

Nana I na Loea Hula

Kumu Hula: Kapu Kinimaka Alquiza

Interviewer: Lovina Le Pendu

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My full given name is Odetta, Kaohikukapulani, Debra, Kinimaka and now I married, so is Alquiza. For the Book, "Kaohikukapualani Kinimaka Alquiza". (WHERE DO YOU TEACH?) I teach presently at four different locations here on Kauai. I originally started in Hanapepe which is currently still then I moved on to Lihu'e traveled down to Kapa'a and also Koloa. I teach at all different 4 locations, but my base is in Hanapepe at my home. We also utilize a hall down at the Hanapepe town. (NAME OF YOUR HALAU?) Na Hula O Kaohikukapulani, my name Kaohikukapulani is the name that was give to me by both my mom and my dad as I was growing up Kapu became more like my name so everything else has been forgotten and it translates to the dance of the secret heavens and on my third child it was a girl and I gave her partial of my name "Kapulani" but it is a sacred name. (WHY DID YOU GIVE TO YOUR HALAU?) Well, my teachings comes from Aunty Lovey and Uncle Joe Kauhaulileo and I am very proud to be a sibbling of their tree of the hawaiian culture and I gave my halau this name that is named after myself mainly to instruct and to inform the children the student's that it is of my teachings through my kumu that I would like them to continue on the culture through this halau which is named after myself... (WHAT AGE ARE YOUR STUDENTS?) My students range from age of 3 years old to adults, some are kupuna. (HOW MANY IN YOU HALAU?) My halau season months are September thru June and we take a summer break July and August so we just recently opened up again so right now we have about a little over 150 students. (DO YOU TEACH BOTH KAHIKO AND AUANA?) Yes, I do when I first started my halau, I could teach auana my kumu hula being Uncle Joe and Aunty Lovey I did a variety of different polyenesian dancers, so tahitian was also one of the first type of dances that I did teach the halau. (DO YOU TEACH OLI?) Yes. I recently learned my kahiko

from kumu hula Palani Kahala who just recently passed away and also Kepa Mali another good friend of mine and Pohaku Nishimitsu so oli has been part of our teaching in our halau which I also feel is very important of the culture. (HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU BEEN TEACHING?) We are going into the 11th year in August. (WHAT AGE DID YOU FIRST START HULA?) I started hula at age 5. I came from a very large family of 16 children, 8 girls and 8 boys. We grow up and hula was just part of life for us. We all danced it and took lessons and we did it for fun too for myself I wasn't one to really enjoy hula I only did it because when we would perform we would get \$5, but I stuck with it for many many years it sort of grew with me and I never thought I would be the one to teach. (YOUR FIRST TEACHER?) My first kumu hula is Aunty Lovey Apana, she taught at her home in Wailua. She would teach us kahiko and auana and a very little bit of tahitian at that time, my sister and I will be with her for so many hours, and I remember sitting on her front porch in her little hale near the river, I was 5, if I can recall we stayed with Aunty Lovey until I was about 11 or 12. And then we had gone to Uncle George Kahaulilio. Uncle George Kahaulikio was a master chanter as well as entertainer, choreographer, and also very versatile in other polynesian dances. He used to teach auana, he also did teach kahiko. (WHAT AGE WERE YOU.. 11 OR 12?) Yes. (DO YOU REMEMBER IF THERE AN ANY DIFFERENCES IN STYLING BETWEEN LOVEY AND KAHAULILIO?) NO, I don't think there is a great difference between both of them, both from what I can recall right now to my teachings from other kumu hula, their style is very traditional, the old style with the puffed uwehe, the very low helas, very simple and beautiful. I stayed with Uncle Joe until I was probably around 18, going to 19 then I married and had children and that made me stop for awhile. After the birth of my 3rd child, which happened to be a girl, after 2 boys, I was invited to participate at the Merry Monarch festival with a good friend her name is Loke Dolly and her sister Bobby had selected a group of dancers from Kauai to represent Kauai at the Merry

