to composers. While Smith (1999) suggest that the project of sharing is often boring, technical, and cold, music provides a medium of dissemination that is engaging since music often connects to emotion or feeling.

It is interesting that two of the participants chose to write songs for their grandparents. While this may not seem to be a topic of empowerment, in the context of a global pandemic where elderly people are considered the most at-risk population, their compositions empowered them to share their feelings of love and appreciation with their grandparents. Their compositions also allowed them to preserve and protect the stories and memories that were important to them. This purpose will continue to be fulfilled each time they perform their compositions.

The three other songs that were analyzed for this project are meant to serve as public pedagogy. Each is meant to not only bring awareness to chosen issues but also to mobilize and conscientize listeners. The song about overfishing makes people aware of the issue and calls on them to be more conscious about conserving fish populations. The song about the opioid crisis not only paints a grim picture of what can happen to those who do not conquer their addictions, but it also helps people see the consequences that their addictions can have on their lives. This cautionary song encourages people to make wise decisions about what they put in their bodies. The last song speaks about the issue of emotional and physical abuse and encourages those who are victims of abuse to stand up for themselves and to be strong and confident in who they are and who they want to be.

The fact that the participants said that their songs could play roles in the project of sharing is significant because they were taught that music is a tool that can be used to bring attention to issues that they care about. This self-identification demonstrates that they not only understood this, but that they were using music to shed light on the issues that were important to them. Interestingly, their conscientization about the power of music provided opportunities for them to conscientize others on the issues that they cared about.

One other interesting theme in the data is that the participants identified multiple projects of empowerment that their songs could play roles in. This demonstrates that while they understood that their songs would play roles in the project of sharing, they also understood that their songs could do more than just teach people about their issues. Their songs could be used to preserve memories and to mobilize and conscientize their audiences.

One interesting difference in the data is that of the five songs that were composed, only Bruno says that her song is less about performing it for others and more about having an outlet to express herself. This suggests that Bruno was empowered just by writing her song. While music is a performative art, it is also an art of expression. Bruno demonstrates that sometimes just the act of unloading thoughts on an issue can be empowering.

#### In What Ways are Students Empowered Through the Performance of Their Song Compositions?

According to the responses of the participants, four of the five songs needed to be performed in order to fulfill their purpose. In the cases of Lattore and Javier, their songs were about bringing attention to issues that they care about in order to make a difference. Javier's song encourages people who are abused to stand up for themselves but her song cannot fulfill that purpose without being performed. In the case of Lattore's song on overfishing, his song plays a role in public pedagogy and conscientization. In order for the purpose of his song to be fulfilled, he too needs to perform his song. Krug and Morgan both wrote songs for their at-risk grandmothers in efforts to preserve memories and to express their feelings of love for their grandmothers. In order for this preservation of memories and expression of love to take place, performance is necessary—in this case, for their grandmothers. Both Krug and Morgan shared with me the wonderful experiences that they had singing their songs to their grandmothers and

the special feelings that they had while performing. Morgan shared with me that she sent a video of her playing her song to her grandmother in Las Vegas and that her grandmother loved the song. Krug said that he performed his song for his grandmother as a Christmas gift and that she also loved it. As well, Lattore said that he showed his friends his song recording and they all asked him for copies of it. Javier said that she now performs her song at her solo gigs. In this way, each participant's song is already in part meeting its purpose of creation.

One theme that was apparent in the participants' performances, as noted in their reflections on their performance, is that they were all proud of their compositions. All expressed that this pride for their song was due in part to the fact that they had ownership over their creations. They said that they enjoyed knowing and understanding all of the elements that were in their song compositions. For some, performing pieces of their song throughout the semester helped them to build their confidence in both their compositional skills and in their various performance abilities.

The participants realized that performing their songs was the means by which their compositions could fully play a role in the projects of empowerment. They recognize that their songs cannot be a part of the public pedagogy if they do not perform them. This agency fostered feelings of ownership and care about their composition projects. Garcia's (2014, p. 10) assertion that participants gain "...skills at higher levels of intellectual rigor" when educational activities center around issues that are relevant and interesting to them seems to be demonstrated in the findings of this study. Because of the project's real-life relevance, the participants willingly devoted many additional hours to make their song compositions better. Because of this "added rigor," the participants were able to easily grasp musical concepts and also able to find real applications for the musical concepts that they were learning. Connecting my curriculum to the

lives of the participants and their classmates made the song composition project meaningful for them and provided multiple forms of empowerment.

One consideration about the empowerment of the participants through song composition and performance that I have not yet touched on is that they stated that they were empowered because I designed the curriculum with the intention of empowering them. Empowerment is intentional and it requires an awareness of ways that one's life situation can be improved. From the beginning of the course, I spoke to the participants and their classmates about empowerment and its definition and introduce the "Projects of Empowerment" (Smith, 1999). These conversations helped my participants to look at the ways in which they wanted to be empowered and then to provide them with the means to begin their personal empowerment journeys.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates the empowerment potential and viability of a curriculum that enables participants to use composition and performance to give voice to under-represented and marginalized communities even during COVID-19 restrictive orders. More importantly, all the participants in this study raised composition issues that focus on the most vulnerable or marginalized members of the community or, in the case of fishing practices, the focus was clearly on securing healthier practices relating to food security which directly impacts the wellbeing of those who are dependent on such resources.

### **Future Directions**

In future studies, the focus on the political power outlined in Gutierrez's article will be explored more purposefully. The reason is that in Hawai'i, non-dominant peoples (identified by race, gender, sexual orientation, nationality and age to name just a few) are affected more severely by the land use and economic decisions of the state. The assumption here is that focus



on a more narrow group of participants will show greater propensity to compose songs that highlight social justice and cultural issues relative to protection and creation practices.

Another possible future direction for this research could be to conduct a similar project with a sample that is completely made up of Native Hawaiians or other indigenous groups. This purposeful sampling could help these communities to empower young leaders to understand the steps that they need to take to be empowered. Research could also be done to study how song compositions play a role in current Native Hawaiian or indigenous issues. This future research could be conducted in a formal setting like the setting of this case study or it may be conducted among community groups or organizations. The latter setting could give insight into participants' commitment to song composition when a grade is not involved as a motivating factor.

The findings of this study suggest that participants are empowered through song composition and performance. While this research took place in a Hawaiian Ensemble course, the outcomes and findings were not overly dependent on the instruments which were being taught. Another future application and direction for this research could be to study if song composition and performance can be used in other types of music courses to facilitate empowering participants (i.e. voice, theory, digital music, etc.). This future research could help music educators understand if song composition projects can be beneficial in other types of music classroom and settings.

Ultimately, the song composition and performance project is a means to teach participants how to be empowered. Knowing the steps to be empowered is a transferable skill across all disciplines. Future participants will identify issues that they care about, research those issues so that they can clearly articulate their positions, find platforms to share their thoughts, and become agents of change. For some of my participants and their classmates, they will

continue to use music as a way to complete these steps, while for others, they will take these same steps and apply them in ways that maximize other talents, skills, and passions. This is the enlightenment that happens because of this project.

Ua ‘ā ka uila a‘i Kāne‘ohe.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**LILIA MORGAN DATA**

**Pre-Composition Survey**

- Where did you grow up? *I grew up in Ka‘ala, mainly in my tutus house with all of my cousins. The bus would drop us off after school and everyone would be there every day.*
- Does anyone in your family play music? If so, what is the relationship? *My aunty, Teresa Bright, and my uncle, Kanoho Helm, play music professionally. I'm related to them on my dad's side of the family. From my mom's side, no one plays professionally, but almost everyone knows how to play the ukulele or guitar so we all just jam whenever we get together as a family.*
- Do you have a favorite song that is connected to an event in your life? *“Fine Line” by Harry Styles. This song is all about how life is not a fine line, it's not all good and not all bad. It says that even in the bad times, there will be good times and that in the good times there will also be bad times. This song reminds me of the days right before quarantine. My friends and I decided to drive from Kaneohe through Waimanalo and to Kapolei. We just sang loads of songs and were venting to each other. Once we were 6 minutes and 17 seconds away from all of our various destinations, we played the song and we stuck our heads out of the sun roof. As the song was building, it felt surreal to me like I was in a movie. If I had to choose one way to leave my friends and go into quarantine, this was how I wanted to do it. In that moment I knew I found the best people. I felt that they would be there for me through everything in my highs and also in my lows and so far, I have been correct.*

- What is your favorite genre of music and why? *My favorite genre of music is contemporary R&B or any Harry Styles or 1D song. Contemporary R&B is my favorite because it can feel chill and sad. I feel like it can take me through a lot of different emotions. It may be weird but I love any song that makes me feel sad or emotional.*
- Did you learn any type of music before taking this college course? If yes, what instruments or type of lessons did you take? *From fourth to sixth grade I played the ukulele and was in my elementary school's ukulele band that Uncle Eldean and Auntie Darleen Kukahiko started and taught. Also, from ninth to eleventh grade I took Polynesian music with Mrs. Cone at castle and I took on the piano.*
- Did you enjoy those music lessons? Why or why not? *I enjoyed both because the teachers always made the classes fun and helped me forget that I was doing these things for a grade. When I didn't feel comfortable or confident, they would always find a way to comfort me and show me what I was capable of.*
- Explain how those lessons were conducted? *In my elementary class the lessons were simple and didn't make me feel uncomfortable because they would make us sing and play all together. When I got to poly music, Mrs. Cone would make us pick 2 songs to record, and everyone in our group would have to sing and play our instruments. And at the end of the year the whole class would all play different songs in a concert.*
- What made you want to take a college music course? *When I first came to college, I made a friend in my English class and she asked me to take slack key guitar with her, so I signed up for the class but then she dropped it after the 2nd day so I had to drop because I wasn't about to be in a class by myself. But then my other friend from high school signed up for ukulele so I signed up with her because she didn't want to be alone. Later, I*

was “somehow” convinced to take Hawaiian Ensemble (lol) and now I'm here taking it a second time.

- Have you composed a song before? What was it about? *I've only composed one song. My song was about how I miss my papa and how I've never met him before. I composed it last semester in Hawaiian Ensemble. My family loved it and I'm excited to compose another song.*
- In what ways does music play a role in your life? *Music definitely plays a huge role in my life. I can't do anything without music. I have to have music playing when I'm cleaning the house, doing chores, cooking food, getting ready in the morning, and even right before I sleep. It's like I can't concentrate or finish whatever I have to do if I don't have it on.*

### **Choose Three Issues**

- *My first issue is about not being able to see my friends. Of course because of COVID I am not able to see them and it's an issue to not see them face to face because we don't get to ride in the car anymore and sing our hearts out or just have funny moments where we laugh so hard our ribs hurt. Now that we can only communicate through zoom or facetime there's not much of a connection and we have hardly anything to talk about. It's mainly just talking about Tik-Tok trends or “What did you do today?” A song on this issue can play a role in the projects of connecting or networking.*
- *If covid never happened I would have been thriving. I would've had a job, money, and I would have been traveling this summer. Instead, I am just stuck at home. I feel so bored, like I need something to do or somewhere to go. A song on this issue can play a role in intervening.*

- *My last issue is about my Tutu. It's hard for us to talk to her every day because she lives in Las Vegas and she doesn't know how to use technology very well. She is in the early stages of dementia and it is important for people with dementia to stick to a daily routine. Us not being there or being able to easily communicate with her, takes us out of her daily routine. It has really taken a toll on not only her, but everyone in my 'ohana. Sometimes she forgets who we are. I want to write about this issue because maybe this song will help her remember who we are and who she is. Perhaps the song can let her know that it's okay if she doesn't remember us because WE remember who she is. This may be a way for me to talk through my own feelings as my grandma loses some of her memories. A song on this issue can play a role in connecting, remembering, and possibly protecting and intervening (idk)?*

### **Elaborate on Your Chosen Issue**

- *My tutu moved to Las Vegas in 2011 when I was in the sixth grade and she used to come home to Hawai'i for Christmas, New Years, graduations, and Easter every year but she stopped coming down to visit in 2015. In 2017, we went to visit her in the summer and she was moving around and bowling and just very active. In the summer of 2018, my tutu fell and hit her head, after that, she started to lose a little bit of her memory and could hardly walk. As a family we planned to visit her every summer, or anytime we could, but this year because of COVID, we can't visit. We tried everything to talk to regularly talk to her but she doesn't know how to use facetime and her boyfriend hardly ever picks up his phone. They also don't have iPhones, they only have iPads that they always seem to lose. So because we can't see her every day and talk to her, she forgets some of her*

