

even a single chord," he said. "There are so many instruments involved, and so many colors. I had a wider palette than I'm normally used to."

A further challenge was having to imagine those sounds in his head, "wishing that I had a whole orchestra in my living room so I could say, 'Hey guys, take it from bar 58!'"

Peterson wound up using some classic methods for concerto construction.

Some sections use a "call-and-response" format between guitar and orchestral instruments; in other sections, he would "write for the orchestra as if it were a giant slack-key guitar."

"Usually when you play the guitar, it can be like a mini-orchestra itself, where you have independent base-lines, accompaniment and melodies happening," he said. "So to be able to bring out those sounds, those harmonies and everything, that

was really exciting."

Periodically he would send his music to Askim, a respected composer of contemporary music, for comment. That helped immeasurably, Peterson said.

Askim provided tips such as not having the oboe and flute play in unison because the sounds of the two instruments clash. "It's OK if they're an octave apart, but not exactly the same note," Peterson said.

Peterson said he especially enjoyed writing for flute, which is featured in the concerto's moody second movement, "Kilauaea." He based the theme on an imagined oli to Madame Pele and the swift, misty winds that sweep down Mauna Loa.

"The flute carries these really brilliant lines, which are very challenging," he said. "There are some things that wouldn't work on guitar that I could translate to other in-

struments. Things that I could hear in my mind that I couldn't execute, I could now have performed."

Peterson's cinematic work pays tribute to some of the great slack key masters, with references to the fleet fingers of Ledward Kaapana, the joyful charm of Sonny Chillingworth and the introspective soulfulness of Keola Beamer.

The energetic third movement, "Mauna Loa," was inspired by "Holoholo Ka'a" (Joy Ride), a song by Clarence Kinney, while other riffs come from Auntie Alice Namakelua and Gabby Pahinui's "Hi'ilawe." (As Igor Stravinsky once said, "Good composers borrow. Great composers steal.")

Peterson took those themes and motifs and toyed with them, expanding on and developing them. He would name them after the alphabet: the "A" theme, "B" theme, etc. "I went through

the whole alphabet," he said laughing. "I think it goes off to section TT. The idea is that idea can evolve into other sections."

THE CONCERTO has been performed once, in North Carolina. Peterson is eager to perform it here.

"It was something I always hoped for," he said.

Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra artistic director JoAnn Falletta, an award-winning classical guitarist herself, welcomes the work into the guitar repertoire.

"We are always pleased when we can feature a wonderful piece of music that is a new discovery for our audience, and also has a special relationship to the culture of Hawaii," she said in an email. "Jeff Peterson is a virtuoso of the slack key guitar style, which is one of the most genuine and moving expressions of the Hawaiian spirit."



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