

Elaine Kaopuiki

Elaine Kaopuiki began her teaching career on Lana'i in 1950.

① I live on an island that is so isolated that I hardly see things that would change my style. Thirty years ago we didn't think of doing research. Our kumu would give us translations of chants and we would just learn it. In those days you learned by the hour so you had to take as many chants you could by the hour. We didn't have tape recorders so a lot of knowledge I had to jot down or sing so I wouldn't forget.

④ I began to teach on Lana'i because we didn't have a teacher in the hula. I was an entertainer and I felt I could do it. In those days the requirements to teach were up to the individual herself. There were no requirements that I knew of so I just did it on my own.

② Anytime I needed instruction I would fly to Honolulu. Flights weren't expensive like they are today. I would spend a weekend in Honolulu and I would go to any instructor that was available. The instructors that I saw the most were Iolani Luahine and Tom Hiona. My greatest honor was to be able to learn and dance under these great masters.

⑤ I started out teaching both kahiko and auwana. There were a few Hawaiian girls in school and they stayed with me until they graduated. As the years went by I lost Hawaiian girls and picked up Filipino and Japanese. I really didn't want to share the hula kahiko with these people because there are some aspects of the culture that need a Hawaiian background and upbringing to be understood.

⑦ My kahiko has simple steps and hand motions. I don't need the fancy steps. What I do need is expressive hands, bodies, and eyes because the traditional dance compared to the auwana has almost no movement.

⑨ I have tried to respect everyone's style of dancing and remember that we are all together in this, but there have been times in my career where people have wanted me to fail, and criticized me behind my back. I think students have to realize this, expect it, and get through it if they expect to learn and teach.

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I live on an island isolated from drastic changes to alter my style of dancing. Thirty years ago when I wanted to learn some new dances whether it be a chant or Hula ku'i (auwana) I'd fly to Honolulu to do this. Most of my experiences were based on who ^{were} ~~were~~ available ^{when I was in Honolulu} ~~at the time~~. I was given chants with translations, I learnt on ^{my own} ~~my own~~ time ^{and since}. Time was limited, I had to take in as much as I could.

I began to teach on Lana'i because I guess it was inevitable and there were no one to teach hula. I ^{doctor this up} took it upon myself ^{this} responsibility. This has always been my love for entertaining. I love to sing and dance. It was an easy decision to make. The instructors I spent most of my time ^{with} were Iolani Luahine and Tom Hiona. My greatest honor was to be able to learn under these great Masters. There were other Instructors who ~~were~~ gave me just as much and I'd like to acknowledge these Kumus Leilani Alama, Luka Kaleiki, and Noelani Mahae.

I started out teaching both Kahiko and auwana. There ^{were} few Hawaiian girls in ^{oppose} ~~oppose~~ to other ethnic group of girls and boys.. They danced with me until they were out of High School and off to newer adventures. My students consisted of ^{different} nationalities from 4 year olds to whatever age.

My basic steps are 7 in all and they are simple steps and simple hand motions. The expressive hands, bodies, and eyes are my trademark.

I respect everyone's style of dancing and remember that we are all together in this, ⁶ My career has been very interesting, It took me far and met many people whether in dancing or singing. It was not always that easy to be a Kumu. There were many obstacles and over the years I managed to contained myself and still be on top of it all.

Mrs. Elaine Kaopuiki

"NA HULA O LA'I KEALOHA

I had to do this over again. I messed up your copy to me. Please make necessary grammatical correction, I would really appreciate it. Thank you.



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