*grandchildren and sometimes even her own children. Fortunately, once we tell her our name she kind of remembers us but sometimes it takes her a while.*

- *I want to use the song to capture various memories of her and of our 'ohana. For example, she is a really funny person, I remember one time when we went up to visit her, we were in a hotel room and she walked in and looked around and said "oh you got a microwave too?" and when we looked at what she was talking about, it was a safe. We were all just cracking up and still laugh when we think of this story. I also want to add in things that I want to tell her. For example, you may forget, but it's okay because we will be there for you to help you remember the things that are important. Or tell her that no matter how or who you remember, the most important person to remember is you. The song may also remind her of the things she accomplished. I guess this song is to capture how I want to remember her. Sometimes when people suffer from dementia, the family dwells on how the person was at the end of their life. I want this song to always remind me of the tutu that I grew up with before her memories began to fade. The song could also express how sometimes it hurts that she forgets me but that I forgive her for not remembering.*
- *This song issue can play a role in sharing because I want it to be a song about sharing her memories with her and the 'ohana and also to people that love her. It may also fall under remembering because I want to hold onto the memories that we've made. It also can fall under connecting because I want to use this song to strengthen our connection to each other. It can fall under protecting and intervening because perhaps it can help my grandma to remember who she is. It can also protect my special memories of her.*



### **Narrow the Issue to One Sentence**

- *My tutu has dementia and my family is struggling to support her without being with her in person.*

### **Message of the Song**

- *It is important to be there for loved ones who suffer from dementia. When they forget, we have to remember. We remember who they are, their accomplishments, how special they are, and how much they're loved.*

### **Lyrical approach**

- *I want to make my song lyrics happy and funny with just a hint of sad. I think a cool way to structure the lyrics will be storytelling where I share different memories that I have of her up until now and at the end try and make it extremely sad. For example the lyrics of the first couple verses could be very happy stories and the last verse before the last chorus can make it have a sad feel so that that last verse changes the whole meaning and feel of the song.*
- *Like this song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pi2Gy7DG75g> the song starts with a very happy feel but at mins: 1:50 - 2:10, the tone changes.*

### **Musical approach**

- *I want my music to sound like backyard local country music. Here are some examples:*
  - *<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJppo10Q2l0> (Come on over- Hui Ohana)*
  - *<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6m2wLu5l9c> (Pehea 'oe e kalapana - moke boy)*
  - *<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERaPz4fVNzs> (Everybodys talking - third world delight)*

- *I am picking this genre because it is the type of music that my tutu enjoys. Also these types of songs have an upbeat feel to it and she like songs that make her happy and that make her want to dance.*

### **Three Titles**

- *Remember the days*
- *I'll never forget*
- *Take me Back to You*

### **Basic Song Outline**

#### Verse 1

*Wanting to hold onto the memories with her.*

*Possible Memories for the verse:*

*Driving all around Kaneohe in her blue corolla.*

*Taking the family Christmas picture with her every year.*

*How she always asked how she looked, and the answer is always "beautiful."*

#### Verse 2

*More memories:*

*She would hug every one of her grandchildren like they were her child.*

*Whenever we slept over at her house she always brought us lots of blankets and pillows.*

*She would always hold us very tight whenever we cried until we stopped.*

Bridge: (or just add to beginning of chorus/end of verse idk). Possible line or thought:

*"When your memory starts to fade, and you ask me again about who you were"*

### Chorus

*Describe the little things about her such as her bright smile, how beautiful, funny, and smart she is, and how the way that she cares about each of us is like no one else.*

*I'll be there for you when you can't remember anything.*

*Even if you don't remember, we will remember for you.*

### Verse 3

*"No matter what or who you remember, the most important person to remember is you."*

*Remind her of who she is in this verse*

*Even if there is a point in her life where she can't remember us, we will do the remembering for her and we will remind her.*

## **Final Lyrics: Tūtū Pua**

### Verse 1

*When I think of happy times*

*You were always there*

*Whether driving around town*

*Or fixing up your hair*

*Tutu I need to tell you*

*There's something you should know*

*In the memories held in my heart*

*That you are always beautiful*

### Chorus

*Your eyes they shine brighter than*

*Stars in the windward sky*

*The way you laugh, the way you love  
And that smile is one of a kind  
And every night when I speak to God above  
I pray you know that you are loved*

Verse 2

*It seems like just yesterday  
We would drive down to your house  
In the early morning and in the night  
You would answer in you gown  
You would hold me tight  
Like I was one of your own  
Even three thousand miles away  
You've always felt like home*

Chorus

*Your eyes they shine brighter than  
Stars in the windward sky  
The way you laugh, the way you love  
And that smile is one of a kind  
And every night when I speak to God above  
I pray you know that you are loved*

Verse 3

*There are times when you get sad  
When you don't remember my name*

*Don't mind the things you can't control*

*Because to me you're still the same*

*Tutu I need to tell you*

*When your memory starts to fade*

*And you ask me about who you were*

*This is what I'll say*

### Chorus

*Your eyes they shine brighter than*

*Stars in the windward sky*

*The way you laugh, the way you love*

*And that smile is one of a kind*

*And every night when I speak to God above*

*I pray you know that you are loved*

*You know that you are loved*

### **Post-Song Composition Survey**

- In class, you learned about musical concepts such as rhythm, notation, keys, wordsmithing, intervals dynamics, and expression; Share what your song is about and the parts that you think are most impactful. *My song is about my tutu who has dementia and also about some memories that I've had with her. I wanted to use this song as a way to remind her of who she is. I think my third verse is the most impactful. I like the lyrics "There are times when you get sad, when you don't remember my name, don't mind the things you can't control, because to me you're still the same." because it's kind of saying not to worry because these things won't define you. I also think people who have family*

*members with dementia, will relate. The song lets them know that others are dealing with the same pains of watching our loved one's memories slip away.*

- Discuss in detail how you applied at least three of these concepts in your song composition. *I tried going for a backyard country rhythm. I wanted to use this type of approach because it is nostalgic to my tutu. It is also upbeat, so she can still jam to it. I chose to play this song in the key of G because I've heard that it's usually played in happy songs. I also put it in G because it was easier for me to play in slack key. For dynamics, I tried to slow it down a bit in verse three because those lyrics are more sad. Also I slowed it down because that's the part I really wanted her to hear. I also learned a lot about wordsmithing while writing the lyrics. An example of this is in the chorus I could have said, "In the night sky" but I made the lyrics "In the windward sky" because for her, that is the sky she grew up under so it places her there at home.*
- Discuss what you learned about the power of music and song composition during class instruction time. Provide two or three detailed examples. *I learned that music can be used as a tool and that it can serve a lot of functions. Now that I wrote my song, I better understand how song composition can be used as a tool. My song has the power to help our family remember the tutu that we all grew up with and helps us realize that we have so many wonderful memories with her. The song has helped me to share my feelings with my family about tutu's situation. I am young and generally don't say much about tutu and family matters but with this song, I felt comfortable as a voice to remind our family that tutu isn't a burden and that we can't get frustrated with her when she doesn't remember. I learned that composing a song is definitely not an easy process. Learning how to compose a song was hard, especially online during quarantine. Being quarantined for*

*almost a year makes it hard to remember how life was before covid. Even our family felt more distant during quarantine so this song was a way to connect us all together.*

- Discuss what you learned about song composition during the process of composing and performing your song. Provide two or three detailed examples. *I was stuck on a line for the longest time and because I was too focused on that one line I wasn't thinking about my unfinished verse. I learned that when you're stuck on a line, just move on to the next line because later on it will come to you. It's also hard writing a line to one verse when the lines in the previous verse were stuck in my head. How I overcame that type of writer's block was just by looking at my outline and asking if someone else had an idea that I could get inspiration from. I also learned that it was important to remember the people that I am writing my song for. Sometimes, I was thinking about the song as if I was going to record it on a cd for the world and then I would get stuck. I realized that when I focused on my tutu and my family as the audience, the lyrics came easier. Knowing the audience helped me remember that they would understand specific references like tutu coming to meet us in her gown. When I remembered my audience, I felt more comfortable that they would understand the feelings and thoughts in my song.*
- How do you feel about the song that you composed? Provide a detailed analysis. *I really like my song. I feel like my lyrics were written pretty well. I like how the melody fits with the lyrics. The song goes at a medium tempo so the lyrics have moments where they sound happy and moments where they sound sad. It's not too fast, not too slow, not too rancid, but juuussst right. I think the lyrics accurately portray how I feel about the situation with my tutu. [but nothing can beat my papa's song from last semester]. It felt really good to write this song for my tutu. I feel like maybe it feels as good for me to sing*

*it as it will for her to hear it. It makes me happy to know that I captured some of our happy memories and feelings.*

- How does your song fit into the projects of empowerment? Is it the same project that you intended to write on? Can you see other projects that your song fits into? Explain. *My song fits into connecting, remembering, and sharing. These are the projects that I intended to play a role in. So I stayed on track with that. My song fits into these categories because it's mostly about me sharing and remembering my memories with her and using this song to connect to her. In a way, the song could also play a role in protecting for me. It protects my memories and feelings for her.*
- Discuss the feeling of composing a song on an issue of your choice. *It was really hard at some points because I am so close to the issue and at times it would make me very emotional. Sometimes I'd cry because I'm brainstorming ideas and then stumble on one sad memory then it leads to a bunch of other different sad memories. One part that choosing my own issue helped with was that I really wanted to write my song, and I wanted to write it good. I feel like, because I was so connected to the song, I enjoyed and looked forward to the process. It was also nice to have so much control over how I told the stories of my tutu, how the song sounded etc. It was also a bit stressful when I had writer's block, but it was all worth it in the end because it felt very rewarding to have something so personal to share with my family.*

### **Song Performance**

- Who is the intended audience for your song? How do you think they will receive it? *My intended audience is my tutu and my family, but it could also be for anyone in the same situation as me because the lyrics aren't too specific. My tutu and family will definitely*



*like it, I'm hoping for some tears lol. Also I am hoping that they will take time to write down or record their happy memories with my tutu.*

- Explain the feelings you had when you were performing your own song composition. *The first time I recorded it I teared up a bit, because I was thinking about performing it in front of my tutu and family. Once I finished the entire song, I felt very proud because coming into this class I didn't think I could write another banger lol. When we shared our videos with the class, it felt really cool to hear all of our final products. It was like we got to witness first hand, every one's growth. In a way, I was excited for everyone to see how my song turned out. With all that being said, my favorite performance of this song will be when I sing it for my tutu. Then the song will have met its purpose.*
- How do you intend to use your song in the future? *I definitely want to share it with my tutu but because she lives in Las Vegas and doesn't know how to use technology. I can't just send her a video. I would have to go up to see her and play it for her. Hopefully I can do that soon. Like I said, that is why I wrote the song. I didn't write it to be famous, I wrote it for my tutu. After I share it with her, perhaps one day I can sing it to my kids.*
- How do you intend to use song composition in the future? *I'm not sure how I'll use song composition in the future. One day I'll probably compose another song and use this knowledge that I have on song composition. At the very least I will listen more closely to other's compositions and will be more appreciative of composers. It is really cool to know that I have this tool if needed that I can express myself.*

## **Curriculum**

- In class, you learned about musical concepts such as rhythm, notation, keys, wordsmithing, intervals dynamics, and expression. Discuss the benefits of collaboration

on this project. *The benefits of getting feedback from everyone is that they gave me an idea or reminded me about something that I should add, even if it was just a couple of words. Sometimes those one or two words can make a huge difference in the song. I felt like we were all working together and on a common goal. It also helped me realize that everyone had small areas that they needed feedback and help on. Knowing this made me feel more comfortable to share where I was struggling.*

- How did the song composition project help you to better understand music? *I approached song composition like writing a story or giving a message. I was happy that I could tell my story in a music format. If I learned anything, it's that I learned that I can tell a story through music. It's not that I didn't know that I could tell a story through music, it's just that I didn't realize that I could do it. We also learned a lot of music theory in the class to help us with the composition but I feel like not very many people learn about telling stories with music.*

## Projects of Empowerment

- Identify where your song fits into the projects of empowerment and how you felt empowered by your song.

