



The Grasslands Ensemble comes from the Inner Mongolian prairies of Hulunbuir. They represent a diversity of ethnicities: Mongolian, Manchurian, Evenk, Daur, Russian, and Han Chinese. Their music is an organic and inimitably rich presentation of traditional, ethnic minority folk songs.

The group's greatest feature lies in its ability to seamlessly layer music with unique artistic individuality. Hasibatu's Mongolian long songs are magnificent and moving. Qiqigema's dynamic voice has the qualities of both a clear spring and a raging hurricane. Bayinhehe's gentle vocals sweetly echo, leaving a lasting impression. Han Mou Ren's chaoer, an instrument that is soon to be lost to the sands of time, is enchanting. Tamir Hargana works toward passing down orthodox throat singing and traditional instrumentation. And the spirited Hasar Band, comprised of musicians of varying ethnicities, holds to the mission of carrying on the legacy of folk music through diversity in backgrounds, instruments, and vocal techniques.

The Grasslands Ensemble breathes new life into centuries-old folk songs. The tunes on this album are played on traditional instruments. They have been re-imagined in the context of reverently enhanced arrangements. The imagery of the sky and prairie are alive in each note, and are a source of hope to perpetuate repertoire that has existed for generations.



## BORJIGIN HASIBATU

[ Mongolian ]

Short and  
long song vocals

Borjigin Hasibatu was born in Ongniud Banner of Chifeng City in Inner Mongolia. He graduated from the vocal music department at Minzu University of China and is a highly-acclaimed performer at the national level. He is now a standing director of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region Long Song Art Research Society as well as a member of the Inner Mongolian Musicians' Association, Chinese Ethnic Minorities Vocal Music Society, Chinese Ethnic Minorities Music Society, and Chinese Musicians' Association.

Between 1994 and 2004, Hasibatu won a number of folk music competitions. In his over 20 years as an ethnic minority performer, he has been invited to various large-scale performance venues and public benefit events at the national and local levels in China, and he has also participated frequently in performances held in rural villages. Outside of

China, he has performed in the US, Canada, Russia, Japan, Korea, Thailand, and Mongolia. He is currently focusing on bringing traditional long songs to the international stage.

Besides his role as a performer, he is both a scholar and a teacher. He has released folk music albums, published related academic research, and been featured in numerous CDs and VCDs. For more than 30 years, he has helped to train other outstanding vocalists and has taught children from poor families for free. Hasibatu's extensive contributions have greatly enriched Mongolian music.



## QIQIGEMA

[ Evenk ]

Vocals

Qiqigema is an Evenk vocalist with international influence. She is part of the well-reputed music group Anda Union, a superior national-level performer in China, and a member of the Chinese Ethnic Minorities Vocal Music Society. She is also a distinguished professor at Inner Mongolia Arts University, co-chair for the Inner Mongolian Musicians' Association, standing director of the Inner Mongolian Institute for Long Tune Folk Song (Urtiin Duu) Communication and Study, a board director for the Inner Mongolia International Cultural Exchange Center, and a member of the Inner Mongolia Evenk Nationality Research Society. She has won top prizes and international recognition at a number of important competitions in China and abroad, such as the Outstanding Contribution to Culture and Art Award from the Republic of Buryatia and the Advanced Cultural Worker Prize from the Mongolian Ministry of Culture.

An important representative for the young generation of Buryatia- and Barga-style (forms of Mongolian folk singing) singers, Qiqigema also plays a significant role in passing on the legacy of Evenk singing. In her work, she intertwines the spiritual sense and simplicity of Evenk singing specific to the Buryatia short-song style with the bright, lofty feel of the Barga long-song style. Furthermore, she adds aspects of modern technique, forming a style full of the original qualities of these traditional forms combined with features unique to herself.

Qiqigema has become an iconic and established Mongolian performer, and as a member of Anda Union, brought Mongolian music to the world stage. They have opened up the market both in China and abroad and spearheaded an international commercial performance model for ethnic music. Sharing Chinese culture with the world, she and Anda Union are leaders for the development of music not only from the grasslands but from all minority groups of China.

A portrait of Bayinhehe, a woman with a large, ornate blue and gold headdress, wearing a blue and red patterned top and a blue scarf, set against a blurred background of a vast landscape.

