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My interest in hula started when my mother just enrolled me in hula classes. Back in the early forties hula was looked upon as only recreation. So young kids were usually enrolled in the YMCA or the Parks and Recreation. ~~They still do the same here but not with the same intensity.~~ I was three years old at the time. My first kumu was Ruby Ahakuelo. Back in the early forties hula did not have the intense interest level like today so there was no separation between hula auwana and hula kahiko. Everything was just hula and it hasn't been until recently that they have said auwana is with the instrument and kahiko is with the implement. These distinctions started when the competitions started up. The Merry Monarch was the beginnings of the awareness of being Hawaiian, and setting up definitions of what is going to be kahiko and what is going to be auwana. In the forties hula was not the mainstay of being Hawaiian as it is today. At that time it wasn't that important to dance hula. Ruby never mentioned who her kumu were but I believe the style comes from Ilalaole if I'm not mistaken. After Ruby my mother took me to my aunt which was Rose Maunakea. Ruby taught on the YMCA right on Fort Street. Auntie Rose taught on Kam4th Road then I went to the Alama Sisters. My parents and Ruby's husband were good friends and my aunt lived on Kalakaua Avenue at Kam Housing and she had a class there and we enrolled there because my aunt took care of me and we just naturally went to the YMCA. So it was like friendship to relatives. It started blooming that way. During the forties the teachers weren't so conscious of the steps and the gestures. It was very relaxed, you just came to learn and there was more use of implements at the time. You picked up an implement and they taught you a hula. The emphasis at that time was on auwana. The emphasis was also on music. There were a lot more musical groups that were popular at that time. like Genoa Kaawe, Pua Almeida. It was mostly musical groups that existed back then. The upsurge of kahiko didn't really start until the Merry Monarch came into the picture.

I stayed with the Alama Sisters for quite a while then I went to No. Joseph Kahauleleio. I credit Uncle Joe for giving me the incentive for wanting to become something in the hula. ~~Up to that time~~ In those times you just existed in hula. There was not that much knowledge available to students from the kumu at that time. Uncle Joe gave me the incentive to make myself more knowledgeable in the hula. Auntie Vickie gave me the knowledge and Auntie Maiki gave me the whole summary all together. ~~Shangawemmantha~~ It was only after all that training that I even began to think about teaching, and that only began because of Robert Cazimero. He told me he had a few girls and he needed them to be a part of the show. At that time I thought I was going to be an extension of his group. Na Kamalei began with Robert and Wayne Chang. My first class was made up of 14 girls, mostly young Kamehameha students and their friends. Everything was fine until Maiki told Robert that the halau cannot be a joint but that there must be a division. So that was how Na Pualēi Likolehua started.

When I was training with Maiki we were taken to Kalapana for our meditation and ceremony before the uniki and on the beach at 2AM a wonderful phenomenon happened. We saw a fireball descend from the ocean into the mountains and then down upon us, on the beach. Being Hawaiian when you get to the Big Island you look for the lady and hope you will have some encounter with her. Being so young you don't know how to handle such encounters. The next day everything that was taught to me had gone completely blank because I was young and immature. What stands out in my mind is being so young and foolish and wanting things quickly. I'm not sure if I broke a kapu because Maiki taught us hula noa. I consider myself a young kumu. I have much to learn but in the process of learning I am giving. Everytime I empty out I am filled by other people. Maiki was the last teacher I ever had. I had Louise L. Kaleiki, Joseph Kahauleleio and I had Tom Hiona just for a brief time when he was living up the street from us and we were young children. At that time I was still taking with the Alama Sisters. But because of the fact that the Alama Sisters didn't teach kahiko and Tom Hiona did I went to Tom as well. He was staying with Rose Kahauokalani. I think Lena Machado is her daughter. He used to have a little studio up there so all the neighborhood kids would run up there. I was one of them and it was exciting for me to know that at one time he was a real master.

I began teaching in 1975. My goal is to train young people to become qualified teachers because that's what we need. I don't think it's called sacrifice because you have to have the want to do it. Everything I've done is because I wanted to and I know what I want.



My style is a combination of Auntie Vickie, the influence of Ju Uncle Joe. The Alama Sisters, specifically Puanani, gave me one of the most important thing lessons in hula which was you have to be clean inside and outside. Auntie Vickie gave me the knowledge and the style. She has a unique style that no one uses today. Not even the people associated with her use it, not even her daughters use it. There are so many people today that have resources of knowledge that are not being used. I feel all the work and the time spent away from my family has been worth it because now I'm being rewarded in the fact that I can go to these older kumu and they will share their knowledge with me. Something they don't do with a lot of people. Uncle Joe gave me a wonderful rule which is only if I enjoy myself on stage will the audience enjoy themselves. He also told me that if you are too repetitious in your motions it becomes blah. So you have to be creative. This is what Uncle Joe and Auntie Vickie have given me, this creativity. So that no two dances look alike, no two movements look alike.

