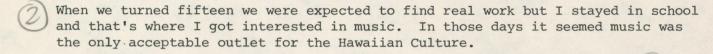


I never learned to speak English until I went to school. The same was true for the Japanese boys that went to school with me. The teachers told us to forget our languages and just speak the English language. How can you talk to your parents when they don't know English? They couldn't understand us.

The hula in my family was something that was alright to look at but not for us to take part. Singing was alright provided you didn't overdo it but you couldn't play the ukulele unless it was outside the house. My father was a ranchhand in Kohala on the Big Island and that's where my whole family was born.



I began to listen to records by people like Sol Hoopii, and a man named Jim Marciel started to put on tableaus in Kohala and I thought he was terrific. He started to give me parts to memorize in his tableaus and that's when I first started to get interested in the hula.

When I graduated from school in 1931 I had decided to become a teacher. When I turned twenty I came to Honolulu but I didn't have the money to get a degree so I started playing music with Sam Alama and Johnny Almeida for five dollars a night.

I was living in Waikiki back then and some friends told me to open up a studio. I was working at Fort Shafter so I quit and took their advice since there was only the Betty Lei Studio in Waikiki.

I never studied under any teacher where you go through certain routines. I just watched teachers and dancers in Kohala and certain teachers like Manuel Silva, and Mary Kawena Pukui here in Honolulu. I hired teachers for my studio and after awhile they would go off on their own and I began to step in and takeover some of the teaching duties. When I taught I tried to combine the motions of Maiki Aiu, Rose Joshua, and Alice Keawekane into one style.

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In my day there were things you could do and you couldn't do. The style was to dance very sedately with very little flair. Only five or ten dancers would dance at a time and they would be accompanied by drumming that did not overpower the dancers. But who of us can prove that this was the style of dance of our ancestors? Creativity and change has always been a part of the kahiko. In Kohala we were never allowed to use shell, plastic, or storebought leis but when I came to Honolulu in 1931 I found that's all anybody used.

The dancing of today is very physical and that's because of the influence of television and other Polynesian dances. But who of us knows how much the kahiko of the past was changed over? There is nothing that has been kept in books or in the Archives that proves kahiko was danced a certain way. All we have are pictures of dancers in poses.

I think the most important thing was that I knew my Hawaiian. Some people get lost because they don't know the language. But it's hard for the young people to learn Hawaiian because it's a foreign language today. From birth you live and speak one language and it's hard to take on another.

Bill Lincoln

In 1947, Bill Lincoln ran the largest and most influential hula studio n in them Hawaii, employing such teachers as Alice Keawekane, Ida Wong, and Barbara Johnson.

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When we turned fifteen we were expected to find real work but I stayed in school and that'ss where I got interested in music. In those days music was the only acceptable outlet for the Hawaiian Culture.

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Bill Lincoln

Music and the hula in my family was not respected. It was something that was alright to look at but not for us to take part. The older ones in my family never had anything to do with music or the hula. Singing was alright provided that you didn't overdo it. We were not supposed to play ukulele unless we did it outside the house on our own. My father was a ranch hand so when we turned 14 and fifteen we used to follow the cowboys all around. We were expected to find real work. I was not interested inranching. So I went to school and that's where I got more interested in music. Y

The ranch was in Kohala on the Big Island. So my whole family was born in Koahala. It's not that music was encouraged that much more than hula but that it was looked down upon less as a career. That's why music grou

So when I was in school I was interested in music so I sang in school., and I was in a couple of operretas and I learned the piano. All this alongwith listening to the records that were coming out then like those by Sol Hoopii got me more interested.

When I graduated from School in Kohala it was 1931. I decided not to be a musician. At first I was going to be a teacher so I was coming to HOnolulu to go to school. But when I came here I changed my mind and went to sing with Sam Alama and Johnny Alameida. In those days jobs were scarce and it was hard. I didn't have the money to go to school so I started playing jobs with Sam and Johnny. Sometimes 5 dollars a night sometimes 7 dollars a night.