Improving Life situation by increasing:	Celebrating Survival	Remembering	Intervening	Connecting	Envisioning	networking	Naming	Protecting	Creating	Sharing
Personal Power		X		X				X		X
Interpersonal power		X		X						X
Political Power										

## APPENDIX B

### KA'ULA KRUG DATA

#### Pre-Song Composition Survey

- Where did you grow up? *I grew up in Wai'anae on the leeward side of the island of O'ahu. I was born and raised into a fluent Hawaiian language home and had been taught about my culture and my ancestors. Hawaiian music was also taught to me and my sisters and we were taught to sing Hawaiian songs in three-part harmony since we were little.*
- Does anyone in your family play music? If so, what is the relationship? *There are multiple musicians in my family from both my father and my mother's side. My father, Kalehua Krug, and my uncle, Glenn Mayeda, were raised to love Hawaiian music by my great-grandmother Irene Pāo'o Jellings. Both my uncle and my father, alongside Kumu Kamuela Kimokeo played together in their first band called Pilioha. Later on, Uncle Glenn left Pilioha and is now playing with Kuana Torres-Kahele, and my father and Kumu Kamuela went on playing together with Blake Leoiki-Haili in their band called Hi'ikua. On my mother's side, her uncle, Anela Kahiamoe plays Hawaiian and jazz music on ships and catamarans for tourists and foreigners. Another musician on my mom's side was her cousin/my aunty, Starr Kalāhiki, who also sings jazz music and sometimes Hawaiian music. I consider all of these people to be teachers of mine that continue to influence my musical journey.*
- Do you have a favorite song that is connected to an event in your life? *Long before I met my current wahine who's family is from Pi'ihonua, Kimo Henderson Hula was always a favorite of mine because I am a huge fan of Helen Desha Beamer's compositions. Not*

*only do I love her poetry but I especially love the beautiful melody of this mele. Dennis Pavao, George Helm, Raiatea Helm and Nā Palapalai all do beautiful versions of Kimo Hula. This song connects to a happy event in my life when I stayed with my wahine and her 'ohana in Pi'ihonua on the island of Hawai'i. It was my first time in Pi'ihonua and in the midst of staying in the area, I got to witness all the beauties that were mentioned and talked about in the song. One morning, my wahine drove me up to the actual property of Kimo Henderson and I saw where his house Moanike'ala once stood. Although that actual house was taken down and a newer house was built next to where it once stood, the rock walls that were once a part of Kimo Henderson's garden still stand to this day. All of his plants and beautiful flowers still flourish on his property. Every time I will hear this song, it will take me back to this memorable experience.*

- What is your favorite genre of music? why? *It may be obvious right now that Hawaiian music is my favorite genre of music because of the value of the Hawaiian language in my family. Another reason is that I currently only know how to sing and play Hawaiian music.*
- Did you learn any type of music before taking this college course? If yes, what type of instruments or lessons did you take? *Yes, I was taught how to sing and how to play Hawaiian music from a young age. I did not take official lessons or classes because most of the lessons came from my father. He taught me and my sisters how to sing Hawaiian music and eventually I grew an interest in playing instruments. I really started playing seriously when I was about 15. Now, I am familiar with playing the 'ukulele, the guitar, and the bass. I am currently interested in learning how to play the piano.*

- Did you enjoy those music lessons? Why or why not? *Most of the music lessons I had when I was young were focused on singing rather than playing. Being able to hear and sing lead and three-part harmony was the skills that was most emphasized in our music time. The first instrument I learned was the 'ukulele and then I started picking up the guitar. Within this past year I have started playing both stand-up and electric bass. Music was almost always fun with our family. I don't think we really even thought of it as "music lessons." We were learning but it wasn't like the lessons were formal or overly structured. It was natural and really was just like family time.*
- Explain how those lessons were conducted? *The lessons were conducted mostly to train our ears to hear the correct melodies. My father would find a musical lesson in any little sound we made. There is a funny and memorable moment that we all remember from when we were very small. My dad scolded me and my sisters in the car for singing the smurfs' "la la la" song off-key. We were confused about why he was making a huge deal out of it. During that whole car ride, we sang the smurfs song over and over again until we sang each "la" at the right key, not flat or sharp, right on key. To this day we remember it as an important musical lesson. As we got older, our music lessons were learning how to sing an entire song together and then when we got it down we would learn another song.*  
  
*Eventually, I grew bored of just standing and singing and I grew interested in picking up an instrument. My father taught me keys and hand placements and how to strum but eventually, I kind of figured out some musical patterns that opened my eyes and helped me understand songs easier. I started to analyze and understand the key patterns of Hawaiian songs. After I understood Hawaiian music patterns and key placements and*

*how instruments are structured, it became easier for me to learn how to play the guitar and now the bass.*

- What made you want to take a college music course? *I've always wanted to take some type of music course in college but there weren't any at my home campus related to Hawaiian music. I've taken a Hawaiian language class with Kumu Keawe Lopes and that class was based on music but it was a Hawaiian language subject class. When Kumu Kamuela reached out to me to take his Hawaiian ensemble music class, I did not need much persuasion.*
- Have you composed a song before? What was it about? *I have composed some Hawaiian songs for my classes or for my class presentations. The songs were usually about my home in Wai'anae and were for the lessons I learned in my classes. I haven't really done any compositions on my own about something that I just want to write a song about.*
- Does music play a role in your life? In what way? *Hawaiian music plays a big role in my life because of the legacy my father has built and is building for himself. His legacy is now starting to turn into a family legacy and tradition. I have received multiple opportunities because of my skill in music. The opportunities have impacted my life and are helping me to shape my own story and legacy. Recently I was a part of a Hawaiian Language musical that got to travel and perform in New York. I also had the opportunity to play the role of one of my idols, George Helm, in a short movie. I portrayed him in highschool. I wouldn't have gotten these opportunities if I wasn't for my experiences and abilities in Hawaiian music.*

### Choose Three Issues

- *Bad leadership in Hawai'i. This is a legit issue we are facing today because Hawai'i is literally run by stupid politicians. During this time with COVID-19, we shouldn't have got any cases here BECAUSE WE ARE SURROUNDED BY THE FRICKEN OCEAN. Our islands have a natural barrier around us that stretches for miles at a time. If we were like other countries in Polynesia like Aotearoa, we could have shut down the whole "fake" state and kept COVID-19 from reaching our islands. Despite the fact that we didn't do that, our quarantine shouldn't have continued. This second wave of cases we are seeing right now shouldn't have happened. Everyone is worried about the economy but look at it now, the economy is even suffering more because we couldn't just shut down for two weeks. I think this could fall under sharing because I am sharing my grief. Another topic it could fall under is envisioning because I can only dream of a better way out of our situation.*
- *Tūtū Manunui. I would love to write a song about my Tūtū Gwen, my dad's mom because she is this hilarious and stubborn old Portuguese lady. She says and does the funniest and most ridiculous things ever. She has this superpower where she can talk my ears off about nonsense she saw on CNN. When she cooks, she makes so much that we could feed the whole neighborhood and her food is always so burning hot that I almost always burn my tongue. She is the best. I just want to appreciate her while she is still here. I know that even the things that sometimes irritate me now will one day be things that I miss and fondly remember. I think this could play a role in the project of celebrating survival because I'm happy that she's still alive. I also think it could play a role in remembering since it could help my kids or grandkids know more about my tūtū. The song could also*

*play a role in connecting and sharing since it will help me and our family connect to my tūtū and the song helps to share my feelings for her that maybe I wouldn't be as comfortable to say.*

- *Hawai'i Island Trip August 2020. I would like to write a song about a very memorable trip to Hawai'i Island that I just had right before this semester started. I went on the trip with my wahine and it was so much fun and I got to go and sightsee all over the island. One day we drove to Kona to see my aunty and then another day we drove up to watch the sunrise on Maunakea and then drove down into Waipi'o Valley. I stayed with my wahine and her family in Pi'ihonua, Hilo, and made great memories there with her ohana and with that place. I think this would fall under the topic of remembering so that with this song I never forget about this experience. It could be almost like a trip journal.*

### **Elaborate on Your Chosen Issue**

- *Tūtū Manunui. I would like to write a song about my grandma because she is a crazy old lady and she brings so much joy and craziness into my life. She is the mother of my dad and she is a mix of Hawaiian, Caucasian, and Portuguese. I am thinking about writing a funny song about her that mentions certain things that she does that are unique or at least part of her personality. We always joke that my tūtū is a true Portagee that sometimes has no common sense. Sometimes it is hilarious and other times, it can be super annoying.*

*Tūtū likes to talk my ears off about how she is super busy and has so many responsibilities yet we would catch her watching TV all day. She mostly watches CNN all day and then watches CBS once the sun goes down. The funniest thing she does is that she tries to keep us updated with everything, literally everything! When FedEx or UPS*



*stops in front of our house to drop off a package, she calls us or runs over to our house to let us know that a huge truck is in front of our house as if we did not know it was there. She keeps us updated with things she watches on the 10 o'clock news when we already read about it or saw it on Instagram. She is like an alarm clock or a reminder you can't snooze or turn off. This is one of the reasons that we call her Tūtū Manunui, because she is always chirping like a bird (hahaha).*

*Tūtū used to cook the same five meals every week until everyone got tired of eating spaghetti, shrimp, hamburger macaroni and cheese, mahimahi with a ton of mayonnaise, and meatloaf. She always cooks enough food that we can have leftovers for days! She is like the mama bird that feeds its chicks until they are fat. Sometimes it feels like we are being forced until we are fat! LOL*

*It is super fun talking with her because she is so stubborn and she talks about politics a lot or at least everything she heard from CNN and all I can do is sit there and laugh at her go off about Trump.*

*Ultimately, I want my song to capture the fun memories of my tūtū while expressing my aloha for her. In our family, we tease each other a lot so I kind of feel that it is one of the ways we show love for each other. This mele could fit under celebrating survival, sharing, remembering, and connecting.*

### **Narrow the Issue to One Sentence**

- *People need to honor and preserve the memories of their loved ones while they are still around.*

## Message of the Song

- *The message of this song is to use the time we have left to love those who probably won't be around us forever. Although the song may be funny and somewhat silly, I really want to show how grateful I am that I have her in my life. I also want to bring awareness to the concept of time because we can't afford to keep wasting our time on useless things because the important things and people may not always be around.*

## Lyrical Approach

- *I am planning to build the song and most of the lyrics off of the word "manunui" because there are a lot of directions that I can go with just using birds as a metaphor. There are 'ōlelo no'eau or idiomatic sayings that I can throw in the composition. Although her nickname is literally "Bigbird" from sesame street, I can show how she brings happiness and silliness to our lives just like how Bigbird sort of does in sesame street. I am planning to put her favorite sayings in the song like "for the love of Mary, Joseph, and Francis," "see ya later alligator," "I'm gonna give you a shabata in the cabesa" or something like "babooze."*  
*The lyrics of the song will be fun and will be humorous. My intended audience is my tūtū and my ohana. I will be writing my song in the Hawaiian Language.*

## Musical approach

- *For the musical approach, I want to come up with a fast paced and possibly hapa-haole in some ways. The hapa-haole part is because I want to throw in a couple of tūtū's funny quotes into the lyrics. I want the song to feel Hawaiian but I want it to be fun like the songs "The Cockeyed Mayor of Kaunakakai" or "Mr. Sun Cho Lee."*

### Three Titles

- *Tūtū Manunui*
- *The Old Portuguese Lady of Lualualei*
- *Manu Kulikuli*

### Basic Song Outline

#### Verse 1

*I would want to start the song off by calling out to tutu and greeting her and introducing her presence by focusing on her nickname and the importance of a bird figure.*

#### Verse 2

*Since she is where our family name Pāo ‘o comes from, I think it’ll be nice to bring up the pāo ‘o fish and its ability to breathe both in and out of the water and its ability to leap or jump. Playing with the word “lele” would work because it can mean leap or fly to build its connection to the manu nui.*

#### Verse 3

*Focus more on Tūtū’s personality and traits or the things that she does or says. Throw in a couple of her well-known Portuguese quotes that our close friends and family hear all the time. I’m debating if I should write this verse in English because of her quotes and the crazy things she does to us.*

*\*\*\*May or may not do this but it would be cool to add in a bridge here to build up the depth of the song for the last verse/Ha ‘ina. Talk about how I feel about her and my love for my tūtū.\*\*\**

