

Louise Beamer

I was born on January 22, 1907 in Honolulu and in 1923 at the age of sixteen I married into the Beamer family. My husband's mother was Helen Desha Beamer and she lived in Hilo on the Big Island. Mother Beamer was a musician, a composer, a dancer, and she was my first kumu. She taught me everything. Mother Beamer always taught at her mother's home on Eighth Avenue in Kaimuki when she visited Honolulu. All the young ladies would come to learn and there would be thirty young women dancing in the living room. Now Mahi's (Mahi Beamer) mother and I, the two daughters-in-law, would stand in the backline and that's how I really got started.

Mother Beamer had her own way of teaching. She didn't do too much dancing for you or with you. She got up and showed you the dance one time and that was it. When she taught auwana she would sit at the piano and play it one time and that was it. You were allowed to watch the motions, and listen to the words once and then you were expected to get up and do it all. The hula that we were taught was simple and subtle. The subtler the better. Our knees were always drawn up rather than outward when we would uwehe and the dance always projected the words of the chant. I went through the process of learning the hula kapu but because of the kapus associated with the dance I've chosen never to teach it.

Mama had a very beautiful way of teaching. She always told me, you know Lu you always have to be aware of how you are teaching. You always have to teach your students the way you would have wanted to be taught. What she meant was a teacher had to go down to the level of each student. I first began to teach at home in Alewa Heights. We had a very long porch with a million-dollar view of Pearl Harbor and that's where I held my classes for five years.

Sometimes I would teach a student something and she would get it right away. But in the next class another student might not get it at all. I always remembered what she told me and I would have to go home and figure out another way to teach the lesson. Mother Beamer told me that there's always a reason why the child understands and doesn't understand and it's an excuse to brand the child as stupid.

To tell the truth I wasn't too keen about the idea of teaching at the very beginning. I was nineteen-years-old and I didn't believe in myself and have the confidence in myself to be a teacher but she believed in me and that's how I started to teach. I took over her classes at Punahou School and in 1934 I opened my halau in Waikiki next to the old Kodak building. In those days I used to work in hula from seven in the morning till seven at night. I would close my studio door and drive home and there was so much joy for me to open the door and come home to my children. I think the greatest sacrifice I had to make was the time I couldn't spend with my family because of my work. There were mornings that I would feel a little low but when I got to that studio I would turn on the Victorola and I would forget everything outside. Whatever problems I might have had disappeared. Suddenly my whole life would be inside that studio. I just enjoyed it so.

Mother Beamer always told me that when you perform the hula you always want to portray your best side, the good side. The other side never. You just keep that to yourself. We weren't even permitted to dance naughty hulas. I'm from the old school of training and it's hard for me to understand the changes in the hula of today. Kumu hula has been my life's work, as well as the work of my daughters and their daughters. It disturbs me when unqualified hula instructors identify themselves as kumu hula. The right to this identity must be earned.



Tita Beamer Solomon

In our family hula is our way of life. We have always been in the arts. My daughters, Malama and Hulali, represent the fifth generation. It has never been a question of choice but a commitment to our culture. My sister (Nona Beamer) and I spent every summer on the Big Island with our grandmother, Helen Desha Beamer, and we were brought up with our music and our hula. We thought every family played the guitar and sang. We thought everybody danced the hula. This was grandma's philosophy for all of us and how we took it from there was our own kuleana.

The boys in the family were primarily directed to music and the girls toward the hula but everybody had to be trained in the fundamentals of the dance. Other children were outside playing while we were practicing our hula. For my mother and my grandmother the Hawaiian language was their first language but for my generation it was more important to learn the English language first. My grandmother ~~realized~~<sup>realized</sup> that unless she got all of us involved with the Hawaiian arts we would lose the Hawaiianess in our lives. The hula you have to understand encompasses everything in the Hawaiian culture and through it we learned our Hawaiian language.

I began to dance at the age of two under my mother and my grandmother and I was taught both kahiko and auwana. When my grandmother would come to Honolulu to visit, my mother would take Nona and I to the backline of the classes Grandma held in Kaimuki and we didn't dare fail. The influence that my mother had on me was that she showed me the quiet and beauty of the art. Now my grandmother Helen Desha Beamer didn't have that soft way about her like my mother. My mother really showed us an inner beauty. The hula was something very special and we had to take care when we studied or danced it.

