

Nana I Na Loea Hula
Kumu Hula: Keali'i Reichel
Interviewer: Lovina LePendu
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Carlton Lewis Keali'inaniaimokuokalani Reichel

FULL GIVEN NAME? Full given name, everything, everthing? It's Carlton Lewis Keali'inaniaimokuokalani Reichel. IN THE BOOK? You can take out the Carlton and you can take out the Lewis. I told my mother why did you name me that name. Actually it's supposed to be Reichel, it's German, but nobody can say it like that so Reichel is the most common way people say it. So people think it's French, but it's German. CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT AGE YOU STARTED HULA? I started hula, I'd say late in comparison to a lot of other people. I think I was about 14. And I was exposed to hula through the Hawaiiana Club at Lahainaluna High School. I was a freshman. I had always loved hula, watching hula especially, but I didn't know how to get into it. Both my parents were working two jobs and I didn't know how to learn. So when I enrolled in high school at Lahainaluna, they had that Hawaiiana Club and it was under the direction pretty much of Peter Day, who was also a student. So I started learning hula then. PETER DAY TAUGHT WHERE? Peter Day at the time he was considered, at the time to be a child prodigy. He studied under 'Iolani Luahine, and Henry Pa, from when he was seven years old, eight years old. When he was in high school, he had all of his knowledge, so he taught kahiko and auana and oli for the Hawaiiana Club although he was a student. So he was two years older than me. I think I was a freshman and he was a Senior. SO HE TAUGHT THE CLASS. Yes, he didn't have a halau sort of speak. He didn't start his halau until after he graduated, so I studied with him for that one year in high school and then after that I quit. WHERE DID HE TEACH? He taught at the school. When I was in school. HOW OFTEN WAS THE CLASS? Once a week. It was a once a week class and of course because we were in school, lunch recess we would have rehearsals, practice. We would bring our lunch up there and have rehearsal there. WHAT KIND OF HULA DID YOU LEARN? Kahiko, that was pretty much his specialty. DO YOU REMEMBER THE STYLE OR METHOD THAT HE USED? Basically, one of the things he didn't do was that he didn't explain too much about the chant. All he said was that you get up and this is what you do for this mele. You stand up, you have x amount of hela, x amount of uehe, and this is

how the mele is danced. And he would teach us basically just like that, basically. DID YOU LEARN OTHER THINGS FROM HIM? No, just hula. HOW LONG DID YOU STAY WITH HIM? Well, in high school, it was that one year. And then I didn't start up with him again until like 1978 until 1981. WHY DID YOU GO BACK? Because he asked. What happened was when I was in high school, I was such a bad dancer. I had no rhythm, nothing, I was really junk. And what they used to do was they used to forget my outfits on purpose when we had performances. So, I would get to the performance and everybody had their outfit, and I never had my outfit. And so, they'd say, ah we forgot um, ah we forgot um, and finally after the twelfth or thirteenth time I caught on that they never like me dance, I was junk. And so, when you're fourteen years old that's hard to take and so I quit and I studied on my own. I practiced everyday in front of the mirror, just to perfect my timing and stuff and it took me a few years to do that. But after a couple of years, Peter saw me dance again for Hawaiian Club and he was impressed and he had just formulated his halau and he wanted me to come dance and help teach. AT THAT TIME YOU WENT BACK AND HELPED TEACH? Pretty much, I was an alaka'i. He would teach me and I would teach the students when he wasn't there. THAT WAS JUST KAHIKO? Just kahiko. I would do some auana, but I was never really interested in auana too much. DID YOU RECEIVE ANY CERTIFICATE WITH PETER? No. NO TRAINING FOR UNIKI OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT? No. YOU STAYED WITH HIM? Yes, learning with him, teaching. I would say that during that time I was able to perfect how to teach. Because I think that is a skill to itself. You can have all this knowledge, but if you don't know how to teach it or convey it, no sense. What really pushed it over the edge was that in 1981, Peter left the halau, he moved. It was in a two day period that he just up and went, he just left us. And he had all these students that were hungry for more hula and because I was the alaka'i and in charge when he wasn't there basically, we were all going to stop hula because our kumu wasn't there. The students asked if I could stay on and help teach and continue the training as best as we could and at first I told them no, I wasn't qualified and I'm not ready and stuff. But talking to other kumu hula like Hoku Padilla on Maui, she suggested that I at least continue with the halau and if I needed help, they would help me. YOU ALREADY GRADUATED? Oh yah, graduated from high school. I had basically took over his halau when I was 19. Yah, 19 years old, very scared, don't know what to do, because you're missing your kumu hula, there's no foundation there. But because of the insistence of the students and because of the help of other kumu hula on Maui, I felt a little bit more comfortable.