#### Verse 4

*Wrap the song up A.K.A Ha 'ina 'ia mai. Bring up the same ideas I brought up in the verses before.*

#### **Final Lyrics: Tūtū Manunui**

##### Verse 1

*Tūtū Manunui, kupunahine Pukikī  
'A 'ole o kana mai kou leo kanikani  
'A 'ohe nō he lua e like aku ai  
Kou aloha pūlama mo 'opuna*

##### Verse 2

*Lele aku lele mai e ka pāo 'o lēhei hale  
Halehale ke aloha noho ana i ka poli  
Ua holo ka ulua ho 'olei kīpuka 'ili  
Mau nō ka 'u 'ina o ka uepa*

##### Verse 3

*Pū 'ā 'ia ke aloha, ke aloha kūpuna  
Pa 'ē mai ka leo, ka leo kupuna  
Punalau ka wai wīneka 'aka 'akai  
Mā 'ana i ke aloha o ke kupuna*

##### Bridge

*He aha ke kani a Tūtū Manunui  
“Eh babooze go feed da damn dogs”  
He aha ke kani a Tūtū Manunui*

*“For the love of Mary, Joseph, me Francis”*

Verse 4

*Ha‘ina ‘ia mai ana ka puana*

*A hui hou “see ya layda alligatah”*

*‘A ‘ohe nō he lua e like aku ai*

*Kou aloha pūlama mo ‘opuna*

**Post-Song Composition Survey**

- In class, you learned about musical concepts such as rhythm, notation, keys, wordsmithing, intervals dynamics, and expression; Share what your song is about and the parts that you think are most impactful. *I think the melody of my song was most impactful because I wrote the song in Hawaiian and my classmates probably don’t understand what it means or even what I’m saying. However, the melody of my song helps them kind of have an idea that my song is about a bird because the melody goes high and low. Although when I do give a brief description of the song and its meaning, then my feelings and my love for my grandma is seen. I think that my ohana will definitely get the full picture of the song. They’ll know the quotes and understand all the little things.*
- Discuss in detail how you applied at least three of these concepts in your song composition. *I feel the upbeat rhythm and how I rush the lyrics as I sing shows how Tūtū Manunui normally is. She’s always freaking out and losing control of herself to the point where she rushes her chores just to get it over with. That feel was purposeful in my song and I guess would fall under expression. Lyrics-wise, I played around with the meaning behind a bird and the responsibilities and actions that birds have as they become parents, and how they feed their young this would be under wordsmithing. I did not put any minor*

*chords in the song because I felt it would take away the excitement in the song and that probably falls under notation and keys.*

- Discuss what you learned about the power of music and song composition during class instruction time. Provide two or three detailed examples. *Right from the beginning when Kumu Kamuela went over the projects of empowerment with us everything made sense on how people use songs to share messages. Throughout the whole class, I feel each song that each of my classmates composed was empowering. Sienna's song was really powerful just because of the melody and the rhythm. Another powerful song was Rachel's about boundaries and rejection.*
- Discuss what you learned about song composition during the process of composing and performing your song. Provide two or three detailed examples. *I learned that song composition has a distinct process because prior to entering this class I thought you just have to be creative to write a song. I live with someone (my dad) who can just write songs easily. I learned that it's not just about having a catchy melody or nice words but that if you can put both those things together then the song can be really powerful. Performing the song was intense because I would get nervous to sing a song that almost no one understood what it meant. I guess that should have made me more comfortable but when other people got feedback on their lyrics it was cool that they were able to get so much help.*
- How do you feel about the song that you composed? Provide a detailed analysis. *I feel happy about the outcome of the song because it serves its purpose of drawing an image of my grandma. Her quotes made their way into the song, her well-known habits of going back in forth from her house to ours. Her yapping mouth was recognized in the mele as*

*well LOL. Even though the song has a lot of teasing in it, I feel that I accomplished my goal to honor her with my song.*

- How does your song fit into the projects of empowerment? Is it the same project that you intended to write on? Can you see other projects that your song fits into? Explain. *I believe that the song fits perfectly with Celebrating Survival because I honor her in the song and I am grateful that she is still with us. Sharing could be another project of empowerment that this song could fit in because I share stuff about my tūtū. I think, the song can fit in the remembering project of empowerment when she's gone and me and even my future kids can still remember her.*
- Discuss the feeling of composing a song on an issue of your choice. *I feel that giving me the opportunity to write about an issue I was passionate about felt really good and I believe that the process of composing this song went smoothly because I gave as much of my time and energy and thought into this process. If I wasn't so interested in the issue then I would not have cared much about composing the song.*

### **Song Performance**

- Who is the intended audience for your song? How do you think they will receive it? *I mean this song could be for everyone. I think those who know my tūtū would enjoy this song because they would recognize her famous sayings. They may also remember her famous pickled onion. I hope this song could be almost like The Cockeyed Mayor of Kaunakakai or Mr. Sun Cho Lee meaning that it has some humor in it. Ultimately, I think this song is most for my family because they will recognize the sayings and catch all the references to tutu. I want everyone to enjoy it but mainly I care about my family and my tutu with this song.*

- Explain the feelings you had when you were performing your own song composition. *I felt really happy singing the song I wrote for my grandmother because it made me go on a journey down memory lane. I have the opportunity to reminisce about all the fun we had with Tūtū Manunui growing up. It's really cool to sing a song that is yours because you know that all the words, chords, and melodies were your ideas.*
- How do you intend to use your song in the future? *I am actually going to use this song as a Christmas gift for my Tūtū.*
- How do you intend to use song composition in the future? *I will and have already used this process of composing to write a song for my girlfriend who lives in Hilo. However, I do plan on using these techniques and this outline in the future when composing more original songs. The whole breakdown of the process really makes composing a song seem much more doable.*

## Curriculum

- In class, you learned about musical concepts such as rhythm, notation, keys, wordsmithing, intervals dynamics, and expression; Discuss the benefits of collaboration on this project. *Being that my song is in Hawaiian, mainly Kumu could help me. His ideas were really good and helped me a lot to bring my ideas to life and to guide me in the process. For the most part, even though the other students couldn't really help me, they were very supportive and that added a level of comfort. I think I also learned a lot by helping my classmates with their songs. It was good practice to think about composing songs on all these different topics.*  
  
*I benefited from this project because I am starting to understand how much potential I have when it comes to writing songs. Growing up, I didn't see much talent in myself for*



*composing music until maybe this year when I really started to understand a different process for composing a song. I used what I learned in this project and it helped me compose more songs about things that I have much passion for.*

- How did the song composition project help you to better understand music? *The project helped me understand music better through learning about intervals and keys that help set a mood for the song. Rhythm also has the role of touching the souls of those that listen whether they understand the lyrics or not. I also wouldn't have found the perfect rhythm and melody if it wasn't for kumu. The way he linked all of those lessons into the song composition process was really cool.*

### Projects of Empowerment

- Identify where your song fits into the projects of empowerment and how you felt empowered by your song.

Improving Life situation by increasing:	Celebrating Survival	Remembering	Intervening	Connecting	Envisioning	networking	Naming	Protecting	Creating	Sharing
Personal Power	X	X		X						X
Interpersonal power	X	X		X						X
Political Power										

## APPENDIX C

### SIENNA BRUNO DATA

#### Pre-Song Composition Survey

- Where did you grow up? *I grew up in Haleiwa on Oahu.*
- Does anyone in your family play music? If so, what is the relationship? *My cousin Chandon started singing and playing guitar at an early age and I followed in his footsteps. He was a lot better than me for a while but soon after I caught up to him, he fell out of love with music. He's currently attending art school in San Diego and was my first mentor, even if he doesn't know it.*
- Do you have a favorite song that is connected to an event in your life? *I have many songs that marked milestones in my singing education, but none that highlight a specific event.*
- What is your favorite genre of music? why? *I don't have a specific type of music that I love, but I enjoy stripped, acoustic, live versions of songs. I dislike that a lot of current musicians today, use autotune. I'd rather hear the human voice doing the work, instead of the electronics. Sometimes imperfection is beautiful. It makes it easier to learn songs too.*
- Did you learn any type of music before taking this college course? If yes, what type of instruments or lessons did you take? *Yes, I've taken piano, ukulele, voice and music theory all in college. I started studying voice shortly before I entered college. I've been studying under my current mentor, Roshan.*

- Did you enjoy those music lessons? Why or why not? *Yes, but even though I understand the basics of string instruments, I'd much rather sing a song than play it. My drive just shifts more towards that, but I'm hoping I can cut that habit.*
- Explain how those lessons were conducted? *Most of my lessons were a part of college classes (mostly with you) so those were conducted like a regular college class.*  
*My lessons with Roshan were conducted as follows.*
  1. *I'd pick a song*
  2. *Practice with the music*
  3. *Show it to him and he'll critique me*
  4. *Redo until I get it right*
  5. *Begin to practice with the instrumental track*
  6. *Go back and forth, between the instrumental and original track, trying to pick out mistakes on my own*
  7. *Perform it in front of him and receive critiques*
  8. *Keep repeating 6 and 7 until I can do it well*
  9. *Perform*
- What made you want to take a college music course? *My burning passion for music. I started with just a couple music classes and this semester I am graduating with my general music certificate.*
- Have you composed a song before? What was it about? *Yes, but currently, I mostly write lyrics. I have trouble with putting the correct chords and strum patterns into my music. It's easier for me to write lyrics and melodies. I write songs about anything that comes to mind. My first song was about dancing under the moon, unfortunately the song book it*

*was in received water damage, so it's lost, but maybe I can recreate it. Roshan always tells me to keep a digital copy on the cloud to ensure stuff like that doesn't happen again.*

- Does music play a role in your life? In what way? *Yes, I'm always practicing, singing a tune, or attempting to match a note I've heard. I have always loved music but it is great to know a lot about the mechanics now.*

### **Choose Three Issues**

- *The Opioid Crisis. The opioid crisis has taken the lives of many individuals from all walks of life, it is not just gangbangers and abuse victims. Taking lives aside, it has split up families, caused crimes, and given people a total loss of self. It affects suburban upper-class families, who don't have a history of drugs or abuse. It could start off with a prescription of Oxycodone or Vicodin, for a simple sprained wrist. Once those pills stop rolling in from the doctor, individuals start to experience flu like symptoms, which are part of withdrawals from the drug. At this point, the person may do anything to get Oxycodone or Vicodin, from faking pain at hospitals to going to the streets to find their fix. There, on the streets is where they get introduced to a cheaper stronger alternatives like Heroin. It goes further down from there, possible drug overdoses that are cured with Narcan and rehabs. I would like to write about this issue because I find it incredibly interesting and disturbing. I've watched many documentaries on it and it would be an worthwhile topic to turn into a song. The song could fit into;*  
*Celebrating Survival: I can write about someone that went through this and survived*  
*Remembering: The song can be about people who lost someone close like a mother, father, or sibling. Sometimes the person is "lost" while they are still alive.*

*Envisioning: The song could envision a world that legal opioids don't exist, but fight that idea with the fact that it's a billion-dollar industry.*

*Sharing: The song can share some of the information that I have learned about opioids.*

- *Eating Disorders. People of all ages can be affected by an eating disorder, a few of them are anorexia, bulimia, binge eating. As my favorite show, Super-Sized vs. Super Skinny, states "It's not just about what you're eating, it's about what's eating". In other words, victims aren't exhibiting these behaviors because they want to be skinny, I mean they do, but that's used as a coping mechanism. Some do it subconsciously to distract themselves, or some do it to have control over their hectic life, I have learned that like many things, it's never really just black and white. Studies have shown that vomiting, starving yourself for long periods of time, eating (obviously), gives you a sense of euphoria. People with weight loss eating disorders, also love to see that number on the scale drop as far and fast as it can. It's comparable to the feeling of getting a good comment on something you worked hard on. This topic would be important for me to talk about because a good friend of mine suffered with an eating disorder for years. It was difficult and she still deals with it to this day, but it's easier for her to manage. This song could play a role in; Celebrating Survival: although it took her four years, she came out on top!*

*Sharing: I am once again sharing information that I've learned.*

- *Americans being selfish and revolting against the mandate(s). Particularly, I would showcase young individuals, like myself, acting entitled and selfish during quarantine. Throwing and attending parties, spending time with all friends, and sharing/doing drugs and drug paraphernalia with other people. These are among some of those entitled behaviors. In other words, young adults doing what they would normally do without a*