Monarch festival and I believe it was at 1982, so we participated in the Merry Monarch festival, it was then that my daughter was just about 3 years old, but bringing her with me to all my practices for Merry Monarch and I was impressed with her interest in hula as the adults were practicing the dance she was back there following us step by step and so at the end of the year, throughout the practices for the kahiko and auana and more dances that we learned from both sister Loke and Bobby, my daughter had also learned the kahiko and auana by just watching and practicing in the back so through that it got me thinking. I get to take her to hula so her interest in hula inspired me to persue her into a hula class, so I look around I really wanted to find someone that I felt comfortable with, someone that could be versatile in the different polynesian dances as well as hawaiian someone that will be very similar to Uncle Joe and Aunty Lovey's teachings but I really could not find someone that could fit that although many kumu hula around here in Kaua'i are wonderful I wanted, there is just a certain way or style that I felt my daughter should be taught, and through that I pursued it and I wasn't lucky to find or fortunate to find anyone that I was happy with so I didn't take her to anyone, instead I decided to learn a lot more for myself so I made an effort to want to be a part of kumu hula Rosel Bailey's halau I called them and ask her if it is alright to for me to join her halau and asked her what she taught and she invited me to come in and so I was a mother and working wife at the same time. I was working at the bank of Hawaii and I try to work my schedule out to accompany her hours of teaching and it was unfortunate that I was not able to join her class for one lesson, after that the timing was not that good so I just put the whole idea to rest, so my husband, he name is Pete, we have been together since I was 13 years old. He is also a tahitian drummer from Uncle Joe Studio back in the middle 70's or should I say early 70's. We had gotten married when I was 20 years old and he knew my hula background and so when our daughter was born and I couldn't find someone that I was comfortable with he asked me what was wrong with me. Hula as far as

teaching never entered my mind. I had many sisters that we all dance hula with. Aunty Lovey and Uncle Joe and I thought I was the worst student of all. I had 2 left feet and I remember Aunty Lovey's sister Aunty Shalet, will always call me blind ear and deaf eye because I could never follow instructions the right way, but it kind amazed me because I almost could remember everything that I was taught not everything, but the majority of the most important matters that was important to pursue the teaching so when my husband and I spoke about it and I thought about it very, very heavily, I decided to go into teaching so I went and contacted Uncle Joe Kahaulilio since he was our last kumu hula to seek for his blessings I was not sure where he was at, but I was told, he had moved to the mainland in San Jose so I called many people to try located his number I finally found the number I got hold of him and asked him if I could come and visit him and try to see whether he would feel I was capable of teaching or not and I was ready to accept the yes or no from him. So I took vacation from my work place made my reservation to go to San Jose with my sister "Kaniu" and when I finally called to reconfirm that with him that I was coming he had flown to Hawaii for an emergency so now I have to track him do to when he was here in Hawaii and I found out he was out in Laie with Aunty Mable Woodward, so instead of going to San Jose, my sister and I flew over to Oahu to meet with Uncle Joe for the weekend and all through that time in my heart I wanted to be able to teach, and I was so afraid that he would say no. Yet, I was been prepared for what ever answer he came up with so we went up to Aunty Mable Woodward's home up at Punaluu and spent the weekend with him and few more days with Uncle Joe. I finally had the courage to come up and ask I almost chickened out, because I was so afraid because I thought I was one of the worst students I would think that he ever had and he will guarantee say "no" as a student that's how I thought, so finally I had the courage to ask him. We went down to the Lions Crouch and we had dinner and a few drinks and sat around and finally the courage came to me and I asked him, I had expressed to him my feelings of wanting to teach

because of the frustration for my daughter so when I asked if it will be alright to continue his teachings of hula and hawaiian culture, he looked at me straight in my eyes and I can almost feel him right now, he put his hands on my check and he said to me what took you so long and through that I was very surprised, but happy at the same time, so his words was what took you so long and out of all my sisters he felt that I was going to be the teacher and all of this time I felt I could not do something like that so we finished up the evening with good feelings and blessings from Uncle Joe and I knew in my heart what ever I do I will do in his name as well as Aunty Lovey's name and persue the best that I know, in what I do, so after that we moved over back to Aunty Mable's home and we talked story, we share stories of the kahiko and chants and the dos and don'ts, how to beat the ipu, how to beat the pahu, in that short time we were there so after that I will commute back and forth from Kauai to Oahu to visit Uncle Joe at his home. He wasn't very well at the time, but he would make the time to see me and Pete would also travel a lot with me we'll take a cassette, a tape recorder to tape what he had to say. I will call him up for advice and guidance because I was very much afraid. I did not want to do the wrong things and I know the cultural is oh, I say special, sacred, religious. I don't want to offend anyone, by doing something that was not proper so I will take my steps very slowly and do the best I can and corespond with hime and he will be teaching me chants and after 1 year, not quite a year I decided to take that step and start teaching hula. So I did that was August 6, 1983 that I started my first class in my garage in my home in Hanapepe heights with a number of 20 students, and it was a frightening day for me, I did my best and I tried to do what I thought was right.

