

HIF-Rapport

2003:7

Maori music and culture in New Zealand

Report from studies at Waikato University in
Hamilton, New Zealand, August 2001

Anitha Eriksson



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IN NEW ZEALAND

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Subjects 2003

In memory of Hirini Melbourne



I wish to dedicate this report to one of my most important informants, Hirini Melbourne, who died of cancer in the beginning of 2003. I am deeply grateful to him for sharing with me some of his extensive knowledge of Maori music, in particular in the field of music instruments.

Preface

During my sabbatical in the autumn of 2001, I went to Waikato University in Hamilton, New Zealand. The purpose of my stay was to learn about Maori music and culture. The reason for this was two- fold: my professional interest in ethno-music on the one hand, and on the other hand, the fact that I work in Finnmark, a region closely associated with Sami culture and tradition. My interest in ethno-music go back to the 1980s, and since then I have made use of it in my teaching whenever appropriate.

In the summer 2000, at a music conference in the USA, I met a musician colleague from New Zealand who made me interested in Maori music and culture. I got the impression that the cultural situation of the Maori people had much in common with that of the Sami people in Norway. Both are conspicuous minorities in a highly technologically developed society rooted in European culture. Furthermore, there seemed to be a national policy of furthering Maori culture in the school system and rendering it more visible. This report contains a summary of my experiences during my visit there.

Waikato University September 2001

Anitha Eriksson

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Photos: Anitha Eriksson

CD with sound samples - live recordings

1. INTRODUCTION

This report is based on my personal experiences in meeting with the culture and music of the Maori at Waikato University in Hamilton and elsewhere in New Zealand. In order to obtain a deeper insight into various forms of music and cultural expressions I have talked to a number of professionals in addition to studying available literature and sound- and video-tracks.

Similarly to other indigenous cultures, the Maori culture has been threatened by extinction. For a long time it was forbidden to use the Maori language. Many cultural manifestations are closely related to the language and are consequently in danger of being lost. Since Maori culture is basically an oral tradition, literature by Maori writers is exclusively a modern phenomenon. Older literature is mainly by European authors and is marked by the cultural views that were prevalent in colonial times.

Subsequent to the policies of the 1950s and 1960s of assimilating the Maori into the European society, in recent years a great deal of work has been done by the national government to make up for previous wrongdoings to the Maori people and their culture. Today's aim is to strengthen the identity of the Maori as a people and render their culture visible in society.

On the basis of what has been mentioned above, I will focus on the following question: *how is Maori culture manifested in schools and education in today's society?*

2. STUDY ENVIRONMENTS

2.1 Visit to WHARENUI - the assembly house of the Maoris (a big house).

Guide: Ray Gage

The **WHARENUI** I visited belongs to Waikato University and was inaugurated in 1987, at that time as part of the teacher training college. The Wharenuui are normally named after one of the ancestors, but this is not the case with this one. Wharenuui is situated on campus. A dining hall is attached to the assembly hall. All the buildings are called **PA**. Today the house is used for teaching Maori culture as well as for meetings and gatherings of various kinds, such as weddings, anniversaries, and mass. The Wharenuui is meant to function partly as a centre for studies of Maori language and culture, and partly as a meeting place for Maori students who are leaving home for the first time in order to study at the university.

Elsewhere in the Maori society, every tribe has their own Wharenuui. If people get into conflict with other people within their tribe, they may build their own Wharenuui.



Picture 1. *Wharenuui*

The building is decorated on the outside with woodcuttings symbolising the human body, head, arms and legs. In the middle of the entrance area there is a pillar, a totem pillar. The

door, which is placed on the end-wall but away from the middle of it, symbolises the mouth, while the windows symbolise the eyes. On entering the house through the door, I pass through the mouth and come to the ancestors.

Those who come to visit must first be assessed outside the door on MARAE (the threshold). What is the purpose of the visitor? Is he a friend or a foe? Prior to entering I had to take off my shoes out of respect for the ancestors.



Picture 2. *The assembly hall in Wharenuī*

The house consists of a single big room and has many decorations and woodcutting ornaments. There are several wooden sculptures that are images of protective guards or "angels". In each one of the four corners there are woodcutting ornaments on the walls, symbolising the four cardinal points. This means that everybody, whether he comes from the north, the south, the east, or the west, can feel at home and identify with the Wharenuī. In addition, there is a Christian cross on each of the longitudinal walls.

One side of the room is called **TE AO**, "daylight", the shortest side by the door. This is where the host and his family sit. The other side, **MANUHIRI**, "the side of sorrow", is where the guests are placed. The room has no chairs, but there are mattresses that are used both as seats and as beds. (There are similar seats outside.) On my next visit, I am allowed to sit at the host's side. Usually there are two rows of seats. The women sit on the back row, and the men on the front row so that they can protect the women from potential

threats and dangers that the guests may bring with them. The dangers can be either physical or spiritual in nature. The reason why the women must be protected is that they are the ones who bring forth the new generation. Back in time the dangers were real, whereas today this tradition is only symbolic.

All guests are welcomed by a special ceremony called **POWHIRI**. This ceremony includes a prayer, **KARAKIA**, to God and greetings to the guests and their ancestors, who are placed where they belong. This ceremony is also used to greet official visitors who want to learn about Maori traditions. I am invited to join a visiting group from the municipality. The group is waiting a few metres away from PA. An older Maori woman, a young woman, and I are sitting on the back row outside the house, at the short side beside the door, the host's side. Ray is sitting on the front bench. When everybody is seated, the old woman gets up and walks out to the road, to look for the group that is waiting. She shouts over to them by singing a song that consists in only a few notes, **KARANGA**¹, an invocation to ask who they are and why they have come. A woman from the group answers back.

Then the group starts moving towards Wharenui, and the women get seated on the back benches. At last the men come and take a seat on the front benches. Ray opens with a karakia, and then our group sings a song, **PAO** (see a special section about this). Afterwards there are speeches and singing by the visitors. Finally a letter from the visitors is placed on the ground in the open space between the two rows of seats, and Ray comes forward and picks up the letter.

