

Nana I Na Loea Hula
Kumu Hula: Hu'i Park
Interviewer: Lovina LePendu
Date: April 27, 1990

My full name is Elizabeth Ma'ihu'i Brown Park. Ma'ihu'i is a personal dream name that I got when my mother was pregnant for me. She was six months pregnant when she gave me that--when she had that dream. That's a name that had belonged to my aunt that had passed away.

I teach at 1674 Lusitana Street. My students start from three years old and the kupuna 74. (What is the halau's name?) Hu'i Park's Hula Studio. (Do you teach both kahiko and auwana?) Yes. This November will make 16 years. (Can you tell me if you remember what age you started hula?) Eight years old. (How about your first teacher?) Ah, Mariah. Mrs. Mariah...can't remember her last name, but this was with Park's and Recreation at Lanakila Park. (Do you remember how long you studied under this teacher?) Every summer and then during the week days at Likelike School with Aunty Sally--she was teaching hula auwana. She was Woods at the time, now she's Naluai. At Likelike School then we'd go to the park. Then I went with Joe Kahaulilio for 14 years--14 1/2 years. No kahiko, only auwana. Even Aunty Sally was only auwana. Joe Kahaulilio was auwana AND kahiko. (And did you learn any oli with these people?) Ah, no, no. (Only the dance...) Yeah.

(Do you remember the methods they used to have. Like Mariah, did they have a special style or somebody else's style?) No, she was just simple basics, kaholo, kalakaua step, and kawelu, uwehe, wela--simple basic steps. (Do you have special memories or experiences that you have with one of the kumu) With Joe. My style of dancing is Joe Kahaulilio even though I danced with Aunty Vicky for 17 years. We were all somewhat Joe Kahaulilio's students most of us, so we still keep--I do, anyway--keep his styling. And Aunty Vicky was pleased with us keeping his styling.

(Did you 'uniki?) No. I don't believe in 'uniki now days because the rituals are gone. Not everybody can go through that now anymore.

I didn't realize that I was going to be a teacher until I was in the travel agency and I was traveling to Hilo one aloha week and Aunty Genoa was in the plane with me and she had a studio up at Kaneali'i--her recording studio, and she wanted somebody to come in and teach, and she asked me. And I told her, "Oh, no, I don't think I want to." Then the second time I went up to Hilo again Aunty Genoa--because I've travelled all over with Aunty Genoa as a dancer--and she asked me, "Hu'i, come,"--this was in 1974. And at that time my daughter who was 20 at the time was going to have a baby, so I thought I better stay home, quit my job and help her take care of baby. And so I said yes to her in 1974 and she opened up her

halau and I started teaching until now. For one year I taught for Aunty Genoa and the second year she turned it over to me as a job. This is why 'til today Aunty Genoa... (At that time do you remember where you opened--at home?) No, at the studio--Kaneali'i Street. Between Booth and Kanealii. Right on the corner--Genoa Keawe's Hula Studio. Then the following year she said, "Hu'i, you can take over the studio." so since then I've been teaching.

Aunty Vicky has given us so much. She **really instilled growing, how** to be a lady, and polished us. She liked Joe's styling. She wasn't teaching us at the time when we were dancing for her--Joe Kahaulilio was, and he was always our chanter. Then when he left for Kaua'i Kawai (Cockett) came in to chant and George Holokai came in to chant for us. Because we didn't want chant in those days so we had chanters. We were just dancers. So I kept the styling of Joe Kahaulilio and the grooming of Aunty Vicky--the strictness.

When you open a studio there is so much jealousy, but you just leave it up to the Lord and he'll take good care of you. And when I first taught kahiko I went back to Hoakalei (Kamau'u). She gave me the basics--she was just like Joe. Back to the basic of Kawika, Hula Noheo, Pele. The hela's, uwehe's, for the kaholo's. I studied under her at Nu'uanu.

My joy is when I accomplish a student in teaching. Even if you never place in anything, but the respect and dedication of the student and the final product. And I must say the product of my children when I take them they all have to start from the beginning even if they had hula they have to start from the beginning. My greatest thing is when someone sees a teenager of mine and they want that girl. So it's a great challenge for me. And I feel great because they can go on to other things. It's a feather in my cap that someone else wants my student (because) I would never want someone else's student--I don't. But when my students accomplish and somebody else wants them it's a big feather in my cap. For 10 years I have a student and finally someone wants them and the student comes and asks me because they dance in high school and someone sees that. And they're asked. And if they ask me with my blessing they can go. Somebody else liked their work. No sense you hold them back because you're going to have bad vibes and the doors always wide open. Just let me know first.

I don't believe in 'uniki, and my teachers never believed in 'uniki. Because in the old days you had to live with the kumu and you have to abstain from sex, you have to really be there and learn the hula. I remember Eleanor Hiram telling the story of her, and we cannot go through those things. I had a husband and I'm not going to deprive him of anything. How can you go through rituals like that? I know a lot of them that do and

yet go through that. I'm sitting in there and they're going through all these ceremonies and I'm laughing to myself because they're hypocrites. There's a lot of work. Your heart and you self have to be dedicated to the hula. I am not really dedicated to the hula. There's other things in life I put first before hula, but I want the kids to learn what I learned a long time ago. A lot of children in my studio are non-paying students. I have a girl who's been with me for 15 years, going on 16 years, and she's never had another hula teacher. And she's satisfied. If I can't teach them anymore then they should go on. In the hula auwana they have classes of teaching. One implement, one kala'au, one pu'ili, one 'uli'uli, and the ipu. If they have accomplished that and on top of that create their own--I give them a hapa-haole song. If they create and can teach that class I think they're ready for an auwana. I always teach them some Hawaiian basic words. I teach to the baby's too. And they will come and we will check it out and if I don't understand it I will go to a source. And I always used to go to *Lolena Nicolas* Nolen. Nolen is the principal for Punana Leo, and she has always been my friend from way back. So I always went to her to check it out, and if she says maika'i then we go on. This 15th year I graduated 6 who have been with me from 10 years to 15 years, and they have a certificate of accomplishment. And for five years they have taught the basics and that's an accomplishment. And then they've created a hapa-haole number which I

would give them that they would put into the hula. Now, into my 20th year and that's why they're learning the pahu drum. And every girl, before she graduates and gets a paper knows how to make a ti leaf skirt, a haku lei, ku'i lei, and can do everything I taught them. I can tell a girl when she's a natural. Because of Aunty Vicky and Uncle Joe always telling me, I remember, never to do anything you're not supposed to do like go in deep and you don't know how to handle it.