When I graduated from Kamehameha Schools I enrolled at the College of the Pacific in California. A local Y.W.C.A. (Young Women's Christian Association) was putting together a Hawaiian cultural program and I was asked to go down and teach the girls. This was how I began to teach. I taught easy haole hula because I wanted them to have a little bit of Hawaii and not get intimidated with the culture. You always have to keep in mind that we are taking the Hawaiian lifestyle and sharing it with these keikis who are coming from all different backgrounds and hopefully they will blend it with their own. If we take a student from five-years-old and train her until she's eighteen, she can come from any walk of life and she will know as much about the hula as any other dancer. We are training children of all backgrounds to speak up and be counted and to be proud of themselves and where they are from.

So where does the hula go from here? In my grandmother's and mother's time everything was changing with the influx of foreigners and ~~Waikiki~~<sup>Waikiki</sup> was the only public showplace. In order for the hula to survive, it was ~~taken~~<sup>taken</sup> out of the home and the family and made available to everybody. My grandmother felt if we taught the keiki well then they would always have a love for Hawaii and the Hawaiian culture. Today you'll see an image of the Hawaiian culture that is dominated solely by economics. This is what has destroyed the hula.

The hula is <sup>1</sup>not just an expression of the culture, it is the heart of the culture. What is happening today is that some people are changing the hula and in fact are changing the culture. Unfortunately, in time we may find out that it's much easier to change the culture than to perpetuate it.



Malama Solomon

I remember participating in a women's conference in Hilo. I was asked if as a woman and a Hawaiian, had I ever experienced an identity crisis. I told them no because my family had been so involved with the culture and arts of Hawaii. When I was three-years-old I was wearing a kikepa. The hula really expresses the self-determination of the Hawaiian people to survive. In my grandmother's, my mother's and my own time the culture has experienced a tremendous transition. There was pressure from Oriental immigration to change and there was tremendous outside pressure to be Western. It was the hula that kept the Hawaiian community intact because in the hula you could be expressive, you could be Hawaiian, you could be different. Art forms are always acceptable to the majority in a dominant culture. Hawaiian music and dance really has been an identity for the Hawaiian people. It was an outlet, an area where it was socially acceptable to be Hawaiian.

My sister (Hulali Solomon) and I were taught by my mother (Tita Beamer Solomon) and grandmother (Louise Beamer), and we were started in the hula as soon as we could walk. Nowadays students seem to question everything and parents think they know as much as the teacher but under my grandmother and mother we never questioned what they said. Their word was law. The strength of their training was that we learned to kukakuka with each other and to realize that individually we are not all things. We weren't allowed to just go out there and do our own thing. In other words we were accountable to each other. Today my choreography is accountable to my mother and my grandmother and it really is a product of three generations.

The reason my sister and I can work together today is that my mother never pitted us against each other. So many times a family can be torn apart by artistic competition but my grandmother always had the final word in all matters concerning the hula. My grandmother would lead us on long discussions about the travels of Pele, the different sides of her nature, and the power of her position in the Hawaiian culture. We were taught that you must work towards being culturally correct and so you have to understand the characters you are portraying in the dance.

At nineteen I took a short workshop with Uncle Henry Pa and it was totally different from the teaching I had been receiving under my family. His view of the arts was that it was a discipline. There was almost a militancy to his teaching. In his halau he would always say the ipu is the boss. The lesson that he taught me was that we have to respect each other's differences. When you go into another halau you have to leave every other teacher you've had behind. You have to be totally humble to the halau you are at. The Beamer way is not the only way just as the Pa way is not the only way.

I began to teach at fourteen under the supervision of my family and I think the reason the hula has become so standardized is that the teachers of today don't have the family background and structure to draw from. Before the hula was a socialization of the art but now you go to these festivals and the feeling is totally different. Before each kumu had their own manao but there was a real feeling of togetherness. There used to be a feeling of lokahi and kakoo. If you needed someone to chant or play music or dance, each halau would borrow from the other. But the new way today seems to be professional separatism. There is no sense of sharing, there is no sense of interdependence anymore.

The hula kahiko that we see today has become tremendously commercialized and an exaggeration of the Hawaiian culture. The problem with the hula is that so little of the knowledge was ever written down so it is difficult to keep people within the boundaries of the kahiko. The standard defense against criticism is who's to say what are the boundaries?