So I stayed with it.

The teachers told us to forget your language and just speak the English language.

I was in my teens at the time and I when I turned twenty I came to Honolulu. This was all before I becamse interested in the hula. There was another lady who lived in Kohala that I use to go to watch all the time but she died not to long ago.

say to everybody

When I got interested in these tableaus he used to hambdonmam you have to watch the theme of the song and the Hawaiian words. There may be a lot of Hawaiian words byt there is one thogguht. So this is how I got interested in the hula.

I never studied under any teacher where you t go through all of these routines. I just watched all these people in Kohala and I when I came to Honolulu I watched certain teachers like the Silvas, Mary Kawena Pukui. Even when I opened my studio I was not interested in dancing but in was in me so I hired all these ladies to come and teach. Alice Keawe kane, Ida Wong. Barbara Johnson and many otehers. I began my stuidio right after the war, 1946-47. I was living in Waikiki and wome friends told me to open up a studio inemem in Waikiki. I was working in the Army at the time up at Fort Shafter so I quit and I mamemumnimamimim opened my stuidio in Waikiki. There was only one other studio in Waikiki at the time and that was the Betty Lei Studio.

Back inKohala we were never allowed to use shell leis. All the flowers that were used had to be fresh. When I came to Honolulu I found everybody useing plastic leis, storebought leis. and shell leis. The dancing of today is more physical but yet who knows if the dancing of the past wasn't physical. There is o nothing that has been kept in books or in the Archives that prove khahiko was danced a certain way. All that we have is pictures of dancers posing. But I give h the dancers of today credit becaseuese they project the dance more openly now.

We used to have nice dancing in my day but everything is more out in the open today. In my day there were things you can't do and things you can do.

I admired Aggie Aull, Winona Love, Tootsie Notley and there are many others.

The style in my time was to dance very sedatley. In those days only fifve or ten dancers would dance at one time. Not like today with so many dancers.

Even the drums were not as many and as strong as they are today. I'm stating this as an opinion not as a criticism. I've seen the Maori dance come to Hawaii, I've seen the Samoan dance, I've seen the Tahitian dance and now the Hawaiians are coming out of their shell and have come o up with a hula that is as physical as any of these dances. But who of us can prove that this was not the style of dance of our ancestors?

I began to teach only after a few years. My teachers after awhile would want to go out on their own so I began to step in and takeover some of the teaching duties.

I think want separartes the modern and the ancient is that the ancient is there is a sacredness to the ancient. It's imoportant to know what the cannt is about and who is going to chant it. the people of my generation The reason auwana was strong in the forties was becsasue people were afraid of doing kahiko. They were afraid of the kickback.

In my dance I combined the motions of Thanham Miki Maiki, Joshua, Alice Keawekane. The motions that they gave I combined into one style. Most of the hula that I performed came from inside me.

Mrs. Pukui would advise me to pa'i the ipu but I would have to go home and practice myslef. When I look at this my mother's folks were dancers and so were my father's way back. I found out by coming to Honolulu. My parents wanted us to be smething respectable. My mother's side were the Kaniho's and I found that Papa Bray was related to the Kaniho's and so were a lot of the kumu in Kohala. This was all inside of me and the music and the studio brought it out. But I think the most important thing was that I knew my Hawaiian. .Some people might go off becasue they don't know the languaged but I always knew what the boundaries were. But it's hard for the o young people to learn Hawaiian because now it is a foreign language. From birth you live and speak one language and it's hard to take onanother. Each step has come from another. First we had the ancient and then a little flair was added to it. Each generation adds a different flair to what existed before. I think most of the stuff that we are getting to day comes from this generation watching television. When I watch the Hawaiians put on a show now the presentation is just fabulous. In my time we just danced. We had little bit flair but not like now. Even thier entrances and exits have flair.