And if I had questions, or I needed help, they'd come and help. Because I guess they felt that I had some kind of gift to teach. DID HE HAVE A SPECIAL METHOD OF TEACHING? No I think I took his method which was basically by wrote and I realized that the students were not getting enough, as far as on how to identify with a specific song or chant. And so what I would do was I would supplement whatever he taught with, you got to memorize the words, cause I did it on my own. And when you memorize the words, and you know what the chant is about, and you're able to interpret that you are able to understand the chant and the dance better, and it'll stick. Some of the students had a hard time for the knowledge to stick with them, and I had an easy time remembering dances even till this day. I can remember dances that were taught to me when I was fourteen clearly and a big part of it was because I had learned how to chant or sing it at the same time and I did that on my own because Peter never taught that. SO YOU WERE STUCK TEACHING AT THE SAME TIME? Right. WHEN YOU TOOK OVER THE HALAU, DID IT BECOME YOUR HALAU AT THAT TIME? It was a slow process. I didn't want it to become my halau, and I didn't want to take over his halau. So what we did was we changed the name eventually from his halau. And his halau name was Halau Hula O Kala. And I felt funny with that and so we decided to change it and make our own identity sort of speak and even if we never performed it was something that we could call our own and it was pretty, at the time it was the early 80's and kumu hula were poppy out of the wood work and anybody that had learned two or three numbers were calling themselves kumu hula and I had realized that I didn't want that to happen to me, or to our halau. And so we changed our name to Halau Hula O Kamakaniwilimakahaokaulaulula. The name comes from Maui and Kalaua is a name of a valley that is situated right next to Lahainaluna High School on the west side. And it is famous for this terrific wind that comes out every so often usually after a death of an ali'i. And it's a kind of a cleansing wind, it cleans the land, it knocks everything down, but it takes everything out to sea, but the land is clean. One of the reasons we decided to name our halau after this is because first of all, I came from the west side, and grew up in the shadow of this valley, so that was my connection for myself. But also it's a powerful wind. Wind has power. And what we wanted to do was that we wanted to harness this power within the name and instill that in all of our dancers. And so that's one of the many reasons why we decided to change that name. And so I think it was in 1980, you know between 1981 when Peter left and 1983 is when this name came up. There was a long time when we didn't have a name because I didn't want to. YOU KEEP SAYING "WE", WHO

