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I was born in Kalapana, Puna Hawai'i and was reared in the ways of old Hawai'i. My mother, a native of Ka'u and Puna was a full blooded Hawaiian who saw everything through spiritual eyes. She had taught me at a very early age the spiritual aspects of Hawai'i. We were the offspring of Pele. So I was a very special child I was taught. My mother's maiden name was Elizabeth Waia'u Waipā. My Dad, from Oslo, Norway, learned the Hawaiian Language before English. He brought his "old Country" ways along with him. He was very strict with us. We were not allowed to dance or play the ukulele around him. The desire to do these things were always with me but it was unheard of in my family. My mother had allowed me to have some hula lessons but this was done in secrecy - without my Dad's knowledge.

At the age of six, I was taken to my first kumu hula. Her name was Aunty Mary Keahilihau. Aunty Mary lived right next door to Edith Kanakaole in Keaukaha, in fact, they've shared the same hulas. After two years with her, I went Rose Nuhi also in Keaukaha who taught me more Kahiko, auwana and the use of implements.

I moved back to Kalapana and lived with my granduncle Napua Kaukini. He, along with my mother, taught me a lot of chants about the land and Pele. At that time, all of the people of Kalapana and Ka'u were related and like me, they grow up respecting Pele as a grandmother and kupuna figure. Everything about her was beautiful.

Later, I studied the ohelo dances under Kumu Hula Victoria Nuhi Wright in Pahoa. Then I began to travel with my cousin Kumu Hula Martha Waipa Ka'iawe with whom I had my uniki in a modern ceremony. I danced professionally for many years on the Big Island and studied with Kauihealani Brandt and George Naope. I moved to Honolulu after High School and College and continued to dance at night clubs, and hotels. While studying with Aunty Rose Joshua, I related a dream that I had the night before, in this dream, I was dancing on a heiau and Pele was dancing toward me with flames shooting





from her eyes. She then told me to go down to the Ala Wai Clubhouse to see this beautiful lady Alice Kalahui because I was the one she was looking for. Not knowing what I was getting myself into, I went. She then hired me to be a hula and ukulele instructor with the Parks and Recreation. I was pretty shocked at what was happening, but she instructed me to report to Kahala Playgroung the next day to teach. I had never picked up an ukulele in my life and here I was facing a class with a toy ukulele in my hand, an ukulele chord sheet in front of me. I taught the children C and G7 all day.

Aunty Alice trained me in the proper costuming, the dances of both the ali'i and gods. She taught me the different aspects of the culture. Many tears were shed by me because Aunty Alice was a very strict person and she expected perfection. I had never taken the hula seriously before this but with her, I learned fast and well. She brought in some of the very best kumu hula to teach us their speciality. Among them, my very own Aunty Mayr Kawena Puku'i. For eighteen years I've been with the Parks and Recreation. At present I am the kumu hula of the Hula Halau 'O Leolani in Hawai'i Kai.

For years I have had this battle within myself. A spiritual battle. My parents were both pastors in a Hawaiian Christian Church in Keaukaha, Hawai'i....Although I have been taught the old religion and the Christian religion and have been walking and talking this dual religion all my life, I am a born again Christian, am an ordained Evangelist and have rededicated my halau as a Christian Hula Halau. Although I no longer do the chants of our kupuna, my God Almighty has been giving me some beautiful chants and songs for my halau. The songs and mele are different, but the hula is still being perpetuated.

Mahalo!

Liffie Keonaona'OKu'uipo'OLEolani Johansen Pratt



Leolani Pratt

Aunty Mary Pukui showed me that people's feelings are the most important things in life. These are the free things in life that must be respected. This is what the spiritual aspect of the hula means to me.

I was six-years-old and in the first grade when I was taken to my first kumu, Mary Ke-ahi Lehau. Aunty Mary lived right next door to Edith Kanakaole and they share the same hulas. I went to Rose Nuhi after two years with Aunty Mary and I was taught kahiko, auwana, and the use of implements.

When I moved back to Kalapana, I lived with my grandfather Napua Keakini. He taught me a lot of chants about the land and Pele. Most of the people in Kalapana and Kau are like family to me. They grow up respecting Pele as a grandmother and kupuna figure. Everything about her is beautiful.

In the fifth grade I studied under Victoria Wright who taught me a lot of ohelo dances. At this time I began to travel with my cousin Martha Kaiawe who pulled me into the classes she gave all over the islands and I uniki with her in a modern ceremony. When I moved to Kapahulu at twenty-seven, I met Rose Joshua and I told her I had dreamt I was dancing on a heiau and Pele was dancing toward me with flames shooting from her eyes. Aunty Rose told me to go down to the Ala Wai Clubhouse and see Aunty Alice Kalahui. She said Aunty Alice was a beautiful lady and I was the one she was looking for. Before my contact with Aunty Alice I didn't take the hula seriously, I looked at it more as exercise. I never took care of it or treasured it. She told me to report to Kahala Playground to teach ukulele and hula for the Parks and Recreation Program. I had never picked up an ukulele in my life and I ended up teaching the children C and G7 all day.

