

Koowhiti

Editorial Panel:
Tanemahuta Gray, Merenia Gray, Jennifer Stevenson,
and Peter Cleave

Te Kaharoa Editor:
Paul Moon

*Teena raa koutou. Nau mai ki teenei koorero. Whakatau mai i
runga i te huumarie me te rangimarie.*

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
1. Background	
2. Koowhiti 2010 me 2011, Koowhiti 2010 and 2011 by Peter Cleave	
3. Aerial Dance in a Cultural Context, Tanemahuta Gray: Director, Choreographer, Aerialist, Kōwhiti Productions and Te Ao Marama Tapui by Jenny Stevenson	
4. Merenia Gray- Dance Biography	
5. Jenny Stevenson- Dance Biography	
6. Tanemahuta Gray- Dance Biography	
7. Culturally different dances in the New Zealand arts curriculum: Understanding about fusion, tradition and making dances in context by Linda Ashley	
8. Some questions on Maui. Peter Cleave asks questions and Tanemahuta Gray responds	
9. Concluding Comments	

Introduction

Teena rawa atu koutou.

This Special Collection has been assembled and some of the articles have been written by members of an editorial panel. These are Tanemahuta Gray, Merenia Gray, Jennifer Stevenson and Peter Cleave. This panel has worked with Paul Moon from the editorial group at tekaharoa.com.

A feature of this Special Collection are the photographs that are spread throughout. Nearly all of the photographers are identified below their work and the Special Collection might be seen as a collection of photography as well as writing, perhaps the most extensive of its kind in recent years.

Some articles have been done by individuals and these include Jenny Stevenson's *Aerial Dance in a Cultural Context*, Linda Ashley's *Culturally different dances in the New Zealand arts curriculum: Understanding about fusion, tradition and making dances in context* and Peter Cleave's *Kowhiti 2010 and 2011*.

Other work has been shared. This includes the Dance Biographies, and the sections entitled Background and Concluding Comments. Typically Peter Cleave has cobbled drafts together using websites and other sources and then comments and alterations have come from others from the editorial group.

Some questions on Maui is a little more specific. There are a set of starter questions by Peter Cleave but the author of the article is actually Tanemahuta Gray who gives extensive responses to those questions.

Our thanks to all involved in this Special Collection,

Naa maatou noa iho,
Naa Tanemahuta Gray, Merenia Gray, Jenny Stevenson me
Peter Cleave

Part One: Background

Dance had been in Aotearoa for centuries in 1953 when the New Zealand Ballet Company was set up. A world of performance had been here for a long time.

But to the national media and in the history books as written in 1953 dance was a developing art in a small country on the periphery of things. There was a catch up to be made. There was ballet to be danced and opera to be sung, there was a map to be drawn up and then to follow for national cultural development.

Soon we had Malvina and Kiri and before them Inia in Opera. There was a wave of singers. And there were dancers. Douglas Wright. There were tours.

In 1984 there was the Hui Taumata, a gathering of Maori leaders and stakeholders in Wellington and this may have been significant for Maori arts including dance. Some like Paul Moon (1993) have seen that summit meeting as an event that ushered in a renaissance that included the arts as well as social, and economic development.

Or it may be that dance needs to be considered as a set of quite different strands. Ballet is one thing and Kapa Haka is another while the subject of this Special Collection, Maori contemporary dance as seen in *Koowhiti* 2010 and 2011 and in attendant developments, developed in its own way, in fits and starts until the late nineties and with a steady haul over the last decade.

Koowhiti Productions is a Limited Liability Company and the three Directors are Merenia Gray, Tanemahuta Gray and Jenny Stevenson. The principal funders have been Creative New Zealand and Wellington City Council and Koowhiti Productions has also received grants from the Lotteries Board, Lion Foundation, Endeavour Trust and the Performing Arts Foundation.

As far as the origins of *Koowhiti* are concerned the establishment of the Merenia Gray Dance Theatre in 1994 may be a significant date. From there a pattern of steady development may be seen in the activities of Merenia and her brother Tanemahuta. There are dance biographies of Merenia, Jenny and Tanemahuta in Parts Three, Four and Five and considerations of Tanemahuta's work in Parts Two and Eight.

