

Lorraine Jashua Daniels

When we were 7 years old, we used to watch my mother dancing in the troupe with Sally Wood, Helen Fuller among others. I was very, very impressed by their dancing. + There was a man named Mr. Fern who would come and do the chanting in the living room. His chanting really inspired me and it stayed on my mind all the time. We used to have parties ~~all the time~~ on the beach and whenever the music would play I would get up and just dance.

People used to admire me because I would just get up and dance but it was natural since I watched so much of it. There was one day my mother watched me and began to direct me and cue me. Her schedule was quite busy, so she sent me to Mrs. Kuulei Clark. She would teach me down here at her sister's place on Kalakaua. I was uniki'd by Mrs. Clark. After Mrs. Clark, my mother took me to Auntie Louise Akeo. My first performance was one unforgettable. It was at the Waialae Golf Club. My father couldn't find a parking space. By the time I got in, the show was on and Auntie Akeo was very upset with me, and I was very sensitive. I just cried. After the performance I never went back to her. Then I went to Hana Ho, her maiden name was Mrs. Poonaikai. She taught us hula auwana and some chants but my Dad was very religious and he would not let us delve into any kapu hula or kapu chant because we were Christian. The night before the uniki we were told to go out into the sea and walk in the sea and the kumu would oli but I was not there to participate. My father did not let me go out there. But I did uniki with her later without any kapus. ✕

In 1940 just before the war broke out I was 14 and I was told to enter a hula contest. The crown for queen of hula was open to girls over 16 years old. So I told them I was 16. I believe that was the beginning of my career. When it came time to select the queen they went by the applause of the audience. I took first place and that's how my song "Hookipo Parker" became very popular. My style at that time was to get as low as possible to the ground and up. The problem was I didn't know how to lie. On one part of my registration I had written my age as 16, on another part I listed my birthdate as 1926.

Flora Hayes was one of the judges and she came back stage and told me I was too young to receive the title and I almost cried. I had dressed myself up in falsies and padded hips to make myself look older. So they decided to give me the Princess crown as consolation. It was the most enjoyable and yet most difficult time of my career because the crown was taken away from me. My mother had the greatest influence on me. I used to watch her train the dancers. Although she did not train, I got a foundation from her by just being around so much and watching. Afterwards she would see me perform and began to take an interest in me. She sent me different styles. Actually all these kumu had a similar style, dancing on flat feet with simple hand motions. I will never change my style and we teach our students the same style. What our students to hang on to the old style passed down by their ancestors of dancing flat-footed. When the new style came along of dancing on the toes. That's their business but I'm a stickler for the old-fashioned style.

My definition for hula kahiko is the hula done to the ancient chant. Many people nowadays seem to feel that you must do the hula kapu to be thoroughly initiated in kahiko. To me, if you know the chants, you know the history, you don't have to delve into the spiritual realm. I get my spiritual strength from God Almighty and I will not go to the gods of the old Hawaiian way.

The greatest change in the hula to me has been a shift towards Western styles of dance. There seems to be more posing rather than dancing. To me that's not dancing, anybody can do that. Many of the halau seemed to be going back to the old-fashioned way. But sometimes their motions do not coincide with their words.

I think it's so important for the young kumus to know the language. So when they create their dances, their hands will go right together with their words. Many of them do not know what they're dancing about. The responsibility lies with the kumus. They must truly direct the haumana and be sincere with them. The dancers reflect the kumu's teaching.

A kumu has to go into teaching with his or her whole life. You cannot keep your health and teach well if you spend your nights on the town.. You have to discipline your life so that you can give to the students. I began to teach in my mother's home after I won the Princess of the Hula title. People came to me because they wanted to know the dance I had performed. After Mrs. Ho, I stayed with Henry Pa and Tom Hiona. It was Henry Pa that gave me my kahiko training although he never brought out kapu hula for us.

If you know the language, and the interpretation of the chant, you can create in hula kahiko. In the days of our ancestors they know the root of the chant so they created and passed down the motions to their children. But I don't like to see people stealing other people's motions. I consider myself traditional and contemporary at the same time because I allow for creativity, but I will not change the hulas passed down to me by my kumus. I wanted to be a nurse very badly because I loved people and felt compassion for the sick. So I went



to St. Francis Convent. But when I won the ~~xxx~~ Princess title, the Mother Superior asked me to train some students and put on a fundraiser and when the war broke out I was told it was my patriotic ~~h~~ duty to entertain the troops who were going down under. My grades never recovered.