ELSE WAS INVOLVED? No, it was me, but I didn't want to say "I". AT THE TIME THAT YOU STARTED YOUR HALAU, WHAT AGE WERE YOUR STUDENTS? Oh, the ages were anywhere between 14 and 15 all the way up to 60 or 70 years old. It was a huge, because there was no to much hula on Maui at the time. WHERE DID YOU TEACH, DID YOU TEACH AT THE SAME PLACE? No, we moved. We taught where ever we could teach, because we had no base we taught at Kalama Beach Park, Baldwin Park, at all of the different parks, because we had no base. HOW LONG DID YOU DO THAT BEFORE YOU SETTLED DOWN? Oh, at least three years. We moved from park to park. WHERE DID YOU SETTLE? Then we settled at our first home for many years was at Salvation Army in Kahului. They had a huge dance hall. And we used that place for many years until it burned down. And then the last seven years we've been at the Central Maui Youth Center in Kahului. HOW DOES YOUR HALAU WORK? We rehearse every Sunday and we start at about 1:00 in the afternoon after church, some times people go church. In our halau we stress language and so all the students have to go through Hawaiian language classes in halau. We provide those classes for them. And so we usually start off with a few language classes first, and depending on the level, and then after that we start an hour and a half of hula kahiko or hula auana, depending, because there is two of us that teach. I teach the kahiko and Uluwehi Guerero teaches auana. So the dance classes will probably run three and a half, four hours. HOW ARE YOUR CLASSES SET UP, BY AGE, BY KNOWLEDGE? No, by skill and knowledge. To me age does not matter as long as they are able to physically keep up with the class. And we have some as young as 12 and 11 in this class. And to me as long as they can mentally handle and physically handle the class then fine. But, I don't separate by age or sex. HOW DO YOU SEPARATE THEM? In the language classes, we have on going language classes, and we don't normally open our halau for a long time. We don't like having to continually get people caught up or whatever the case might be. So, we have students, we haven't opened up our halau in three years and so we have students that have been dancing with us for eight years, max, and some for about four years. And so they are all one class sort of speak. I don't like separating the classes. Once in a while I will separate the men from the women for certain things, but for the most part everybody learns the same thing, because I think it's important especially for men who perhaps want to teach hula someday or want to become an alaka'i or move up in the ranks of a halau. You have to be able to know all, you have to be able to learn how to teach women, how to dance like a woman if that's the case because you don't want your women

dancing too much like a man, so you need to conform to that kind of thing. WHAT DO YOU TEACH, KAHIKO? I teach kahiko and oli and all types of chant actually. SOMEONE ELSE TEACHES THE AUANA? Right. WHAT TYPE OF HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE DO YOU TEACH IN YOUR HALAU, DO YOU TEACH CONVERSATIONAL OR HULA LANGUAGE? That's a good question, it's both that we try to do. Everyday spoken language is very different from hula language and I think learning both is really important. First of all to be able to communicate and think in Hawaiian is important, because when you can do that on an everyday basis, everyday language basis, shifting into a hula language sort of speak is very easy. It's not a difficulty. It's very difficult to do it the other way around. I firmly believe that if you are going to dance hula, if you are going to teach hula, that you got to be able to speak Hawaiian or understand it. And have some kind of fluency in the language, otherwise it's just a jumble of words and what you're doing is that you're memorizing passages which is fine, it's better than nothing, but what I have seen over the years is that you take a student who doesn't understand the language. You give them the language as a basic foundation, they get by on an everyday level, speaking and stuff and the simplest songs all of a sudden that they have learned over the years, ten years ago and stuff, all of a sudden has new meaning to them. And that's what I live for. I live to see the light bulb go over their head. Because they didn't get it when they didn't speak, but once they start to speak they get it. And it's an amazing process. DO YOU THINK ANY OF YOUR CURRENT STUDENTS WILL CONTINUE YOUR WORK IN THE FUTURE? Yes, not too many. DO YOU PLAN TO UNIKI SOME OF THEM? That's a difficult question only because I have not uniki. So, a huge part of me feels that if you never uniki, that you cannot uniki sort of speak. Now, there may be a way to get around that and what we are thinking of doing is getting together a few kumu hula on Maui who have uniki and sit down, talk about it and figure out how we can uniki these people to a different level. Maybe not into a kumu hula level, perhaps from olapa to a ho'opa'a level. And leave it at that. I'm not too sure if I want to pursue being uniki to uniki somebody and stuff, because I think uniki is real heavy. And a big part of me regrets not having been uniki sort of speak, but I also understand, that there are many kumu hula today who have not uniki, who are good, who have contributed to the advancement of hula and there are those who have uniki and have not contributed anything to hula. So, I don't think uniki in this day and age, it's important, but it's not absolutely necessary to teach hula. WHO DO YOU REQUIRE OF THE STUDENTS THAT YOU THINK ARE GOING TO BE THE FUTURE OF