*pandemic now, is unsafe and selfish. It's also frustrating seeing those individuals allow themselves to visit grandma, grandpa or their older parents. I understand visiting someone, if you and that person don't interact with anyone else, that to me is safe, because there is no way of contracting it between your household and theirs, but if the person you're visiting visits other people that visits people, goes to the store or goes shopping that's when it becomes dangerous. I would like to write a song about this topic because it's a current event that needs attention. It could also fit into the category of; Sharing: as in I'm spreading awareness on the topic*

*Intervening: I could write a song simply saying to stop and think.*

### **Elaborate on Your Chosen Issue**

- *The opioid crisis has exploded and taken the lives of many everyday individuals. This applies to more than just gangbangers and low-income households; it also affects suburban, upper class families with no history of drug use. The main reason that the opioid crisis has exploded is because doctors hand out prescription pain killers, like candy. In an addict's lifetime, they're likely to either die from their addiction, go to jail for it, or overdose. Fortunately, unlike other drugs, such as cocaine or meth, opioids have an antidote. Narcan. Opioid addiction causes a lot of behavioral changes in a person that frequently result in family drama.*

*Opioid addiction often starts with a visit to the doctors. Perhaps someone sprained their wrist or broke a bone. Since they're in pain, they ask their doctor if there's anything that can be prescribed to them, to relieve it. Their doctors then prescribe Vicodin or Oxycodone to them. They take it as the label directs them to, and their prescription only lasts for a few weeks, with two refills. Once their refills run out, they may begin to feel*

*sick. Maybe I caught a flu they think to themselves, but in fact they're facing one of the many side effects of withdrawals. This person may begin to fake pain in their doctor's office, and even venture to other medical establishments to score. The life sentencing move that many people make, is their move to search for pills on the streets. Often, while there, they'll be introduced to a much cheaper and more potent form of prescription pills. Heroin.*

*In an opioid addict's lifetime, they're in a never-ending cycle of making money to purchase more drugs. The more drugs they use and time that passes, the more their tolerance is built up. This means that the individual will have to work harder to sustain their habit. Some individuals commit crimes such as prostitution and robbery to feed their addiction. Although many crimes go unnoticed, the longer an individual repeats these crimes, the more likely they are get caught. In other words, eventually they'll go to prison. For the most part, while in prison drugs will be unattainable. When they get out of prison, they'll have their heart set on getting their fix. They will inject, smoke, or snort the same amount of opioids that they used to, before going into the big house. Not realizing that their tolerance shot is much lower. This is one of the main causes of overdose and also applies to an individual being sent to an in-patient rehab facility. Another main cause for overdose is purchasing heroin from the streets. Drug dealers will do anything to skim a dollar from you. They do this by, shorting you or cutting the drugs with another substance to make it more potent or stretch. Drug dealers tend to cut heroin, with fentanyl. Fentanyl, is another opioid far more potent than any other and therefore deadlier. Since there are no guidelines of how much the dealer is putting into the heroin, the user has no idea how much they're ingesting. Especially if they're used*

*to clean untampered heroine. The user will use too much of the heroine mixed with fentanyl and suffer an overdose. In both of these cases, if the user is lucky, they'll be administrated Narcan. Narcan, reverses all the side-affects of opioids and essentially brings the individual back from the brink of death. This is where the controversy comes into play. Should Narcan be in use if a person's suffering is just being prolonged? I believe it should be administrated to anyone that needs it. In addition, I'm very interested by and well read on this topic. I just can't get enough of the stories; I find them both interesting, sad, and often disturbing. It's insane how people who were living with their upper-class family, are on the streets shooting up. Caused by something that was (almost) not their fault. How can one thing change the course of so many lives? Children in foster care, divorce, death, passing on addiction and many more horrible things that strain from one person's decision to continue to take drugs. Please note that there are many ways that people become and go through addiction, I just wanted to highlight the most common ways.*

### **Narrow the Issue to One Sentence**

- *There are a lot of people who are addicted to opioids.*

### **Message of the Song**

- *The message of the song is to bring awareness to the opioid crisis and the people that are involved with it. Another message is that people should not turn to opioids for peace in their lives.*

### **Lyrical Approach**

- *I would like the lyrics of my song to be metaphorical. Metaphors can add a lot of depth and different meaning(s) to a song, depending on the listener's experiences. In short, it*



*can help my song to become more relatable. In addition, I would like to compare opioid addiction with religion. Saying things like, this is my savior, he gives me life etc. So perhaps upon someone's first time listening to the song, they could think it's about church. But throughout the song there's key words like high, ruined, snort etc., that go against what religion is about.*

### **Musical Approach**

- *I would like my song to be a mixture of soul, gospel, pop, a little jazz and rock music. Songs like "Take Me to Church" by Hozier, "Me and My Friends are Lonely" by Matt Maeson, "Forever" by Lewis Capaldi and "Xanny" by Billie Eilish are a few songs that I would like to sound similar too. I'm sure as I start writing it will become clearer what kind of musical approach is most appropriate.*

### **Three Titles**

- *My Savior*
- *The Rapture*
- *The Scripture*

### **Basic Song Outline**

#### Verse 1

*Talks about daily routine praying/using in the morning, middle of day, and night.*

*How the person in the song can't live without their "religion"*

*How the person always needs it*

*Normal person that loves sports*

*How this religion engulfs their life and they haven't talked with their family or friends for a while, but it's okay because church meetings have a lot of other people to get involved with*

## Verse 2

*Introduce the message*

*It started off with a twisted leg, I had no one to turn to, to take the pain away, just my guardian angel.*

*He is holy and righteous*

*Be aware of what you're doing and manage your pain though an avenue that doesn't involve prescription pills*

## Chorus

*Focuses on.... He is my God*

*baggies of black disguised as heaven*

*Asking when will my smile come back*

*Will I need an antidote to escape the pain or one to give me my breath back (Narcan)*

## Bridge

*Talks about hating the religion I've signed my life to, after all the other verses say I love it.*

## Verse 3

*Remembering my childhood*

## Chorus:

*Same as the other chorus*

## Verse 4:

*You don't want to sell your soul to the devil because you have lost control.*

## **Final Lyrics: Blinding Faith**

### Verse 1

*Dealt an unfair hand*

*Born in rags*

*It was so cold, muddy, and slippery*

*I fell down the slope and suddenly hit rock bottom*

*Then I heard a heavenly sound*

*As I whispered*

### Chorus

*He is my god*

*He is my savior*

*The giver of all ecstasy*

### Verse 2

*Born again in sixty-six*

*Life was crumbling it needed a fix*

*I look up at the window*

*The sun begins to fall*

*or rise who knows anymore*

*I look down at the mirror*

*to see a stranger*

*Oh learn from me don't be naive*

*I just crave your love*

### Verse 3

*Until I'm in church*

*with knees bruised and lips burnt*

*Singing the harrowing praise of god*

*Until I'm exalted and mother Mary couldn't see me*

*Holding the hand of my intoxicating god*

#### Chorus

*He is my god*

*He is my savior*

*The giver of all ecstasy*

#### Bridge

*Until and only when his divine power comes in can I fly Higher, Higher, Higher, Higher*

#### Verse 4

*Then the sun melted the wax*

*Eagles wings collapse*

*Leaving my body*

*Six feet under*

*Laying, Sleeping, Oh god take me to a higher place*

*Where is thy comfort... thy hand*

*Where is my family*

*Then the veil of faith rose from the grave with antlers*

*What god has antlers*

*Only a false, a fake, a phony, a fraud*

*But*

### Chorus

*He was my god,*

*He was my savior*

*The giver of all ecstasy*

### VERSE 5

*Oh learn from me don't be naive,*

*I just crave a breath*

### **Post Song Composition**

- In class, you learned about musical concepts such as rhythm, notation, keys, wordsmithing, intervals dynamics, and expression; Share what your song is about and the parts that you think are most impactful. *My song is about how drug addicts treat their addictions like their religion. The idea behind my composition was to make it seem like a godly song, but upon closer inspection there are lyrics in the song that don't correlate to any sort of positive god. For instance, at the end of my song the lyrics call upon god to take the person to a higher place and when this god shows themselves, he has antlers. Those exact lyrics are: Laying, Sleeping, Oh god take me to a higher place. Where is thy comfort, thy hand? Where is my family? Then the veil of faith rose from the grave with antlers? What god has antlers?! Only a false, a fake, a phony, a fraud! In short, this is the moment that this addict realizes that their god is false, he's made them feel good in the moment, but now he's dead and left with nothing and no one. I used antlers in the lyrics because unlike "horns" usually antlers have many different tips. This represents how drug addiction can "stab you" or affect you in many different ways. It can affect families, health, jobs etc.*

- Discuss in detail how you applied at least three of these concepts in your song composition. *During my song, I attempted to input dynamics, rhythm, and metaphors. During the beginning of my song, I tried to start it off in a whisper. Through the rest of the song I tried to gradually get louder and ideally on the emotional parts I got a little messy and a lot louder. For instance, I got louder during the question “Where is my family?”, on the statement “with antlers” and during the word “fraud.” I also intentionally made some verses shorter and longer with melody lines and rhythms that weren’t overly repetitive. This represents the chaos of a drug addict’s life. The only part that was really consistent with the melody was the chorus “He is my god...” The chorus symbolizes the drugs being his only peace and constant.*  
*As for rhythm, I wanted the ukulele to be fast and the singing to be a bit slower. The intention is that the chords and strum represent the world moving quickly all around the addict and the addict can’t keep up with the pace of the world. It is almost supposed to give the feeling of what an addict may feel like when the world moves so fast around them and they can’t keep up and thus turn even more heavily to their addictions to calm their insecurities. I also changed the strumming pattern during the bridge because I wanted it to have a slightly different feel.*  
*During the end of my song, I stopped the strumming patterns all together and replaced it with a single strum to signal the ending of the song.*  
*Finally, I placed a lot of metaphors in my song because I wanted the listener to hear a praise song. But, this praise wasn’t given to a Christian god. Heck, it wasn’t even given to a holy god. Many people on drugs treat it the same way that they would treat their religion, because drugs are their religion. Furthermore, I added references to the*

*Christian religion. For instance, “rose from the grave”, “Thy comfort, thy hand”, “Savior”, “Knees bruised” (from kneeling during prayer), exalted (being high), and “eagles wings collapse” are all references to the Christian religion. I also put in references to the devil and drugs, which go hand in hand. “Giver of ecstasy”, “with antlers”, “Lips burnt”, “Born again in 66”, “needed a fix”, “I look down at the mirror” and “The sun begins to fall or rise, who knows anymore?” are among the drug/ devil references added to my composition.*

- Discuss what you learned about the power of music and song composition during class instruction time. Provide two or three detailed examples. *During class I learned that using song composition, you can spread awareness about a topic and get people to not only hear you, but to listen. We learned this when we talked about the different projects. One of the things that stood out to me was when kumu said music was a way of gently getting people to listen. I thought that was really cool and I hope I can compose more songs to help people.*
- Discuss what you learned about song composition during the process of composing and performing your song. Provide two or three detailed examples. *During the process of composing my song, I learned that less can be more. Kiss, keep it simple stupid. I also learned that to tell a story you don’t need to always be literal. In fact being metaphorical can help your song to be more impactful to the listener. Also being more general can help people relate to your song too for example if someone wrote a line like, “I’m a girl that’s 6ft tall with jet black hair, green eyes, and I’m lonely” it may be less relatable than just saying “I’m a lonely person.” There are far more lonely people out there than lonely girls with jet black hair and green eyes.*

*I also learned that sometimes it's hard to breathe when you're thinking, playing and singing at the same time. Normally I have no issues with breath control, but there were a couple parts in my song that I struggled. But I believe that takes more practice and planning to solve.*

*Another thing I learned is that composing is actually fun. It was cool to try and work in metaphors and get different musical textures to match the music or feeling of my song.*