(AUANA?) I started with strictly auana hapa haole tunes, my students were very little, so we did the fun hapa haole tunes then we went into the hawaiian hula's, that's when the halau started to grow and older girls started to come and we also worked to aperima and tahitian. Kahiko was not something that I went into right away. When I spoke with Uncle Joe through those times that

we were commuting back and forth , he gave me some advice that he felt, affected him in his years of kahiko and that I should stay away from certain chants. Stay away from certain rituals to protect my family, and I did not quite understand what he was saying at that time bieng 10 years almost 11 years later I do understand and I do see what he was trying to say, and from that day, he spoke to me about kahiko because I did stress to him that I will like to go into it because I feel that is part of our culture and that's the root of hula he told me to take my steps very carefully. Take it very slowly and go into it but to watch as to what types of chants and hulas that I decided to go into. So he shared with me chants of the land, the sea and the mountain and people and not too much of the worships, not too much of ritual types of hula, not too much, when they go to a big ceremony. Not too much of that.. I do respect that but I won't dwell into it only because of his advice into hula... (WHICH TEACHER HAS THE GREATEST INFLUENCE ON YOU?) Yes, like I mentioned earlier, Aunty Lovey was my first kumu hula, Uncle Joe Kahaililio and then Palani Kahala, Kepa Maly and Pohaku Nishimitsu. I have to say that they all wonderful and I love them all dearly, but Uncle Joe Kahaulilio is one teacher that stands out much in my mind, whose done a lot of different dance teaching of dance with me and for kahiko. I have to give credit to all 3 of them, Pohaku Nishimitsu, Kepa Maley, Palani Kahala and I feel fortunate to work with Palani Kahala because he is unique in his own style. He is a unique person period, but he has his own creation, his own style he taught me sort of like stepping into a different world of kahiko when we first met back in 84 and I appreciate his style so did my students. I also had to mind when I am formatting a kahiko number he's innovative styling however Kepa Maly on the other hand and Pohaku Nishimitsu are traditionalist, they are very simple, very traditional in thier dancing and momentum of dancing is lot more slow at pace opposed to Palani Kahala rythmic type of dancing. I enjoy both of them so I feel fortunated to had share to both different kinds of style of kahiko, but yet they focus directly on the same point of the culture..

(HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH POHAKU?) When Palani Kahala passed away I felt like a lot of help and resource that I get from Palani because he did help me a great deal in proper protocol. I felt like oh my goodness, where is it all going to go now!.. I don't like to just call up on anyone that I am not comfortable with, nor they are not comfortable with me. I like to be able to approach other master kumu hula that I can feel good about. I can just relax and be myself I don't have to worry what they are really thinking or they are going to criticize me or anything like that so I was pretty much selective too, as to the people I wanted to learn from and Kepa Maly was very, very easy to get along with. He understood where I was coming from and if I will mess up or pronounce words incorrectly he'd make the correction a lot like Pohaku, so it wouldn't be an embarrassing way they will make me feel comfortable and encourage me to continue and I enjoy being around people that are willing to help at no price, willing to encourage even if we fail as we move along. (YOU TOOK HULA KAHIKO?) Yes, Kepa Maly had helped me for about 3 to 4 years in his training of kahiko he had learned a lot of chants from Aunt Mary Puku'i that he shared with me he has a very unique style of oli and pohaku Nishimitsu I just recently worked with him for the past year going on 2 years and we have become good friends and he is really a clown but I feel comfortable with him to be able to approach him and ask him for things I don't know and I need assistance from. (HOW DO YOU DESCRIBE YOUR DANCING STYLE?) I think it is a variety of kumu hula basically from Aunt Lovey Apana and Uncle Joe Kahaulilio we as students can learn from our kumu hula and duplicate their teachings or their style of dancing but we are what we are we are individual people, we feel different from others. From our kumu, therefore when we come to express and to teach it is simply us, strictly us it comes from within ourselves and not from our kumu hula so I would have to say for myself when I am teaching a song or a chant they have the important facts that I remember whether is a chant or a hula that I need to apply into the hula, but the style just has partially them inside of it, but