YOUR HALAU? Basic chant skill, basic knowledge of our particular style of hula, and our particular style of chant. That's really important that they get the styling. But a big part of it is attitude. How self motivated they are, because I don't think we can give them everything on a silver platter. I think they have to be able to research their own, be able to take a concept, a hula concept, or a cultural concept and work it so that it becomes workable for hula. Attitude is a big thing. Philosophy, what their views on hula is is important also, because that's what's passed down. You don't just pass down dance, you don't just pass down chant, you pass down attitude and philosophy. Those two things are just as important as the physical skills that you acquire in a halau. So all of those things play an important role in our choosing or our recognizing of that. HOW DID YOU ACQUIRE YOUR STYLE OF HULA, IS IT FROM SOMEONE OR IS IT YOUR OWN? That's a hard question, because it's something that you develop over the years and might even still be developed sort of speak. I think that every person who teaches hula today is almost a direct reflection of their kumu hulas or their kumu hula, or all of the kumu hula in the past. To me what makes a kumu hula good is that they take the knowledge that they have from their own kumu and they take it to a higher level in a sense. They take the styling. And one person could have learned from two or three different people over a ten, twelve, fifteen year period and what they do is that they blend all of those styles together from each particular kumu and then they come up with their own in a sense. And it's not done on purpose, it just happens that way. And I think that's an important osmosis in a sense, where you gather all that you've learned and you make it work for yourself and for your students. It's not copy cat kind. DO YOU STILL SEEK KNOWLEDGE? Oh, definitely. I think it's an ongoing thing. I don't think everybody knows everything. What they say, aue pau iki ka halawe o kaha, that's really true. For us, for our halau there are certain things that I'm not real knowledgeable in and I know that and I recognize that. Certain types of hula I don't know and I'm not going to pretend to know. So, what we have taken to doing on Maui is that when I feel that my dancers are ready to learn say, hula noho, cause I don't know too many hula noho. I wasn't trained extensively in hula noho, so we send them to Hoku Padilla, who was extensive knowledge of hula noho or she comes to us. And so that way our students receive as much information as possible, not just from myself, but from other kumu hula who are willing to help and to share. Because I think that's important. You have an all around, very rounded type of curriculum if you want to call it that, but I hate to call it that. I'm not going to deny my students a specific branch of knowledge just because I don't know it. It's

important that I bring someone in that can fulfill that void that I can not. DO YOU HAVE OTHER PEOPLE YOU CAN TALK TO? Oh, plenty. Each one for a different reason. As far as in the hula community for myself and for our halau, we look up to the Kanakaole ohana, Halau O Kekuhi, because that's the one's who I believe gave me the actual foundation into what I am doing today. I believe they are taking chant and hula to a higher level in a sense where it's not just hula and chant anymore, but it's done on a daily basis, ceremonial basis. And I think that's the next step for many of our halau. We're stepping out of memorized dancing, and we stepping out of memorized chants and moving it to the point where we can do it spontaneously. And that's a difficult transition, but I think it's a transition that is important and Halau Kekuhi is at the forefront of that I believe that. WHAT KIND OF FOUNDATION DID THEY GIVE YOU, IS IT ALSO A FOUNDATION IN CHANT? It's both. I think, through Peter, and it was an intense several years that I studied under him. Learned dozen, upon dozen of dances and they were fine, they were good, but something was missing. And when Pua Kanahale came to Maui to teach Hawaiian language, I jumped at the chance to study with her and so the first foundation she gave me was language and stressing the importance of language and hula and chant. The next foundation that she gave me was in chant. I became her apprentice and studied with her one on one in chant styles and techniques. Between those two different foundations, I believe that we have become in a sense quote, unquote successful, if you want to call it that. I don't want to base any halau's success on competitions or anything like that, although, some of it is. But for us, through those two foundations, through our halau we had the first group of Maui born, Maui breed, Maui trained chanters for the first time in 100 years on Maui. And for us that was a big accomplishment, because for many years there was a huge void of chant especially on Maui. Most kumu hula are trained in dance, but their not trained in chant and we had that luxury of having both and I think that's really important. YOU TEACH OLI IN YOU CLASS, DO YOU DO JUST OLI OR OLI FOR THE HULA? Both, we do a lot of non-dance oli. 'Oli'oli is the (?) of the chant world, and we have no dance. And I think that's really important. Because it offers you insight into the hula also. You cannot have one without the other, you really can't, and I have both. And they learn all styles of chant as best as they can do. I firmly believe that anybody, everybody, everybody, can chant. It doesn't mean that you can chant good, but you chant. Some people say that not everybody can chant, but no, I believe that everybody can chant, but some people just are better than others. So those who are better, or gifted or naturally talented they get pulled on the