## BAYINHEHE

[ Manchurian ]

Vocals

From deep in the Changbai Mountains, Bayinhehe is a Manchurian whose faith lies in singing. Her voice, nurtured far from the noise of the city, intimately expresses the primal hues of life. She draws inspiration from a vanishing repertoire of Manchurian melodies that she hopes to preserve. The music she creates is full of elements of ethnicity, religion, nature, and humanity in a blend of ancient vocal techniques and modern musical concepts that reach deep into the soul.

With her bright, sunshiny presence, Bayinhehe has performed at celebrations, music festivals, and singing contests at a national and local scale. She has also worked as a model for ads and fashion shows. A multi-talented singer of varied gifts, her albums include No Boundaries, Gulu, and Songs of Joy.

A portrait of Han Mou Ren, a man with short brown hair and sunglasses, wearing a dark suit jacket and a blue shirt, holding a morin khuur (horse head fiddle) against a blurred background of a vast landscape.

## HAN MOU REN

[ Mongolian ]

Morin khuur  
(horse head fiddle)  
and Chaoer

Han Mou Ren, known as the “Prince of the Morin Khuur,” is a descendant of Khorchin Mongol nobility. He is devoted to passing on the knowledge of the revered instrument which he so proudly plays.

From a very young age, his technical skill and accomplishments won praise from master players. He has blended the essences of eastern and western Mongolian morin khuur styles, and is a standout instrumentalist among a new generation of players. Since his first experience in a professional recording studio at the age of 15, Han has provided morin khuur accompaniment on nearly 100 songs for famous Mongolian vocalists including Dedema, Audu, and Qiqigema.

Han also possesses a unique insight into classical European music. In Vienna, he captivated audiences with his morin khuur performances of the violin pieces “Csardas” and “Songs of the Wanderers”—known for their speed and difficulty, and coupled with his adept fingering technique and smooth tone. His pure style is enhanced with a perfect combination of gentility and strength. The French composer Alain Charron was deeply moved by Han’s playing during a collaboration between the two. Wu Lan, the creator of UE.Art.Republic, has described Han’s performance technique and stage presence as “thoroughly flawless.”



## TAMIR HARGANA

[ Mongolian ]

Throat singing  
tovshuur  
igil  
and amen khuur (jaw harp)