So <sup>WHERE</sup> ~~where~~ are the role models in our society? People are making money off the culture and what is being done to prevent it? In a Western context you would expect a professional elite to come forward and chastise someone for not being competent but that is simply not the style of the Hawaiian society. In order to make them publicly criticize someone you are forcing them to become Western. There are some Indian cultures that throw their blankets over their heads whereas the Western style is to confront. If you notice in any Hawaiian activity if the Hawaiians don't approve of something they simply do not participate. Instead of criticizing we should be making Hawaiian companies, Hawaiian enterprises, Hawaiian corporations but we have more sympathizers than doers. When people see that there is no discipline or responsibility by government officials, Hawaiian leaders and the media, they just withdraw further.

The problem today is that we are trying to take a unique cultural art form and strain it through a sieve that is the Western perspective and context. There are many facets of the hula that simply cannot be understood and categorized in a Western context.



Tita Louise Malama Beamer

Malama

In the end the hula ia is not an expression of the culture, it is the culture. When I participated in the women's conference in Hilo they asked me if I had ever experienced an identity crisis in terms of being a woman and being a Hawaiian. I just a had to laugh at that and say no I haven't and the reason that I haven't is because my family has been so involved in the culture and the arts.

I was three-years-old and I was wearing a kikepa becasuse I was dancing hula. The hula expresses the self-determination of the Hawaiian people to survive.

In my era

In my grandmother's era, in my mother's era in my own era, the culture has been experiencing a tremendous transition. There was a tremendous outside pressure to be Western, to be American. There was pressure from the Oriental immigration to change as well. It was the hula that kept the sanity because you could be expressive. Art forms are always acceptable be the dominating culture. Hawaiian music and dance really has been an identity for the Hawaiian people. It was an outlet where we were allowed to be Hawaiian. In this area it was socially acceptable. But I feel the hula that we see today is an exaggeration. I feel saddened by the present situation of the hula. It has become tremendously commercialized and an exaggeration of the Hawaiian culture. My mother when she danced used one ti leaf skirt for a 45 minute performance. Before the emphasis was on the art form not the costuming. When you saw a halau you could tell it was Henry Pa or Beamer or Kanakaole because the differences were so tremendous and that was the strength and power of the community. But now what I see is a total standardization.

In grandma's era and when mama was dancing the majority of the audience still spoke the Hawaiian language. In other words they knew what was going on. The Pele chants which are the traditional chants, they are almost like the epic stories in Greek mythology. The past audience had seen it 5million times but everyone was eager to see it again. Because it was a different interpretation of the character.

When Mama got involved she really started to push the kahiko in the Beamer halau. She and her brother Clayton. What was acceptable in Grandma's time was the modern hula.

Tita

You folks have to remember that everything was changing with the influx of foreigners and Waikiki was the only outlet. In order for hula to survive, my mother along with my grandmother decided that the hula would have to be made available to everybody. And so hula must be taken out of the home and the family. It must be put where everyone could come and pay a very nominal fee. Like anything else in life if it is free people don't appreciate. We made it available to the people because we felt if we taught the keiki well then they would grow up and always have a love for culture and for Hawaii.

Malama

Our halau is based on kukakuka. You just don't go out there and do your own thing. In other words we are accountable to each other. My choreography is accountable to my mother and my grandmother. That's how the Merry Monarch started it was just a hoike, just an expression of sharing. And all of a sudden it's turned into a competition.

Tita

What happened there was that the Hawaiians themselves would not participate in just the sharing.

Malama

Especially the Hawaiians from Oahu.

Tita

Everyone that you work with you work towards their best and that's the best. I think it's wrong to pick one dancer or one group out of everyone and say this is the best.

Louise



Louise

Mother Beamer was my first kumu. She taught me everyting. Mothedr asked me if I wanted to learn hula kapu and Itold hr her I wasn't sure. She told me that I had to be sure because if I went into the hula kapu and didn't abide by the ak kapu system either myself or my parents would suffer. So I went through the process of learning the hula kapu but I chose never to teach it. Mother Beamer always taught at Eighth Avenue in Kaimuki at grandma's home. All the young ladies would come to learn. She would teach there when she came to visit from Hilo and there would be 25-30 young women dancing in the living romm. Now Mahi's mother and I , the two daughters-in-law would t stand in the backline and the ote others would be in the front and that's how I really got started. So I went through the process of learning the hula kapu but I just haven't taught it.

