

Patty Wright

I arrived in 1968 to live. My 1st exp. was seeing Bev, Noa Jane. I was so moved by that experience that I decided I wanted to learn. I began looking for a teacher. My first lesson was a lady I met through the new comers club named Carolyn Miller whose approach was ~~very~~ directed only to give students an exposure to the hula. 1 year. I outlasted 5-classes. She didn't know what to do with me.

I soon realized my interests were much more compelling & deeper. About that time I saw Bella Richards at a Kailua Mardigals concert. I called her the next day and told her that her ~~hawa~~ girls danced the way I wanted to dance and would she take me as a student. She told me she never taught adults. I pleaded with her but she told me adults don't practice, don't remember, and don't have stamina. She ~~said~~ preferred young people because they don't have distractions and they have bodies that can be molded. I kept begging her. She told me to come to the next practice. When I arrived she put me in the front row and we practiced from 9AM-3PM without a break. When I got home, I was literally on my hands and knees. She continued to ^{& a mainland hawle.} ~~practiced~~ with Bella from 1969-75.

test me because I was new but as a teacher I was still
In 1973 I opened my own studio but as a teacher I was still
under Bella's supervision. In 1975 I started totally on my own. I
got a tremendous amount of attention from Bella because being
haole she knew how vulnerable I would be to criticism. When
you come in, there are things that kumu & haumana know by
osmosis that I had to actually learn.

Bella was my greatest influence because she took me from zero.
Her style epitomizes how I would like to dance. It is a very low,
'qihaka', very soft & fluid in the body movements. The highest
compliment for me is for someone to me up to me after a
performance and say I know who your kumu is.
Bella taught very little kahiko, auwana is what she taught.
But after I had been teaching I felt I needed the foundation that
kahiko could give me. You cannot teach ~~the~~ hula without knowing
the language ^{so} I took a year of Hula Lang. at UH-M and
it was like ~~opening~~ ^{turning on a light} in a dark room. Then I went to
Bella Richards for her permission to study kahiko. I then studied w/ Lani Kalama
I remember Edith Kanaka'ole coming up to me at a workshop she was
giving and telling me I must learn the language, I must learn
the mother tongue. My husband did to go to UH-M the next
semester and I went.

In 1973 my first marriage had dissolved so I needed a way to survive. I had taught kindergarten & piano & had always enjoyed teaching and I enjoyed hula. I knew this was what I wanted to do. I went to Bella for her blessing and advice ~~also~~ asking her whether a hula can make it in the hula field. She said if the kumu is well-trained & you are.

The greatest hardship ~~has been~~ was surviving Bella. Everything has been easy since then. I was so ignorant and so I made gaffes or errors that seemed so obvious they looked like they were intentional. I did not know what the proper role of the haumana was. I have had to do nothing I would consider a sacrifice to dance & teach the hula. I have had to work very hard but I would not consider that a sacrifice but an adventure and a challenge.

I get the most joy when I can show Bella that I ~~am trying to perpetuate her that all her work went to some good~~ am trying to perpetuate her in the hula.

how far she has brought me in the hula. Defining hula kahiko is a very hard job. I've listened to both sides of the argument, ^{I don't know} whether it has to be old or whether it's the old style. ^{I don't know}

can just be done
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The hula kalikeo mele that moves me the most is ?
The ~~emotions~~ play between Pele & Hialeka makes it a fascinating story for me.

I also enjoy "Hole Waimen" because of the turn of mood from militant to gentleness and love.

My enjoyment of hula aumana does not center with one song.

To the haumana, don't take your culture and your heritage for granted. They tend to take it for granted that cultural resources like Bella will always be around. Hula has to be danced from the inside out. Many might not know the language so they dance very mechanically and so you must share a little bit of the hula is a living form and so you must share a little bit of your emotions, your ~~energy~~ past to make it live. Tolani Luahine dances as if there is a movie going on within her head which she projects out to the audience with her eyes. I rarely see that kind of emotion in kalikeo today. A good dancer is a good actress. Every part of her body and heart acts out the story. Ber. Nona, Tolani, Leinaala Heine, Bella. When Lei dances, I don't think there is anybody in the audience who doesn't believe that she is not dancing specifically to & for them. With a change of her eyes she changes the mood of that she is giving off.