When there are no more speeches, we stand in a row in front of the front bench, and the guests defile past us, greeting each one of us. The greeting is in the form of pressing our noses against each other, saying **KIA ORA**. Some give kisses on the cheeks. There is time for some informal conversation before entering the dining hall for a cup of tea. Then the visitors are welcomed into the house with a new Karanga by the old woman. The visitors from the municipality are to stay the night in Wharenui. They are asked to choose a mattress and place it wherever they want to sleep. On the mattress they place their belongings, and here they are to stay for two days in order to work with and learn about Maori culture.

¹ **Karanga** is sung by women in the town square – Marae as a greeting or a farewell song.

2.2. Visit at a Kapa haka rehearsal

Leader: Joe Harawira

Every Wednesday between 7 and 9 the university **kapa haka** group has a rehearsal. This is a Maori song and dance group. The group was started in 1978 by Joe and was aimed at giving the students an opportunity to learn and use the Maori language. Similarly to other kapa haka groups at the university, this group was part of the political struggle for a revival of Maori language and culture, and for rediscovering Maori identity. In 1913, 90% of school children were of Maori origin and had Maori as their first language; in 1975 this percentage was only five. The purpose of the group is to continue using songs as a tool for learning and using the Maori language. Today no more than 10% have Maori as their first language.

Today the number of participants is somewhere between 30 and 60. Membership is no longer restricted to students at the university. Many of them have finished their studies, but are still members of the group. Some of them have been members ever since the group was started. Some bring their young children. The children are crawling around among the dancers, but since the dancing is relatively calm and not involving much moving around, no harm is done to the children. Some of the older children take part in poi and clearly show that they master the poi technique already, even though some of them are no more than 4-5 years of age.



Picture 3. *The women are swinging their poi balls while they are singing*

The group is now rehearsing for the national kapa haka competition, "Aotearoa Traditional Maori Performing Arts Festival", which is to take place next year. This is a gathering of groups from all over the country. Each group performs six numbers, i.e. four numbers plus one introductory and one concluding number. There are several groups from the Waikato district that have signed up for the competition. The repertory consists of songs made by the participants themselves over the years. The leader encourages them to use songs from their own tradition and not borrow popular music from America or Europe.

The rehearsal starts and ends with karakia. Then they rehearse songs with movement. One type of repertory is the so-called POI (see the special section about this), referring to some kind of balls that the women are swinging in time with the song. Some use only one poi, while others have one in each hand. Two guitars accompany the song. The tunes are melodious and have a simple harmonising. One or two parts are improvised in addition to the tune.

The men rehearse a vigorous dance, **HAKA** (see the special section about this).

Forceful stamps onto the floor keep the rhythm. They move their arms, hands, legs, heads, and eyes, and sometimes they stretch out their tongues.² Their voices are powerful, and the lyrics are performed rhythmically, on only a few notes.

The lyrics are also read rhythmically, without a melody or on one single note, like some sort of nursery rhyme. I write down the lyrics of one of the refrains and try to get a translation from one of the participants. She is a teacher, educated at the School of Education at the University of Waikato, and she is the leader of a kapa haka group at a secondary school. It appears, however, that she is unable to translate the lyrics because she does not understand them. Apparently, according to the teachers at the teacher training college, this is quite common.

The lyrics of the refrain of one of the kapa haka songs

*Wharau ana i te huka tai,
I te roma wai
Hikawea aha e te kōkōuri
E te kōkōtea
Nā korei pōi a tia tini,
Pōi a amano
Ki runga ki a koe*

The lyrics are about the poi balls that are swinging in time with the music. They are compared to a waterfall with glistening water and also to running-down sugar.

2.3. Instrument workshop

Leaders: Hirini Melbourne and Richard Nunns

Together with Richard Nunns, Hirini Melbourne is going to lead a workshop on Maori music instruments in Rotorua. Melbourne and Nunns started to collect information on the old use of music instruments more than twenty years ago. By travelling around in the country and talking to old Maoris, listening to their stories about the use of the music and its function, and by studying collections of instruments in museums, they have managed to

² The heavily outstretched tongue is also visible on the wooden sculptures. The purpose of the wide eyes and the outstretched tongue is to attract attention.

create a picture of what the instruments looked like and how they have been used. They have collected lots of old instruments, and they have also reconstructed traditional instruments by means of the information they have managed to collect over the years. In addition, they have given a number of seminars, workshops, and concerts. They have produced a CD together in which they perform songs to the accompaniment of traditional instruments. They also produce and perform music independently of each other.

Picture 4. **Hirini Melbourne** is a Maori. He teaches Maori language and culture at Waikato University. He also a composer and singer. His music is used both for entertainment and for teaching.



Picture 5. **Richard Nunns** is a fifth generation New Zealander who has had a career as English teacher in upper secondary school. He is also educated as a flutist.



Rotorua is a centre of Maori culture, and ever since early in the 20th century it has presented Maori culture to tourists in various ways. There is a 3-year education for woodcarvers, initiated in 1963 by the state to forestall the loss of the old tradition. The school receives grants from the Department of Tourism. There is also a school that teaches how to make traditional textiles. Several kapa haka groups have daily performances.

I am invited by Hirini Melbourne to attend a workshop on a Saturday and Sunday, where I will get the opportunity to learn about Maori music instruments, how to make them as well as how to play them.

Hirini gives me some materials to work with beforehand: a piece of bone from a sheep and a wooden pipe to make a flute, a flat wooden disk and a piece of wood to make a Jew's harp. These I am supposed to polish and to produce sound with them.

2.3.1 The programme for the workshop

Demonstration of various music instruments, their historical background, their use and function, and the collection of them.

Practical work

The participants are given various materials to work with. We have to do some preparatory work before we can have sonorous instruments, making finger holes etc. Then we practice making the instruments produce sound.

Concert

On Saturday night Hirini and Richard give a concert, using the instruments and combining them with song and guitar play.