In 2009 Stephen Bradshaw and others organised the *Aitanga Dance Hui* where a mandate was given to go forward with the initial *Koowhiti* festival from the delegates that were present(

<https://sites.google.com/site/maoridancesummitsite/te-whanau-aitanga/compiled-notes>)

Stephen Bradshaw is a pivotal figure having started the first contemporary Maori dance company in New Zealand, *Te Kani knai o te Rangatahi* which later became *Taiiao Dance Company*

(http://www.danz.org.nz/sidestep.php?article_id=11&type_id=3). *Te Kani Kani o te Rangitahi* grew out of a work scheme. Merenia Gray, one of the principals in *Koowhiti* danced in *Taiiao* as did Charles Koroneho. Both of these are discussed regarding their performance and artistic contribution to *Koowhiti* in Part Two. Stephen Bradshaw is now Pouwhakahaere of *Te Ope o Rehua*, the contemporary performance arm of *Toi Maori Aotearoa* and Kaiwhakahaere, Manager, of Maori Arts for Manukau City Council. Other major developments have been seen in the contemporary Maori dance companies Atamira (<http://www.atamiradance.co.nz>) and Okareka (<http://www.okareka.com/index.asp?id=8>).

Coming back to *Koowhiti* itself, following endorsement at the *Te Aitanga – DescenDANCE hui* of the Māori contemporary dance community, Koowhiti Productions Ltd was established in October 2009 for the purposes of producing the *Koowhiti Matariki Festival of Māori Contemporary Dance* at Te Papa in June 2010. The *Koowhiti* festival was established as a means to promote recognised and emerging Māori dance artists to the

public at large but more especially to create an environment to nurture te puuaawaitanga o reehia, the blossoming and audience experiences of the dance-form.

The 2010 festival included performances by both leading and emerging Maori dance artists, workshops, lectures, forum discussions and film screenings. The season was strongly supported by Creative New Zealand, Wellington City Council, Lion Foundation and Whitireia Polytechnic as well as by numerous sponsorship donations.

In 2011, Koowhiti Productions was invited to produce a three-day season at the Wellington Opera House in September as part of the Real New Zealand Festival for the Rugby World Cup. As South Africa was being hosted by Wellington the Producers, with the assistance of the South African Government were successful in bringing out Nkosinathi's Cultural Group from South Africa to perform in the season which was called *Koowhiti Dance 2011*.

For this season, Koowhiti Productions also invited a Pacific Island group to perform alongside a selection of leading and emerging Māori contemporary dance artists. *Koowhiti Dance 2011* was strongly supported by Creative New Zealand, Lotteries Funding Board, Wellington City Council, the Endeavour Trust and the South African Government as well as by many donations from sponsors, some of whom were repeat donors.

In addition, Koowhiti Productions received grants for both the 2010 and 2011 seasons from Creative New Zealand to commission awards made of pounamu, to honour selected dance pioneers, the rangatira of Māori contemporary dance, with Lifetime Achievement Awards. Stephen Bradshaw, Tama Huata, Gaylene Sciascia and Taiaroa Royal have been formally acknowledged thus far.

As the publicity for *Koowhiti* states;

2010 was about the Poowhiri – the traditional Māori welcoming ceremony of Koowhiti into our world. 2011 was the weaving of other cultures, Earth - tangata

whenua; welcoming the people to our land, Air – Manuhiri, the visitors that have flown to us; Fire – Atamira – the energy that bursts to life on stage and Water – Hononga – the connections between nations and performance artists.

2013-15 will be Te Whaanau Punga – the stars poured from the great Waka of Tamarereti: showcasing our brightest dance stars under the guardianship of Te Matau a Maui – the tail of the constellation of Scorpio, which is a guiding constellation to these lands.

There are many influences on *Koowhiti* and these are introduced and discussed throughout this Special Collection. Another key line of development is the background of Jenny Stevenson and her joining up with Tanemahuta and Merenia as a producer and company director in the *Koowhiti* enterprise. This is discussed in detail in her Dance Biography in Part Four.

What is that enterprise? It might be divided into four parts. The first is performance and this is discussed in Part Two of this Special Collection in the reports on *Koowhiti 2010* and *2011*. The second is a consideration of the principals and this is made in the biographical and dance discussions in Parts Two, Four, Five and Eight. The third part is reflective and this is seen in the article by Linda Ashley on dance education in respect of *Koowhiti* participants like Tanemahuta Gray and other dancers. Tanemahuta Gray's responses to questions on Maui shows the reflective process working at another level again as he explains how and why he portrayed Maui in contemporary Maori dance performance. The fourth, as discussed throughout this Special Collection, is a project, historical and looking forward as well as contemporary and this involves academic symposiums and workshops as well as performances and other things.