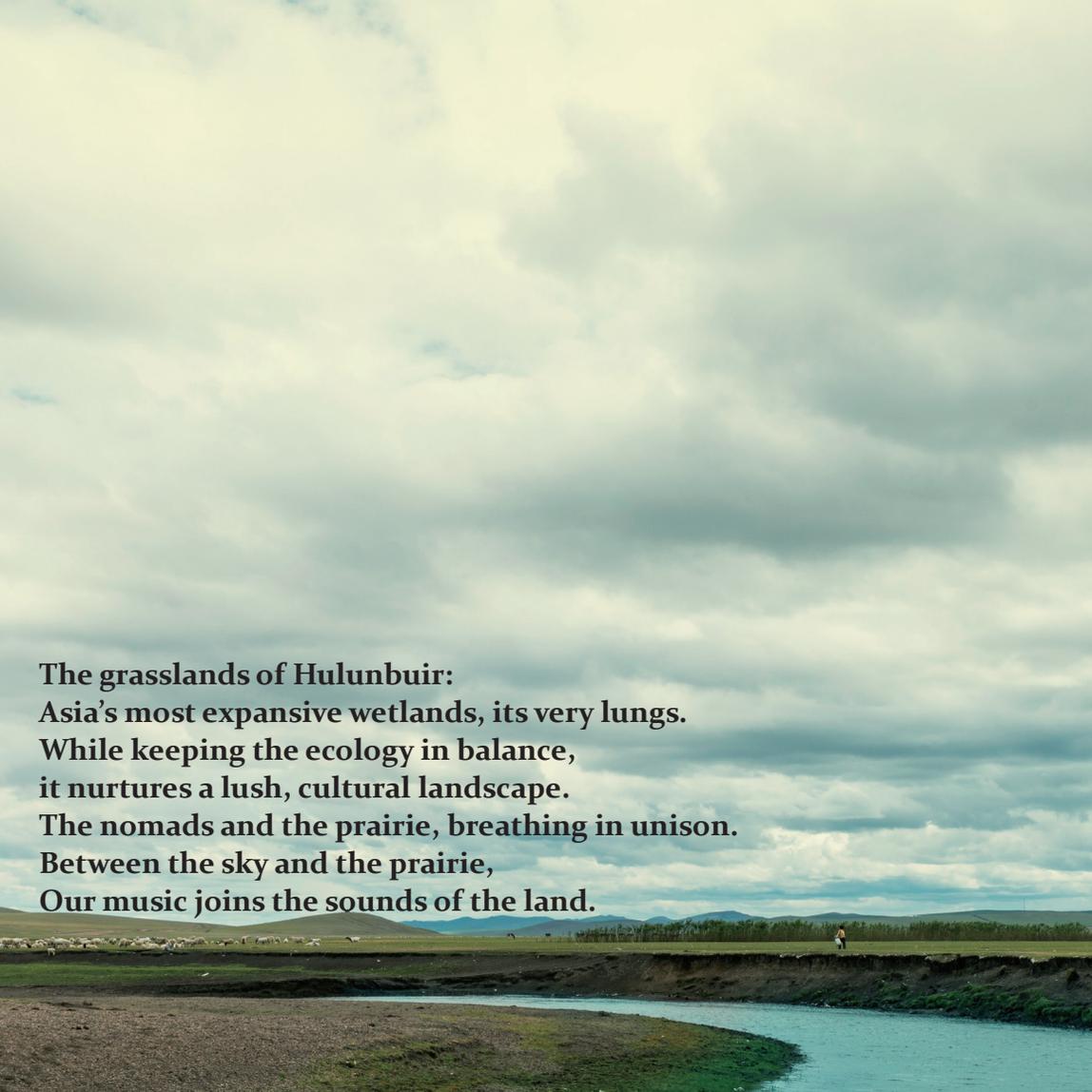
Tamir Hargana studied traditional Mongolian music at Inner Mongolia Arts University. He is from the first class of graduates to have majored in throat singing. He is also proficient on many Mongolian stringed instruments including the morin khuur. In Mongolia, he has won a number of awards at international throat singing competitions. Tamir has received instruction from several masters, most notably, under the direction of the late throat singing guru Kongar-ol Ondor from the Tyvu Republic.

Tamir has worked to promote traditional Mongolian music through educational opportunities and cultural events. Aside from performing and perpetuating music during his university years, he taught at the junior high school affiliated with his alma-mater. He has even demonstrated throat singing techniques on a television documentary. Tamir recently received a master's degree in world music at Northern Illinois University. His focus has become oriented toward "musical fusion" as a result of his interactions and collaborations with musicians of all backgrounds from around the world.