2.3.2 Playing methodology and technique

We get instruction in how to obtain differences in pitch and how to locate individual notes. This activity includes a stroll outdoor to listen to the sounds of nature. We are close by an area with hot springs that discharge steam, and we can hear how it boils down there. We listen to running water, to birds and to the wind.

2.3.3 The participants of the workshop

The participants are divided into two main groups. One group is teachers and pre-school teachers. Among these, there are no Maoris. The aim of this group is to acquire knowledge of Maori music in order to comply with the aims of the new curriculum in arts. The other group is woodcarvers. They are teachers and students from the woodcarving education, and some run independent businesses. They have been making music instruments for sale to tourists for a long time, but these instruments have been made only for decoration, and not for playing. These people therefore want to learn more about how to make instruments that can produce sound. Moreover, they also want to be able to play the instruments themselves in order to improve their skills in making them. Both groups see themselves as important mediators of traditional Maori art and culture.

2.3.4 Further work in seminars and workshops

In near future, there will be a follow-up seminar to this seminar, focused on working further with producing music as well as with the technical skills required to make the instruments. There is a great need among teachers to learn about Maori music, since this subject is made obligatory in the new curriculum.

2.3.5 Workshops as a meeting place

This seminar is a meeting place for people with Maori and European backgrounds. Admittedly, the motivations for attending are different, but in addition to learning about Maori music instruments, we get the opportunity to meet. It turns out that even if people have Maori background, they do not necessarily know very much about their own traditions. In this seminar, those with an European background are mainly teachers who want to acquire competence in teaching Maori culture in school. The seminar is also an opportunity to interact across cultural barriers.

2.4 Waikato University

Waikato University is built in a field that belongs to the Maori tribe Tainui. The so-called Waitangi contract was signed by the majority of Maori leaders and Queen Victoria of England in 1840. The Treaty of Waitangi included both rights and duties for both parties. Over the past two decades, the government has attempted to make up for past breaches of the contract, and approx. 10 years ago, as a result of this work, the field was returned to the Maori.

At Waikato University in Hamilton, Maori culture is present in a variety of ways. "School of Maori and Pacific Development" and "Academy of Performing Arts", e.g., have specific courses in Maori Performing Arts. In "School of Education" Maori culture is part of the curriculum and as well as of the students' everyday life.

When new students or employees come to the university, they are received with the powhiri ceremony. Every Wednesday between 13 and 14 p.m. there is a "culture session" in which various student groups have the opportunity to gather and present

themselves.³ As mentioned already, the university also has its own kapa haka group that gathers every Wednesday evening.

2.4.1 "School of Maori and Pacific Development"

Waikato University is the only university in the country with a separate department and a professor for Maori studies.

Here they offer a variety of culture-related courses: Maori language, Maori contemporary art, traditional arts and crafts, Maori religion from the pre-Christian era and up to our time, history, traditional and modern customs, women's culture, including Maori women in the traditional society as well as in modern society, and Maori feminism.

2.4.2 "Academy of performing Arts"

The courses in Maori Performing Arts have been developed by a young and recently employed teacher, Terri Ripeka Crawford, whose background is classical dancing as well as traditional Maori dancing. The academy is housed in a newly built centre for dance, drama, music and theatre, opened in March 2001.

Terri Crawford's teaching is based both on classical training and on his background and training in Maori culture. I visit one of her lessons, which opens with a section on various exercises in techniques. Then the students are given an assignment in the form of a poem by a Maori poet and a picture made by a Maori artist. The students then go out into the park outside the classroom. The building is placed by a little lake rich in bird life and surrounded by tropical plants and flowers. The students are given a place outside where they are asked to prepare a performance based on the poem and the picture. They get approx. 15 minutes to prepare this.

Two students are placed on a tiny jetty by the lake. One student finds himself a big tree on a lawn, and another student sits down in the shadow of some medium-tall trees and bushes full of birds in the tree-tops.

During the performance I concentrate on the student under the big tree. She makes a dance and includes singing. She tells us that what she sings is an ancient Maori proverb that came to her mind when she saw the picture and read the poem. The student here

³ The university has 1100 international students from all over the world.

makes use of her traditional ancient culture to make something new.

2.4.3 "School of Education" (Teacher training college)

Music and the arts in teacher training

In September 2000, the Ministry of Education decided on a new curriculum for the arts subjects, "The Arts in New Zealand Curriculum". The new national curriculum for primary and secondary school, to be implemented in 2003, constitutes the basis for the teacher education. They do not have national framework or study plans - these are developed at the individual colleges and departments. Dance and drama are new subjects that are now made compulsory in the teacher education. Music and arts belong in the Department of Arts and Language, and each subject has its own study program. Students who start their teacher education in 2001 are supposed to implement the new curriculum when they start teaching. The compulsory part of the art subjects is 25 hours music and dance, 12 hours drama, and 12 hours art. Approximately one third of this is supposed to be related to the Maori tradition. Furthermore, they can elect one or two art subjects as majors. A major constitutes approx. 50 hours.

A scrutiny of the study program for "Learning and Teaching Music" brings out that there is nothing in it that requires the teaching of Maori music and tradition. J. Jackson, who is one of the teachers in music and who has participated in designing the program, tells me that this is implicit in the program. They are supposed to use songs in Maori and Maori dances in teaching dance and music. She says that even if a curriculum or a study program states explicitly that Maori culture is compulsory, it will not necessarily be taught. That depends on who the teacher is.

In a conversation with G. Price, I am informed that they have decided to teach Maori art explicitly so that the students will understand the use and function of Maori traditions.

As part of the implementation of the new curriculum, there will be discussions within the art subjects two to three times a year. In these discussions issues related to Maori culture will be natural topics.