Malama

It's just like ma'i hulaas. We don't teach the mai hula because it is grandmas feeling that it is reserved for the older type person. It is a very persoal hula not meant to show everybody.

Before the hula was a x socializationm of the art but now you got to these fstivals and the feeling is totally different. Before each kumu had their own manao but there was a real feeling of togerhthereness and a lot of hugging and kissing. When I went to this last festival everybody was in their own little corner they didn't even co cl cross over their little territorial lines. There used to be a feeeling of lokahi and kakoo, if you didn if you needed sm omeone to chant or to play music or to dance each halau would borrow from the other. But the new way today seems to be professional separatism. There is no sense of sharing, there is no sesns of interdependence anymore. This notion is very white, it is non-Hawaiian.

From that day on our halau has never participated in these festivals because you and your dancers are forced to compete everywhich way. Does are art have to be subject to that? Hula has become a side job to the people of today. The people of the past, that's how they made their livning.

Tita

Where does hula go from here? Where do we take hula from here in this Fifth generation. You have these young people who are doing it now and I guess they think they are doing hula. But for the old-timers who have dedicated themselves to the art what is this dance they are doing?

Hula is not just an expression of the culture it is the culture and what is happenning today is that people are changing the hula and in fact are changing the culture. Unfortunately we will find out that it's much easier to change the culture than to preserve it.

Unfortunately we will find out in the fututre that it's much harder to take back these changes ~~than that have been made~~ than it was to

In the costuming we never wore the hula skirts at the height they are today.

Malama

There are only a certain number of steps to the kahiko so where do kumu become creative? They become creative in the manifestation of the art which is costuming. My god some halaus look like Africans gyrating up there. I see that as the new contemporary in put into the art form.

The irony of it all is that there are facets of the hula today that is totally contrary to the Hawaiian culture. In terms of costuming you didn't go out and rape the forests for palapalai but that's what they do today to gather greens that will be used for one or two performances. They take much more than is needed.

Tita

A few years back I was severely criticized fr having Japanese girls dance. You take a girl like we do from five years old and train her until eighteen. She can come from any walk of life but she will know as much about the hula as any other dancer. So why shouldn't she dance..

Malama

It is an exposure to a different lifestyle. Parents will call up and say that exposure has brought the childd out of their shell.

Tita

The Japanese girls have their culture and so they are very respectful and mindful of our culture. And so their parents expose the children to our culture. We have some Japanese girsl that are just beautiful in our hula.



Tita tita

I got a lot of pressure d not to dance girls in festivals because they were not Hawaiian. We are tatraining the children of all backgrounds to speak an up and be counted. To be proud of yoruself and where you are from.

In our time we have everybody but the Hawaiians coming to learn because they think they alreacy know how to do it. Then all of a sudden they realized that they beter go and learn. We don't teach everybody. We do not appeal to everybody but it s is up to the student and to the parents and to the kupuna to get something out of every teacher that the child goes to. Every kumu has something to offer.

Malama

What is interesting is tathat the grandparents of our students are of all different races but the Hawaiian culture was so stran ong strong in the past that many of them speak Hawiaiiian fluently. They are 75 and older. They grew up among Hawaiians and worked with Hawiians. I think this is especially so in on the Big Island. If you are working in Hookena where the majority speak Hawaiian what are you going to do. And they are proud of this.

Tita

Before when the keiki came to grandma for hula the mama didn't stand there and sya do you want to have hula laesssons? The motheres would just drop the keiki off and that was it.

Malama

When grandma and mama taught their word was the law, you never questioned what they said. But now the students seem to questoion everything. Your'e dealing with a totally different temperament where parents and kids think they know as much or more than the teacher.

Hula has always had a stigma of not being academic, not being erespected.

I think there has been a push in my generation to push the repsect of the hula forward as a legitimate art.

Tita

When we were brought up in Hawaii you just didn't come home from school and go and tell you're mother and father that you didn't like the teacher. If anybody was wrong it was you not the teacher. Discipline has really deteriorated.

I've taught for over 30 years and grandma has taught for over 50 years. At 55 I'm really stepping back because I cannot understand the disrespect of this new world.

