

Rena Ching

My mother wanted me to take from Manuel Silva because he was known for his strictness. So my husband and I went down to Honolulu for one week and we stayed at a hotel. I went to see Manuel Silva who was living in the back of the Star-Bulletin at the time. He told me straight that if he didn't know my mother he would've sent me away because he didn't take anybody anymore. His basics were really hard. You had to squat on the floor and then he would bend your body to make it flexible by walking all over you. Then he put me flat on my stomach and bent my legs back. When he finished I was exhausted. All he said to me was if I didn't want to learn, I was free to leave.

My first teachers were actually my family and I was pushed into it whether I liked it or not at the age of four. My grandmother, Annie Kalaau, had come from Kona and she had been trained in olapa. My aunty, Helen Apo Hanu, was taught by my grandmother and she was my first teacher. My first kumu outside the family was Alice Mahi. She would put on concerts at the county church and she was a member of the Mormon Church. Alice Mahi needed a place to teach so my mother offered her our home because we had a big lanai. So she would teach and I would sit down and watch. I graduated from Aunty Alice in her home in a very modern uniki.

When Aunty Alice left Maui I returned to my aunty who taught me modern hula. I uniki'd with my aunty in another modern presentation, and then I began to dance professionally for Eddie Tam, the late mayor of Maui. When I got married my husband refused to let me dance professionally so I began to train my little girl who was seven. After awhile I wanted to learn olapa so I could teach it to my daughter so my mother recommended Manuel Silva. He couldn't start me off dancing immediately so he trained me to pai the ipu. My olapa was kapu which meant I could only dance them in certain areas and my dancers had to be trained in certain duties. I did not take the kapu because Uncle Manuel did not want me to get hurt if my students were kapulu in their duties. Unfortunately this meant he would be the one to suffer for their actions which may have been affected by the KAPU. <sup>consequences</sup> <sup>ANY OF</sup> <sup>STUDY WITH</sup> <sup>MRS HELEN APO</sup> <sup>HANU (my Dad's sister)</sup> <sup>RESPONSIBILITIES</sup> <sup>INDIVIDUALLY</sup>

My kumu Alice Mahi & Aunty Helen Apo Hanu taught me hula auwana and Manuel Silva gave me my foundation in olapa. But it was my mother, Mary Elizabeth Aikau, who encouraged and gave me support to become a kumu hula. She would watch me dance in front of her and she would be my critic. She made sure everything was correct. She was my inspiration.

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"So my husband and I went down Honolulu for one week, and we stayed at a hotel.

I went to see Manuel Silva. He was living in the back of the Honolulu Star-Bulletin at the time. I told him who I was and he said he knew my mother. He told me straight that if my mother didn't send me he would have turned me away because he didn't take anybody. So I began my classes with him and I tell you I wanted to quit. His basics were hard. I had to kneel and squat on the floor then he would start walking all over me trying to bend my body to make it as flexible as he wanted it. And he was not a small man. I can remember being in his bedroom and my husband couldn't stand it because I was crying and screaming. All the while Uncle Manuel was telling me if I didn't want to learn, to get up and get out..."

Rena Ching

out



~~Rena Maile-Mahoe Apo Ching~~

~~Mrs.~~ Mrs. Rena Maile-Mahoe Apo Ching

It was my mother who encouraged me to become a kumu hula and to become a good kumu hula. She was my inspiration. She would watch me dance in front of her and she would be my critic. She made sure everything was correct. She was the one that interpreted everything for me...

He put me flat on my stomach and bent my legs back. My husband kept asking me if I wanted to leave. When he finished, I couldn't stand up, I couldn't sit down, my husband had to carry me back to the car. He couldn't start me off dancing so he first trained me to pa'i the ~~ipu~~ ipu. My olapas were kapu. I could only dance them in certain areas and my dancers had to be trained in certain duties. I did not take the kapu because Uncle Manuel did not want me to get hurt if my students kapulu their duties. Unfortunately he would be the one to get hurt. Everybody has different interpretations to a chant or a song but I think its important how you were taught them. There are basic steps only associated with the olapa but today I see basic steps being changed. I had never heard the word kahiko before, olapa had been the word always used. The hula olapa that is bieng danced today is totally different from the olapa of my day. They are borrowing all over.

I began to teach when my daughter was seven and I began to teach with the permission of my mother.