The start of the academic year

At the beginning of each academic year, there is a great powhiri in the market place for new students and new employees. This ceremony is in Maori and is not translated into

English. At this occasion the speakers are partly important elderly people and partly people from the management. The dean of the Teacher Education is a woman, but women are not allowed to speak at powhiri, and therefore the vice-dean is stand-in at this event. He is one of at least 10 employees who are not a Maori but who speak Maori fluently. In addition, there are several who know some Maori and who use this knowledge actively in their teaching. Since knowledge of Maori is no requirement for employment, the exact number of the employees who speak or know some Maori is unknown.

Introduction week

At the opening of the new academic year for new students of 3-year teacher education, there is a two-day workshop on the new curriculum for primary and secondary school.⁴ The initiative was taken by the art teachers.

The new students were of different ethnical backgrounds, and in this workshop they were introduced to different aspects of Maori culture. The powhiri ceremony that they had already attended was explained to them,⁵ and they were allowed into wharienui (the big house) and were told the meaning of all the symbols. They learned about art and music, including a Waiata about students and the college, composed by one of the art teachers. This type of workshop was also organised on Matakana Island⁶ and has now been established as a yearly event, to be repeated next year, but not necessarily with Maori culture as the main focus.

Workshop

In conversation with J. Jackson, I am told that this introduction program was not initially planned as a Maori program, but at some point in the process turned out to become just that. She also said that it is difficult to decide on whether to have a Maori program or not. I contacted C. Watiti for information on the introduction week. She was one of the teachers of the team and was herself a Maori, and I ask her about the

⁴ Five workshops were organised, based on Maori music and art: *music/ Waiata, kapahaka, Te Marae, Koahau and story telling*. The students were divided into several groups led by teachers or senior students. The group work was finished with a performance in the newly inaugurated building for executant art.

The term *Koahau* means knowledge of who you are, that is, awareness of one's identity. Although this is a Maori word, the meaning is not necessarily restricted to Maori culture. (This is one of many examples of using Maori language in different contexts.)

⁵ The initial Powhiri ceremony was carried out outdoors, and they were allowed to have a look inside the wharenuui.

purpose for the workshop. She teaches visual art and says that the intentions were to give the students a positive start. Students tend to give art subjects the lowest priority. As an answer to my question on whether the workshop was dominated by Maori culture, she says that taking the students to Powhiri and the history group necessarily had to be dominated by Maori culture. It seems, then, that the purpose was not primarily to teach the students Maori culture, but to introduce them to the art subjects. Thus the workshop combined art subjects and Maori culture, for example in the form of the powhiri ceremony, the wharenuī house and story telling. Maori is an oral culture in which story narration is central, and use of metaphors is common in lyrics. The students were taught the use of symbols in art, e.g., and during the workshop on story telling they were asked to recount their own history, inspired by the Maori traditions.

Graham Price is another one of the teacher team. He teaches visual art. As a member of the committee that designed the new curriculum for the arts, and as a regional contact person for the schools, he was among those who took the initiative to the workshop. According to him, the purpose of the workshop was partly to present the art subjects in the context that the university is a part of, and partly to introduce these subjects as early as possible in their education. Otherwise the students would have to wait for a full year. The context in question is of course the Maori culture. After all, Waikato University is situated in a district where nearly 50% of the population is Maori. This means that 10-20% of the pupils are Maori, which is a reality the teachers will have to face when they start teaching. One of the principal aims of education in New Zealand is to give people access to both the Maori and the English language through cultural activities.

Teachers for Maori schools

In recent years, the Ministry of Education has demanded that teacher training colleges educate teachers for Maori schools. The teacher trainees form separated classes called Rumaki classes, and they are trained to teach in "Kura kaupapa schools", i.e. Maori schools in which Maori is the main language. These students have the same study program as students aiming for mainstream schools, but their supervisors are Maori, if

⁶School of Education has a separate department there, and the teacher team went there and organised a similar program with their students.

possible. If no Maori supervisor is available, one who speaks or knows some Maori is appointed.

2.5 Schools

2.5.1 The curriculum

In September 2000, the Ministry of Education designed a new curriculum for the art subjects, "The Arts in New Zealand Curriculum". The curriculum, which is to be implemented in 2003, includes the following subjects: dance, drama, music and visual art. The curriculum is both in English and Maori. The Maori curriculum is not a translation of the English one, and there does not exist an English version of it. The English curriculum is to be used in mainstream schools where English is the teaching medium. These schools can have separate Maori classes as well, but Maori classes are taught the English curriculum. The Maori curriculum is for schools in which Maori is the general teaching medium.

In the introduction to the section about music, it says that the aim is to further the musical heritage of the various cultures in New Zealand. In particular, it will give the pupils the opportunity to learn different styles and genres within traditional Maori music as well as in contemporary Maori music.

2.5.2 Work schedule

The work schedule is a 2-year program that involves all schools in the country. A group of schools have been selected in each district (i.e. 60 out of a total of 555 in the district of Waikato) to function as "model schools". In the first year, the teachers attend courses in music and dance. 30 schools have courses in dance and 30 in music, and they are supposed to instruct one another in the subject that they do not themselves have courses in. In the second year, they have courses in drama and art.

A network is also created in which two teachers from each school function as contact persons, and each one of the schools is to function as a contact school in one of the four subjects. All the teachers will attend courses and take part in six workshops. The headmasters will also attend the courses. The state covers 25% of the cost for the course, and the rest is covered by the individual schools.

An example of Maori content in the courses

During my stay at Waikato University, they are running one of the first courses for teachers in music and dance. Within executive art they use the concept of tool about the following human functions: the voice, the hands, the body, the senses, the heart and the spirit. One type of Maori song game used in teaching dance and arts is a play with sticks – **Tititorea**, which are thrown from person to person to the accompaniment of a rhythmical rhyme. This game is presented to the participants.