Malama

The problem with the hula is that so little of the knowledge was ever written down so it is difficult to keep people within the kahiko. The standard defense against criticism is who's to say? An example today is that everyone is claiming Autny Iolani Luahine as their kumu hula but aunty never really taught anyone except Hoakaleei Kamaau. The reason we don't participate in any of the hula seminars is that the kumu of today come with their tape recorders and steal the manao of the kumu on the panel. We have gone to festivals and end up seeing our routines being performed onstage.

The reason that these public seminars and conferences to that involve kupuna don't work is that the structure of the Hawaiian society is not set up to be a pbulic display. Manao is shared but it is done prigat privately and only among the kupuna.

I will come out and say things becasue I come from a different culture than grandma and mama came from. The only way these seminars will work is if you include everyone from the kupuna to the young people. But if you have only grandmas generation up on stage they will never say publclly what they say to each ohter privately. They will say everyone has their own ma omanao. They are not trying to be uncommittal but that is what they truly believe. They believe it because in the world that they came from the culture, the kumu, and the hyla could survive that way. In my grandma's time you just didn't think of appearing onstage after a few hula lessons.

Louise

When I opened my stuidio in Waikiki in 1934. There were three of us teaching, myself, Lydia Bray, and Dorothy Cmapbell.

Tita

My first kumu was my mother. This was when I was a keiki. We learned auwana and akhiko. We would spend the summers on the Big Island and we would be taught by my great-grandmother Helen Desha Baamanm. ~~amwamomamfrommamfaimmitynmfingGrandmanMahan~~  
~~DeshapmGneatmggrandmsamHahandDeshap~~

So we come from a family of Great grandma Isabella Desha, grandma Helen Desha, ,other Louise Walker.

Louise



Louise

I got started when Mama Beamer told me you know Lu, you beetter b come out and do your hula. I wasn't keen about the idea in the very beginning. Mama told me she needed help teaching because she always had big classes.

I wasn't too keen about it because there was a lot of competition between one of my sister-in-laws. So I told Mama I would teach anyway and all the young ladies would come when Mama would come to Honolulu and they would learn at the house on Eight Avenue. There would be 25-30 ladies in the room.

I was 19-20 years old at the time.

I think Heln Helen desha was one of tehmost kindest persons I've ever met.

Tita

I think you have to understand the structure of the family. My grandmother took on my mother because she knew the language fluently and because she was kind herself. My grandmother just didn't take on someone for no reason. The Beamers were happy because she did right by the hula and she never hanaunu the art.

Louise

Mama had a very beautiful way of teaching. She always told me, You know I Lu you always have to be aware of how your are teaching. You always have to tach teach your students the way you wanted would want to betaught. What she meant was you had to god down to the elvel level of each student. Sometimes I would teach a student soemthing and thae they would get it right away. But in the next class another student might not get it at all. I always remembered what she told me and I would ahve to go home and figure out ~~anyway or how I could~~ anothaer way for her. Mama Beamer told me that there's always a reason why the child understands and doesn't understand and it's an excuse to brand the child as stupid.

She always told me that when you perform the hulas you always want to portray out the best side and the good side. The other side never. You just keep that to yourself. In other words you don't even do naughty hulas. So she would interpret the hulas exactly what it was so that I would know. Mama would not let many things out and what she did let out she let out through me.

Malama

I think what has been very very important is that the men in our family have been behind the women 100 percent. The male role in our family was to help gather the greens and support the halau's efforts. I started teaching hula when I was fourteen. At nineteen I took a two week workshop with Henry pa that was only for kumu and ti was totally different from the teaching within the family that I had been getting.

I took a short workshop with Uncle Henry. His view of the arts was that it was a discipline. There was almost a militancy to his teaching. In his halau he would always say the iupu was the boss. The lesson that he taught me and that his has stayed with me was that when you go into another person's halau you have to leave every other teacher you've had behind. You have to be totally humble to the halau you are at. The Beamer way is not the only way just as the Pa way is not the only way. We just have to respect each other's differences.



Louise

I opened my studio in Waikiki in 1934 right next to the Kodak Hawaii Building. I guess I began to teach because as my sister-in-law and I attended class after class I became interested in hula. It got so that I enjoyed it. I really enjoyed it. I remember several times that Sweetheart Grandma had classes ha at Punahou School.