PETER CLEAVE

Part Two: Koowhiti 2010 and 2011

**Ko te whakaaturanga tuatahi ko *Koowhiti*;
Matariki Festival of Contemporary Dance i whakatuungia
ai i Hune 24-27 ki te Papa Tongarewa anoo.**

The first performance was *Koowhiti*; *Matariki Festival of Contemporary Dance* held June 24- 27/2010 again at the Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa.



New Native Dance at Koowhiti 2010, Pā Kingdom
Choreography: Taupuhi Toki, New Native Dance Creative
Producer: Kasina Campbell
Dancers: Jai Campbell, Andy Faioga, Ellen Moana Smith,
Taupuhi Toki

Ko te waa tapere o nga waa tapere teenei. He whakaaturanga kanikani tuuturu, he kanikani Maaori, ki Te Papa Tongarewa. Ko teetahi mea nui ko te haakari ki Icon, te waahi kai ki te papa Tongarewa. He mea hirahira inahoki he rahi ngaa taangata rongonui i puta ai. He mema tuakana mai i te Paremata, he kaiwhakawaa o te Kooti Teitei, ki reira hoki ko Kerry Prendergast te Koromatua o te Whaanganui a Tara, eetahi atu mema paremata, roia hoki.

It was the show of shows. A comprehensive display of dance, Maori dance at Te Papa. It featured a Hakari, a Dinner at Icon the dining complex at Te Papa Tongarewa and this was remarkable for the dignitaries there. Senior politicians, High Court judges, Kerry Prendergast, the Mayor of Wellington, sundry MPs and lawyers.

Ko Brendon Pongia mai i te pouwhakaata o te ata te kaiwhakahaere moo te haakari, aa, ka whakahoki ia i a maatou katoa ki te whenua tonu i eetahi koorerorero moo Dancing with the stars. He koa kee au ki te whakatuu I tooku ringa i taa Brendon paatai ko wai i maatakitaki i

Dancing with the stars. Kaaore he koorero ahiahi teenei. Ka moohiotia te minenga i teenei paatai. Ko teenei he hui o ngaa taangata matatau i nga tihi o te ao toi. He itiiti kee raa ngaa kaupoi, ngaa mea kuuare wheenei i a au. Engari he tino tangata a Brendon moo ngaa mahi peenei, he kaikanikani, he kaitaakaro hoki ia, aa, ka whakauru ia i a Toni Huata moo eetahi waiata kaha, aa, ka whakatikatika hokitia te minenga e ia moo *Koowhiti* tonu me te hoatutanga tohu ki te whai mai.

Brendon Pongia of morning television was the Master of Ceremonies for the meal and he got us all down to earth with a lot of patter about Dancing with the stars. I was proud to put my hand up when Brendon asked who watched Dancing with

the stars. This was not idle chatter. This sorted the audience out. Here was an audience of Wellington High Culture. Lowbrows like me were in the distinct minority. But Brendon was the perfect foil, dancer and sportsman, introducing Toni Huata for some powerful waiata and getting everyone ready for the show itself, *Koowhiti* and the presentation of awards to follow.

Araa, kua whakatereretia te minenga e MC Pongia i a maatou e kai puurini ana, ka nekeneke maatou i te hooro kai ki teetahi o nga hooro tapere i Te Papa moo te waa tapere.

And then, with a bit of a hurry-up from MC Pongia over the dessert, we all moved from the banquet room to a theatre at Te Papa for the show.

Ko te kaupapa o te kupu koowhiti ko te whiriwhiri, te too ake ranei. Ka taea te koorero; 'kua koowhiti nga kumara.' Ko tetahi atu kaupapa ko te putahanga mai o te maarama hou, a, ko teetahi aahua koorero o teenei ko te whakaruahanga o te whiti hei koowhitiwhiti. Ka aro teenei ki te pekepeke, te kanikani raanei o te wai.

Koowhiti means to pull out or to select. It can be used to say something like, 'the kumara were pulled out of the garden'. It also has the secondary meaning of the appearance of a new moon and there is an interesting usage with a replication of whiti in koowhitiwhiti which refers to a leaping or dancing of water.