I say it is mostly something from me, then again I know a lot of my hula sister have all been part of Uncle Joe's halau back then there is a certain style that he portray that tends to come out of us so therefore. We are passing it on to our students and that's is the greatest thing because today we being from a different generation from Uncle Joe. We can come together my students and I we could come together with students of Uncle Joe's for 20, 30 years back and we could see the styling being the same from his teachings back then and to my teachings to my students on certain numbers, certain hulas that he had taught me that I continue to teach the certain motions to my students so that's kind of unique it has not happen to often but when it does it almost like a treat. (WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER YOUR GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT?) As a teacher is being able to develop a great amount of patience, a patience with myself as well as with the students being able to understand their thinking where they're coming from, the background they came from and what they are trying to achieve through my teachings so my greatest accomplishment is, ya being able to have the patience to teach what my kumu hula has taught me and hopefully to enhance it even better. (WHAT IS YOUR MOST JOY IN TEACHING TODAY?) I would have to say teaching the young ones, teaching the babies, teaching the very sensitive dancers because they are innocent children, the dance irregardless what kind of dance to auana, kahiko, tahitian what ever it is but watching them to try comprehend what you are teaching and seeing that glare or the look in their eyes, that ya! I understand what you are saying, yes I got it and they are applying it that gives me the most joy the most satisfaction of being there as a teacher and as they continue to remain with you and to see the years of growth in the dancing till they are off into college or married whatever it is yet they continue the dance it might not be professionally, it may just be occasionally, prom to party or whatever but to have them be married or at College and drop me a line and say, thank you so much for what you have given me, you have been a big major important part in my life and that's being so happy.. (DO YOU UNIKI YOUR STUDENTS?)

No, I do not uniki my students merely because I was not uniki myself. By my kumu hula I don't feel it is proper at this time for me to uniki my students until I have been through some sort of formal training or proper protocol to have my student uniki if their interest is to pursue that career, in hula I will be with them to guide them the best I can and give them my blessings and help them along but currently I don't uniki my students. (WHAT KIND OF ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE THAT WANTS TO TEACH HULA?) To the haumana, that want to pursue their career of hula especially if they are young is to concentrate and to focus in all that is given to them or being shared with them to retain all knowledge that is being taught for them to intake that information and have it put in a place for themselves to be able to figure it all out and to be able to teach it when they feel the timing is right and if the call is there for them to take that next step. (DO YOU THINK HULA HAS CHANGED?) Yes, hula kahiko, like hula auana has been very competitive today and it has changed a great deal since I was little because the kumu hula of today are very different they are innovative they are creative, they are original, they are wild too. You know I guess it is a matter of preference of what you like and what you don't like and I like a simple traditional hula school and I can see a big difference in styles today. (DEFINITION OF HULA KAHIKO?) Hula kahiko is the basic foundation of hawaii of our culture and hula and our teachings will stem from hula kahiko when I first started however I only started off with auana and hapa haole tunes. Tahitian, aprimia I did not take a step into kahiko because I was not comfortable in kahiko as the years went by, I realized that if I wanted to pursue this career in hula that my students would need to know basic foundation of hula which I learned that as kahiko it is knowing where our ancestors came from, the history the chants, it tells stories of the past and we need to know that, it is our heritage we need to continue it to our students and then to their students and so I feel that kahiko is very important it is part of the upbringing and nurturing of our haumana into the hula world and not just about hapa haole hula tunes or auana

