

Nani Lim Yap

Besides running her own entertainment company, Nani Lim Yap has been teaching hula with her sister, Leialoha Amina, for over fifteen years. They are kumu hula of the halau, "Na Lei O Kaholoku" in Kona.

My mother, Mary Ann Neula Lim, was my first kumu. She had 'uniki at a very young age from her aunt, Rose Mason in Kohala. I was about six years old when my mother started to teach me and my sisters. But she was very impatient with us and she stopped teaching us. Five years later, my father felt that we should learn culture so he took us to our aunty who was a kumu hula from Niuli'i, Kohala. Her name was Margaret Kaleolani Moku and I took from her for six years until I graduated from high school.

Aunty Margaret had gotten sick so we would have to go to her house to learn new numbers. Several years before she passed on, she couldn't move her legs or her hands so she would use her expressions. She taught me and my older sister just about everything that she knew. She said, "That was it. You folks know everything that I know. Just please take it and train others." She wanted us to carry on that style for the children and for her love of Kohala.

We started to go to other teachers after Aunty Margaret. Through the program funded by the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts, we took workshops from Uncle George Naope, Kaha'i Topolinski, Edith Kanaka'ole, 'Iolani Luahine, Darrell Lupenui and John Ka'imikaua.

Because our babysitters were my grandparents who spoke fluent Hawaiian, we were able to understand the essence of the song because we could understand Hawaiian. When I began to sing, it made even more sense. I could actually understand the song. Therefore, I felt that through that understanding, I should teach. It was a follow up to what Aunty Margaret said; this was the time. We took it from there, knowing the songs, translating it and teaching it.

Through music, we can convey the mele with the true expression. True expression means that once you know what it is, you've translated it in your mind. If it's a love song, you

can make it even sweeter, and that with hula, it just enhances and takes on another dimension.

And we are all able to it.

Hula brings people back to their roots. It teaches you discipline. There's a lot you can learn from hula: respect for things of old and an awareness of going back and learning traditions.

I think hula will remain and it will become stronger because of our awareness of things Hawaiian. This awareness is growing and it is being instilled in the children where it will live on.

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