- How do you feel about the song that you composed? Provide a detailed analysis. *I'm very proud and satisfied with most of my lyrics. I normally have a difficult time telling a story without being literal. There are some parts of my song I wish I said less because like kumu taught us, there doesn't need to be a word during every beat. I think if I go back and edit the song, I may try to do that. This will make the fast strumming and slower singing more noticeable.*
- How does your song fit into the projects of empowerment? Is it the same project that you intended to write on? Can you see other projects that your song fits into? Explain. *After writing my song, I think my song fits best into sharing. I think it shares a lot of the struggles and mindset of those who struggle with addiction. One that I didn't think of before that my song could fit into is intervening. I hope someone will hear it and think "Gosh I don't ever want that to be me." Or maybe they will hear it and see how their addictions control them and they may want to make life changes.*
- Discuss the feeling of composing a song on an issue of your choice. *It was awesome to be able to choose what I wanted to write my song about. I liked all three of my topics and feel that because I was choosing what I wanted to compose my song about that I really*



*enjoyed the process. It felt good to write about something that is important and interesting to me. It made me feel like all the assignments were engaging.*

### **Song Performance**

- Who is the intended audience for your song? How do you think they will receive it? *The intended audience for my song is actually both those who struggle with addiction and those who have loved ones who struggle with addiction. I hope that in both cases they realize that they are not alone and that they could get strength from that.*
- Explain the feelings you had when you were performing your own song composition. *I enjoyed knowing what all the metaphors of my song were about. Sometimes when you perform other people's music, you have to guess what they are really trying to say and find the proper expression and dynamic for the song but because this was my own song, it was awesome to not have to guess and to do it exactly how I feel. Kumu gave us a lot of creative freedom in the assignment and I chose to write about the opioid crisis which is not a very popular topic and honestly is even a little dark. I feel like some classes may have discouraged me from writing about it. It was really positive to write about something that I was interested in and I was excited to give voice to the issue. It was definitely an empowering and enjoyable experience as a musician, both to write and perform a song on this topic.*
- How do you intend to use your song in the future? *Honestly, I don't know how often I will share my song. I may never play it again. It was cool to write a song that I wasn't trying to be famous for but to just express my thoughts on an issue that interests me. For me, it is actually less about the song and more about the process of expressing myself through music. That's probably the biggest thing that I learned that I will take with me. I know*

*that I can take all of the things that I learned and apply them to other musical endeavors. I also know that I am capable to write a song on issues that I care about or that I just want to express. It was therapeutic in a way.*

- How do you intend to use song composition in the future? *Honestly, I valued the class a lot. I've taken poetry, voice, learned about song and structure and before this class I felt that there was no real process for writing a song and I felt almost stumped when I would be composing a song. In earlier music lessons my teacher would say, "You can write a song about anything." We would end up writing about something stupid like peanut butter jelly sandwiches. This class gave me a clear process for composition and also helped me learn how to write on real topics that matter and not just on silly things.*

## **Curriculum**

- In class, you learned about musical concepts such as rhythm, notation, keys, wordsmithing, intervals dynamics, and expression; Discuss the benefits of collaboration on this project. *The benefits are that I could hear different opinions and sides on the issue that I never thought about. Even though I wasn't going to use all of the feedback, it helped me to be self-aware and actually helped me to clarify and crystalize what I wanted to say so that a more general audience would understand the metaphors in my song. Sometimes during the early process, I realized I was losing people with some of the metaphors so I would change them so that more people would get it. Collaboration allowed us to get feedback throughout the process and not only when the song was done. Sometimes, some of the ideas were really good and really helpful. It would often be just enough to keep me going on my composition.*

- How did the song composition project help you to better understand music? *I took music theory before this class but a lot of the concepts were just that, theories. The song composition project helped me to make applications for the musical concepts that I learned. I feel that “Knowledge unused is not real knowledge at all.” With this project I felt like I finally had the opportunity to use everything I learned about music.*

### Projects of Empowerment

- Identify where your song fits into the projects of empowerment and how you felt empowered by your song.

Improving Life situation by increasing:	Celebrating Survival	Remembering	Intervening	Connecting	Envisioning	networking	Naming	Protecting	Creating	Sharing
Personal Power										X
Interpersonal power			X							X
Political Power										

## APPENDIX D

### MATT LATTORE DATA

#### Pre-Song Composition Survey

- Where did you grow up? I grew up on the Eastside of Oahu, even though I lived in Kaneohe, I really feel like I grew up throughout the whole Eastside. I spent a lot of time in Kaneohe mostly because that is where most of my family lives, and I always went to school in Kaneohe, but I would also spend a lot of time at my uncle's house in Waimanalo, going to the beach across the street, and I would also spend a lot of time in Kahalu'u at my tutu's house, where it was my families gathering spot for every occasion. All the memories I have growing up as a child where all taken place on the EAST!
- Does anyone in your family play music? If so, what is the relationship? *A lot of my family members play musical instruments and sing, so just being surround by music is what made me interested in learning to play music as well.*
- Do you have a favorite song that is connected to an event in your life? *I can't really think of one song connected to an event in my life but I can say that music in general is a part of most of my memories. I just can't think of one specific song.*
- What is your favorite genre of music and why? *My favorite genre of music is Hawaiian and Reggae because I like the feel, and vibes the music portrays. When I hear Hawaiian/Reggae, it makes me feel joyful, and it is very up lifting. Everyone can jam out to Hawaiian/Reggae, and if you cannot, then there is something wrong with you.*
- Did you learn any type of music before taking this college course? If yes, what instruments or type of lessons did you take? *I learned guitar before I took college*

*courses. I learned from watching YouTube videos, and learning from Mrs. Cone for four years at Castle High School. My cousins and sister recommended I take Mrs. Cone's class my freshman year, so I listened and took her class. I loved Mrs. Cone's lessons and everything about playing guitar so I took her class the next year, and the rest of my years in high school.*

- Did you enjoy those music lessons? Why or why not? *I enjoyed learning how to play different island songs and I would look forward to getting on stage with everyone for our yearly Ho'ike. It felt good to be able to play music in high school because it felt like I wasn't really even in a class even though I was.*
- Explain how those lessons were conducted? *Mrs. Cone's lessons were taught in classes of about twenty, and there would be people who wanted to learn how to play guitar, like myself, but Mrs. Cone taught other instruments as well. In my class we would have people playing bass, ukulele, percussion, keyboard, guitar, and singing. It is kind of like how Kumu Kamuela's class is, which I think is why I also enjoy his class so much as well.*
- What made you want to take a college music course? *When I got to college, I went to support my cousin at her performance for Kumu Kamuela's class and that was the first time I heard about his class. From seeing Kumu's Ho'ike I wanted in on it, so the next semester I took one of Kumu's classes.*
- Have you composed a song before? What was it about? *The only song that I ever composed was last semester for Kumu's class. My song was about violence in Hawai'i and how it is getting worse as the years go on. We need to appreciate the life we live, and stop being so hateful towards each other. The song is titled, "Throw a Shaka Not a*

*Fist.” It was really cool that 2 Hawai‘i news stations talked about my song and played parts of it too. It made me want to compose another song.*

- In what ways does music play a role in your life? *Music does play a role in my life because it is a way for me to put my mind at ease during difficult and stressful times in my life. It helps me to express feelings towards things, music is a way to spread positivity and a way to bring light to different situations.*

### **Choose Three Issues**

- *Overfishing. First topic that is an issue that relates to me is overfishing. In Hawaii this is a critical issue, but I know people are overfishing all around the world. This relates to me because I like to go fishing and diving, when me and my friends dive our spots, we are noticing less and less fish. We only fish for our families and it is getting harder and harder to bring home food. The oceans are being overfished too. Now days the price of fish is crazy. This is the problem, the price is super high so if you want to eat fish, unless you are rich, you have to catch your own but when you go to catch your own, there isn't any. A song on this issue could participate in the role of protecting. It is about protecting what we have for the future generations. This could also relate to sharing, taking only what you need and we can share with the keiki of tomorrow. It also shares the message of not overfishing.*
- *The cost of living in Hawaii. This is an issue that relates to me because I do want to live in Hawai‘i and have a family in Hawai‘i, but the cost of living is getting ridiculous. This would relate to envisioning, envisioning a cheaper Hawaii, with more affordable rates.*
- *Beach access limitations. This relates to me because I love going to the beach and they close it because of covid. They allow gyms, restaurants, malls, the water park, and*

*other packed areas to remain open, but close beaches, parks etc. I don't understand why. I guess this could be under connecting , like making sense of why they leave these things open but close beaches and such.*

### **Elaborate on Your Chosen Issue**

- *The issue that I have chosen is overfishing for both in Hawaii and all around the world. For me, diving and fishing (more so diving) has always been a big part of my lifestyle. Growing up, all my cousins would go fishing with my grandpa, catch and release, in a stream behind my grandparent's house. I caught my first talapia with my grandpa and the excitement and laughter that we shared from that moment is what drew me to the sport. As my cousins and I got older we started fishing in the ocean. We used to have fishing competitions where my siblings would split up and get paired with a different cousin and whichever duo caught the biggest fish, our grandpa would give us ten dollars each. I am the second youngest of my generation of cousins so I was always the baby. For a long time I never got to go night fishing or diving with my cousins. When I was finally old enough, and my mom gave me the okay to go, my cousins took me diving. We went out to Punalu'u and they just helped me get used to diving. We weren't trying to shoot fish because it was my first time and my cousins just wanted me to get used to swimming in a current, diving down, and holding my breath. Before we got in the water, my cousins taught me how to poke a hole that might have a tako in it. That day, I caught my first tako. My cousin spotted the hole for me, but I poked it and pulled him out. From that day I was addicted to diving. In recent years/months, I see social media posts of people who seem proud of all the fish that they catch. While it is "cool" that they catch*

*so many fish, it is definitely overfishing. People often use illegal size nets and I have seen people who have caught fish, and then string them on a kui and leaving it in the bushes. There is no reason for that, if you are gonna waste fish like that, you should not be diving for fish in any waters. Some people really don't understand what they're doing when they overfish, they just keep catching, catching, catching, and think it's a game with no consequences. Some people take fishing for granted and that's why I would like to make a song about overfishing.*

*If there are less fish, the future kids won't get to make those lasting memories with their grandparents, parents, and family. They may not have the chance to catch food for their families. The keiki of the next generation won't be able to enjoy the sport of fishing, and want to continue to fish, if they keep going out and catching nothing. I want a chance to one day take my grandkids fishing for the first time, we need to really take care of what we have now so that it will still be here in the future.*

### **Narrow the Issue to One Sentence**

- *People are overfishing and leaving nothing for the future generations.*

### **Message of the Song**

- *People should just take what they need from the ocean and that it isn't cool to catch tons of fish for IG.*

### **Lyrical Approach**

- *The lyrics of my song are going to just be straight forward. I want it to feel like the lyrics are a call to action. I will use the lyrics to talk about the issue and what happens if we don't change the path that we are on. I will definitely have a rhyme scheme.*



## **Musical Approach**

- *I love how reggae music was used for political issues so I will have a reggae feel to my song. I want the chorus to repeat so that people can really hear the message of my song. It can almost be like “Get up Stand Up” by Bob Marley and the Wailers.*

## **Three Titles**

- *Not Many Fish in the Sea*
- *Let em Grow*
- *Just Take What You Need*

## **Basic Song Outline**

### Verse 1

*I want this verse to be a call to all the people who fish. I want to call them to action*

### Verse 2

*I want to talk about the issue of over fishing and how the ocean is different now because there are hardly any fish. I also want to introduce the message that we need to change before we deplete the ocean.*

### Chorus

*Just take what you need and if a fish or tako is small, let em grow.*

### Verse 3

*I want to talk about how I get angry when I see people overfishing on social media.*

### Bridge

*We should only take what we need and not be greedy. If we keep going there will be nothing left for us to fish. All we will have left is fishing tales.*

*(Probably will repeat some verses and the chorus throughout)*

### **Final Lyrics: Let 'em Grow**

#### Verse 1

*Listen up can you hear me*

*Cause what I am about to say*

*I hope you agree*

*This one goes out to the people*

*Who live off of the sea*

*Been silent for too long*

*We need change for this I pray*

*So believe me when I say*

#### Verse 2

*The water don't feel like it used to*

*Some feel the same*

*But most have no clue*

*About this new enemy*

*Shooting everything he sees*

*And the pain he puts us thru*

*We've been silent for too long*

*We need change for this I pray*

*So hear me when I say*

#### Chorus

*Why can't you just take what you need*

*And not what you don't, nooo*  
*Theres plenty fish in the sea*  
*Just let em go and let them grow*  
*Just let em grow*