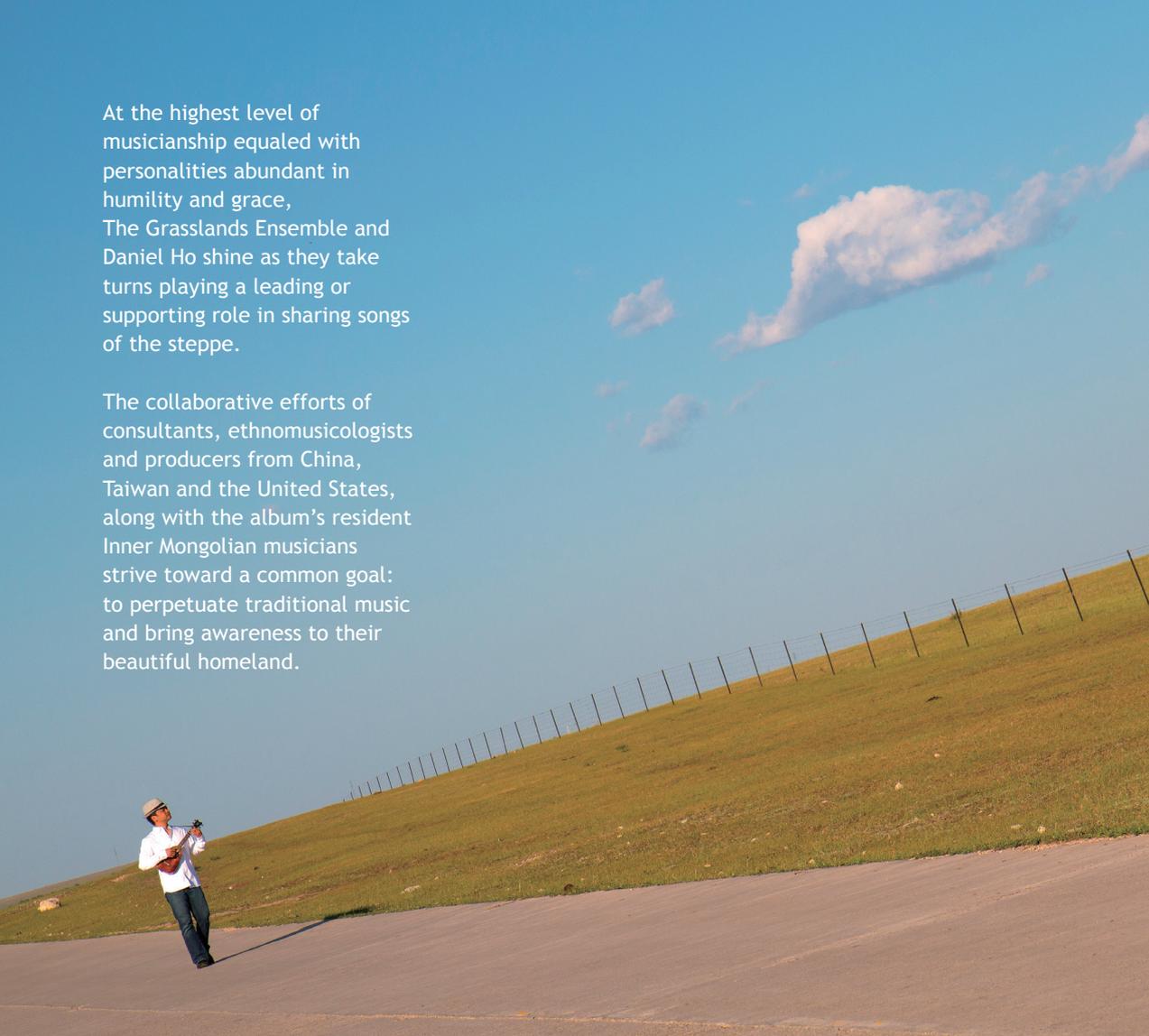
The Hasar Band (named after the younger brother of Genghis Khan) was formed in 2010 by six members from the traditional music ensemble of the Hulunbuir Ethnic Opera House. Instruments played in the band include the morin khuur, doshpuluur, tovshuur, sheepskin drums, jaw harp, and shagai. Other Mongolian features, such as throat singing, are also included in their talents. The band works to

maintain tradition while interweaving elements of modern pop music. The powerful, dynamic tempo and contemporary feel of their music with distinctly Mongolian features allows their songs to resound with a feeling of vastness.

- YIMIN** ————— Bandleader, morin khuur, backup vocals
- CAI YI-FEI** ————— Morin khuur, tsuur flute (Mongolian flute), backup vocals
- BAO WUYUNBILIGE** ————— Lead vocals, tovshuur
- WANG JIAN** ————— Doshpuluur, backup vocals
- AQITU** ————— Lead vocals, percussion, amen khuur (jaw harp)
- BAO YUE-YONG** ————— Morin khuur, harmony



**The grasslands of Hulunbuir:  
Asia's most expansive wetlands, its very lungs.  
While keeping the ecology in balance,  
it nurtures a lush, cultural landscape.  
The nomads and the prairie, breathing in unison.  
Between the sky and the prairie,  
Our music joins the sounds of the land.**



At the highest level of musicianship equaled with personalities abundant in humility and grace, The Grasslands Ensemble and Daniel Ho shine as they take turns playing a leading or supporting role in sharing songs of the steppe.

The collaborative efforts of consultants, ethnomusicologists and producers from China, Taiwan and the United States, along with the album's resident Inner Mongolian musicians strive toward a common goal: to perpetuate traditional music and bring awareness to their beautiful homeland.

Riding through the grasslands of Inner Mongolia on horses (an SUV powered by hundreds of horses, that is), I was filled with anticipation. I was excited about the cultural and musical revelations that lie ahead, and a bit apprehensive about how I would be received by the musicians I was soon to meet.

