

Nana I na Loea Hula
Kumu Hula: Beverly Muraoka
Interviewer: Lovina Le Pendu
Date: 9/10/93

Full given name Beverly Healani Sun Lan Apana Muroka. (FOR THE BOOK?) (WHERE DO YOU TEACH?) I teach in Lihue and Kapa'a, for Lihue in the Community Center and in Kapa'a at my home... (NAME OF YOUR HALAU?) Healani Hula Halau and Music Academy. (WHY THAT NAME?) When we were thinking about names I felt something simple and since I was going to be the one teaching I felt it would be ok! To name it after me.

(TEACH KAHIKO AND AUANA?) Yes! (OLI?) Yes! I mean I don't have a special oli class for oli but only when we have an occasion that I will teach it in a special way. (HOW MANY YEARS YOU HAVE BEEN TEACHING?) I guess over 20 years... (AGE OF YOUR STUDENTS?) They range from 4 and my oldest is 65.

(WHAT AGE DID YOU LEARN HULA?) When I was 8 years old. (YOUR FIRST KUMU HULA?) Kuchi Kuhns, she came to Kaua'i and she taught us in the Kapa'a LDS gym - she was a Polynesian entertainer and a teacher apparently she must have been really happy in her day she came to Kauai and she came to ask me my mother for my sister Lovey and Myself to go and dance so that's why we went other wise we probable never gotten started. How she found out about us I don't know she might have been told. (HOW LONG?) About 1957 to about 1961. (WHAT DID YOU LEARN WITH HER?) Kahiko and auana in the auana that's where we learn our implements. (DID YOU KNOW IF SHE HAD A KUMU?) NO! I was too young, those days we did not ask. I think she came from Honolulu.. I am not too sure. (DO YOU REMEMBER IF SHE HAD A SPECIAL STYLE?) Yes, Aunty was known for her comedy, she was a fiesty hula teacher she loved fast numbers and she the first song that we learned was "hula lolo" and "tutu e" and "princess pupule" those kind of numbers lot of "hapa haole" songs. (ENTERTAINMENT?) Yes, we started

at the Kauai Inn which is the progenitor for Western Kauai and then she took us to "Club Jettly" which now no longer exists. (DID SHE HAVE A HALAU?) If I recall the most we had was like about 10 in a class and I know one of her alaka'i was Henry Taesa, he also had a halau in Kauai although now he is a studying priest he was a famous dancer with her.

(ANOTHER TEACHER AFTER HER?) Yes, well we rested after Auntie left Kaua'i she was not feeling well so she discontinued that, we rested and we joined the Mormon choir so I learned under the tutorship of Jane Kinager and her daughter Marilyn Inoa Goo we perform there from 1964-1981, learning hula, I was the hula dancer... We learn kahiko and auana, but through them I learn to dance the slow dance and that's what I am known for when people see me dance, almost always they have never seen a dancer move as slow as I can. (A SPECIAL STYLE THEY TAUGHT?) NO! I embraced it I guess maybe the loving way they taught I was able to embrace it and it just became a part of me, so almost always whenever I dance I have been known to be, how shall I say, not bragging or anything, but the smoothest slowest dancer..

(AFTER THERE?) Not really!... But I learn a little bit from Auntie Sally Wood Nalua'i, and in the mean time I became associated with Auntie Genoa Keawe so she would always give me instruction like honey! I like your iawehe so we should do it or correct my ka'o uwehe, not correcting me but correcting my instructions. (WHERE DID YOU MEET AUNTIE SALLY?) I met her through my sister Lovey, from the Polynesian Center, we entertain there in 1960's. Lovey was attending church College of Hawaii and Auntie was the Hawaiian instructor. I did take 1 or 2 classes, and like I said Auntie Genoa she and I used to communicate about our hula. (DID YOU UNIKI?) For the sense of the word uniki, NO! Except Auntie Kuchi who gave me a certificate. (HOW DID YOU GET THE CERTIFICATE?) She just gave us a certificate that one time that was it. She gave only to special people.

(WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO BE A TEACHER?) Well, as I mentioned a little earlier my

hula style is known for my slow dancing, so a lot of people was asking me to teach, but I was working for the government and so I couldn't do both and then my sister Lovey, who owned the halau would call me to come and help her entertain, so while entertaining she ask for my assistance she was progressing with her illness a lot of people then turn to me and ask Auntie would you teach, and I said no, I wouldn't never teach, if Auntie Lovey is still teaching is not right for two sisters on the same island to compete so when she totally left the hula and people were still bugging me to teach them. I consented I said I'll try. I was teaching in Honolulu hit that was little bit home kind. Saturday, Sunday but now I left the government and I embraced it. (HOW DO YOU DESCRIBE YOUR DANCING STYLE?) Well, I guess I am known to be a slow dancer, I like the soft style, I didn't like things that are rough. I don't like jumpy, I guess you might say, I am from the old school, we move slow... (IS IT FROM PAST TEACHERS?) It is my own style.