Tita

She only taught there when she came to visit from the Big Island. The governors wife. The governoer at the time was Frier and his wife was a dillingham. She and my grandmother were dear friends and that's how this class at Punahou was put together.

Louise

So grandma told me that she wanted me to take over the classes at Punahou for her. I told her I didn't know how to teach. I didn't believe in myself and have the confidence in msyself to be a teachr but she told me I did ~~nadmnandnongonnm~~ and that's how I started tot teach.

Tita

Grandma only came back to the Big Island when she knew she had my mother to take over the classes at Punahou.

Malama

Just as it was for Hulali and I the older generation has to step back and let the next generation come forward, My grandmother is very strict. I remember Hulali complaining that grandma is always at the practices pointing out every little mistake. I remember grandma making us do one number twenty times.

Tita

Now Hulali's feeling is that as long as the dancer and thea u s audience gets the full feeling and di idea of the dance and the chant then the basics don't have to be perfect.. Now they have taught me this and we have made grandma aware of it.

Tita

Malama

I think the reason the hula has become so standardized is that the teachers of today don't have a family background and structure to draw from.

Tita

When I was going to Kamehameha we always danced. My mother did the first Kodak hula show when we were keikis. My mother also did the first Aloha Week at Ala Moana Park and we were d the dancers. We always shared whether they were able to pay or not we would accept.

Malama

At the same token to in my mother's generation everything was donated when you performed so you didn't really a have to worry aboutgetting payed. Anytime you danced the standard was that you got fed. Plus you could get all your fo flowers free.

Tita

We did a few sitting hulas at Kamehameha but hula was really a no-no. Our perpetuation has really survived through our music at Kamehameha. Mother started teaching when she was nineteen. I started when I was seventeen and have been dancing since I was two which is forever. Starting at 17-18 wh was when I got out of Kamehameha and went away to school. I came from Hawaii and I was a Hawaiian girl and I wnewent to the Colllege of the Pacifc in California. And at the YWCA they put togeter a Hawaiian program and I was asked to go and teach. I was asked to go down and teach the fgirls so I taught easy hal haole hula. I wanted them to have a little bit of Hawaii. I would come back during the summers I would help my mom at the studio. But I had Hulai and Malma start teaching earlier.

Malama

My sister and I were startded dancing as soon as we could walk. My first pervformance I was two years old. I think it's unfortunate that we've been sold a stereotype f of what a Hawaiian should look like. What people are selling in the tourist industry are hula girls in bikini's and scanty sarongs. That is the image of Hawaii.

Tita The tahitian that I saw ehni it was first introduced to the islands was a very lovely dance.

Malama

When I came in that 's when they started to commercialize it. The push became Polynesian dancing in order for you to get d jobs and the emphasis became on Tahitian because of the costuming drumming and the hip movement. Then it became you not only needed a show that had hula, and tahitian but you had to have modern dance and all of this is h what has really destroyed the hula.



Malam

This is why you no longer see the hula in it's corect form today. You have dancers who are modern dancers n first mixing it with the hula.

Tita

I cannot even see the performnace today because t of the costume. What depresses me is that the leading Hawaiian enetertainers are at the forefront of sellingthsi this image of Hawaii that is humiliating to our culture.

Malama

The problem too was if a Hawaiian wasn't willing to compromise they could easily bring in a fl filipino or japanaese to do the dance and sell them off as being hawaiian.

Tita

I have to say this that the hawaiians were doing it too.

Malama

If you go to Waikiki today you'll see that it's dominated by ohter Polynesian dances. IN a revue you'll see maybe two hulas. But this is all economics and this is what has destroyed the hula. What the heck is it worth keeping something if it's not saleable.

Tita

Grandma and I have to believe that the hula as we have done it is in good hands as we have perpetuated it as we have taught it. I don't know about hula as a whole and I think it's something that people shoudl be worried about. and be very careful about.

Malama

Where are the role models in our society. People are making money off the culture and what is being done. The Hawaiians aren't v even the ones making money. Instead of criticizing we should be making Hawaiian companies but unfortunately there are more sympathizers than doers. when people see that there is no discipline or responsibility by government officals, hawaiian leaders, and ~~withhensmthey~~ the media they just withdraw even futrther. The fact remanins is that people are selling are culture . What

Tita

What is being slold today is not hula, it is only promotion. Unfortunately there are teachers in the hula today that are ~~perpetuating~~ doing the same thing. What they are perpetuating has nothing to do with the hula. When you confront them thy rattle off their kumu and what can you say.