A lot of teachers should go back and learn the kahiko. Especially when they cannot create. One of my girls dances for a boy in Pearl City. Now he want her to teach, help him teach keiki's. However I told the girl you cannot teach my numbers, the boy has to create his own. If it was your hula halau opening fine, I'd say, this is yours, go right ahead because I'm your teacher, but I am not that boy's teacher. You cannot give him everything that we've learned. What I've suggested to my student--and she's a 13 years student--because she was a dancer. All these kids are all in high school competition, but the teacher see how good they are they make them their alaka'i. Michael Casupang opened a studio with all these keiki and don't know how to handle them. So he asked Leialoha. But my students learned, and I tell them if you're going to do anything don't do it behind my back because I know everyone on this island. And they will come back and tell me. You be honest to me I be honest to you. I suggested

to her to tell Michael go to Hoakalei. Go back to basic then develop from there.

We were the best dancers on the islands--Hau'oli girl; however, not all of us ^{peace} are teachers. Some of them help Na Wai Ehu like my cousin Florence and Mapuana. They were products of Uncle Joe and Aunty Vicky. So was 'Ala, but 'Ala changed her styling. When she dances it's altogether different. But I can't give advice to the young ones, and they won't listen anyway.

There's so much creativity in teachers now. I think kahiko is telling stories through a slower medium. I like it. Because I teach girls, I don't teach male dancers and I don't teach keiki kane, but I love girls because I love the girls' soft. In my kahiko they are soft because that's the way I was taught from the beginning at Lanakila park because Moriah is a lady and she was very soft and so we was soft. Even with Uncle Joe. Joe was a man, but we still were soft. My favorite chant is Ka'ililauokekoa. Now that I play music I love auwana, but I will do kahiko, but not any old place. I'm like Aunty Vicky in that way. If the people are to ^{rowdy} roudy we are not doing kahiko because they will not understand it and they are not going to respect it. Mi Nei is my favorite (auwana) song--or Ku'u Hoa Aloha. When I taught hula auwana that was the first hula auwana I created by myself. And that reminds me of my first teenage girls that I had from Roosevelt

High School and they were seniors. Hawaiian language helps you know the dual meaning of the song. There's the face value and the kaona. With the girls I leave it at face value. The Hawaiian language is important. I never thought that way 10 years ago because it was just face value but as you get older you really need it.

Hula masters should know everything about the hula and what goes with the hula. So many people are proclaimed hula masters nowadays. And you don't remember them from the days when you were dancing and all of a sudden they're a hula master. I feel if you did the work yourself someday you will become a hula master. When I was with Joe Kahaulilio and I was helping him teach every armed service--he taught all the bases. And in turn he needed a lot of implements. (Timothy) Montgomery was the supplier for implements and in turn he would get free implements and he would teach Aunty Lokelia the hula auwana. This is a secret that has never been told. Everybody say they took from Aunty Lokelia, but I don't remember most of them. I've been in the hula many many many many years dancing and going here and going there and I was in every night club...with Joe. And I told this once to Wendell, and I said, "how can anybody say they took from the master?" At the time I knew her she wasn't a master. The other one that used to be there teaching her was Eleanor Hiram when we'd go there. And I remember way back, you know, in Kapahulu. And so, half of

these things I read of these people I think, "Jesus!" I thought if she lived today, Eleanor Hiram would've been one of them. Because I've watched her when I was younger and watching her I admired her. But to die so young...

(I'm involved in) the Hawaiian Studies Program. They changed the name. They're not calling it "Kupuna" anymore. It's Hawaiian Studies Program. This September (1990) will be changed. Because we don't have too many kupunas, we have a lot of makuas. So it's great that they just send it to Hawaiian Studies. And I'd rather they called me at school "Aunty" instead of "Kupuna" I'm still young! (Although I'm a kupuna!) We have our Anthropology Club that we're in that we go once a year with Kalihi-Palama.

The first Tahiti Fete and in Vegas, and then this year's High School (I've been a judge.) I think it's wonderful. I'm not prejudiced, I have an open mind. And if I think that someone needs help I'll write it. I'll put that comments so they'll know (and) if they want to talk to me fine.

I'm a feet person. I'm always looking at the feet. Then I watch the hands. Where's the simple motions? The hula is the hands, to me, and the eyes that tell the story. It's not suggestive. It's your eyes and your face.

We went to a lot of workshops, but it was just dancing. I think it should come back. I think there's a lot of material that I think we should share with other people that wants it. That's the time to share it and offer it to them.

Papalina Lahilahi--watch them up there. Nobody's dancing. They don't know how to do Papalina. The only one--Leimomi Ho. We all knew the basic. That's a basic hula. Kekoa Fernandez does that every year. Then the next song is I Ali'i, then everybody's gone. Nobody knows. Momi Ho is still there because we all came from the same school. We all learned the basic. Those songs were taught to us by Joe Kahaulilio. All the basic songs. So how can they call themselves a master and they all disappear. I watched that every year.