(YOUR MOST JOY IN TEACHING?) When I can take a student that had no rythm and with the years they have been with me I can play any song, they can keep up with the rythm and retain the motions and only tell them one time that's the most joy I get... In another words you see an ugly duckling turning into a swan. (DID YOU ENCOUNTER ANY DIFFIULTIES DURING YOUR CARRERR?) Yes, you know we have unfortunately a lot of people who are very interested in the hula, maybe not able to do the things we might hae thought of it so yoiu have to deal with a lot of. I hate to say, the word "jealous", Oh! When ever we prepared to enter any kind of competition, you find a lot of obstacles you have to over come, but I guess that's part of the cost. Everything can't be smooth, all the way and nothing good come from sitting down you have to work hard at it.

(YOUR GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT?) Well, up until this point, I guess winning the Merry Monarch we took Auntie Lovey's name but I was the teacher and we won there and I guess

you might say having my hula girls go to the different contest and become, declared the winners like miss hula halau, miss aloha hula or whatever and on the other hand the greatest accomplishments is I have allowed handicapped children to my halau and see them be able to coordinate their motions. We have deaf, the downsyndrome and when I can see them dance, it gives me great joy.

(ARE YOU GOING TO UNIKI YOUR STUDENTS?) Yes, in a few more years, I have at least one I am going to uniki. (WHAT YOU EXPECT FROM THEM?) My halau I guess is in a way based on love and forgiveness and that's what I expect my alaka'i or ho'o'pa'a which I intend to uniki to promises the same thing this love and ability to withstand any obstacles that may come her way. (WHAT KIND OF ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO A KUMU HULA TO BECOME?) She has to have the ability to forgive when you can forgive, you demonstrate Christ like love and when you demonstrate Christ, like love for them the world is a better place.

(HULA HAS CHANGED?) Definety, unfortunately, to me the hula that I see today is kind of messed up, you are not really to sure when you see some students they are dressed anciently dancing modern or they are just modern dancing anciently something it can be confusing, you don't know what is what, where is where, even their adornmetns is confusing when we were growing up we were only told greens. Today you see "babies breath" you see all these modern flowers, all in thier hair, if they are dancing anciently it is confusing.... (YOUR DEFINITION OF HULA KAHIKO?) I would say hula kahiko would be the simple style of the interprtive not making it so flamboyant but how the old hawaiian would have told a story they would not been jumping all over the place. If they told you about a mountain they make their hands go higher, but they wouldn't have to jump up to tell you it was a mountain, so hula kahiko to me would be keeping it simple and soft and yet still interpreting the story... (WHAT DO YOU THINK OF HULA KAHIKO TODAY?) Well, as I said, the hula kahiko of today to me very few are hanging on to what

I know it to be, unfortunately there is always the case where if you don't follow suit then you are what they call a bore, it is boring. You know what I mean it is not the culture because if you went to New Zealand or Tahiti you saw those cultures what they consider ancient you look at it that's boring. But it isn't because that's the true way.

(DO YOU PREFER HULA KAHIKO OR AUANA?) Auana definitely Auana. (A FAVORITE SONG?) No, I love them all, but I guess I will be prejudice to the song that I danced to so that would be "Naupaka" (SPECIAL MEMORY?) Yes! I guessed because I danced it since at Coco Palms so I have been dancing that song for over 30 years, they probably think that's the only song that Auntie Bev knows which is true..NO. (IT IS LIKE A MARK FOR YOU?) Yes... (KAHIKO FAVORITE?) I guess when I was young I would suppose the two combinations "Lilui e" and "Kawika" one for king one for queen. (THAT REMINDS YOU?) my first hula.

(HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE IN HULA IMPORTANT?) Yeah.. Well it is the mean by which we can interpret our story and the language is the beauty of the song of the mele if you are teaching hawaiian if you are teaching english then the tune is important but if you are teaching hawaiian the language is definitely important. (WHERE DID YOU OPEN YOUR HALAU?) Here on Kauai 1988, so we are a fairly young halau as far as Kauai is concerned. (PRIOR TO THAT WAS IN HONOLULU?) Yes, 1977, in Honolulu I was teaching with Puanani Akiona, Kealoha Kalama's sister. (TEACH CHILDREN?) Yes, children, adults and kupuna. (WHAT MAKE YOU MOVE TO KAUAI?) My husband's job. (THE NAME HELEANI CAME WHEN?) (ON KAUAI PRIOR TO THAT?) Prior to that we did not have a name we were just called the Makakilo garage gang...