Malama

The problem today is that we are trying to take a unique cultural art form and strain it through a sieve that is the Western perspective and context. there are many facets of the hula that simply cannot be understood and categorized in a Western context. In a western cnontext you would expect a professional elite to come forward and chastise someone for not ~~remaining~~ being competent but that is simply not the style of the hawaiian society. In order to make them do that to criticize someone publicly you are forcing them to become a Westerner. I f you notice in any Hawaiian activity if the hawaiians don't approve of somehting they simply do not participate. There are some Indian cultures that throw their blankets over their heads whereas the western style is to confront.

Louise

I think the greatest sc sacrifice for me is that I was working so much I couldn't spend a lot of time with my children. In those days I used to work in hula from 7 in the morning till 7 at night. I would close my studio door and drive home and there was so much joy for me to open the door and come home to my children. I had a japanese f girl who took care of the kids and diid some of the k cooking and cleaning and she was a beautiful girl. That was the best time of day for me.

Tita

It is an indescribable feeling of your body coming together with all the chants, and the music. And to be able to take that feeling and share it with the keikis. You always have to keep in mind that we are taking the Hawaiian lifestyle and sharing it with these keikis who are coming form all different backgrounds and hopefully they will blend it with their own. It might be a morning that I would feel a little down and I would get ready to go to the stuido. You know when I got to that su tudio and I would turn on the Victorola I would forget everything outsiede.and whatever the problems might have been. Suddenly my whole life would be inside that studio. I just enjoyed it so. I've always loved the two traditional hulas kawika and Liliu E You can't hl help but love the king and queen of Hawaii. The royalty is the basis for everything.



ita

I have the greatest respect for a kumu hula who knows who is an authentic resource.

Louise

Mother Beamer had her own way of teaching. She didn't do too much dancing for you or with you. She got up and showed you one time and that was it. When she taught auwana she would sit at the piano and play it one time and that was it. You would listen one time and then you would have to get up and do it all. I consider authentic hula to be very simple and subtle. The subtler the better. The knees should always be drawn up rather than outward and the dance should project the words and the chant not the other way around.

TV



Malama

Spirituality is the essence. The strength of our halau is that we learned to kukakuka each other. We realize that individually we are not all things. You want to be culturally coorrect. In order to be culturally correct you have to understand the characters you are portraying.

You can get into very long discussions about the travels of Pele which is very important to us. Who was Pele and in our mythology we know that she's a woman. We know she had a temper but she also had a very loving nature. She is also responsible for creating new aina which is very female. What we see here in the Hawaiian community is that females play a very important part as far as the leadership roles but they are still rooted to this earth.

What allows Hulali and I to work together is that my mother never pitted us against each other. and my grandmother always had the final word in the hula. So many times a family can be torn apart by artistic competition.

Tita

The influence that mama had on me was the quiet and beauty of the art. Now my grandmother Hlelen Desha did not have that soft way like my mother. My mother really showed us an inner beauty. The hula was something very special and we had to take care. Two years old we were just put in the class. Mother, Nona and I were all in that backline. Wwe just didn't dare fail.

Maybe Grandma is in the kitchen mixing poi and I'm making a salad I don't want to make but it's important to give the next generation theri own crdeative time. Our generation cannot be creative forever.

After awhile we are invited in to see the new dance. Then we we see it again and again. Then we have our a say of what we like.

Malama

What it becomes is an end product actually of three generations. It really saddens me that I don't have time for the arts because of my involvement with politics today. Orour family doesn't compromise. We stick together as a tea m. You have to be willing to pay the price of not conforming and we are willing to do it. Today the prob lem is that there is too much conformity. The hula is losing the individuality of the past where therew would be one chanter and one dancer. Today you need a small army up there.

~~Malama~~ Louise

I'm from the old-school and when tita told me that it was time to let the girls take over the studio I didn't want to. But I realize that I have to give it now while I'm here. I tuaght at home first in Alewa Guegg Heights. We had a million dollar view we were up on the hieghts and below us was the Alewa Heights park so we could see way down to Pealr Harbor. We had a vr very long porch. I think our veranda was like 28 feet. long. And that's where the lclasses were held. It was a beatifl beautiful spot and I tuaght there for 4 or 5 yaears.