2.5.3 Teaching materials

In primary and secondary school, there is a range of teaching material that is used to teach Maori music and culture. Following are some examples:

- ❖ **Mervyn Mc Lean, *Maori Music, A Bulletin for School***, (with tape recordings) School Publications Branch, Department of Education, Wellington 1971
The author wishes to show the broad range of Maori music, not only "action songs".
- ❖ ***New Zealanders make music***, Teachers' guide and 6 tapes containing 60 excerpts of New Zealand recorded music, Department of Education, Wellington 1987.
This material deals with the various music traditions in New Zealand.
- ❖ ***Hei Waiata, Hei Whakakoakoa, Songs to sing and to enjoy***, (with 3 tapes) Ministry of Education, Wellington 1992.
This material introduces Maori culture to children.
- ❖ **Hirini Melbourne, *Te Matauranga, Kia Ata Mai***, Educational Trust, 1997
This is a songbook with a CD that teaches Maori art, language, nature, life, love, hope and death.

2.5.4 On the timetable

In the 1950s, some schools had already kapahaka groups where the pupils learned Maori songs and dances. Today this is common in most schools. Participation in a kapahaka group is usually voluntary, and it is mostly Maori pupils who choose to participate. The aim is primarily to learn Maori language and culture, but some of the groups also focus on perfecting their singing and dancing in order to participate in regional and national contests.

2.5.5 School visits

I visit a so-called mainstream school, i.e. a school that uses the English curriculum and whose teaching medium is English. In this school, there is also a Maori class in which all teaching is in English, and a bilingual class where teaching is both in English and Maori. This school is an 'Intermediate School' for the 7th and 8th grades. The kapahaka group, which contains boys and girls with Maori background, practices every Friday. All of them have attended kapahaka groups in the lower grades. They are practising in order to participate in a national contest for children up to 8th grade, which is to take place in six weeks. First they practice in two groups, the girls in one group and the boys in another one. The girls practice poi, and the boys do haka. In the last half-hour they practice together. The girls start practising poi techniques in small groups.

The female group is instructed by some slightly older girls when they are practising poi. These are relatives of some of the pupils, and they come every Friday to practice together with them. The teacher takes over when the day of the contest is nearing. The boys practice with a young male teacher.



Picture 6. *Kapahaka rehearsal 7. and 8. grade.*

2.5.6 Music as a factor for identity

Ever since the 1950s, the schools in New Zealand have used music actively to maintain and promote Maori culture. For this purpose kapahaka groups have been a central activity, in the mainstream schools as well as in the Maori schools. Here pupils and teachers with a Maori background have been given the opportunity to confirm their cultural belonging. They have also had the opportunity to use the Maori language in songs and they have learnt about ancient customs and traditions.

Girls and boys have had a chance to reinforce their individual and cultural identify, both separately and together. This is especially apparent in the male haka dance in which the boys use their voice and body to express strength and initiative. The teacher functions both as instructor and role model. These activities have also included family members of the pupils. Incidentally, this is characteristic of traditional teaching within many indigenous cultures. People pass on customs and traditions from generation to generation within the family.

The Kapahaka groups have also contributed to a renewal of Maori song traditions. New music has been composed with Maori lyrics in the traditional style. Due to local and national contests, Kapahaka groups have become popular among the young ones.

3 MAORI MUSIC

3.1 Maori song traditions - Moteatea

Moteatea is a concept that refers to vocal music traditions. There are many different types of songs that are not very different from modern song traditions. The purpose of the songs is to express a message through the lyrics.

Like other indigenous peoples, the Maori have been in danger of losing their language and consequently also the access to the songs of their ancestors.

3.1.1 The land and the importance of the landmarks in the music - Te Whenua

Te Whenua means not only land but also "mother earth". Tangata Whenua means "the people of the land or the people of the earth". In the conception of the Maoris they are not owners of the land, but keepers, and they see it as their duty to take care of it for future generations and pass it on in a better condition than it was before. This reverence for the earth and respect for the environment has a long history.

The use of Te Whenua, landmarks, in music, such as Awa, rivers, Moana, the ocean, symbolises the importance of the tribes. Using such landmarks also refers to special events that have taken place at this location.

Maori composers often use metaphors from their own environment. Here is one example:

"Kua hinga te totara o te waonui a Tane "
A Toatara of the great forest of Tane has fallen

The forest god's name is Tanemuhata, and he is the father of all trees. This metaphor refers to some dead leader or important person as a Toatara, meaning a tree that is now dead. The tree that has stood high in the wood and offered protection for those who live on the ground has now fallen.

3.1.2 Different types of Motetatea

Waiata

Waiata is among the most important ones of the melodious songs. Originally they were lamentations that were sung publicly at Marae or in other places. They expressed the emotions of the poets and influenced the feelings of the listeners, and they passed on a message.

The music of the songs is no different from other songs. The tune and the tempo reflect the content of the lyrics. The music furthermore reflects the geographical area that the composer comes from. If the composer comes from a coastal area, we are likely to hear the sound of the sea and the waves touching the beach, the cry of the birds, and the ocean winds in his music.

In music from inland composers we are likely to hear woodland birds, the rustling of leaves, water falls, the winds, or the silence of the woodlands.

Waiata tangi

Lamentations

Tangi means crying. Four fifths of Waiata are lamentations.

Waiata whaiaaipo ***Love songs, personal in character***

Waiata Aroha

Love songs

Expressing love for people, the land, etc.

Oriori

Children's songs

Nursery songs or educational songs with the function of saying how the child should behave.

Kaioraora

Lamentations performed exclusively by male soloists

These songs were written by the widow when a man had been killed in war or other hostilities. Kaioraora means "to eat alive", i.e. with words. The lyrics express the feelings of the widow towards those who killed her husband. The songs were written to keep the hatred alive. They have been handed down by those persons to whom they were written.

Puri-Pao

Improvised songs

These songs are used at various gatherings. Each stanza consists of to lines, frequently composed on the spot. The composer improvises

two lines, the audience repeats them. As the lines are being repeated, the composer is making up the next two lines. This type of songs is often used at informal gatherings, and they frequently take the form of a competition in which various individuals try to surpass one another.

Patere

Movement songs

Movement songs resemble Kaiaraora but are performed by a group. The tune is limited to one note with continuously rising pitch before falling towards the end of each stanza.