Verse 3

*So many times when I'm*  
*Lying in my bed at night*  
*Scrolling through my phone and I*  
*See something that doesn't sit right*  
*And then I feelin that I might do something out of spite*  
*I take a deep breath, relax*  
*Because every little thing*  
*Is going to be alright*

Verse 1 (Repeat)

*Listen up can you hear me*  
*What I am about to say*  
*I hope you agree*  
*This ones goes out to the people*  
*Who live off of the sea*  
*Been silent for too long*  
*We need change for this I pray*  
*So believe me when I say*

Verse 2 (Repeat)

*The water don't feel like it used to*

*Some feel the same*

*But most have no clue*

*About this new enemy*

*Shooting everything he sees*

*And the pain he puts us thru*

*We've been silent for too long*

*We need change*

*For this I pray*

*So hear me when I say*

Chorus

*Why can't you just take what you need*

*And not what you don't, nooo*

*There plenty of fish in the sea*

*Just let em go and let them grow*

*Just let em grow*

Bridge

*We were taught to take only what you need*

*But there is so many now that share the common greed*

*Pulling the trigger at every shot they see*

*Keep this up, there will be no more I guarantee*

### Chorus

*Why can't you just take what you need*

*And not what you don't, nooo*

*There's plenty more fish in the sea*

*Just let um go and let um grow*

*We've been silent for too long*

*We need change for this I pray*

*And this is why I say*

*Let em grow*

### **Post Song Composition Survey**

- In class, you learned about musical concepts such as rhythm, notation, keys, wordsmithing, intervals dynamics, and expression; Share what your song is about and the parts that you think are most impactful. *My song is about overfishing, and how people are taking more than they really need. In my song I express how what these people are doing is wrong and that it brings pain to the people that depend on the ocean and fish to survive. An impactful part in my song is when I'm talking about how the water doesn't feel like it used to, some feel the same, but most have no clue. Some people may not even know about people overfishing, which is why I composed this song, to bring awareness to those who may not know.*
- Discuss in detail how you applied at least three of these concepts in your song composition. *I use rhythm in my song by keeping a steady beat with a few different instruments, which gives it a nice reggae upbeat vibe that creates rhythm. I use keys and notation in my song, I use a few different chords in this composition which follow a*

*rhythmic pattern. I also use expression in my song, in the chorus in some other parts of my composition, I really tried to get you to hear how I feel about overfishing, so the audience can really feel it and have a connection to it.*

- Discuss what you learned about the power of music and song composition during class instruction time. Provide two or three detailed examples. *Music is very powerful, it can move people, some songs are so powerful that the audience kind of gets swept away when they listen to it. Music can soothe you, heal you, and just make you happy. During this class one powerful thing I got out of this song composition is how relaxing it can be. You can just jam whatever you want, write whatever you want, and express how you feel. As I composed my song I felt relaxed, not pressured at all, just taking my time trying to get all of my thoughts down. Then once I had all my thoughts I was able to piece together my song, the way I wanted it. For me, I can say that it is very therapeutic, music calms me and song composition gives you a lot of power to create something very special.*
- Discuss what you learned about song composition during the process of composing and performing your song. Provide two or three detailed examples. *I learned that there are many different steps in song composition, and you need to go through each step to help you be more successful. From starting off with a why, a reason for your song, to coming up with chord progressions, melodies, lyrics, and structure. There are many parts in composing a song. I also learned that writing a song takes time, you can't just write it overnight, maybe a few people can but most cannot. But it is okay to take some time when composing your song and really think about who your target audience is and what you are trying to express to this audience. If you can connect with your audience then you can*

*make them feel the same emotions that you may feel towards what you are portraying, which could make for a good song.*

- How do you feel about the song that you composed? Provide a detailed analysis. *Overall I feel good about the song I composed, I feel that I said everything that needed to be said and I think a lot of people can relate to it. I really would just like people to hear my song and remember it the next time they go fishing, hunting, or anything game related. I like the whole vibe of my song, the island reggae feel really relates to me and works well with my issue. This sounds like the kind of song that I would listen to or create.*

*Hawaiian/Island music is what I grew up on, and that is the way I intend to compose more songs.*

- How does your song fit into the 10 projects of empowerment? Is it the same project that you intended to write on? Can you see other projects that your song fits into? Explain. *My song fits into the protecting project of empowerment. I am trying to get people to stop overfishing and only take what they need. Also, protecting what we have now, so they will still be there, and plentiful, in the future. Some people are also getting greedy, selfish, and taking more than they should, only thinking about themselves. I am trying to protect the fish that people do catch, there are plenty of fish in the sea, so let the little ones go and let them grow. Seems obvious right? I've seen some incidents where people have forgotten all about that, and keep small fish. If no one stands up for them who will? And will it be too late? I also see my song fitting into the envisioning project of empowerment. I am envisioning a better place where people will remember the ways our kupuna taught us. Envisioning an ocean full of fish and life, that we can then share with the next generation and beyond. My project can also fit into sharing because I am sharing the*

*message of my song in the hopes that they will think about it and do something about it.*

*My song can even fit into intervening because I hope that people will hear my song in their head when they are fishing and not take more than they need.*

- Discuss the feeling of composing a song on an issue of your choice. *Being able to compose a song on an issue of our choice was very empowering and gave us the opportunity to create it exactly how we wanted it. It is our issues that we think are a problem, and feel a certain way about. No one else told us how to write it, what genre, tempo, chord progressions, no one told us anything, it was totally up to us and that is very empowering.*

### **Song Performance**

- Who is the intended audience for your song? How do you think they will receive it? *My intended audience is the people of Hawaii, all ages, people who fish, dive, hunt, or that depend on the land and sea for sources of food. I feel this audience will receive my song well and really connect to it. I know that there are people out there that feel the same way I feel, who also want change for this as well. It is also an island reggae type of song so I think people can really vibe to it.*
- Explain the feelings you had when you were performing your own song composition. *I felt great performing my song because I was very prepared for it. We did the composition of the song in parts so that it wouldn't be one huge project at the end. When we broke down each part and did them week by week it helped to slowly put it together for us and made for a better performance of the song. If you're ever nervous then you were not prepared enough, and with the help of my peers and kumu, I was ready to rock.*



- How do you intend to use your song in the future? *I will use this song to show my friends and family and they will probably pass it on to their friends and families, that is a way that my message can get around. More needs to be said about overfishing, by spreading my song around more people will hear it and the next time they think of catching more or keeping small fish, they'll hear my song in their head and let the fish go, and grow.*
- How do you intend to use song composition in the future? *I will definitely use song composition in the future, outside of a classroom setting and write more. I am very passionate about my guitar, and music as it is a part of my life and my family's lives. Whenever I come across something that I feel needs attention or if I have a connection to a certain person, place or thing I can write a song about it. Then I can share those songs with my family about the memories or stories we may have had.*

## **Curriculum**

- In class, you learned about musical concepts such as rhythm, notation, keys, wordsmithing, intervals dynamics, and expression; Discuss the benefits of collaboration on this project. *Collaborating with my peers and kumu on this project was beneficial for all of us. Everyone was able to share their ideas for their original songs and we could all give each other feedback on something that we liked, things that could be improved, or any other thoughts that we had for that person. Kumu, with his musical background and knowledge, was able to also listen to all of our ideas and help guide us if we ever hit a writing block or just couldn't think of anything to say. We were then able to take all the suggestions and use them to compose better songs. I like how it was really stressed that everything said by other people in the collaboration was just suggestions and that we could make the final decisions on our songs.*

- How did the song composition project help you to better understand music? *Song composition helped me to better understand music because I learned all the parts that make up a song. Breaking down a song and putting it together like a puzzle taught me all the steps needed to make music. I didn't know how many steps go into making a song, but now that I do, I understand music and the structure of it a lot better.*

## Projects of Empowerment

- Identify where your song fits into the projects of empowerment and how you felt empowered by your song.

Improving Life situation by increasing:	Celebrating Survival	Remembering	Intervening	Connecting	Envisioning	networking	Naming	Protecting	Creating	Sharing
Personal Power					X			X		X
Interpersonal power			X		X			X		X
Political Power								X		X

## APPENDIX E

### RACHEL FAITH JAVIER DATA

#### Pre-Song Composition Survey

- Where did you grow up? *I was born and raised on Oahu, growing up in Ewa and Aliamanu.*
- Does anyone in your family play music? If so, what is the relationship? *My deceased great-great grandmother from the Philippines was a famous opera singer. She gave me a lot of inspiration to keep singing. My father plays the drums in the choir at church and his brother in California also plays drums in his own band.*
- Do you have a favorite song that is connected to an event in your life? *“Hello Fear” by Kirk Franklin is always my go to song whenever I'm really down and need a pick me up. I can never pick just one song because I love all kinds of music genres.*
- What is your favorite genre of music? why? *I have a very heavy love for all genres of music and always find myself trying to keep my ears open. But, if I had to pick a favorite I would say musical theater because it feels like I'm watching the performance as I'm listening to it.*
- Did you learn any type of music before taking this college course? If yes, what type of instruments or lessons did you take? *I am self-taught with the ukulele, guitar, and piano. I didn't take any lessons because I simply never had the time during high school with the other extra curriculars*

- Did you enjoy those music lessons? Why or why not? *I didn't take any lessons, not because I didn't think I would enjoy learning from others but because it wasn't my primary focus.*
- Explain how those lessons were conducted? *Personally I learned the basics in elementary school then from there on I kept teaching myself off of YouTube. Often other musicians I met while performing all over the island would show me stuff.*
- What made you want to take a college music course? *This college music course will help give me the opportunity to widen my range in instruments. Song writing is my main focus and I'm hoping to finish an album by the end of this year to show a producer and get recorded.*
- Have you composed a song before? What was it about? *I've composed many pieces of songs but I'm not sure I would call them "songs" because I have a habit of not finishing them. Mainly I try to write about things that are close to me personally that I feel and need to express as well some love songs. My kind of music is more upbeat. There was one song I wrote about embracing.*
- Does music play a role in your life? In what way? *Music is my life. When I was 8 years young, I lost my oldest brother which left a heavy hole in my heart. One of our close family friends who worked for Koaloha had a ukulele customized with his quote on it "don't regret, just let things flow." For me, music is the way I communicate with my oldest brother to let him know I'm doing good. When we were kids, he loved to watch me dance and sing around the house, I still feel that every performance I am a part of is for him. I'm hoping to dedicate one of my songs to him in the album. Music is not just a way*

*for me to express how I feel, but also my way of life. Without having rhythm my life would go offbeat.*

### **Choose Three Issues**

- *Corona Virus/Quarantine. First issue is Corona virus and being in quarantine. Talking about simpler times and how we can overcome this together. Being from the class of 2020, it affected me academically and mentally. I was unable to have a typical graduation which was junk and it felt like I didn't REALLY graduate but I just stopped going to school. This song could play a role in remembering. It could also fit into celebrating survival.*
- *Physical and Verbal Abuse. Second issue is physical/verbal abuse. It would be about bringing attention to the types of abuse and how people should stand up for themselves. For abused people it is hard to stand up for yourself when you're constantly riddled with fear. Hopefully I can inspire others and share that you're not alone no matter what people tell you or how they make you feel. This song could play a role in protecting and intervening.*
- *Crime in Hawai'i. Third issue is crime in Hawai'i and how it affects me and my life. Crime rates are rising and living in Aliamanu doesn't make it any easier. The rise in violent crime can affect the way people view Hawai'i. I grew up here and feel like it has changed so much even in my lifetime. Even though I'm not Hawaiian, I still have so much respect for this island and all of its raw beauty. With so much hate in the world it makes me question what is going on and where Hawai'i headed. This could play a role in sharing and possibly envisioning too.*

## Elaborate on Your Chosen Issue

- *The topic I have decided to write on is verbal/physical abuse and standing up for yourself. The world continues to change and so do I. Something I have noticed affecting me most lately are the simplest words and actions that each of us choose each day. We see videos from all over the world showing how people interact with each other. It is common to see people talking down to others and lacking basic kindness. As I am entering adulthood, I am making choices on the type of person that I want to be and what I will stand for. Personally I have been dealing with standing up for myself and my desires with family members and mentors. If I'm being honest, my family members and mentors have always been very supportive of me and have really helped me on my journey so far. Overall I am grateful for them helping me to succeed, it is just that now that I am becoming older, I have ideas for the type of artist that I want to be and they sometimes get angry and talk down on me when I don't want to only do things their way. Sometimes they say things that are unkind and hurtful and that affect our relationship. My family and mentors work with me very closely to help ensure that I am getting the best gigs and opportunities possible so it isn't always easy standing up for myself. Sometimes I feel like they will just abandon me and not help me anymore if I disagree with them. As I am getting older, I want to start doing things on my own and making my own choices even if they end up being mistakes. At least I will know that it was my choice. I had no idea the affect this could have on my relationships with these people There were times where I thought I performed great because I sang what I wanted to sing and not what they thought I should've sang. I would be feeling happy about my performance and then they would pick apart my performance and almost look for flaws so that I would just*

