

November 1995

Holoua Stender

Holoua Stender teaches ^d five classes of Hawaiian chant and dance everyday as part of the regular school curriculum of the Kamehameha Schools. He has been teaching since 1979.

I was raised by my ^{maternal} grandparents and my great-grandparents. ^{at Kamehameha} ~~They all~~ spoke Hawaiian to me when I was little. When I attended St. Louis High School, I studied ~~formal~~ Hawaiian language with John Lake and I continued learning language throughout my years at the University of Hawai'i ^{where I graduated in 1979.}

John Lake was a wonderful and an exciting teacher. I took hula from him ^{in 1970} when I was fifteen and enrolled at St. Louis High School. He was a very ^{motivating} ~~bombastic~~ teacher. He ^{encouraged students} ~~motivated~~ you to want to learn. He must have had over sixty students that came to the afterschool rehearsals to ^{study chant, music and dance} learn from him. He ^{has a} had that charismatic way of teaching. He used to take us all ^{around} over the island to learn from different kumu hula. We ^{studied with} took from Auntie Alice Namakelua, Pua Dela Cerna and Auntie Hattie Au. He provided us with many opportunities to learn hula and we performed ^{performances by hula greats 'Iolani Luahine and Edith Kanaka'ole.} and traveled to the neighbor islands and to different conventions. We would also sing and dance to earn money for travel. ^{watched}

After ^{high school} John Lake, I went to the University of Hawai'i where I took hula classes from Ho'oulu Cambra and language from ^{Sarah NāKoa and} Larry Kimura. ^{In 1973} Concurrently, I joined "Ka Pā Hula Hawai'i" under John Topolinski.

Kaha'i Topolinski had the greatest influence on me because of the depth of his teaching and because I was with him the longest. He would take chants and ^{analyze them to} ~~tear them apart~~ and study the different levels of the language in the chant. I used to wonder why it took so long to learn a dance ^{of} when the dance was so easy. ^{Each dance took a long period to learn because} But what he was doing was that he took each layer of the chant apart ^{of Kaha'i's care and scholarship.} and made us study it. Sometimes we would ^{visit} go to Mrs. Mary Kawena Puku'i to ask her questions about different chants and she would unravel the ^{hidden} real intricacies of the language which is very

important for studying ~~the~~ ^{study} chant and ~~for the~~ dance. I was fortunate to go through that with Kaha'i.

In 1977, I left Kaha'i and went to study with Darrell Lupenui. Darrell was ~~the most~~ ^{a very} loving person. I have special memories of him and the way he taught. He would sit on the floor and he would teach us by describing the motions to us. He would ~~never~~ ^{not} perform the motion but he would tell us what to do and the dances would ~~come out~~ ^{become} so perfectly and so beautifully. He hardly ever changed things. He had a mental picture of the dance in his head and he ~~didn't have to~~ ^{described} ~~and translated his mental images to teach us,~~ ^{create} have it performed for him. It's like someone who is a genius at creating music. They have the music in their heads already. He would explain it to ~~his~~ ^{the} alaka'i and they would then show us the motion. Darrell Lupenui was an artist, and ~~maybe~~ ^{perhaps} a genius in hula. He worked within the ~~parameters~~ ^{parameters} of traditional steps, ~~but~~ ^{and} he created art right inside his head.

When Keli'i Tau'a asked me to join his kumu hula class, Darrell was very gracious and released me to go with Keli'i. My entire two years with Keli'i was spent training for graduation. Part of our training for graduation was to compose mele. Keli'i invited renown kumu hula, Manuel Silva, Henry Pa, Kalena Silva and other people to ~~come to~~ ^{view and participate at} our graduation. He wanted them to watch us perform hula ~~to our own~~ ^{to} compositions with our own choreography, working of course within the ~~parameters~~ ^{parameters} of his tutelage. The kumu hula came to watch and comment on our creations and our compositions when we performed at the Star of the Sea Hall on the evening following our formal graduation ceremony. Charles Ka'upu and I were ~~the only two~~ ^{uniki held at Sand Island.} fortunate ~~ones~~ ^{as kumuhula} to be trained and graduated by Keli'i Tau'a in 1979.

I teach Hawaiian chant and dance at Kamehameha Schools. We ~~have~~ ^{offer} a beginning level, ~~an~~ ^{and intermediate level} intermediate level and a "select" level. ~~Anyone can register for the beginning and intermediate level class.~~ ^{We also teach select performance groups} ~~Anyone can register for the beginning and intermediate level class.~~ ^{Students may} ~~as a part of the regular curriculum.~~ ^{Hawaiian Chant and Dance I and II} Randie Fong and Wayne Chang work very closely with me and we ~~hold auditions for~~ ^{to create special dance and performance productions} the select class. Three hundred students show up for our auditions and we'll select maybe forty ~~for the~~ ^{Schools.}

or fifty of the most talented young men and women performers.

who study dances for special performances such as the Concert Glee Club or the Song Contest Ho'i'ike.

Students need not ~~have taken the beginning and intermediate levels to be in this class.~~ They ~~must~~ ^{exemplary} demonstrate their skill in dancing and ~~language.~~ ^{music to be able to perform.}

We try to ~~groom our students.~~ We tell them that, "A'ohe pau ka 'ike i kau halau," which means "All knowledge is not found under one roof." We ask students not to ~~change or forget what was taught to them by other kumu hula.~~ ^{teach} What we give you, we want you to keep pure but separate. We try as much as possible to give them a new style and enhance ^{which} their dancing; ~~making them better than they were and not change somebody else's style.~~ ^{causing} We are fortunate that they come to us with ~~all the experience so we don't want to dampen that experience.~~ ^{most students} We want to give them another ~~experience.~~ ^{hula challenge and teach them to excell in performance.}

Our "select" students ~~start~~ ^{begin class} outside on the lanai. They line up ~~and~~ at a designated time they will start their oli kahea. If we feel that the chant is sincere, they will be welcomed inside. ~~Sometimes they stay out for twenty to half an hour just chanting.~~ ^{to chant} When they walk in, it's perfectly quiet. ~~Then we start the basics for anywhere from twenty minutes to an hour.~~ ^{At times may continue chanting} After the basics, we break up into three groups and each of us will ~~teach~~ ^{practice minutes} a different dance.

I consider myself more a language expert than I do a hula expert. I ~~got involved with~~ ^{studied} hula because of language. I could see the beauty of the poetry and ~~the~~ ^{demonstrates} beauty of the Hawaiian language. That's what made me interested in hula, because hula has the highest use of the ~~beauty~~ ^{beautiful soul} of the Hawaiian language. ~~It is an art form that the world could learn.~~

E Kala mai,
please excuse all the red marks
but since it's written in my voice
I want it to be as accurate as
possible. *Volona Stender Mahalo,*
November 26, 1975

Corrected: 11/21/95jy