side and get taught special things that require their talent. But everybody in our halau, and even parents of students in our halau are required to learn different kinds of chants for ceremony and for protocol. It's really important that they not be shame to use their voice and to chant. **DO YOU SEE SPECIAL PEOPLE IN YOUR HALAU?** Yes, but for me you can have all of this talent, you can have all of this natural aptitude for chant and hula and be a great dancer, and you have the attitude and you have the philosophy and stuff, but the other stuff I failed to mention was the commitment and discipline. I know so many dancers and chanters who are so gifted, but because they're gifted, it comes really easy to them and so they don't work as hard. They feel they don't have to. They're spoiled. And so those are the ones, even though they are gifted, they probably not going to be the ones. It's the ones that have a little bit more hard time who can do the same thing like the gifted ones, but not as quickly and not as fast, but they've been steady and disciplined and there all the time. I think a big part of it is longevity. I try to avoid people who are real gifted and want to come to halau and only be there for only certain things and grab what they can and then bag. I think there's something to be said about people who been dancing, or have been an olapa or ho'opa'a for ten, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen years, because you know that it's not a phase, we know their not in it because.. it's part of their life. They don't just love it, it's a part of their life. And I think it has to be that way. That kind of commitment. **WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT?** I think being able to pass on the chant knowledge especially to the students. Accomplishment, not in the sense, not something that everybody can see, but something we do in our halau, were it's constant. They learn chant, they learn hula whether it's competition or not. To me that's the biggest accomplishment. To be able to pass on this type of thing to your students and hopefully make them and inspire them to either teach someday or at least to teach in their family. I think that's important. If they can take home the philosophies and attitudes that they learn in hula and I think they do, they take it home with them and they pass it on to their children and even if it's not done on purpose, it's a kind of their children being exposed to hula, being exposed to chanting, being exposed to philosophy, attitude. This is taken home with them and I think that...**END OF TAPE**

IN WHAT SENSE IS LANGUAGE IMPORTANT TO YOU? Any language, any native language is and I forget who I'm quoting, but I'm quoting somebody, is a language is a way how certain race looks at the world around them. And when you can think in Hawaiian and when you can speak in Hawaiian, then you are viewing

the world as a Hawaiian and in Hawaiian thinking which is very different from English, which is very different from French, or from German. It's unique to our environment, it's unique to our place and when you can do that it's a huge foundation, because you can take a look at any type of art form that's Hawaiian and almost immediately identify with it and dive into it because you have the language background. If you are a canoe paddler, if you are a lauhala weaver, if you are a hula dancer and stuff, if you have your basic language skills behind you, you can move forward in that art form much faster, much quicker, physically, and spiritually I think. And I think that's the importance of the language. It gives us that foundation. We think in Hawaiian and we act Hawaiian in a sense if you want to call it that and it makes you also feel really good that you are seeing the world like how your ancestors saw the world. **WHEN DID YOU START BEING INTERESTED IN THE LANGUAGE?** Always was. And I knew how important the language was for the hula, but there was no Hawaiian language classes available on Maui really until Pua came. **YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH PUA?** It's a student teacher relationship mostly, and I'd like to believe that we are kind of friends. **WHEN DID IT START?** It started in 1985, around there. She was teaching at Maui Community College. She was teaching Hawaiian language. I was holding down two jobs, plus running halau at the time and when I heard she was coming, I knew who she was, I knew what she had to offer, and I knew at that time I had to do something. So, I quit all my jobs and I basically plunged into poverty and went back to school just to study under her. At first it was language, just language and culture because that's what she taught. And I guess she heard that I was a kumu hula, quote unquote kumu hula, I was teaching hula and stuff. She taught chant also at the school and I guess she maybe felt that I had some kind of gift or whatever the case might be. I don't know what it is she saw, maybe I was a pest. I asked if I could study under her through the State Foundation on Culture & the Arts Apprenticeship Program. And she said okay, well, if you get accepted, sure. And so we worked really hard. We put that proposal together and we were accepted, so I studied with her. And that was like the most intense year of my life. **AFTER YOU FINISHED STUDYING WITH HER YOU WENT BACK TO YOUR HALAU?** Well, I was still there. **IS THERE ANYBODY ELSE THAT YOU CREDIT WITH YOUR LANGUAGE BACKGROUND BESIDES PUA?** Yes. She was the first. I think another one that has been inspirational for us is Puakea Nogelmier. I first met Puakea, I think he came to Maui to take over Pua's class, I think one time she was sick for a week, or she had to go someplace for a week, so he came. We became really good friends, and every