Engari raa ko te kaupapa o *Koowhiti* moo nga mea i puta ake raa, ko te whakaaturanga nei, ngaa whakaaturanga kanikani raanei ki Te Papa Tongarewa i te waa o Matariki.

Ko eetahi o eenei, he mea mai i eetahi whakaaturanga

o mua, ko eetahi, he mea hoou. He mea tino tata I waaenganui o eenei whakaaturanga, he mea rerekee hoki.

Araa, ko Koowhiti, he kohinga whakaaturanga i nukunuku ai wheenaa i te wai i te waihirere (cf Ka'ai Mahuta 2009).

But *Koowhiti*, for those who attended will always mean the performance or a set of dance performances at Te Papa Tongarewa during Te Matariki. Some of these were excerpts from earlier shows and others were new shows. There were strong similarities amongst the shows and there were differences as well. *Koowhiti* then was a set of shows shifting in shape like dancing water in a fountain (cf Ka'ai Mahuta 2009).



Black Rain- The Merenia Gray Dance Theatre

Kaaore he wera i te rae moo te mahi ahurewa i taea ai e Cathy Knowsley me taana roopu. He rawe hoki te mahi whakamaarama naa Lisa Maule. He peenaa te katoa o eenei mahi i te rerenga o te karaka, aa, peenaa raa eenei

mahi moo te pai o te pourewa ki te kai i te haakari, he mea aataahua ki te whatu, he mea pai maa te puku hoki.

Stage management was well done without fuss or fanfare by Cathy Knowsley and her crew. Lisa Maule provided very effective lighting. It all ran like clockwork and like the food at the hakari it was both elegant and sustaining as background for the performances.

Ko Cat Ruka he tangata tuu atu. Ka tuutaki te waahi kanikani ki te waahi tapere; ka mea ia pikitia kanikani i taana anoo koorero me kii, aa, i eetahi aahuatanga ko Cat te mea tino pai rawa o ngaa taangata katoa i puta ai ahakoa kaaore kau he rahi te kanikani i taana. Kaaore he haate i a ia, he tapere takitahi taana, a, he mea tautoko I eetahi mea mai i te ao o te wahine Maaori, he wahine e taawhititia ana. I a au e matakitaki ana i a Cat ka whakaaro au mo ngaa tuhinga naa Cheryl Te Waerea Smith moo ngaa mea e mauhere ana i te iwi Maori (cf Smith 1993). I taa Cat Ruka ka kitea te taawhiti o te wahine Maaori i nga hikareti, I te waipiro me ngaa taru kino. Ka hiinaki hokitia te wahine raa e nga keengi, e nga turuhi hoki pea- ka hari noa raa a Cat i teetahi karetao i a ia e tapere ana. Ka marutia, me kii, e teenaa haki, teenaa raanei. Ka taapareparetia ia i teetehi whare mamae. Ka rongohia eetahi aronga o te taperetanga o Beth mai i te pukapuka me te pikitia, Once were warriors, aa, ka haria eenei aronga ki teetahi anoo reanga i eetahi aahua (cf MacDonald 1995, Cleave 2009a).

Cat Ruka stood out. Dance met theatre at Koowhiti; every dance-picture told a story and she was the best in many respects even though she did not dance much. Bare breasted, her solo dance involved props from the world of the Maori woman, a woman trapped. While I was watching Cat I thought of writing by Cheryl Te Waerea Smith about things that trap

Maori people (Smith 1993). In Cat Ruka's work the entrapment of the Maori woman by cigarettes, alcohol and drugs is to be seen. The woman is also trapped by gangs and also perhaps by tourists- Cat carries a doll as she performs. She is wrapped up in a house of pain. This echoed the role of Beth in the book and the film of *Once were warriors* and took it a stage further in some respects (cf MacDonald 1995, Cleave 2009a).

Engari, he rahi kee nga mea i te waa tapere nei. Ko eetahi o nga kaikanikani he aahua koroheke raatou engari raa he rahi kee mai i te rangatahi, aa, he mea hoou, tuuwhera hoki ki te whai i te rangatiratanga o Taanemahuta raaua ko Merenia i runga i te ahurewa me te moohio tootika rawa. Ko te rangatahi, mai i nga kura o te Judith Fuge Dance Studio me te waa ako e kiia nei ko te Commercial Dance Course kei te Whare Tapere o Whitireia raatou.

