

PULUELO PARK

Puluelo Park was born in Hoesa, Kohala and moved to Watertown, Oahu at the age of 9. She established the Pumehana Hula Studio in 1952 and currently resides in Kailua, Oahu.

I remember one ^{day} time when I was a little girl I went shopping with my mother down on Fort Street. I heard a man's voice chanting and I followed it to the old Princess Theatre. I sat inside that dark theatre for hours listening to a man who turned out to be Tom Hiona while my mother was going crazy outside looking for me.

I never did like the hula. My mother was against it because of the rituals and my Dad was a musician so the emphasis in my family was more on music. My children are half-Korean and I felt that their Hawaiian side would be neglected if I wasn't able to teach them. So in 1950 at the age of 30 I began to train under Lokalia Montgomery in Kapahulu on Charles Street.

A usual class with Lokalia would begin with a talk session. She would tell me the story background and meaning of the particular mele we were going to learn that day. There was no sense of rush like today where we want the children to learn as much as possible in a certain amount of time. Not those days. She would chant the first three lines of the mele and I would repeat the lines. After every three lines she would stop and give deeper explanations of each line and we would not go onto a new portion of the mele until I was comfortable with the first. My training with Lokalia was mostly kahiko and she said that her line was from tutu Keaka Kanahele and Mary Pukui.

I stayed with Lokalia for two years and then went onto Kathy Nakaula with whom I studied under for a year and three months. Aunty Kathy was akuahu teacher who taught me ritual dances. Aunty Kathy was much different from Lokalia. She had been brought into the hula ~~from~~ from childhood and she was not so concerned about your posture. Her great emphasis was on the placement of the feet and hands. Lokalia always worried about how you stood and how you presented yourself. Aunty Kathy was more interested in how you put your dance across. so I learned the dances immediately on the floor. *Motions & gestures of Kathy under*

Lokalia had a tremendous influence on me. She made us keep our heads up, and we danced proudly. She was always so calm and collected and she taught me to respect who I was. *(It was she who encouraged me to open my hula)*

Some Hula kahiko today *even resembles the* looks like martial arts and you cannot blame the dancers. The older kumu have to step forward and draw the line of what is traditional. Today's judges are rewarding dancers based on the reaction of the crowd. There is so much doubt today because the majority of us *don't* know what *are not* directly *connected with* went on in the old days.

Today's training emphasizes more physical expression of the ideas in the mele because *some* the hula audience of today doesn't know the hula. The hula audience of old was made up of people who knew the hula and knew the language so the gestures of the dancers could be more subtle. Today's kahiko is what the modern audience wants but it is *to be* not *necessarily* the hula of old. Each kumu in the past had their own style and you didn't see it mixed with other cultures like it is today. Lokalia taught me that the old way is not the only way and that as a teacher you must be creative but I feel this creativity has gotten out of hand.

I had a hard time training for it and I can't believe it is my favorite mele but I've grown to love Kaulilua. My advice to the students is not to put the hula in a position of ridicule.. The hula is more than just words on a sheet of mimeographed paper and you cannot just abuse it.. Respect yourself and the things you do because you are not alive for nothing.

Pulueleo park

I never did like the hula. My mother was against it because of the rituals and my Dad was a musician so my family always thought I would be a musician. I became interested at the age of 30 not before then. I liked hula yes and did it when I was young but it was at 30 that I really wanted to get into it. My children are half-Korean and at that time I had one daughter so I felt I should get into the hula so that their Hawaiian background wasn't neglected. My Korean in-laws like all orientals wanted their children to learn the Korean culture. My mother-in-law wanted them to learn the Korean side and not so much the Hawaiian and I took it as an insult. So it made me really go out and learn the Hawaiian culture so I could instill it in my child.

I studied with Lokalia Montgomery for two years. Her kumu were Tutu Keaka Kanahele and Mrs. Pukui. ~~She taught in Kapahulu on Charles Street and I was taught mostly kahiko. She was strict when it came down to classes because we were not there to play around.~~ A usual class would begin with her telling us about the particular song we were going to learn that day. She would tell us what it was all about, and how it should be done. It was really a talk session first. Then she would show me since it was private lessons the beat of the pahu and of course there would be voice training as well for chanting. The talk session would last 15-20 minutes, then she would take five minutes to chant the mele then I would have to chant the mele with her and then go into the rest of the lessons. We would continue to work on just a small part of the chant until I felt confident in it. There was no sense of rush like today where we want the children to learn as much as they can in a certain time. Not those days. You had to learn first how to start each particular chant. For every three lines of the mele there would be a story for why it was that way. There were no papers made up for us explaining the history of a particular chant. It was told to us and that's the difference from today's classes and her teachings. In those days they had tape recorders but we were never allowed to bring one into class. I remember one morning I brought a recorder and she took one look at it and said what do you have there. I was having hard time memorize her voice so I told her it was a recorder. She said you will learn it the way it's learned here. During and after class I constantly had to be picturing her chanting in order to remember what she was teaching. At that age of 30 it took me a long time to learn that one chant. I wanted to quit. Just to learn that first chant made me feel like crying. I didn't realize to be a hula instructor you had to go through all of these things. The lessons would last two hours every other day, and we would pay 125 dollars a year.