since then I've just been in awe of his talent and his skill and knowledge and his teaching style too, very different. I think every kumu olelo Hawaii, like kumu hula has something different to offer your students. He's absolutely amazing. YOU DO A LOT OF ALBUMS WITH HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE DO YOU GO TO HIM? Yes, and no. What we do is once and a while he'll send me a song and he'll go this is how it goes and if you like it you can perform it and if you don't like it that's fine. And that's our relationship for that. What we've done, and this is probably like jumping ahead, this is how important the language is to us, not only for hula, but also for singing and stuff. What I'll do is when I am in the recording studio recording an album, I have him come and listen just to make sure that I'm pronouncing in a specific manner, because even though I speak Hawaiian and I get by and stuff, it's different when you sing it. And sometimes you do things vocally that you don't realize that you're doing until somebody points it out to you. And that's really important to me to have him or somebody there, of that level who can listen and say, no, no, no, I think you're da kine is kind of weird, so change that. That's important. CAN YOU SAY MORE ABOUT SONGS AND CHANTS THAT YOU WRITE? I'm not a prolific composer. I compose every so often, and I have to be moved to do so, or stressed out to do so maybe. I've done some stuff for ceremony. Mostly for hula and for singing. For myself, and I can only speak for myself, I usually compose when emotions are running high, because I need an outlet. Some people punch walls and stuff like that, I like to compose, because I think it's a good outlet for that. I believe that if you are composing, you need to have that emotional connection to whatever it is you are writing about. If you are writing about love, or if you're writing about a broken heart, make sure that you understand what that emotion is. You cannot be writing songs about love if you've never been in love. So I think the emotional aspect of your being gets put into your composition. That's what I've been able to do for myself anyway. The first several compositions like Kawai Punahale, Kauna Anuheia was all done during a time when I had split up after a seven year relationship. And I didn't know how to deal with that kind of pain and emotion, so I composed. And visa versa, when you're happy, and things are great, you get this belated feeling and you want to write, you want to have an outlet for that, and that's important too. DO YOU THINK COMPOSING COMES NATURAL OR DO YOU HAVE TO LEARN IT? It's both. It's both. There are certain techniques in Hawaiian composition that you have to learn. What you don't want to do is that you don't want to take a thought that's in English and translate it into Hawaiian, because then it sounds like that. You need to be able