But there was much else in the show. One or two of the dancers were older but a lot were younger and they came with an open freshness, taking the lead of Tanemahuta and Merenia on stage with very clear understanding. The young ones came mainly from the Judith Fuge Dance Studio and the Commercial Dance course at the Whitireia Performing Arts Centre.



Past / Present / Future Choreography: Tanemahuta Gray.
Music: Tiki Taane - Past Present Future Album: Past / Present

/ Future. Costume Design and Construction: Mina Davies, Olivia Giles, Moana Jones (Maro) Dancers: Jacqui Hailwood, Tanemahuta Gray.

Ka kitea te mahi a Taupuhi Toki me New Native Dance hei mea pai rawa i *Paa Kingdom*. Aa, ka haria te tono me te whakaaturanga e Cathy Livermore me te Atamira Dance Company ki eetahi reanga teitei i *Don't feed the man fish*. Ka ui hokitia eetahi paatai hoou moo ngaa mea peenaa i te whakamahanatanga o te ao mai i te tirohanga o te iwi taketake.

The work of Taupuhi Toki and New Native Dance was seen to effect in *Paa Kingdom*. And the choreography of Cathy Livermore and the Atamira Dance Company in *Don't feed the man fish* took message and performance to new heights and asked new questions about things like global warming from the point of view of indigenous people.

Ka tautoko te New Zealand School of Dance i a Merenia Gray me te Merenia Gray Dance Company i *Black Rain*. Aapiti atu i te kanikani pai he rawe hoki te waiata me nga koorero atu i aa Hirini Melbourne raaua ko Richard Nunns ki teenaa naa Hone Tuwhare.

The New Zealand School of Dance supported Merenia Gray and the Merenia Gray Dance Company in *Black Rain*. As well as the superb dance this show had an excellent use of music and poetry ranging from the work of Hirini Melbourne and Richard Nunns to that of Hone Tuwhare.

Kia piri a Taanemahuta Gray i te waa o naaianei inahoki ka rongohia nga waiata naa Tiki Taane i *Past/Present/Future* me *Tangaroa* me *Now this is it* hoki. Ka whakauungia teenei aahua o naaianei e Future Fame. Ka tautokongia ia e Mad Fame Creative Specialists i *The*

***Inner Cosmos.* Ka rongohia hoki he waiata naa Mr Flash me taa The Dorian Concept.**

Tanemahuta Gray used the music of Tiki Taane in his *Past/Present/Future* and in *Tangaroa* and *Now this is it*, keeping things current. The contemporary feel was reinforced by Future Fame appearing courtesy of Mad Fame Creative Specialists in *The Inner Cosmos*. This featured the music of Mr Flash and The Dorian Concept.



Entangled.

Choreographer Merenia Gray. Dancers Footnote Dance Company

Ko Merenia Gray ka huri hoki ia ki nga korero aataahua, araa, ki a Octavio Paz, ko *The Sacred Fig Tree* he puutake mo *Entangled*. Ka haangai, hookai hoki a Merenia ki eetahi mea, aa, kaaore i ngaro taana anoo ira. He paa pai kia miiharotia ai.

Merenia Gray also used poetry in *Entangled*, this time taking Octavio Paz's *The Sacred Fig Tree* as an inspiration. Merenia cross referenced to a lot of things without losing the

thread. A subtlety to be wondered at.

He tawhiti hoki te hokinga atu o eetahi mea. Mai i teetahi whakaaturanga i te tau 1990 ka puta mai *He Taura Whakapapa* me te mahere kanikani naa Charles Konehono me Te Toki Haruru. Ko teenei mahi, he kaupapa kei roto moo te uauahanga o te kotahitanga, aa, peenaa i eetahi mahi i teeraa poo ka noho noa eetahi paatai.

Some of the work went back a fair way. *He Taura Whakapapa* with choreography by Charles Koroneho and Te Toki Haruru came from a production by the Taiao Dance Theatre in 1990. With a theme concerning the fragility of unity the work, like all other pieces on the night posed questions that lingered.