3.1.3 Lyrics and tunes

There is always a close relationship between lyrics and tunes in the song forms. Since Maori music is an oral tradition, the songs are normally learnt by ear. It is therefore difficult to transfer the music to notes, and several types of notation methods have been tried.

The lyrics

The songs, or Waiata, are always sung in Maori, and even if the tunes may sound familiar to European ears, they are rarely translated from English or other languages. The lyrics may describe or comment on special events. They also express the hopes and longings of the Maori people. Cultural customs are also common topics.

The music

Most people do not associate Maori music with the ancient Waiata tradition but rather with songs of European origin, melodies used for so-called action songs that are accompanied by typical hand movements. These melodies can be modern original compositions with Maori lyrics, but they can also be popular hits. The melodies are then adapted to Maori lyrics and are often hard to recognise.

One element that contributes to forming a music tradition is the type of scale system. The music of the ancient Maori tradition does not go well with the European scale system. The two music forms have therefore survived separately. However, other European musical elements that have been less central to the Maori system have been

included into traditional music forms such as Waiata, Pao, Poi, etc. In a historical perspective these songs are therefore traditional songs with elements from both Maori and European music.

3.1.4 Other types of songs

Song games

Many Maori games have a vocal accompaniment. Few have survived, however. One of those that are still used is a game with sticks – Tititorea, which are thrown from person to person to the accompaniment of a rhythmical rhyme. This game develops the children's motion co-ordination and rhythm.

This game was originally used to select those young men that were suitable for weapons training.



Picture 7. Tititorea- Stick game. Performance in Rotorua

Paddle songs

Canoe songs or paddle songs have long since been observed by travellers to New Zealand. The Maoris used boats of different sizes, and in the big boats they needed one or more leaders to keep the rhythm of the rowers. As many as 60 paddlers may have to lower the oar into the water at the same time. These leaders or singers, Kaituki, stand in the boat and conduct with a stick. Their position depends on the size of the boat.

The style of singing has been compared to the Haka war dance, both because of the rhythmical singing and the tattoo. Originally the leader used a weapon for conducting. The song is performed as a mutual response ⁷between the soloist and the chorus. The leader starts, and the chorus answers. The songs may have refrains. The leader may also include various types of jokes in the song. The songs may be improvised in that the leader and the soloist start with a few words and the chorus of paddlers answer. In the 1960s and 1970s it was difficult to find anyone who remembered any paddle songs, but by the river Waikato they still have canoe competitions where the song tradition is maintained.

3.1.5 The function of the songs today

The survival of the Maori song tradition is in general a result of the Kapahaka groups. The main purpose of these groups appears to be the teaching of Maori language and culture. Here the songs function as a medium. This is apparent both in elementary school and in higher education. One consequence of this education is the production of a lot of teaching materials. Hirini Melbourne at Waikato University in Hamilton is a central person in this field, both as a teacher of Maori language at the Department of Maori and as an active singer and composer and producer of songs and materials. The lyrics embody Maori philosophy and culture.

Traditional songs are also preserved by being used in the traditional ceremonies at Wharenui, the assembly house. In this context the function of the songs is primarily to express Maori identity, even though this identity is of more symbolic than practical value in our time.

⁷ River Waikato flows through the city of Hamilton where Waikato University is situated. On my first Saturday in Hamilton, as I was walking along the river, I saw and heard a Maori canoe with paddlers who were training and using paddling songs.

3.2 Maori dance

3.2.1 Haka and "Action songs"

In the ancient Maori tradition, Haka was a concept that included all types of dances. The main groups were ***haka Waiata, haka taparahi, and haka poi***. When the missionaries arrived in New Zealand in the 1820s and 1830s, they tried to abolish the Haka custom because it was seen as immoral, belligerent and incompatible with Christianity.

The concert version of the Haka dance was reintroduced by the Maori princess Te Puea at the turn of the 19th century. She had been introduced to the dance when visiting some islands in the Pacific, and she brought them home and organised a tour with them. It took some years, however, before the dances were accepted and performed. Variations of the dances were also performed by women and children. The terms "action songs" and "Haka" are used interchangeably, and according to old concert programs, action songs were performed in the first half of the 20th century both by Maori and non-Maori groups of children or adults.

The concert groups (or choirs) also performed at church events. One such event was in Papaunui Methodist Church in Christchurch in 1930; it was then announced that the program included "strange Waiata, spiritual Poi, action songs, hymns, Maori greetings and speeches, etc.". Kapahaka groups are known to have performed with Poi at church-related events later on as well, e.g. at an Easter gathering in 1980 where the group had a performance about the meeting between the Christian missionaries and the Maori people.

Haka Waiata is a song accompanied by simple movements that are less rapid or energetic than those songs that accompany Taparahi. The movements with Haka Waiata are typically vibrating hands into the air. In the early form of Haka Waiata they used only six different movements with purely aesthetic and rhythmical functions. In a more modern form the movements reflect the lyrics and emphasise the content of the song.⁸

Haka taparahi is performed with powerful movements and a shouting chorus that is now associated with Haka. The term Haka is used both to refer to the dance and the melody that accompanies the dance

⁸ While writing, I can hear singing outside my office window. It is a kapahaka group of students practicing a haka waiata with the characteristic hand movements accompanying a popular melody.



Picture 8. *Haka dance. Performance in Rotorua*

Characteristic features:

- **Formation dance:** The participants stand in rows.
- **Movements:** They move their arms, hands, legs, head, and eyes and make grimaces. Sometimes they stick out their tongue.
- **Voice production:** The dance includes shouting, rhythmically performed lyrics by a soloist and a chorus, in a pattern of shouting and answering.
- **The pulse** is marked by powerful stamping on the floor.
- **Accompaniment:** They use their body as an instrument and produce sounds by beating their chest, arms and legs.

3.2.2 Haka Poi

Poi and Haka belong together and are performed by the women. The Poi art has been developed and performed by women over many generations. Today it is a key factor within the performance of Maori traditional art, and it is the most important tourist attraction. Behind the scenes, thousands of women all over the country are learning and practising this art form at the marae in their local community. In this way, the Poi art plays an important part in Maori culture.