My 'ukulele is always within arm's reach when I'm traveling by plane, train, or automobile. It is the perfect way to enjoy the ride while practicing or writing. I pulled my 'ukulele from its case, tuned it up, and stared out the window in awe as we drove through an endless expanse of blue and green. I strummed a G major chord. "G" for grasslands. Ok, it's a start. I wondered to myself if there was a musical way to capture my feelings at that moment - peaceful, excited, and grateful for this gift of music, which had somehow brought me to this majestic land only a stone's throw from Russia.

Over the course of the album's production, I had the distinct pleasure of crossing paths with chaoer and horse head fiddle virtuoso Mou Ren, angelic Qiqigema, the gallant Hasibatu, the warmth of Bayinhehe, the versatile Tamir, and the heartbeat of our group—the Hasar Band. They generously shared their culture and openly entrusted me with their traditional music. A gift I will forever remember, "Between the Sky & Prairie" musically tells the story of this unforgettable experience.

Aloha,  
**Daniel Ho**



## WU CHIN-TAI (JUDY WU)

Producer

Wu Judy Chin-tai is a respected producer and composer with a keen gift for the development of nature, crossover, and traditional folk music.

Judy began creating nature music in 1994 and was a pioneer in the production art of carrying recording equipment on her back into the mountains and across streams to record the sounds of nature before mixing them with music. In 1999, she produced a popular album of nature sounds called *The Forest Show*. To date, she has released ten best-selling nature music albums.

Active in traditional and world music, Judy has produced and participated in the creation of albums that have won numerous awards. She won Golden Melody Awards in Taiwan for her albums *My Ocean* in 2001 and *The Mongolian Folk Long-Song* in 2009. Her 2010 album *Drum Music Land* was nominated for Best Traditional World Music Album at the 52nd Grammy Awards. *On a Gentle Island Breeze*, which she co-produced in 2012, was nominated for Best World Music Album at the 55th Grammy Awards. *Legends of Passage*, which she co-produced in 2015, won the Best Aboriginal Language Album Award at the 27th Golden Melody Awards and was named one of the top ten albums in 2015 by the Association of Music Workers in Taiwan.

Production & Publication:  
Wind Music International Cooperation,  
Meiku Original International Culture Media (Beijing) Co., Ltd.  
Production supervisor: Yang Chin-tsung, Li Dong  
Producers: Daniel Ho, Wu Judy Chin-tai  
Music: Daniel Ho (track 1)  
Recording in the US: Daniel Ho  
(recording of Daniel Ho and Tamir Hargana)  
Recording in Beijing: Liu Ke-ming @ Bysong Recording Studio  
(recording of Mongolian musicians)  
Recording Assistant: Chen Zi-hao  
“Golden Sunlight” Nanjilema Field Recording:  
Qiao Jian-zhong, Xiao Mei  
Mixing: Daniel Ho  
Mastering: Daniel Ho  
Consultants: Chester Hsu, Sa Ren  
Mongolian music consultant: Charlotte D'Evelyn

Project director: Yu Su-ying  
Coordinator for Inner Mongolian musicians: Li Xiao-jun  
Production administrator: Howard Li  
Project Executive: Tang Wun-jyun  
Chinese liner notes: Yu Su-ying, Tang Wun-jyun  
English liner notes: Miyashiro-Ho & Daniel Ho  
English translation: California Translations  
Chinese translation: Cheng Nancy Feng-chu  
English editing: Lydia Miyashiro-Ho and Pure Three  
Publicity photography: Wu Chin-tsan  
Graphic design: Keystone Design Co.  
Promotion Executive:  
• US: Cindy Byram, Patricia Chuang Greene  
• Mainland China: Yang Yi-gui, Liao Jin-hui  
• Taiwan: Tsao Tsu-fang  
Promo video production: THINKOTHER  
• Director: Fan Yi-qi  
• Camera operator: Shi Chao-fan  
• Recording: Arturo Quesada Lopez  
• Producer: Li Tian-ji