*sing what they want me to sing. These interactions started to mentally affect me. My self-consciousness almost became fear over what they would say. Recently I shared the way I felt about how they were treating me and things got pretty heated, but I finally felt happy to let it off my chest and to stand up for myself. If there was anything I learned from this experience is that no matter what, you have a voice and you need to stand up for yourself in any situation. For this song I want to talk mainly about speaking over that fear, that thing standing in your way from speaking up. I also have many friends who I have helped to speak up for themselves. No one should have to feel like silence is safety. With my song I want to encourage people to not only depend on others, but also to trust themselves. While my situation is specific, I think the song may just be about standing up for yourself.*

### **Narrow the Issue to One Sentence**

- *Sometimes people fear speaking up for themselves and who they want to be.*

### **Message of the Song**

- *The message of the song is to use your voice to overcome your fears. As people we all have fears, burdens, etc. There is always that thing in life that is in our way of being who we want to be. Overcoming these obstacles can be challenging, but by trusting in yourself and having the confidence to use your voice or actions is the key to fully facing your fears.*

### **Lyrical Approach**

- *My lyrical approach to this song is more straight forward, there may be lines in the song that can be interpreted in different ways but they should all connect to speaking up for yourself in order to do and be what you want. This is why I would say it is more straight*

*forward, because it's a song for those that need a nudge in life to be or do what they want without worrying about being ridiculed.*

### **Musical approach**

- *My musical approach will be island/island reggae. I want something that builds people up while their listening to it. For this assignment I'm hoping to get the help from my musical friends to play different instruments for me to complete the band feel. I only play ukulele so, hopefully I can finish it the way I envision it.*

### **Three Titles**

- *Back Up Off Me*
- *A Bit Too Late*
- *Can You Hear Me Now*

### **Basic Song Outline**

#### Verse 1

*Talking to that thing or person standing in your way of fulfilling your full potential as a person. Kicking it off calm but still straight up. Saying how you have been affected.*

#### Chorus

*Focuses on being vocal. This is the part where you stand up for yourself and finally use your words to say what you feel and telling them to back up. Sometimes we need to remind people to back up out of our lives, because they are affecting us.*

#### Verse 2

*In this verse you start to see the word structure build up, and getting more upset. This part is to show how much a person or thing can impact your life and hold you back either mentally, spiritually, or physically. This shows how tired you are of holding back.*



### Chorus

*Focuses on being vocal. This is the part where you stand up for yourself and finally use your words to say what you feel. In this chorus we add that we have worth.*

### Bridge

*The bridge talks about the good times and how we are thankful for what we've learned from them but this is enough. At the end we add how their time is up and that they had their chance.*

### Verse 3 or rap

*Wanted to make it straight up and upset at all the hurt. Wanted this part to be really gutsy and strong. Also in this part we're gonna talk about self-worth.*

### Chorus

*Focuses on being vocal. This is the part where you stand up for yourself and finally use your words to say what you feel. In this chorus I may add that this is goodbye.*

## **Final Lyrics: Back Up**

### Verse 1

*You say want to fix us, but it's just too late*

*The words that you said were more than enough, so what's there left to say*

*How could you do this? You slowly ripped me to shreds*

*I smiled through the pain, but I know it won't last*

*so you best be on your way*

### Chorus

*Back up back up (back up off me)*

*you had your chance had your time*

*I know my worth  
and you just ain't right  
Back up back up (back up off me)  
just want you out of my sight  
it's been long enough  
and I'm done wasting time  
Back up, Alright?!?*

Verse 2

*I'm just so tired of playing games  
you know my mind starts tumblin' tumblin', but my heart keeps numbin' the pain  
All I did was trust in you, but your light turned into shade  
The love that we shared was just enough.  
so what's left to gain*

Chorus

*Back up back up (back up off me)  
you had your chance had your time  
I know my worth  
and you just ain't right  
back up back up (back up off me)  
just want you out of my sight  
I was never enough  
but that ain't for you to decide  
Back up, Alright?!?*

### Bridge

*And now that you're gone*

*I finally feel free*

*to just do me*

*sucks to say*

*that you got away*

*but you set me free*

### Rap

*I'm done with arguing*

*I'm done with your "last words"*

*Tired of constant back and forth bout the past*

*So don't coming back after I picked up your slack*

*cause I'm movin' on and I'm gone*

*I'm finally done with this*

*I'm finally done with that*

*so don't go thinking that I'm coming back*

*finally found my voice, that you tried to hold back*

*so I wrote it all in a song*

### Chorus

*Back up back up (back up off me)*

*you had your chance had your time*

*I know my worth*

*and you just ain't right*

*Back up back up (back up off me)*

*just want you out of my sight*

*I was never enough*

*but that ain't for you to decide*

**Chorus (Repeat)**

*Back up back up (back up off me)*

*you had your chance had your time*

*I know my worth*

*and you just ain't right*

*back up back up (back up off me)*

*just want you out of my sight*

*I was always enough*

*I know my worth and I'm worth the fight*

*Back up, Alright?!?*

**Post Song Composition Survey**

- In class, you learned about musical concepts such as rhythm, notation, keys, wordsmithing, intervals dynamics, and expression; Share what your song is about and the parts that you think are most impactful. *My song is about verbal abuse and using your voice to take control of your life again. For me, the most impactful parts of the song are the 2nd verse, chorus, and rap. In the 2nd verse I really like the word play and the suggestions from my fellow classmates, on how to express the feeling of disappointment in someone who you would've never expected to be so cruel. In the choruses the last couple lines change throughout the song, because I wanted to show growth. In the final*

ending chorus line “I was always enough, I know my worth and I’m worth the fight” it represents what most people realize after the end of every toxic relationship. Whether it be a relationship with your friends, family, co-workers, teachers, etc.

- Discuss in detail how you applied at least three of these concepts in your song composition. *Three concepts in my song composition are dynamics, rhythm, and key choice. When I first started writing my song I thought of the chords first, and in this case I wanted my song to be a little more straightforward and serious but still sounding gloomy yet intense. So I went with D minor because most minor chords give me that uneasy feeling sound. Once I found my chords, I needed a strum pattern to go along, that made sense with the feelings I wanted to express. I got some inspiration from the song “I Am A Queen” by Kapena and Willie K. Going through many different strum patterns, I finally found one that I liked that didn’t seem too easy or boring. The dynamics in my songs are definitely important, especially after the bridge into the rap and out of the rap into the last chorus. Every song to me is like a story or movie, it has to build. If I had all the tools to fully do a recording of how I would like my finished song to sound, it would have lots of percussion helping with that intensity. With what I have currently, I did my best to make things build vocally and melodically.*
- Discuss what you learned about the power of music and song composition during class instruction time. Provide two or three detailed examples. *This class has taught me a lot of things about myself that I didn’t know I was gonna gain. First off, if there is anything I have learned. It is that the power of music keeps people together no matter the distance. My initial thoughts of online music class weren’t all that positive at first, mainly because of covid ruining a lot of my plans for the future. Eventually I found myself really enjoying*

*the context we were learning, honestly this class is the only class I really enjoy attending. I've been in many music classes and have created strong bonds with many of my teachers, but this class never seems to bore me. This class has shown me how I can incorporate life into my music every day, when it comes to writing. The song composition project really helped me to understand where I stood as a writer and how I can continue to practice music in a way that works for me and allows me to express myself.*

- Discuss what you learned about song composition during the process of composing and performing your song. Provide two or three detailed examples. *I learned that it's really helpful to have a "why" for your song. For me, knowing why I was writing my song really helped me to stay motivated and to make the song as good as possible. Another thing that I found is that I learned a lot about music just by composing my song. I learned about all the thought that goes into every decision to make a song more impactful. I realize how critical it is to choose a good melody, tempo, and chords for your song. I also learned how important the lyrics are. It was amazing to me how much impact changing one word in a line can have.*
- How do you feel about the song that you composed? Provide a detailed analysis. *There are no critics worse than myself, so it's hard to say how I feel about my original because I already know that I'm gonna add more to it. The song that I composed overall as a final draft was not too shabby in my opinion. There was definitely a lot of thought put into it, mainly because it was a song that I was planning to write anyways. At first, I really thought this song wasn't going to work out, and that I would have to start over because I'm a perfectionist and everything just sounded scattered at first. The peer reviews and collaboration seemed to boost my confidence on finishing this song. Since most of you*

*enjoyed what I prepared even though deep down I thought I could do better, I kept pushing myself on trying to make it work out and one day it all just fell into place.*

- How does your song fit into the 10 projects of empowerment? Is it the same project that you intended to write on? Can you see other projects that your song fits into? Explain. *My song fits into protecting and intervening. In protecting, it is about protecting myself from things or people that try to get in my way. It can also play a role in intervening by letting people know that they should not be afraid to speak up for themselves. Other projects that I that I thought my song could play a role in is sharing and celebrating survival. It can play a role in sharing because the song shares the message that you have to be willing to speak up for yourself because you are worth fighting for. I also thought of celebrating survival because any type of “abusive” relationship can have an effect even if it is only mental. It can be celebrating that you can find ways to blossom even though not all of the conditions were ideal.*
- Discuss the feeling of composing a song on an issue of your choice. *The feeling of writing a song like this is like a roller coaster ride. When you have an issue, it is typically something important to you, if not, it wouldn’t have your attention so much to even be considered an issue. As for myself, I found this process comforting at first to the issue that I had chosen to write about but, as I continued to find the right words and feelings, I really had to tap into the issue myself. Without personally connecting to a song, I feel as if there is no meaning to the person singing or performing it. There were definitely some struggles trying to get all the words for lyrics out because it felt like I was bringing back old memories. But what I realized was that through that process of looking back at old*

*memories and making peace with it by putting it in a song, it only made me see the potential I could possibly have in writing songs that the people can connect to.*

### **Song Performance**

- Who is the intended audience for your song? How do you think they will receive it?  
*Anyone can listen to my music if they can connect with it or not, but the intended audience for my song would be mainly teens or adults all over Hawai'i. I'm hoping that the locals enjoy my song and find it empowering. Overall I'm looking forward to seeing people bob their heads to my song as if they were skanking. If they feel this way, I hope they will really get the message of the song.*
- Explain the feelings you had when you were performing your own song composition. *It felt great to sing the song fully with finished lyrics. The more I sing it and continue to practice it I find little things to change or add to it vocally. Just like anything else I put a lot of effort into.*
- How do you intend to use your song in the future? *I want to work it into my shows. I think that people can relate to the message since most people have something or someone holding them back.*
- How do you intend to use song composition in the future? *I plan to keep composing songs. This class really helped me see the structure that can help to finish some of my songs. I want to do a recording soon so I plan to compose a lot more songs using what I learned in this class.*



## Curriculum

- In class, you learned about musical concepts such as rhythm, notation, keys, wordsmithing, intervals dynamics, and expression; Discuss the benefits of collaboration on this project. *As I mentioned earlier, the collaboration was awesome. Sometimes I thought something was really good but when I shared it with the class, they didn't quite get what I was trying to say or they thought of other ways to say what I was thinking. It really helped a lot. It was also really cool and good practice to help my classmates with their songs. It made us all feel like we were working together and not competing with each other. We all wanted each of our songs to be the best they possibly could be.*
- How did the song composition project help you to better understand music? *It helped me understand how important all the different aspects are. The project also really made me appreciate other composers. When I listen to music now I find myself listening more to the words and how everything works together.*

## Projects of Empowerment

- Identify where your song fits into the projects of empowerment and how you felt empowered by your song.

Improving Life situation by increasing:	Celebrating Survival	Remembering	Intervening	Connecting	Envisioning	networking	Naming	Protecting	Creating	Sharing
Personal Power	X		X					X		X
Interpersonal power	X		X					X		X
Political Power										