

ROBERT KALANI

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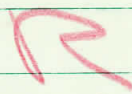
When I went to go learn the chants from my kumu, my mother was against it. My grandmother had been a kahuna and my mother didn't want me involved in the old ways. My grandmother lived in Makena and when she walked the streets the neighbors would get so afraid of her. She would constantly oli until one a.m. in the morning and my mother didn't want to see that happen again.

When I was eleven, I started to visit Honolulu during the summer months and I would stay with my aunt. Henry Pa would come over and use her house for rehearsal and this is how I got into dancing. So I would come over every summer and learn different dances under Henry Pa. His classes would last for three hours and he was teaching at this time in Palama.

I studied for three summers under Henry and then I stayed back on Maui and went to Rena Ching for six months. I graduated from Rena and went through a modern uniki with her. After Rena, I decided to go back to Honolulu and that's when I met Tom Hiona who I feel had the greatest influence on me. He had the ability to teach and to find the right English word for Hawaiian ideas. This was back in the early fifties and Tom would not teach us at a studio but at a private home that we would go to on the weekends. I found him to be very sensitive and very demanding and after a year, I returned to Maui.

I began to teach when I was attending high school. Some of the students wanted to learn, so I would have my mother translate songs for me and that's how I began to teach. My kumu taught me that what you want to explain to the audience comes from deep within you so you must show that in your expressions.

Insert



Hattie Au
Tom Hiona

9 months

Aunt taking
from her

HA took me into her hula
taught hula dance

SO's

Did not put in
but always

TH different styles of trad,
dance. Diff types of beat
in hula & hula
3 summers SO's
after Hattie.

insert

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Robert Kalani

Robert Kalani began his hula training under Henry Pa at the age of 11. Born in Paia, Maui, he has taught the hula for 26 years in Lahaina, Paia, Kula and Kahului.

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I began to teach when I was attending high school. Some of the students wanted to learn, so I would ~~have~~ have my mother translate songs for me and that's how I began to teach. My kumu ^{TEAUGHT} taught me that what you want to explain to the audience comes from deep within you so you must show that in your expressions. (A lot of dancers today just go up and dance and they don't grab ahold of the audience.)

Robert Kalani

I became interested in the hula when I was about seven years old because we had the Amateur Hour here on Maui on the radio. I was asked to enter the amateur hour because at that time I was a singer. I had a very high falsetto. This was back in the forties. When I was eleven I started to go to Honolulu in the summer months and I would stay with my aunt. Henry Pa would come over to her house and they would have rehearsal and he would work with the dancers. My aunt asked me if I wanted to learn some of the hulas and this is how I got into dancing. So every summer that I would come over I would learn the different dances from Henry Pa. At that time he was teaching mostly the ancient dances. I was kind of leery of these dances at that time. My aunt told me to make the effort to learn the ancient dances because in years to come this would be very beneficial to me. But my mother was against it. But Henry asked me if I would be interested in learning the ancient dances and I told him yes I was interested, and that's how I got into learning the ancient dances from Henry Pa. So I spent three summers with Henry Pa learning the ancient hula. This was before he moved to Kalakaua. He was teaching at this time in Palama.

After my three summers with Henry I stayed back on Maui and went to Rena Ching. Uncle Henry was very strict. I was young at that time but some of the students would get really upset. His classes would go for three hours. Because the other students were so much more advanced than I was, I had to catch up. Also I was ~~one of the few male students~~ one of the few if not the only male in the class. Since the other students were much more advanced than I was, Henry offered to help and gave me two hours extra. I think what Henry was trying to do was give me as much as he could. But I think I was a disappointment to him because the following year I just didn't want to dance and I stayed back on Maui.

I studied with Rena for six months and then I met Tom Hiona back in Honolulu. Tom did not teach us at a studio but at a home we would go to on the weekends. This was back in the early fifties. I stayed with Tom for just one year. He was very sensitive, and very demanding. He was worse than Henry. Anyhow I returned to Maui and I would occasionally go out and perform. Then a lady came here who was one of the students of Kao'o, named Caroline Link. She told me that there were only three students in her class. She was working at the Salvation Army Boys' Home. I took three years from Caroline. Caroline Link had a different style of pa'i from Henry Pa for Kaulilua. She had a thick book of the oli's and mele's from Kao'o. She left for Laie after three years and I went on to Mrs. Makekau.

Robert Kalani

She was a student of Kaoo and there were only three students in her class. She came to Maui to study and I took three years from her. She had a pai style from Kaoo. She had the oli for building the kuahu, she had the prayers, she had the oli for gathering up the greens.

~~Mrs. Makena was a Pihini Pihini student.~~

I learned one hula from Ilalaole up in Kapahulu through a man named Kamuela

I began to teach when I was attending school. Some of the students wanted to learn hula so I took the songs to my mother who translated them for me and that's how I began to teach. I was in high school and I went to Emma Sharpe for advice on whether I should dance and she said yes. When I went on to college I taught the students there as well. This was in 1968 and I opened up a whole halau.

I uniki'd from rena ching. There was no traditional rituals it was very modern. I went to George Naope and Auntie Io because I didn't want to go teach the kahiko unless I myself had more to give. I think Tom Hiona was the greatest influence on me. His ability to teach and to find the right English words to match the Hawaiian mele was what impressed me. When I went to learn the chants from George Naope, Io and Tom Hiona my mother was against it. She didn't want me involved because my grandmother was a kahuna. According to my mother. She lived in Makena. The things that my grandmother did my mother didn't want to see repeated. She would constantly oli until 1 in the morning and the neighbors along the street would be afraid of her when she walked the streets people would get so afraid of her.

The happiest point was my first ~~uniki'ia ni iho was unono reno of mami ni iho~~ hoike.

My students studied with me for three years. After the hoike came more training and then an uniki.

When you go upon the stage what you want to explain to the audience comes from deep within so you must show that in your expressions. In your facial, body and hand expressions. A lot of dancers today just go up and dance and they don't grab ahold of the audience.

I think the hula has changed a lot. It has become a lot more modernized.

I think it has changed for the worse.

I consider myself a kumu in the contemporary sense