Poi is a formation dance where the participants stand in rows, and each one of them has a ball (or several balls) in their hands. The balls are tied to a rope or a string that they swing in step with the song (rangi-poi). The length may vary. The balls swing in many directions: upwards, downwards in front of them, and backwards behind their shoulders. The participants stand in rows when performing the dance and the singing. In addition to the movements with the balls, the dancers move across the floor, change places and turn

around in different directions.

The Poi dance is used in ceremonies, symbolising various Maori customs, traditions, and rituals from the past and the present. Today Poi is used in connection with Powhiri and entertainment, as an example.

The inspiration for composing Poi songs is sought both in traditional legends and ancient religious conceptions, from the ancestors and from the Bible.



Picture 9. *Poi with two balls.
Performance in Rotorua*



Picture 10. *Poi with four balls.
Performance in Rotorua*

3.2.3 The dance in a new context and with a new function

The function of Maori dance in modern New Zealand is, of course, totally different from its original function. Although context and function are different, however, it has survived, and it still has a function. The dance is passed on from generation to generation, but whereas it used to have a practical purpose in the past, it now contributes to strengthening Maori identity. The male Haka dance, in particular, seems to function very well as an instrument for creating identity in school.

The dance becomes an arena where people meet and maintain ancient traditions and memories. In addition, it is very entertaining and functions very well commercially, in contests and tourist performances.

3.3 Maori instrumental music - Nga puoru

Instrumental Maori music has received little attention as compared to vocal music.

As a consequence, the use of traditional music instruments has largely been forgotten. Research has been initiated on how to play the instruments and what kind of occasions they were used at. Based on this research they efforts have been made to reconstruct the instruments. Most central in this connection are Hirini Melbourne at Waikato University in Hamilton and Richard Nunns from Nelson.

On the basis of the extensive collection made by Melbourne and Nunns, they have managed to form a picture of the sound of this music and its use and function. There exist a few old instruments that can be viewed in the museums. The instruments have mainly been used in combination with singing. The materials from which they are made depend of what part of the country they are from. Their makers have used the material that was available in the nature. By the sea, they have used mussels and stones very much, and in the interior they have used different types of wooden materials. The instruments, moreover, have different names, according to the part of the country in which they were used.

In co-operation with the artist and woodcarver Brian Flintoff, Nunns and Melbourne have had the old instruments reconstructed, and in this way they have built an impressive collection of traditional instruments. In the past few years they have used these instruments in CDs, films, and television productions as well as in concerts.

Picture 11. *Richard Nunns (left) and Brian Flintoff (right) in the workshop and artgallery of Flintoff*s in Nelson on the South Island.*



3.3.1 Maori wind instruments

Picture 12. *Puutaatara - Conch trumpet*

They use a type of conch that occasionally strands on the beaches of New Zealand. At one end they make a hole and insert a wooden mouthpiece. It is played as a trumpet; the pitch is controlled by the breath, and the hand is used as sordin. Due to its strong sound, it was used as a signal instrument to gather people and to announce deaths and births.



Picture 13. *Pukaaea- Wooden trumpet*

A trumpet made of wood with a length of up to 2.5 m, usually 1.5 - 1.8. Has been used mainly in situations of war to announce the arrival of the enemy and to gather people to fight.



Pictures 14 and 15 *Koauau – flute instruments*

This is the name of a group of flute instruments. The flutes are made of bone or wood with three to five finger holes. Most of them have three holes. They are usually played by the mouth, and sometimes the voice is used simultaneously on various vocals. They say that the flute reflects the voice of the player.



Pictures 16 and 17 *Putorino – double flute*

This instrument is probably an instrument that is exclusively Maori, and not found in any other places. It is made of two hollow pipes of wood or bone, broad in the middle and narrower at the ends (the material may be albatross bone – putorino – iwi toroa). The name putorino means "two voices" and refers to the human voice and the voice of the flute, which together produce a third one: an spiritual voice. The flute can produce two distinctly different sounds: a trumpet sound for invocation – the male sound – and a long flute sound – the female sound. Some Putorinos are constructed in such a way that it is possible to blow from both ends, getting different sounds from each one of the ends. Some flutes may produce different sounds from the same end.



Pictures 18 and 19. *Nguru*
Flutes made of stone, wood, or tooth This is a stone flute with a bend at one end, resembling a whale tooth. It is played by the mouth and the nose.



Picture 20. *Koauau-pupu harakeke*
Wind instruments without finger holes, made of shell. Blown over the opening at the bottom.



Several instruments are made of seed capsules that are either blown in or swung in the air.

Picture 21. *Poia whiowhio*

A string is strung from the middle and out into the smaller end and then twirled in the air. It makes bird-like sounds and was used at the opening of the bird-hunting season



Koauau-pong ihu (No picture)

This is made of seed capsules where the top of the narrow end has been cut off, and it has two finger holes on the side. The player blows by one nostril and tightens the other one with his finger.

Picture 22. *Hue puruhau*

Made of over-dimensioned dried seed capsules where the seeds have been removed and the narrow end cut and blown into. Used in connection with healing.



Picture 23. *Porotiti*

This is a small wooden disk with a double string attached to the centre. When it is whirled in the air, it produces a whining sound. The sound changes according to the size of the disk and the angle in relation to the wind. It is used as a toy, but traditionally it was also used in connection with healing. Then it was twirled over the face or the chest of the child sick with a cold or with the flue.



Picture 24. *Purerehua*

This is a flat disk made of wood, stone or bone. It is oval or diamond-shaped, flat and with the form of a leaf. At one end a string is attached, and it is swung in the air. The sound it produces is low and buzzing and can be heard over long distances. It was used by the Ngati Porou tribe in rain ceremonies, and among the Taranaki tribe several instruments were played simultaneously at funeral ceremonies



3.3.2 Rhythm instruments

Hue Puruwai

This is made of dried pumpkin, and when it is moved, a sound is made by the seeds inside the capsule that is rotating. It was used in connection with healing and in order to calm restless spirits.