Ko eetahi o nga mahi aa roopu ka tuutaki pai ahakoa ngaa mea uaua, ngaa mea whakamataku. Ko te tautoko mai i a Kid Genius Klik moo *Playing Savage* naa Cat Ruka he mea miiharo teenaa hononga. Kei *Playing Savage* hoki nga waiata naa Chopin me Notorious BIG. Ka pai te hari o te whakaaturanga i eenei rangi rerekee.

Some of the collaboration worked extremely well, taking all kinds of risks. The support of Kid Genius Klik for Cat Ruka's *Playing Savage* made for a magic combination. *Playing Savage* also employed the music of Chopin and Notorious BIG. The presentation carried the musical contrasts.

Ko te mahi i kitea ai I a *Koowhiti* ka puta mai eetahi tino whakaaturanga i ngaa waa o mua, aa, ka aata whakaaronga ngaa take kia kitea ai ngaa aahua o te Maori mai raanoo. Mai i te tau 2006, te tau o te hooia tawhito, te Year of the Veteran, ka puta nga whakaaturanga o *Moonlight Sonata* me *Memoirs of Active Performance* kia

titiro whakamurihia ai te waa o te Maaori, tae rawa ano raa ki ngaa mea mai i te tuawhenua me ngaa waahi taawhiti, i a raatou e hiikoikoi ana i te mihini pakanga o Niu Tiireni.

The way Koowhiti worked was that key performances from the past were selected with an eye on the message so that the experience of Maori over time was reflected. *Moonlight Sonata* and *Memoirs of Active Service* dating from 2006, the Year of the Veteran, looked back to the long experience of Maori, especially Maori from remote areas in the New Zealand war machine.

Ka hikitia te paatai moo ngaa mea taawhiti me ngaa mea tata, he whakarerekeetanga nui i ngaa whakaaetanga Tiriti inahoki raa ko te aahua he mea ngaawari te whakatau whakaaro te rapu taonga ki te whenua peenaa i te hinu i nga moana me nga whenua taawhiti (Cleave 2009a). He mea nui te taawhiti i te moemoeaa kino o te taaone o Cat Ruka ki te oranga i te tuawhenua me te oranga i te waahi pakanga, aa, kua tuhi eetahi taangata moo teenei. Ko te mahi i tekaharoa.com naa Moon me Keiha (2008) te mea hou rawa pea engari raa ka rere teetahi taatai whakaaro ki taa Laurence McDonald (1995 ibid) moo te taha taane, wahine raanei e kitea ana ki te pukapuka me te pikitia *Once were warriors*. Ka pai a Beth ki te tuawhenua engari kaaore a Jake e pai ana ki teena.

Ka whakaaro te tangata moo te koorero naa Ani Salmond (Salmond, 1975) moo ngaa waahi nunui o te tuawhenua peenaa i a Te Teko, Ruatoki raanei, aa, ka whakaarongia taa Joan Metge moo te haerenga ki te taaone (Metge 2004). He taatairanga hoki ki tea o o te whenua taawhiti, te tai taawhiti raanei I nga pikitia peenaa i taa Vincent Ward, Ko *Rain of the Children* (2008), me taa Taika Waititi, ko *Boy* (2009).

This raises the question of near and far, an important distinction in Treaty settlements as the distant seas and the hinterland seem more easily settled or explored for minerals like oil and mined (Cleave2009). The distance between the urban nightmare described in Cat Ruka's and the rural life, or the distant warzone is important and several people have written about it. Work in *tekaharoa.com* by Paul Moon and Pare Keiha (Keiha and Moon 2008) is perhaps the most recent but there is a line of thought going back through Laurence McDonald's (1995 *ibid*) consideration of gender in *Once were warriors*. Beth likes the rural and Jake cannot relate to it. One thinks of Anne Salmond's discussion of rural capitals like Te Teko and Ruatoki Salmond 1975) or Joan Metge's discussion of the urban migration (Metge 2004). There are also correspondences to the rural life evoked in films like Vincent Ward's *Rain of the Children* (2008) and Taika Waititi's *Boy* (2009).

Mai i te whakaaturanga o *Whakairo* o te tau 2007 ka puta mai *Te Whenua* me te mahi kanikani naa Moss Paterson me te Kamupene Kanikani o Atamira. Mai i teenei whakaaturanga ka puta te aahua o te wairua me eenaa moumou mea ki a *Koowhiti*, aa, ka honoa te hohonu o te waa o neheraa o te Maori ki a Matariki ki Te Papa Tongarewa i te tau 2010.

