

The Hula Manō

for soprano, clarinet and piano

Jeff Myers
(2017)

The Hula Manō

Auwē! pau au i ka manō nui, e!	Alas! I am seized by the shark, great shark!
Lālākea niho pākolu.	Lalakea with triple-banked teeth.
Pau ka papakū o Lono	The stratum of Lono is gone,
I ka ai ia e ka manō nui,	Torn up by the monster shark,
O Niuhi maka ahi,	Niuhi with fiery eyes,
‘Ōlapa i ke kai lipo.	That flamed in the deep blue sea.
Ahu e! auwē!	Alas! and alas!
A pua ka wiliwili,	When flowers the wiliwili tree,
A nanahu ka manō,	That is the time when the shark-god bites.
Auwē! pau au i ka manō nui!	Alas! I am seized by the huge shark!
Kai uli, kai ‘ele,	O blue sea, O dark sea,
Kai pōpolohua o Kāne.	Foam-mottled sea of Kane!
A le‘ale‘a au i ka‘u hula,	What pleasure I took in my dancing!
Pau au i ka manō nui!	Alas! now consumed by the monster shark!

From *Unwritten Literature of Hawaii*, by Nathaniel B. Emerson, [1909]

The hula *manō*, shark-dance, as its name signifies, was a performance that takes class with the hula kolea, already mentioned, as one of the animal dances. But little can be said about the physical features of this hula as a dance, save that the performers took a sitting position, that the action was without sensationalism, and that there was no instrumental accompaniment. The cantillation of the mele was in the distinct and quiet tone and manner which the Hawaiians termed ko‘i-honua.

Lalakea. This proper name, as it seems once to have been, has now become rather the designation of a whole class of man-eating sea-monsters. The Hawaiians worshiped individual sharks as demigods, in the belief that the souls of the departed at death, or even before death, sometimes entered and took possession of them, and that they at times resumed human form. To this class belonged the famous shark Niuhi.

Papa-ku o Lono. This was one of the underlying strata of the earth that must be passed before reaching *Milu*, the hades of the Hawaiians.

Verses 8 and 9 are from an old proverb which the Hawaiians put into the following quatrain:

A pua ka wiliwili,	<i>When flowers the wiliwili,</i>
A nanahu ka manō:	<i>Then bites the shark;</i>
A pua ka wahine u‘i,	<i>When flowers a young woman,</i>
A nanahu ke kanawai.	<i>Then bites the law.</i>

The people came to take this old saw seriously and literally, and during the season when the wiliwili (*Erythrina monosperma*) was clothed in its splendid tufts of brick-red, mothers kept their children from swimming into the deep sea by setting before them the terrors of the shark.

About the music...

I interpreted this song as a romantic love song, possible about love making. The shark is an obvious symbol of love or romantic ecstasy. There is a dialogue between the singer and the clarinet--something like a courtship. The piano represents the emotion and the ebb and flow of the ocean in this love-making episode.

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HAWAIIAN TRADITIONAL

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Freely ♩ = 84
p love-drunk *mp* *rit.* *mf* *p*

Soprano
 Au - wē! pau ai i ka ma - nō nu - i, e!

Clarinet in Bb

Piano

8 **Più mosso**, ♩ = 112

S.

Bb Cl.

watery *mp cantabile*

Pno.

p 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

ped.

12 *mp*

S. Pau au i ka ma - nō

Bb Cl. *mf* *p*

Pno. *pedal sim.*

28

S. Lo - no

B♭ Cl. *p*

Pno. *pedal sim.*

32

S. *mf* I ka ai ia e ka ma - nō *rit.* *f*

B♭ Cl.

Pno. *cresc.* *mf*

Ped.

Più mosso ♩ = 132

36

S. *port.* nui *mf* O

B♭ Cl. *ff* 3 *pp*

Pno. *ff* 3 L.H. R.H. *pp*

"shark" bite!

Ped. *8^{va}*