to think in Hawaiian in order to compose in Hawaiian, otherwise it's just translations. WHERE DO YOU THINK HULA IS GOING? I think hula is going to eventually take a next step which is moving into ceremony, moving into protocol. Being able to say, take a halau and go down to say New Zealand and step off your boat, or your plane, whatever and do the protocol without having to prememorize anything. Doing it off the top of your head, because that's part of that. That's a part of the protocol. People like the Maori, I believe they're a couple of generations ahead of us in the sense of ceremony and protocol and philosophy and thinking. I think right now in Hawaii, we are in the crawling stages of that. Where as the Maori and maybe other parts of Polynesia, like Tahiti and Samoa, their protocol is much more advanced, because they never lost it. We lost our protocol and that kind of thing, so we have to relearn it again. So you got to start somewhere, so right now we are crawling I believe. I think within the next ten, fifteen, twenty years, I think we're going to be at a much higher level of being able to do that kind of stuff. CAN YOU TELL ME THE DEFINITION OF HULA KAHIKO? I think that hula kahiko is hula that is done in a specific styling that is kahiko. I think hula kahiko first of all has to be chanted, number one with or without accompaniment. With or without ipu or pahu. Can't be sung sort of speak. I think there are certain styles or certain steps that have to be incorporated into the hula kahiko to be called hula kahiko. The formatting of the hula has to be of a specific style that makes it identifiable as hula kahiko. That's a hard one, I never really thought about it. DO YOU THINK HULA KAHIKO IS TRADITIONAL? Oh definitely, but I also think that hula auana is traditional too. It's become traditional. IS IT AN ANCIENT HULA? No, not hula auana. Hula kahiko is ancient, but not always ancient. It's in a traditional style. So, I can compose something today that's done in a kahiko styling, but it's not kahiko, kahiko sort of speak, but 100 years from now it will be kahiko. That was a hard one, I never really thought about it. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING SPECIAL TO SAY ABOUT YOURSELF? No. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT COMPETITIONS? I love competition. I think our people were competitive from the ancient times anyway. They're very competitive. Hawaiians are competitive in almost every aspect that you can think of. We love going to competition, we don't do it all the time, because we don't want to make that our one and only goal. But I think competition brings out an excellence in the dancers and in the halau and in the kumu hula that under normal circumstances would never had been. Now, that's not very good to say, cause it should happen all the time, but there's something about human nature, there's something about

Polynesian nature in the competitive sense where you are going to do better when you know you are in competition. Some people may not agree with that, but that's how we feel. Because we don't want to make competition our number one goal, we try to go to competition every other year, or every two years. That way we are not spending all of our time just focusing on that, because that's just one aspect of hula, the competitive part. We go because we want to make a statement. We want to tell people, one of the main reasons we go to competition is we want to tell people, you know what this is us, this is our halau, this is what we do, this is our foundation and this is us. We want to make a statement. ~~Whether~~^{Whether} we place or not isn't important. Of course it's cool if you do, but if you don't that's fine. Because as long as we went, and we made our statement and in the sense it's called sharing, but in a competitive sense we don't share. WHAT KIND OF ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO ASPIRING HULA TEACHERS? Learn your language. Learn your language first, that's very important, because everything else falls into place right after that. No make like you know everything, because that's not good, cause you don't. You only know as much as you kumu know. Just keep trying to learn as much as you can, because up to the day I die I will be learning from different people. And any chance I have as a kumu hula or as a person who is trying to learn, any chance I have to sit down with other kumu hula and glean from their knowledge, you know a lot times you can get knowledge from other kumu hula just by sitting with them, and not talking about hula steps or hula chants, but just getting their thoughts on hula. That's really important. And it's neat to see how alike we are, from kumu hula to kumu hula, yet how different we are at the same time. Kumu hula are notoriously independent. They are almost vicious to that point, and I think that's good, because you take your knowledge and you develop that and you're very protective of it in a sense and that's fine. It has always been that way, even in ancient times. I believe that you kept your knowledge to your halau and if you decided to teach somebody else fine. But, any aspiring kumu hula learn your language, learn as much philosophy as you can so that your students just don't take dance with them when they leave, they take everything else with them too. WHICH DO YOU LIKE BETTER TEACHING OR MUSIC? Oh, teaching. It's been hard though, because what's happened over the past two years, since I started this halau, it's become number one in my life, always. I've lost jobs, because I've had to chose between halau and work. I've lived on the beach, I've been homeless because of halau. I couldn't pay my rent. And halau has always been the number one priority in my life. When this music thing, and it was very much by accident in a sense. HOW