My definition of hula kahiko is mostly feet work. From what I have been taught the gestures are not as important as the foot work. If your foot work are within the basic foundations of kahiko then you are able to be a little freer with your gestures. You will find that a lot of halau today use less footwork and more gestures. The emphasis today is on the upper movements rather than the lower movements. I love doing all the Pele Chants. I believe the creativity of writing new things is very important especially if the young people. Because of the way society is today and the way young people I believe the creativity of writing things is very important. Because when you write you are writing from the view point of when you lived when you taught and when you learned. till the time you know no longer exist and that life span will record and preserve and express your existence. That is exactly what the masters and our ancestors before us did. Hopefully that's what will happen with the generations after us as well. That is how Hawaiian history is recorded.

~~A lot of these mele are written for a specific reason for your lifespan on this earth. this is how you record what is happening today. Now books are written so it's easy to go to the library and read it but in those times books were not written. It's an unwritten literature passed down through the chants, the oles, the recording of the genealogies through the chants. That is kahiko for us. In the distant future the things that we write today is going to be the kahiko of the for the following generations. So there will be a kahiko in every lifespan. Creativity has to play a part in kahiko because you have to have the mind of the old and the mind of the young. It has to coexist together. Without the involvement of the young in kahiko there is no future for kahiko~~

~~and that's why today the young kumu only want the new trends. The kahiko of today has little to do with the old. There should be limits to creativity in kahiko. It should not be totally confined but there should be some rules. There are rules that the people before us set down before us. They said if you want it to be traditional then these are the guide rules to follow.~~

Not everyone follows the guide rules. So now whatever happens from now and hereafter will be looked upon as the Kahiko. There are those that will hang on from now and yesterday. In each case there is no movement because there are very narrow boundaries. So it's stagnant right here. The present the future and the past must coexist with one another if the hula is going to move forward. I feel that when the kumus began <sup>7 years ago</sup> ~~many years ago~~ they each felt it was important to have an individual style in order to teach which is okay. No two teachers should be alike. But the guide rules were not followed, they were enhanced, embellished because if you were to take a basic traditional kahiko hula it would be what we the young people would call boring. And yet it is not boring. If you love the hula if you love the existence of it, it's not boring. But for someone who is brand new it is boring to watch it because they don't understand. Today we have to work to incorporate all three worlds because that is the basic way that makes hula come alive. Making it live making it become real. Kahiko is an education, and auwana is enjoyment. This is what I'm trying to find that somehow a common ground is found where kahiko is educational and enjoyable but also accessible to people who are new to it. Everyday that I meet with my ladies I share with them my experiences of today and yesterday then I have them run up a list of their own experiences because you cannot teach only on the kumu's hearsay. Most of the kids who go to the Merry Monarch don't have any idea what went on at the Merry Monarch. A lot of the people that come to view it are the same way. All they see is the dancing. The priority is who is going to be the best group in the state. The emphasis on the education, why the mele was written, why they are doing the step is all lost. Competition is not what I want. It's good and healthy in that it keeps people sharp but I cannot train ladies year and year out to compete. What happens to the lesson? It's set aside for performance sake. Is that all we are teaching for the Performance. ~~So it has to be a balance of both.~~



I think language can be the most important thing to improve the hula today. The people in the hula have to learn the language. ~~Every kumu~~ There would be a greater understanding when they write, when they dance, when they teach. ~~It is becoming more predominant now that teachers are teaching more for the satisfaction than the pay. I just oep opend a studio.~~

~~I don't think a lot of people who knew me when I first began felt I had the ability or the desire to take on the responsibilities that I <sup>now</sup> do now. I do things now that I never would have done ten years ago. The comic dancer was my role. I was never a straight dancer. I fooled around so much and did so many things that amde people wonder about my seriousness. But underneath the straight dancing was my want. You cannot just say principle too the haumana, you have to live it, portray it, live it because too often people just say it and don't live by it. People who knw me know that i believe in myself and have confidence in my ability tot do things. People here this and say I have no humility but I accomplish what I feel I ama capable of doing. The comedian in me was because i fooled around so much. I knew how to do it so it became my thing. I was a line dancer before i became anything but i c ould not hold myself in to remani in the line. I'm one who gets bored fvery fast and I like to amke things happen. It was a wonderful feeling to have peolple laugh with me and at me. It made no difference. Just the fact that people wanted to see more of me. After awhile i started to ak ask myself where I ama I ging going to go from here. So I started to do some straight numbers and people wu would laugh' thinking it was still comical. Until it started to feel different for me and the presentation to them became different. So now I could distinguish a good hula here and a comic hula and i was over that hump. My basic first love is khiko, not comic, not straight numbers. So now how am I going to get over the hump of doing straight numbers into kahiko. Then came the role of being a teacher.~~