Atamira Dance Collective Maaka Peepene Choreographer Te Whenua with choreography by Moss Paterson and the Atamira Dance Company came from *Whakairo* of 2007. This gave *Koowhiti* a spiritual and mystic dimension and so connected the deep past of the Maori to Te Papa Tongarewa during Te Matariki of 2010.



He Taura Whakapapa: Choreography: Charles Koroneho, Te Toki Haruru Music: Marc Chesterman & Grant Finlay: Ka puta he Kakano; (compiled by Te Toki Haruru) He Whakapapa: Ngahiwi Apanui. Costume Design: Marama Llyod & Charles Koroneho. Dancers: Charles Koroneho / Tai Royal, Maaka Pepene, Jack Gray, Cathy Livermore, Gabby Thomas, Bianca Hyslop

Ko eetahi o nga mahi ka haere whakamuri, ka kookiri ki mua hoki. Mai i te Waa Piki o te tau 2009 moo te New Zealand School of Dance kua puta mai He taonga, he whakaaturanga me te mahere kanikani naa Taane Mete raaua ko Taiaroa Royal me te Okareka Dance Company. Ko teenei mahi hohonu ka whakaroangia moo teetahi whakaaturanga i 2011.

Some of the work went back as it projected forward. He Taonga with choreography from Taane Mete and Taiaroa Royal and the Okareka Dance Company came from a Graduation ceremony for the New Zealand School of Dance season in 2009. This interesting work is being extended for a production

in 2011.

Aa, ko teenei te aahua o te whakaaturanga. Ka titiro ki mua, ki muri hoki, kaaore kau he whakamau kaati, kaore he mauhere, kaore he taiapa kia aukatihia ngaa taangata. Aa, ka haangai a *Koowhiti* ki te waa o naaianei. ka mahia te mahi i te waa o inaaiatonurawaatunei, aa, ka toia te minenga ki teetahi aahua o naaianei e ia whakaaturanga, ia whakaaturanga.

And this was the way of the show. It looked forward as well as to the past with no holds barred, no prisoners taken and no boundaries to hem people in. And *Koowhiti* was made for the present. It worked in the here and now, each dance show tugging at the audience with another immediacy.

He mea nui te whakatakotoranga o te wa o naaianei i mua tonu i te minenga. Peenaa pea i te rerekeehanga o tata-taawhiti i meatia i mua i eetahi waa he taawhiti rawa te titiro ki nga aahuatanga o te Maaori. E ai ki teenei titiro, i nga wai tino pai o neheraa he mea rangatira ngaa taangata i ora ai. Engari i *Koowhiti* ka kitea te pai o te ao Maori i teenei waa tonu. Kia whakaarongia te waa me te waahi (cf Neocosmos 2006) he tika te kauwhata o te hinengaro, me kii, o *Koowhiti*.

This placing of the moment before the audience is important. Rather like the near-far space distinction so there is sometimes a distancing in time. Issues are approached from a way in time. According to this view once upon a time people were noble. But in *Koowhiti* the value of the Maori world today is to be seen. If time and place are considered (Neocosmos, 2006) it might be said that there is a true frame of mind in *Koowhiti*.



Ataamira Dance Collective. Maaka Peepene Choreographer

Ko te tuumanako kia mahi tahi anoo ai te tokoturu nei, ko Taanemahuta raatou ko Merenia ko Jenny. He pai eenei taangata hei mea takitahi; ko Taanemahuta ka whai taha ia, ko Merenia he puu whakahaere ia i a ia e toro atu ana ki te ao toi, te ao pukapuka hoki, a, ko Jenny ka tautoko, ka ako ia. Hei roopu, hei takitoru me kii, he rawe hoki raatou.

It is to be hoped that this trio, Tanemahuta and Merenia Gray and Jenny Stevenson work together again. They are good enough as individuals; Tanemahuta pushing the envelope, Merenia creatively organizing as she reaches out to art and literature and Jenny advising and teaching. Put together they appeal immensely.

Aa, ka piikau taumaha raatou.

And they carry weight.

