

My mother taught hula so there were hula skirts on the walls, and the implements and music all around us. She never prodded my sister and I to go into the hula until we were interested. There was one day when she was ~~x~~ spring cleaning and she took down all the hula skirts off to scrub the walls and my sister and I put on the ~~k~~ skirts and began dancing. She looked at us and said, "You want to dance, I'll take you to class." And that's how I started. We must have been 3 or 4. My mother's name is Blossom Clark. I feel she's the very essence of the hula not only on stage but offstage as well. The

The essence of hula is to give out and that's what she does. She always used the hula as a way of telling people about her love for Hawaii. Our home was a stopover place for strangers. Strangers were welcome and they would return again and again. I studied with my mother as long as I lived with her and I continue to study with her today. I only wish I had taken advantage of my grandmother's knowledge. I was with my mother from age 6 until I left at age 15.

My mother taught me hula auwana. She did give my sister and I the fundamental steps in kahiko and was very strict that we did the steps correctly. I still teach those basic steps the way that she taught them to me. But she didn't say this is kahiko and this is auwana. It's only recently that there has been a clear separation of the two. The hula was just one dance back then. You approached it differently for one dance and then another. For kahiko the emphasis was on the basic steps. When it came to the modern hulas then she allowed us to give more of our own personalities.

I ~~didn't~~ didn't go through a uniki. It was interesting because my mother uniki'd my grandmother who had taught her. By the time I was a teenager my mother I guess was caught up in the times. During the time I was in school there was no Hawaiian in class. We could take Spanish and French. So I ~~xx~~ did not uniki.

I did not take from anybody else although my mother encouraged my sister to take from other ~~kumu~~ kumu. Now I regret it but I still consider myself a student and I will until the day ~~xxxx~~ I make.

When you have the feeling that you've learned everything then ~~you're~~ you're not only yourself but your students. ~~x~~ I began to teach 7½ years ago. My little girl was in Kindergarten and I wanted her to dance so much but I wanted her to dance the way my mother had taught me, which was the way her mother had taught her. It was difficult because I knew I couldn't teach her alone. That would be too difficult for both of us.

I was six months hapai and I had helped with the May Kay Program at school and I thought well this is it. So there I was with my big stomach and I got together ~~x~~ a few girls who were interested, I was learning so I kept the group very small. I had to see how I was going to do. I ~~xx~~ never thought of myself as a kumu, only a hula teacher. To me there's a ~~x~~ difference between the two. I kind of uniki'd myself into kumu. I've gone very, very slowly and I had a kumu for a mother so I haven't yet come to a point where I've had to make a great sacrifice for my career.

I kept my goals very small so that I could fit my children into my life. My husband has also been my greatest helper. I owe so much to hula, more than anything else. My goal as a teacher is to get the students to try their best to tell the audience what the song is all about, to feel what the writer had in mind, to portray Hawaii in the most dignified way and to share that. The most important thing for a student is that the heart must be willing. ~~xx~~ It doesn't matter. To tell a child you're too young is depriving the teacher and the student of a great experience because that's when you can nurture the love for the hula.

To see the students performing onstage is exhilarating. I can't see them for the front so I have to see them ~~xxx~~ from the response of the audience. When strangers come up to me and my girls look like they really enjoy what they're doing, it moves me because that has been one of ~~my~~ my biggest goals when I started out/.

To see a little child go up onstage and forget about the audience, forget about everything else except the fact that she's dancing ~~xxx~~ is more important than bringing home a trophy. competition is ~~xxxx~~ good. It makes you work, it makes everybody work together. It's ~~n~~ not just the children. It's the older students as ~~x~~ well. Seeing someone who has never had a chance to dance get that chance and love the hula is something to see.

I'm so ~~fortunate~~ fortunate to be in the middle of ~~the~~ Renaissance. Before Renaissance in ~~xxxxxx~~ artist created one-dimensional flat paintings. With the Renaissance, paintings became 3-dimensional and full. I first thought the Hawaiian Renaissance was a re-awakening because that's what the word meant to me in school. But as I reflect upon it and see what's happening it's a time that's fostering new growth, it's a beginning for a new life and it's not just a

re-awakening of past treasures. I'm really fortunate to be a part of that because it allows me my freedom to grow as an individual. I respect the old ways and I'm thankful for the old kumu that are practicing the old ways. I will study with them before I die but I cannot help but be what I am as the others will end up doing what is right for them. I think the competitions have created a new style. Everybody comes together and is able to borrow from everybody else. So it was important to me to register my own style and then say to everybody here is my kumu's style and now you may use it in whatever way it will help you.

Kahiko is simple. I don't have the ability to simplify. I would have to strip myself down to boredom. It's just not in my nature. I really do want to learn all the fundamentals of chanting and costume/.

The kahiko goes back to the very basis of fundamentals. Whether I portray that in my style of kahiko is another question.

I think you have to let the kumu alone in terms of ~~xxxxxxx~~ creativity in kahiko. You have to let the judges and the audience either accept or reject it on their own. But we do have to have those who keep it simple. I think people should be allowed to dance, and appreciate kahiko in the simple form and in the more creative form of today.

I love Pili Aloha the most out of the modern hulas although that category spans such a great amount of songs. I think it ~~xxxx~~ portrays the poetry of Hawaii so beautifully. The Hawaiians didn't have all these other things that clutter our lives. They had their land and the plants, the flowers and other people. In the song everything is interchanged and that's what they wrote about. The song goes on to describe the rain falling down and this coupled along with my husband's love for the song make it my favorite.

I hope to see other people recognize the hula as an art. I really love it. I have a passion for it. When I saw La Boheme for the first time, it was the hula to me. From the time the curtain opened and the first movement of the first actor. It was the hula. People see the hula as only a native dance. They don't realize that just as there are countless ways to stage ~~xxxxxx~~ "Carmen," there are numerous ways to portray a chant or a song. It is an art. I hope to see the world recognize it. Iolani Luahine did a lot to show that it ~~xxxx~~ is a dignified, beautiful, artistic thing. It is not just a native classical dance. It is a fine art. It's more ~~xxxxxx~~ than folk dancing. It's more than a few steps here and there and hopping around to any old music. There's a story to tell and every motion in the dance is telling apart of that story. It's like ballet except we're allowed because of the Hawaiian's openness of emotions to give out ~~xxxxxx~~ more than a ballerina is allowed to. I think ~~xxxxxx~~ that's what Kalakaua ~~felt~~ felt when he went around the world, because he knew in the Hawaiian culture he had something profound to share.

Whenever I ~~hear~~ hear the words maka ona ona in songs I think of my mother because to me she has the most beautiful eyes I've ever seen. She had to raise a large family and had a hard life but to see her on stage for a pageant or a political rally, she was lifted above everyday life, away from the worries and the sadness. When she danced the hula, life was ~~xxxxxxx~~ beautiful.