Tokere

Castanets-like instrument made of hard wood, bone or shell. It is held between the thumb and the index finger. It has been used at group performances by women, as accompaniment to a slow and graceful dance.

Pahua - Tree gong

The sound of this wooden drum can be heard several miles away. It was used as a signal instrument to alert people when the enemy was approaching. There are no drums made of hide, presumably because this material would be ruined by the cold climate of New Zealand, as happened in Polynesia.

3.3.3 Other instruments

Picture 25.

Roria – a Jew's harp

The harp was made of wood or bone.
Sometimes they used their voice
simultaneously on various vocal sounds.



4. SUMMARY

4.1 Choice of study location

When I contacted Waikato University, I did not realise how wise my choice turned out to be. The geographical area in which Waikato University is situated is in that part of New Zealand that is inhabited by a majority of the Maori population. This university, the only one with a separate school for Maori studies, plays an important role in the presentation and maintenance of Maori culture and traditions. This contributed highly to giving me the professional rewards described in this report.

4.2 The living conditions of Maori culture

My first impression on embarking on this research was that Maori culture had good living conditions. This culture was especially present at Waikato University, both in the day-to-day work in the various departments and in the curricula. Additionally, it was easy to find literature and sound-tracks of Maori song and dance. Maori music was an important element within the area of tourism as well.

As was to be expected, when I was delving deeper into the material, I discovered that the situation was more complex. The Maoris are a minority as compared to the European population, and as is the case with other minorities, their people and their culture have been subject to various kinds of oppression in the past. The first new-comers in New Zealand were whalers and seal-hunters. Then came the missionaries and explorers. These groups have each in their own way contributed to establishing new customs and weakening the indigenous Maori culture. In recent years, the government has made efforts to create a renewal of Maori culture and to strengthen the reverence for it in school and society. Steps have also been taken to compensate for wrong-doings in the past.

4.3 Ancient traditions in a new context

Despite the difficulties of the past, which I will not elaborate on any further here, Maori culture has survived. This does not mean that it has the same form and function as in the pre-European era. Any culture that is to survive must somehow adapt to new times and new conditions. Examples of new contexts are the tourist industry and music contests.

Admittedly, as an outside observer, one may feel that the Maori culture has been exploited by the commercialism of the tourist industry, but one has to admit that this has also contributed to the survival of the culture for new generations. One example is the Poi art. Thanks to the tourist industry this art form has been passed on to new generations of women. Another example is the kapahaka competitions and festivals. These appeal to the youths and contribute to maintaining the kapahaka groups, which in turn contribute to the maintenance of Maori language and culture and teaching it to new generations.

4.4. Renaissance of ancient traditions

In addition to commercial expressions, we also observe an increased interest in reviving old music traditions that are in danger of being forgotten. One example is the instrumental music. Workshops and CD-productions are very important for this purpose. Waikato University plays a central role, partly due to the work of Professor Hirini Melbourne and the Department of Maori Studies, and partly to the centre of executant art with their courses in Maori music and dance.

4.5 Schools and education

As for the presence of Maori culture in school, I can only offer some very general remarks on the basis of such a short stay in New Zealand. My superficial insight into this leaves the impression that it is more or less haphazard what aspects of Maori culture are taught, and even whether it is taught at all. Most apparent are the kapahaka groups, established as early as in the 1950s in some schools, and common in many schools today. In teacher education they try to integrate Maori song and dance traditions. This is apparent in the organisation of the start of a new academic year and also in their curricula. In addition, they offer special education for teachers in pure Maori schools.

4.6 The status of Maori culture

It seems that the government pays great attention to the Maori culture, judging by measures they have taken at Waikato University, by establishing a separate department for Maori culture and a centre for executant art. The new curriculum for elementary and secondary school is a further example; one of its explicit aims is the furthering Maori cultural

traditions.

There is still one topic that is somewhat difficult to discuss, viz. how to balance Maori cultural traditions against non-Maori music and culture in New Zealand.⁹ The politically correct approach is to promote Maori culture and in this way to strengthen Maori cultural identity. There also seems to be a need for strengthening non-Maori culture, but in expressing such views there is a danger of being perceived as anti-Maori, and consequently people hesitate to put such concerns on the agenda. Concerns about music as a school subject is a case in point. The curriculum covers the various aspects of music, but there is no mention of any ethnic traditions, neither Maori nor other traditions in New Zealand. However, they have been making teaching aids and materials with this in mind since 1986.¹⁰ Due to this lack of explicitness, counter-reactions have been avoided, and the individual teacher is, of course, free to include various traditions and cultures on their own initiative. But then it is more or less left to chance what will be taught or not.

⁹ In New Zealand there are many different ethnic groups in addition to those with a European background. They therefore use the term “kiwi” to refer to a citizen of New Zealand.

¹⁰ *New Zealanders make music*, Teachers' guide and 6 tapes containing 60 excerpts of New Zealand recorded music, Department of Education, Wellington 1986

5. VOCABULARY

HAKA	Position dance
KARANGA	Invocation
KARAKIA	Prayers, every session starts and ends with kakrakia
KIA ORA	Greetings – welcome, they greet each other by pressing their noses against one another
KAITUKI	Leader and soloist in paddle songs
TITITOREA	Song game with sticks
KAPA HAKA	Song and dance group
MOTEATEA	Collective term for song traditions
MARAE	”The threshold” – the square outside the assembly house
MANWHIRI	”The mourning side” - the guests’ side of the house. This is also where the diseased are placed at funerals.
NGA PUORU	The sound or voice of music instruments
PĀ	All the buildings that belong to the Maori assembly place
POWHIRI	Greeting/welcome ceremony
TEAO	”Daylight” – the hosts’ side of the house - Wharenui
WAIATA	Song
WHARENUI	A big house – the Maori assembly house

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