

Final draft

I guess I became interested in the hula because I came from a musical family. I was performing with my family before I ever entered formal training and my Aunt Mary, who was a dancer for Ka'ō'ō, encouraged me to take up the hula. Since that time I have trained under several different kumu and each one had his or her influence on me and my style of the hula.

I trained under Joseph Ilālāole for three years at Pālama Settlement, at Kulamanu in Kāhala, and at his home in Kapahulu. This was my first formal training and from him I learned the traditional form of the dance. I am not certain who Ilālāole's teachers were, that was not an important question at the time.

Later I trained under Eleanor Hiram for seven or eight years, dancing professionally for her, performing in tableaux, and learning from her the hula pahu which were her speciality. She held her classes at her studio in Mānoa. Eleanor had been a student of Keaka Kanahele and during the period I studied with her, she was occasionally assisted by Katie Nakaula.

After a long period away from training in the hula, I returned to take lessons with Hoakalei Kama'u whose teacher had been Iolani Luahine. This was a period of renewal and reinforcement for me in the traditional hula and I also began to learn new things about teaching techniques for hula kahiko in which Hoakalei excels.

While performing at the Bishop Museum's Heritage theatre in Waikiki, I had on several occasions seriously discussed chants with Pele Puku'i Sukanuma. Her sharing allowed me greater insight into the art of the oli. I will always be thankful to Pele for working with me in chanting and for recommending me to teach in the chant training program "Mele Project" sponsored by State Council on Hawaiian Heritage where I was able to learn a great deal more by working with Edith Kanakāole.

During the last few years of her life, I was fortunate enough to spend a good deal of time with "Auntie Edith", a master of many Hawaiian skills including hula and chant. From her I learned the basics of chant, a good deal of hula, composition, and she generally portrayed to me a fine example of an Hawaiian and

a Kumu Hula. Most of my training with her occurred at my ~~home~~ where she stayed when she visited Oahu. From Auntie Edith as from all of my teachers, I was taught by mimicking them in motion and sound.

I went through ~~uniki~~ under Eleanor Hiram and also began to teach under her direction, continuing on my own after my training with her ended. I consider myself a traditionalist but I teach both traditional and contemporary hula. My teaching reflects that which I learned from my teachers, but of course style changes as the context of one's life changes. Hula existed in a much different and smaller role when I was first learning than it does today when the value of it is being acknowledged by so many.

To the kumu of today, I would remind them that every hula has a history, a story content and a reason for existence - don't just pass along the motions. I would also say to the kumu and haumāna that the language is vital to comprehension, and to the expansion of knowledge.

To students of today, I would say don't expect your kumu hula to be your only source of learning in "na mea Hawai'i" - you have to seek knowledge and invest energy.

The hula, both kahiko and auwana, offers people of today and especially Hawaiians of today an exposure to all aspects of the culture, a unique style of personal discipline and a positive view of the culture. The dividing line between kahiko and auwana is of course the chant as averse to music and also the use of traditional ^{hand gestures & foot movements} ~~motion~~ as opposed to more freedom in choice of ^{gestures & movement} ~~motions~~ but either form offers valuable cultural insight as a Hawaiian story expressed through a Hawaiian Art Form. As an extension of this thought, I encourage contemporary composition so that the stories of today can continue to be told in this very Hawaiian way for those who follow us. If we don't compose, about the events of our time, there will be no record of it in dance.