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美庫原創國際文化傳媒(北京)有限公司  
監製：楊錦聰、黎冬  
製作人：Daniel Ho、吳金燦  
作曲：Daniel Ho (Track 1)  
美國錄音：Daniel Ho (Daniel Ho 與塔米爾·哈爾嘎納錄音)  
北京錄音：劉珂銘 @ 百聲錄音棚 (內蒙音樂人錄音)  
錄音助理：陳子豪 (內蒙音樂人錄音)  
《金色的陽光》南吉爾瑪田野錄音：喬建中、蕭梅  
混音：Daniel Ho  
母帶處理：Daniel Ho  
專案顧問：徐清志、薩仁  
蒙古音樂顧問：Charlotte d'Evelyn

企劃總監：于蘇英  
內蒙藝人統籌：李孝軍  
製作行政：李江勇  
企劃：唐文君  
中文文案：于蘇英、唐文君  
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• 中國大陸地區 / 楊宜桂、廖錦慧  
• 台灣地區 / 曹慈芳  
宣傳片製作：THINKOTHER  
• 導演：范亦奇  
• 攝影師：史超凡  
• 錄音師：屠龍  
• 製片：李天濟

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Daniel Ho 代言 YAMAHA 吉他、  
Romero Creations 烏克麗麗、Universal 音響及 BOSE

## DANIEL HO

Producer  
arranger  
ukulele  
piano



Daniel Ho's credo: to see a note through from beginning to end. This philosophy encompasses six GRAMMY Awards, fourteen GRAMMY nominations, four Taiwanese Golden Melody Awards, multiple Hawaiian music accolades, a genre-crossing discography, and a host of proudly designed instruments.

A Honolulu native based in Los Angeles, Daniel is a musician, composer, arranger, audio engineer, producer, and independent record company owner. Daniel Ho Creations has released over 100 albums and published more than a dozen music books.

Daniel's music has been used in film and television, and he performs original instrumentals and vocals in English and Hawaiian that feature his versatility on 'ukulele, slack key guitar, and piano. Most meaningful compositional works include his GRAMMY-nominated solo 'ukulele album, *Pōlani (Pure)*; his GRAMMY-nominated piano album, *E Kahe Mālie (Flowing Gently)*; and his all-

original Hawaiian vocal and instrumental album, *Aukahi (Flowing Harmony)*.

His collaborative contributions span Hawaiian, world, classical, and contemporary instrumental music, with a respectful approach to frame traditional music and uplift partnering artists in a compositionally compelling way. In world music, Daniel has bridged traditional Taiwanese aboriginal music with a Western sensibility, and he garnered his fourteenth GRAMMY nomination in the company of Wu Man and Luis Conte for *Our World In Song*. With a goal to expand the 'ukulele's presence in classical music, his 2016 album *Aloha España*, features 'ukulele duets with famed classical guitarist, Pepe Romero. And in early-2017, he partnered with rock guitarist Tak Matsumoto (who has sold 80-million albums with his group B'z) in a finely crafted stadium-rock-meets-tropical-isle instrumental album, *Electric Island, Acoustic Sea*.

Daniel's latest innovative passion is exploring the origins of sound in the form of instrument design. He is a YAMAHA Guitar artist, clinician and consultant. He has teamed up with classical guitar luthier, Pepe Romero Jr. to conceptualize the Tiny Tenor and XS Soprano 'ukuleles. He has also worked closely with Pepe and Ohana Ukuleles in creating percussion instruments: the Bongolele and Shakerlele.

With his sights set on what's to come, Daniel's follow through style from start to finish is sure to turn heads and capture hearts, one note at a time.

- 53rd GRAMMY Awards Winner, Best Hawaiian Music Album 2010 (*Huana Ke Aloha*)
- 52nd GRAMMY Awards Winner, Best Hawaiian Music Album 2009 (*Masters of Hawaiian Slack Key Guitar, vol. 2*)
- 51st GRAMMY Awards Winner, Best Hawaiian Music Album 2008 (*'ikena*)
- 50th GRAMMY Awards Winner, Best Hawaiian Music Album 2007 (*Treasures of Hawaiian Slack Key Guitar*)
- 49th GRAMMY Awards Winner, Best Hawaiian Music Album 2006 (*Legends of Hawaiian Slack Key Guitar, Live from Maui*)
- 48th GRAMMY Awards Winner, Best Hawaiian Music Album 2005 (*Masters of Hawaiian Slack Key Guitar, vol. 1*)