

The Hawaiian Turnaround

Many Hawaiian songs feature a particular two chord pattern that moves the song along back to the beginning. This vamp is so distinctive that steel guitarists named it *The Hawaiian Turnaround* and use it whenever they wish to give their playing an Island flavor.

Basically, it is simply a dominant seventh chord followed by a tonic:

Treble Clef, Key of D (F#), 4/4 time.
 Measure 1: D7 chord (D-F#-A-C)
 Measure 2: D major chord (D-F#-A)
 Guitar Tablature:
 T: 2 2 2 2 2 2
 A: 2 2 2 2 2 2
 B: 0 0 0 0 0 0

Each slack key player develops a personal set of turnarounds. Here are some variations. Notice the syncopation in this next example; play the downbeat with your thumb, followed by the A on the third string, second fret. Try to sound the hammer-on so the C falls on beat three. Finally, use your pinky to play the F# and G notes that end the run. The lick is easier if you play it out of this D7 chord position:

Treble Clef, Key of D (F#), 4/4 time.
 Measure 1: D7 chord (D-F#-A-C)
 Measure 2: D major chord (D-F#-A)
 Guitar Tablature:
 T: 2 2 2 2 2 2
 A: 2 2 2 2 2 2
 B: 0 0 0 0 0 0

Treble Clef, Key of D (F#), 4/4 time.
 Measure 1: D7 chord (D-F#-A-C)
 Measure 2: D major chord (D-F#-A)
 Guitar Tablature:
 T: 2 0 H 1 0 4
 A: 2 0 0 0 0 0
 B: 0 0 0 0 0 0

Notice how you slide into the final note in measure one just slightly ahead of the next downbeat in the following example:

Now try the same thing with a quarter note pulse:

This next one is typical of the playing of slack key master Raymond Kāne. Play the low D with your thumb, then quickly brush upwards across the top three strings with your index finger; followed by extremely rapid slur consisting of a hammer-on and pull-off. Just to make things more interesting, R does the slurs with an unusual upwards flick of his ring finger!

This lick is based on one of the defining characteristics of *Taro Patch* tuning, parallel sixth harmony played of the first and third strings. Keep your index finger on the third string and your ring finger on the first string all the time, and remember to let each note of the slide sound for its full value.

The musical notation consists of a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written in eighth and quarter notes, including a slide. Below the staff are three lines labeled T, A, and B, representing the strings. The T line has fret numbers 10, 9, 7, and 5. The A line has fret numbers 5, 9, 7, 5, and 4, with circles indicating fingerings. The B line has fret numbers 0, 0, 0, and 0.

Practice stringing these turnarounds together in various combinations. You may even start finding some of your own. The example on the following page shows just how much music it's possible to get from a few simple elements. After you've played through it once or twice, begin adding some of the licks you've learned from the previous examples. Try to keep a steady, languid rhythm to your playing. You'll know you've got it right when everyone in the room starts to smile and sway to the music!

As you play through the tunes in *Taro Patch* tuning, you'll encounter several variations of these common turnarounds. A good way to begin developing your own personal style of slack key would be to substitute different variations for the ones in the arrangements.