(SOMETHING SPECIAL TO PUT IN THE BOOK?) First of all, I thank God and then I thank my grandparents both the chinese and the hawaiian and of course my own parents and my mother in law, my own family... and all our friends and neighbors. Everything we do is centered around these people. We can't do anything without help from anyone. No man is an island, no man

stands alone... Of course definitely my husband and daughter, the long hours you are gone they have to sacrifice their time my poor baby she was raised up with junk food only now she is able to eat a little bit. I guess because we have a little time together when she was young all we knew was McDonalds, or Jack in the Box because we would be gone for hours on end. She is big now, she is herself a dancer so that is another great joy to me. She started hula with Aunty Lovey when she was 2 and Aunty Lovey only allowed people 4, she was in one of the exceptions she and another Leina'alie. I guess they were named after Aunty Lovey, so they could do whatever they wanted... (SO YOU WERE TEACHING SOMETIMES WITH AUNTY LOVEY?) Yes. (WHERE?) In Kauai, Aunty Lovey had her halau at my parents home and also Lihue. Aunty Lovey had schools all over the island, Kekaha, Kalaheo, Kolao, Hanapepe... so she was much more expanded. Today people are still begging me to go, but I don't want to. I have more then I can sure do. I don't want my health to like hers, run down, so I admire the kumu hula that have large and long. I love them for thier ability to be strong and can handle all of that.

(HOW MANY STUDENTS YOU HAVE IN YOUR HALAU?) We are small, we have about 80, the enrollement is plenty but the ones that are very faithful. (DO YOU MAKE THEIR COSTUMES?) My husband helps me with the costuming. I do some designing, but we have a faithful steamstress Aunty Vicky Matsuoka without her we will never be able to do our costuming, because I can't sew. Unfortuantely, that's my next reincarnated goal to be a seamstress.

(HULA MASTER?) Yah, Aunty Sarah Kailikea, Aunty Sally Wood, Aunty Genoa Keawe, my sister Lovey Apana, Uncle Joe Kahaulikio, who I worked for years. No! I was just his musician! (YOU WERE IN ENTERTAINMENT?) Well, my sisters were known as the dream maids at Kapa'a schools so everybody excepted the Apana sisters to play music, were ever went so the 158 dollar guitar my father bought from Sears we all learned how to play the guitar my mother played the

ukulele so we ended up playing music as I said where I was 9 years old dancing and playing. We ended up playing with people like Victor and Kuulei Puanua for "Aloha week" festivals. I played with Uncle Joe Kahaulilio, played with... I was 15 years old when I played with Aunty Genoa Keawe at the Bernakies Beach Restaurant with Uncle Benny Rodhus one of the steel guitar greats and I played with Peter Ahia who we just lost. I played Aunty Kealoha Kalama, played with my sister we were known as the Apana sister and both as musicians and as hula dancers. (WHAT OTHER THINGS DO YOU DO?) Yes, we do Maori, Tongan, Tahitian, samoan a little of each, but my forte is hawaiian, for entertainment and to learn about our cousins... their cultures too... out children sometimes they get bored so they need variety and they need to learn too. (DO YOU TEACH SOME LANGUAGE IN THE HALAU?) Yes, we play games, so we start with the children we start like the parts of the body, days of the week.. months of the year, short sentences, and then we learn hawaiian songs, "Hawaii Aloha" as you can see on my black board they learned "aloha Oe" because they are learning all about Queen Lili'uokalani and all her compositions and all about the "Royal Family". (DID YOU TAKE HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE CLASSES?) Years ago, I think I took one class.

(WHO HAD THE GREATEST INFLUENCE ON YOU?) Outside of my mother, I would say Aunty Genoa Keawe, first of all we watched her from when we were children, when I had the privilege of playing music with her I watched her or observed her style one of patience one of soft speech and concern.. I have yet to see her change, she is continuous, her honesty is uncomprable, she is so honest, I would trust her, and to me everything she does is always been for the benefit of the person she is working with, so I trust her with all my heart and I love her... We thank Kalihi Palama Culture & Arts for going through all of this work were so happy that such organization was set up, somebody had the vision to organize such as the KPC&A and then to have staff that would endure, never giving up because with the Polynesian people is a

special gift, when I say the polynesian people especially the hawaiian people, the hawaiian people are tempermental people you got to have a certain gift to work with them and for you folks to be around as long as you have you have succedded. (WHAT DID HULA DO TO YOU?) It made me blossom and it made me become more humble... And it made me able to endure...hardships...