DID THAT COME ABOUT? That came by a couple of things. I always loved to sing, but I never thought I couldn't sing great. I know I could hold a tune, but I never thought that I could sing really, really good. I was singing in the shower one day and there was some friends over and in the shower everybody sounds good, so I was singing, singing, singing, and I came out and they said wow, you should consider doing an album. Yah, I don't think so. And this group of friends, they kept bugging and they kept bugging and then I had done a few theater plays on Maui that were musicals, and I had a couple of solo spots, and people were like you should do an album, you have a great voice. And I was like yah right. And they kept bugging me and so after a while I said, you guys get the money together, I'll do an album. And I thought I'd nip it in the bud right there because albums are expensive to make. They're thirty thousand to sixty thousand dollars to make an album. Well, they got most of the money together, so I was stuck between a rock and a hard place. I told them, you guys get the money, they got the money, now I had to do my album. It happened like that. I went and did the album, and that was that, we felt that we wanted to put something out that was really nice. We wanted to break even, at least break even on the expenses, that way we don't owe nobody money, you know that kind of thing. We didn't even put a band together, because we didn't think it would be successful at all. We just thought some hula people would like it, that would be nice, and that would be fine. And all of a sudden it went ballistic. Two months after the album came out, we realized we had to perform, we had to, we had to chose if we wanted to pursue this as a career, quote, unquote career. And of course I didn't want to. And when I had, looking into the community, and looking all around, and seeing how these compositions and this music affected people, our people culturally, I realized that it was just a lot bigger than all of us. And so we had an obligation now to fulfill what we've started, and to finish, or to continue what we started. I'm a reluctant performer, I don't like performing. I stress out every time we have to sing at a concert. It's better now, but I would get to the point where I want to throw up before a performance, because I get so nervous. Chanting is so different, because you immerse yourself in the composers, in a composition. So when you get up and do an oli, I can do an oli in front of a million people and not be nervous, because I immerse myself into that and I'm not me. Me is hiding behind this chant, but when you're singing it very, very different. It's a different mind set. It's almost the same, but you can't hide behind anybody, especially if it's your own composition. It's you, and I had a hard time with that. WHAT KIND OF ROLE DOES MUSIC PLAY IN YOUR HALAU? Well, it's been real difficult, mainly

because for the first time in my life, halau was no longer first. This became first. And one of the reasons, and it was a conscious decision, and one that I didn't do very lightly, but it was for the first time in my life personally, I saw myself being able to be financially secure, to be financially stable. I was tired of being poor in a sense. Poor is great, poor is fine, it's all material anyway, but I needed to make a decision. So, I told myself, this isn't going to last long, it's going to be like a fad. Keali'i Reichel the singer will fade away into oblivion at some point and I still believe that. So for the first time in my life halau took second place. And it's been difficult because a lot of times I'm not there, and so I've had to rely on our alaka'i to continue, to try and keep the halau together and stuff. And we have lost a lot of students because of it. And it's gotten to the point where it's really, really hard. And so over the last month I've met with halau and we're doing is restructuring, and I'm recommitting myself. And so now halau is back number one. The singing stuff can wait. I've told my managers and the people who are responsible for the singing stuff, you know what I'm losing the very thing that got me here, which is my halau. I cannot, I cannot do this. I don't want to leave you guys cold. I don't want to quit, because I'm kind of starting to like this now, but I said the singing thing is going to have to take second place from now on. So, that's what's going to happen. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE TWO THINGS? They're two very separate things. They're two very different things. One is glitz. It's very show business and the scene of the music industry is very, very doggy, dog. You cannot trust a lot of people, because they'll take advantage of you. It's happened many times to our biggest celebrities. Our biggest singing groups. They get burned and we don't want that to happen. Halau is for me, is the foundation. If I don't have halau, then this will not work for me, because a lot of this, the singing stuff is based on all the philosophy, all the grounding, everything that I've learned, and worked for over the past twelve, thirteen, fourteen years. This is a by product, the singing is a by product of this base. If I don't have the base, this is not going to work, and I really believe that. Other people may not, but I do and that's what's important.