

# Mokai

## licks and lyrics

## Mokai's Story

*"Mokai's music is out to make a difference in the world."* Larry Kelp – Host, Sing Out! KPFA FM

Mokai (pronounced MO-kI) sings from a place deep in the wilderness of his soul. **His daring guitar work blazes like wildfire through musical landscapes that include folk, jazz, blues and world music.** Mokai writes intelligent songs that speak to your inner rebel child.

Gifted with a **wild imagination** and a **dry wit**, Mokai can be **serious or playful, and above all, original.** His authentic, earthy sound is rooted in **traditional influences** like Blind Lemon Jefferson, Big Bill Broonzy, and Dave Van Ronk, and his love **of world music.** His songs combine emotionally provocative lyrics and skillful rhymes with innovative fingerstyle blues guitar and an infectious groove. Performing extensively throughout the SF Bay Area acoustic music scene and festivals in Northern California, he has attracted a dedicated and growing fan base.

Since releasing his debut CD, "Unearthed" in 2003, Mokai was invited to share stages with Michael Franti/Spearhead, David Lindley and Steve Kimok, as a special guest at **Reggae on the River** and **Earthdance**, performing his new song "You Can't Fool Me (Criminal Behavior)." Mokai taps into the rage felt by anyone who sees through the lies that are used to justify the Iraq war. His **song "World Without War"** has been dubbed "**the peace movement's new anthem**" by Medea Benjamin (founder, Global Exchange) and **has been played on KPFA and other public radio stations, including the nationally syndicated Democracy Now!**

As a child, Mokai loved playing in the forests near his New England home. In the song "Out to the Woods," he sings of his pain at witnessing this forest bulldozed for development. Leaving home as a teenager, he spent years as a wandering guitarist, learning blues and folk from those he met along the way.

Mokai traveled to his ancestral village in Italy, to care for his grandfather in the last months of his life. Traveling and living in Europe, Central America and the Caribbean, his songs were infused with the undeniable spirit of solidarity he experienced among peoples of other cultures. He brought that spirit in his music to the Pacific Northwest where he performed at rallies and benefits for peace, social justice and the earth. **He became known as Mokai during one of the first 'tree-sit' actions to protect ancient forests. He was influential in starting the Headwaters Forest Campaign, a grassroots movement that resulted in the largest land acquisition in recent US history.**

**Mokai's debut CD "Unearthed," released in May of 2003, features** twelve of his original tunes and an expert team of musicians including Todd Sickafoose (Noe Venable Trio, CRATER) on acoustic bass, Mark Growden on Sax, Matt Eakle (David Grisman Band) on flute, Jazz trumpeter John Capobianco, and vocal performances by Erika Lockett, Heather Davison (Hanes Family, Loretta Lynch), and Jessie Turner. The CD is enjoying airplay on college and public radio stations in the SF Bay Area and northern California as well as a growing number of stations across the country.

Mokai performs solo with his Gibson guitars and also with his trio (Nate the Monkey on electric bass, Carlos Pena on drums.) Inspiring and provocative, his music beckons you with his eclectic rhythms and memorable hooks. **Mokai plays music as his way to make a difference in the world.**