Aunty Alice trained me in the proper costuming of the alii and the gods, and she taught me to respect the different aspects of the culture. I had never seen the deeper, more profound levels of the hula and I really treasured the education. For a long time I was having a battle within me because both my parents were ministers within the Christian Church. I respected the gods of the hula but I looked to the Lord as the greater God. Today our halau prays to the Lord and that's how we get our hulas and meles.

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Mendell.

Please consider my very own write-up.

Mahalo ia oe!

Leolani



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My first kumu hula was Mary Keahi Lehou. I was six years old in the first grade. My ear was pulled to go. I was told to go to hula at that age. Aunty Mary lived right next door to Aunty Edith but at that time Aunty Edith did not teach. I enjoyed watching Aunty Edith in the seminars because the hulas she dances were the hulas Aunty Mary taught me. They either taught each other or had the same kumu.

I went to Rose Nuhi in the third grade where I was taught the use of implements along with ancient auwana.

After Rose, I moved back to Kalapana, to live with my grandfather, Napua Keakini. My grandfather taught me a lot of chants ~~about~~ about the land and about Pele. Most of the people in Kalapana and Ka'u are like my family. They grow up respecting Pele as a grand mother and kupuna figure. Everything about her was beautiful. My grandfather was pure Hawaiian. My great-great grandfather was a great kahuna in the Ka'u district.

I went onto Victoria Wright in the 5th Grade. She taught me a lot of ohelo dances but I didn't take it seriously. I looked at it more as just exercise. We never took care ~~xxx~~ of it and treasured it.

After that my cousin Martha Kaiawe came along and pulled me into her classes. She traveled all over the islands giving classes. I uniki'd with Martha but it was not made up with rituals like the ailolo though we did have prayers. to Laka. At that time I was having a ballte within me because both my parents were ministers withingthe Christian church.

My mother had learned the ancient rituals from a kahuna and was brought up in a Hawaiian home. She had a gift of sensing whether a person was sincere or not. After she got married my dad got her to become a Christian but her background was always ther and she lived a life that was part Christian, part Hawaiian. In Kalapana she was known as a good kahuna who ballted an evil kahuna. In terms of the hula we respect the gods of the ~~hula~~ hula but we ook to the Lord as the greater god.

When I was a teenager I took auwana from George Naope whenever he was in the ~~xx~~ neighborhood. I took a few lessons from Aunty Su at ~~palace~~ palace but these lessons were all informal. After that I moved ~~xx~~ to Kapahulu and I went to Aunty Rose Joshua.

I told her that I had dreamt that I was ~~xxx~~ ~~dn~~ dancing on a heiau and Pele was coming toward me dancing with flames coming out of her eyes. She said to me "Very good, youssit right here." She then called ~~me~~ on Auntie Alice Kalahui of the Dept. of Parks and Recreation. She told me to go down to the Ala Wai Clubhouse and see Auntie Alice. She said Aunty Alice was a beautiful lady and that I was the one she was looking for. I didn't know what I was getting into but I went down to meet Aunty Alice. She told me Pose had told her everything and could I start work tomorrow. She told me I was going to start teaching hula for the Parks and Recreation and I was 27 years old. She told me to report to Kahala Playground to teach ukulele and hula and I had never picked up an ukulele in my entore life. At this time Addine Lee was working there. I taught the kids C and G7 all day. For eighteen years I taught at the Parks and Recreation. So Auntie Alice trained me in the proper costuming, she taught me to respect the different aspects of the culture and how to really care. for the spiritual aspect of the Hawaiian dance. Before my contact with Alice, I had just been looking at the hula throughtthe eyes of a performer and a spectator. I had never seen the deeper, more profound aspect of the hula. And I really treasured the differenc.e

I think when the kumus go to see a performance they end up looking at the dancers as teacher. They question every motion and step and I feel it is better to appreciate the good that is there rather than concentrate on the bad. Ther is something worthwhile in every performace and thats what should be emphasized.

Auntie Alice taught me the importance of proper costuming. YOU don't ~~xxxxxxx~~ use this because this is for alii, and this is for the gods or a particular god. And you cannot mix any of these colors or costuming because of that.

Auntie Mary Pukui showed me that people's feelings are the most important things in life. These are the freethings in life that must be respected. This is what I mean by the spiritual aspect of the hula.

Rose Joshua showed me patience in the most demanding circumstances. She has weathered many illnesses but keeps moving ahead quietly.

So my style comes from these three women along with my mom. I also have sharèd with many kumu that worked with me at the Parks and Recreation.

Our ~~haka~~ Halau will pray to the Lord and that's how we get our huals and mele. My daughter Vernalani has been given the gift of having the motions come to her in dreams so this is how we get our motions.

The hula as taught to me was very contrained and disciplined. The motions now seem to have exploded. Emphasis has shifted to generation of excitement in the audience.

Hula kahiko--hula without music. Steps and mele must be kahido. Passed down from generation to generation. Hula auwana will become more individualistic.