numbers. (YOU HAVE A FAVORITE CHANT?) Yes, I have a favorite chant, Kaulelua i ke anu O Waialiali is my favorite of all chants basically because it is of Kaua'i and it speaks and describes the beauty of Kaua'i and Mount Waialiai it is just a majestic area up there. I enjoy the sound that this chant brings forth with the pahu and puniie and at the pace and the rhythm that this chant offers it kind of takes me there. (YOU PREFER KAHIKO OR AUANA?) If you asked me this 5 years ago, I would say auana today I am still learning kahiko and I have lots lots more to learn I am also learning to develop my chanting, my oli style much more in depth as far as preference to auana or kahiko I truly enjoy kahiko today, and I want to continue and I need to research more and I need to talk more with the master kumu hula into kahiko and I want my students to learn about it a lot more than ehsy I can share with them today. (LANGUAGE IMPORTANT?) Yes, the language is very important and I say that because for myself I kind went backwards on that I started hula not knowing the language so when it came to hawaiian hula I have to go and get someone to translate the song or look it up in the dictionary which does not always come out the way it should be so I felt like learning the language which sould really be the first priority to hula and being able to teach kahiko or a hawaiian number. Hawaiian song will make a lot easier for teaching so kind of did this backwards for myself. I do find out that language is very very important to the art of hula. (DO YOU TEACH SOME OF THE LANGUAGE IN YOUR HALAU?) I have been a student in a hawaiian language class for going on to 2 years and I am at the beginners level and what I learned in a short time yes, I applied it to my studens and I even practice my hawaiian language with them. I teach them words and phrases and sentences so we can eventually work up to a level where we could perhaps hold a conversation and learning the language is one of my immediate goals of the culture so I cannot only give my students the ability to dance well, but also learn the culture and also have them learn the language is important. (BESIDE HULA?) Our halau is involved in ukelele performances, I do teach children how to play

ukulele on a very small level I am not the greatest player, I can teach simple and some slightly harder numbers to the students and we do performances utilizing the ukulele and also we share hawaiian crafts, making like coconut weaving or lauhala mat weaving, quilting, implements makings, ipus, uli uli, ohe hano ihu, pu ili... (DO YOU PERFORM WITH YOUR HALAU?) Our halau is kind of broken up into 2 parts one is the school first of all the education; the nousihing to the students and the foundation of our culture. And secondly on the professional side of entertainment, being at a hotel, a promotional tour, or convention so the halau is broken up into 2 different sections so we do a lot of community involvment we do a lot of volunteer support to non profit organizations whatever it might be. We also work entertainment for Luau's, parties and stuff like that where people would make a donation to the school and that would go directly to the children and yes again we do entertain professionally. (HUAL MASTERS FOR YOU?) (WHAT IS A HULA MASTER FOR YOU?) I feel a hula master is a person can very willingly give from their heart and teach of the culture at no restrictions, one with patience and understanding to be able to teach and share those who are pursuing and wanting to advance and move forward in the hawaiian culture. (NAME OF HLA MASTERS?) I know of many kumu hula in the state, I really don't know a lot of them personally most of them are by acquaintances, I think I would have to say. I had the pleasure meeting these 2 sisters Nalani and Pualani Kanakaole along with many other kumu hula and I have to say that in my eyes both Nalani and Pua are considered hulas masters not only from their mother's reputation, but also one that they carry themselves. They have to me the sprit of hula, the spirt of new life, of the growth for all of us hawaiians to perpetuate. It was nice and I was fortunated to be with them on a week end when they came and shared chant and music with us and I do know from other instances but I like the ora that they have, I like their humbleness as well, thier joking personalities, but I would have to say Nalani and Pua Kanaka'ole. (WORKSHOPS?) I would encourage my students to participate in any

workshop in a hula workshop, that is being sponsored or put on by whatever organization it might be, but one instructor of good caliber and knowledge and lots of experiences so the students can learn and learn well. (SOMETHING SPECIAL?) My basic hula career is actually dedicated in the memory of Uncle Joe Kauhaulilio and Aunty Lovey, not in the memory of Aunty Lovey because she is still with us, but also to Aunty Lovey for her wonderful thoughts of wanting to pursue in helping me to continue, although I was the worst student around and how they unselfishly gave their time to us. Uncle Joe Kahaulilio sticks out in my mind and so my hula is dedicated to his memory.