

Pear Keawe Souza

At the age of 13 I joined Kent Ghirard's Hula Nani troupe. I was very fortunate to meet such people as Auntie Paline Kekuhuna, aunty vickie ii rodrigues, and Napua stevens. And from there met Lokalia Montgomery, Iolani Luahine, and George Naope. Kent's influence on me was to teach me the commercial aspect of the hula. We performed mostly for tourists and we projected to them HVB's image of Hawaii. Promoting Hawaii in order to bring them back to Hawaii. There were times when we performed for local crowds and that's when I saw the better part of him come out. I saw where he had knowledge of kahiko, and he did teach it to us. His whole format changes when he performs in front of a local audience. He actually performs as you would expect from a true hawaiian. He was not well-accepted because he was haole. But his love for the hula was genuine and he projected it so. Because of that I was very comfortable with him. I learned from him that there was a time and place for your talent. There were things that can and cannot be said in certain places. Now he has returned to the hula field and I see a charitable Kent Ghirard were once before it was a money-making thing. So from Kent Ghirard I was offered a position with Lani Castino's troupe in 1955. That troupe was affiliated with ~~Maunani Kahalewai~~ Lokalia Montgomery.

My mother kept the teachings of my Aunt Caroline Tuck. If I couldn't get to my Aunt to see if I was going off base or to clear up any confusion, my mother was there to help me. I went to Lani Castino who at that time had Lokalia at the Royal Hawaiian. I was there for six months. Lani would teach me all the auwanas and Lokalia taught me the kahikos. From there I began to realize that there was much more to kahiko. It was short but it was something that I cherished. I was then asked to dance at the opening of the Biltmore. Haunani Kahalewai was in charge of that so I was introduced to her. I began to love kahiko more than auwana and I began to get the urge to chant the mele myself. On my own I decided to try it and I began to pick up the ipu and practice by myself. I found that I wasn't doing it right so I went back to all these people that I had been affiliated with. So I asked questions and they were very helpful and nobody turned me down. They told me that how you feel and what you want to do is what is important in a chanter. The next thing is when you take a chant be sure you know what you're saying and if it is correct. I was also taught by Vickie ii Rodrigues the importance of phrasing. Auntie Vickie and Napua helped me on this. Till today I still go back to these people if I need help. The quality of your phrasing depends on your feeling, your tone and the selection of words you use. They taught me what words I should emphasize in a chant. It's your feelings that really matter. That's what they emphasized to me. I also studied under a kumu named Lily Kolani who till this day has never come forward. She was one that happened to see me perform at the state hospital and said she would like to help me along. That's when I first started to want to chant. She taught me in the early years when I was first with Kent Ghirard. But the urge to learn kahiko didn't come out of me until I met Lokalia and it was then that I realized the kind of training that I had when I was young. In terms of giving up dancing and teaching solely I have been teaching for six years. I stopped dancing and I felt there was something that I lacked. because I loved to dance and I love the culture. I decided to go back to teaching and in doing so I found what I wanted. my feeling is I would like to share everything and anything that I can possibly learn with any of the children. I specialize right now with little children. I would like to share everything I have learned with these children that are coming up now and give them that knowledge of the culture and not see it lost.. It actually reverts back to what my teachers feelings were towards me. I find in dancing, in the hula I can get across a message clearer than when I speak. The feeling that gave me the most joy was working with many people and not feeling like an outsider. Everyone that I came into contact with I was taken in as family. A lot of the information I'm sorry to say our people did not write it down. It was word of mouth. I still believe there is a lot of information out there to be found and researched.' I go to the Bishop Museum and use the books that they have that documented the different types of motions and steps of ancient Hawaii. I can only hope that the human resources still alive today will come forth. Hula kahiko is so deep that we have just scratched the surface. There are different types of kuis, there is a difference between olis and kepaepas. I enjoy mele that speak of royalty or pele. I don't enjoy war-like mele except for Hole Waimea.



My favorite auwana is Puao'makahala. I fell in love with this song when i was being trained by ~~hamamni~~ VI Rodrigues. It's a composition of hers and I asked her the true meaning of the song. I thought it was just apple of your eyes. It actually linked closely to her family. It translated to mean her mother's love for someone. ~~Thatnwasnttheapple~~ The man was the apple of her mothers eye and would pick her up and drop her when he found something better. I aked her I would very much



I believe hula kahiko will progress to an even deeper level than today. And it will do so more openly. The halau that are performing now are performing dances that I have never seen. I make it a point to see everyone perform because I find it fascinating that they have brought out so much. I sometimes get nosy and ask where they have gotten certain chants and they are never selfish. I am disappointed in hula auwana. I feel the girl dancers are too much involved with themselves. They are not projecting, they are not getting across to the audience the feeling of their dance. I find that the feelings are lost. I find that they are just dancing, that it is more for show, that they have a figure and are beautiful. To me the hula has nothing to do with looks it is how you project your feelings and if those feelings are genuine.