I went on after that to Katie Makaula. Kathy was a kuahu teacher. She taught more in ritual dancing. It was very interesting and I liked it, but my parents didn't. I studied with Auntie Kathy ~~was~~ for about a year and three months. She mentioned to me that she, Iolani, and Lokalia were olapa dancers at one time. She had a close association with Iolani. It never dawned on the dancers students of those days to question their kumu on who were their kumu. For Lokalia it was a new thing where with Iolani and Auntie Kathy they were brought into the hula from childhood. This is why Auntie Kathy knew much about Iolani's style of dancing. Kathy was much different from Lokalia. She was not so concerned about the posture of the body and whether you slouched or not. The great emphasis was on the position of the feet and the hands. Lokalia always worried about your posture, how you stood and how you presented yourself, how you groomed yourself. Auntie Kathy was more interested in how you put your dance across. And so you learned the dances immediately on the floor, whereas with Lokalia I ~~was~~ was trained more as a hoopaa, sitting and learning step by step each level, and once I had learned the chant and the poi then I would be allowed to rise and learn the dance. I feel Lokalia was my greatest influence as a teacher. I liked her style of dancing, I liked the way she made us keep our heads up. We danced proudly and each motion we made was meaningful. There was so much superstition with Auntie whereas Lokalia was more open and free. She was always calm and collected and she spoke forthrightly and was always teaching us to respect what we were.

I remember one time when I was a little girl I went shopping with my mother down on Fort Street, I heard a man's voice chanting and I followed it to the Gold Princess Theatre. I sat inside that dark theatre for hours listening to a man who turned out to be The Tantrums while my mother was going crazy outside looking for.

I began to teach because I had my children and I wanted them exposed to their Hawaiian side. My husband till this day disapproves because he feels a person has to work to make a good living and the hula will never supply the children with a good living so it is a waste of time. To me it's not so much the ~~money~~ but culture.

Auntie Kathy was a relative of my mine and she wanted to teach me so there was no cash charge. I started to go to Auntie Kathy about the same time I was with Lokalia.. I learned that these two friends who at one time had been dear friends were now enemies so I didn't tell them that I was going to the both of them. I know Lokalia knew because my steps were in a different way sometimes when I got up to dance and she would say who taught you that. I uniki went through an uniki with Auntie Kathy but my mother stopped me from going through any rituals.

The hula put a great strain on my marriage and I was willing to go through a divorce to stay with the hula. When I was finished with Lokalia she told me that I was ready to open a halau and that I should use my home and place address in the paper. I lived in Palao Palolo at that time so I started with 5 students who were mostly family that came from Waimanalo. I got an offer to bring a my ~~daughters~~ dancers to a hotel for my first job and I was so happy. But the strain of performing took me away from the house and soon my husband made me quit. I got a job teaching at the business college and for seven years I just helped other people and tended my family. One day my husband told me to quit my job and go back to hula. I really didn't want to go back because it had caused so much trouble but he insisted. At that time we were living in Hauula so I started small just to get back into it. I was still teaching at the business college so he told me to quit my job and he would find me a better studio nearer to town and he would ~~help~~ let me go out on jobs again.

Performing at the Merry Monarch gave me great joy because I was able to present to my home town my hula teachings and my students. I think losing my grandchild was the lowest point in my life and it made me question my career and the demands of my career. But the LiKeiki Hula Competition gave me a goal to come back

I think a great problem today is that the judges within the competitions are not knowledgeable and they are choosing halaus based on the reactions of the crowd. Today's kahiko resemble calisthenics more than dancing. Traditional kahiko accomplishes more with less motion and conveys more feeling. The reason is the audience of the past understood the language more. Hula kahiko today looks like martial arts and you cannot blame these dancers. It's the judges that have to know and have to draw the line. This ~~is~~ must be what the audience wants but this is not the hula of old and I have seen the hula of old.

Each one had their styles and the audience could tell when a person got up to dance whether they were dancing the hula or not. You didn't see it mixed like it is today with other cultural influences. There's so much doubt today and nobody knows what is the true kahiko hula because we do have resources that know what the hula is but their no judging like that. It's how the crowd judges the dancers, it's how much the dancers wow the crowd. I cannot say that these changes are changes for the worse but I do know that the kahiko of today does not look very much Hawaiian. Today's training emphasizes more expression physical expression of the ideas in the mele. The hula audience of old was made up of people who knew the hula and knew the language so the gestures could be subtle ~~and~~.

I had a hard time training for it and I can't believe it is my favorite mele but I love Kaulilua. My advice to people in the hula is don't abuse the hula. Don't put it in a position of ridicule. The hula is more than just words on a paper mimeographed paper. Respect yourself and the things you do because you are not alive for nothing.

The old way does not mean it is the only correct way. Lokalia taught me as a teacher you must be creative. We don't really know what went on in the old days. There are aspects of modern hula kahiko today that are better than what we've recovered about the old hula. ~~What~~ is only what they

~~I remember one day as a young girl I went to shop with my mother downtown at Fort Street Mall. I lost her in a crowd and ended up at the doorway of the Princess Theatre walking into the Princess Theatre where there was a man sitting on the stage~~

~~As we walked along the street I heard the voice of a man chanting and I followed it till I found myself in the Princess Theatre. On the stage was a man I sat in the darkness for hours listening to the man chant as my mother went crazy trying to find me. The man was Tom Hiona.~~

I began teaching in '52. I went to Lokalia in '50 at age 30.