Ka hari a Taanemahuata me Merenia i te whaanau, aa, he whaanau anoo raa teenaa. He hononga kanikani e toro atu ki te ao kia hoki ai ki a Kaapiti. Ko Taanemahuta, kua hoki noa mai i taana mahi moo te *New Zealand Expo* ki Haina. Kua taea e raatou ko Merenia ko Jenny te kohinga kaikanikani rerekee engari raa kaaore he raruraru teenaa inahoki ka rere reka raa te whakaaturanga kaaore he amuamu i te haerenga- kiihai te tangata i moohio tuuturu he aha te mea e whai ai engari he ngaawari kau noa teenaa, ko teenaa te aahua o te koowhitiwhiti, te aahua tapere o te waihiirere.

Taanemahuta and Merenia bring the whanau and what a whanau it is. There are dance connections stretching out into the world and back to the Kapiti coast. Taanemahuata had recently returned from his involvement with the *New Zealand Expo* in China. He and Merenia had managed with Jenny to get many dancers of different types together but the show hummed rather than grated- you weren't sure what kind of dance you would see next and that was of no bother, it was the way of the koowhitiwhiti, the way the fountain played.

Aa, ka haria mai e Jenny Stevenson toona hoa rangatira ko Jim ki a *Koowhiti*. Ka koorerotia a Jim i te panui moo *Koowhiti*, he kaitautoko huumarie ia, he pou wahanguu moo te ao toi tae rawa anoo raa ki te kanikani ki Te Whanganui a Tara, he mea moohio ki te tautoko pai, aa, ki te hiikoi pai hoki.

And Jenny Stevenson brought her husband Jim to *Koowhiti*. Jim is mentioned in the *Koowhiti* programme, he is a quiet mentor, a restrained *consigliere* of the arts, especially dance in Wellington, a patron who knows how to do it well and walk softly.

Ko ia whakaaturanga he rapunga, aa, ko Taanemahuta

tonu e tuuwhera kuuaha ana, e hoki ana ia i taana mahi i te taha o Jackie Chan ki Shanghai, kua heke a Taanemahuta i nga rangi moo teenei poo, e tiaki, tautoko hoki ia i nga kaikanikani, ka whakahaapai i teenaa mea I teenaa i te taura o toona anoo tinana. Aa, ko teenaa te aahua o te poo; ka arongia oo raatou tinana e nga kaiwhakaatu hei mea koorero. Ko teenaa teetahi o nga tino whakatuwheratanga, puaawaitanga whakaaro me kii, e kitea nei e au i te nuku o te ao. I reira a Merenia puta noa hei mea whakamarino i te wai, aa, i ia kokona, ia kokona ko Jenny Stevenson, he hinengaro kanikani toona.

Each piece was an exploration with Tanemahuta Gray himself pulling out the stops, pulling back from working with Jackie Chan at the Shanghai Expo and down from aerial stuff for the night, mentoring, talking up things with his body. And that was the way of the night; all performers used their bodies to say something. It was the most open expression I've seen for a while, anywhere in the world. Merenia was there throughout, smoothing out the wrinkles and in every corner there was Jenny Stevenson, a mind of dance.



Okareka Dance Company- He Taonga

Ki tua o teenaa ko te hoatuhanga tohu. Moo te mahi e haangai, hookai raanei ki te kanikani Maaori o naaianei i te katoa o te oranga tangata eenei. I teenei waa i kitea ai eenei oranga. Ko Gaylene Sciascia raatou ko Tama Huata ko Stephen Bradshaw nga pou o te ao kanikani mai raanoo. Ka hoatungia eenei tohu e nga taangata rongonui peenaa i te Koromatua o Te Whaanganui a Tara me Gregory Fortuin mai i te Kaunihera o Whitireia, he kaitakawaenga aa iwi o mua. Ka whakauruhia eenei e Brendon Pongia, he mea hou rawa i nga waa katoa koia

tonu raa teetahi o te raarangi hirahira o nga taangata rongonui i mene ai.

And then it was on to the presentation of awards. These were for contributions over a lifetime to Maori contemporary dance. And here the lifetimes were shown. Gaylene Sciascia, Tama Huata, Stephen Bradshaw, figures of a lifetime in dance.

The awards were presented by the dignitaries; the Mayor of Wellington and Gregory Fortuin of the Whitireia Council and ex Race Relations Conciliator. All introduced by the indefatigably fresh Brendon Pongia, himself one of a formidable range of Maori dignitaries in attendance.

I te tau 1977 ki te marae o Rongomaraeroa i Poorangahau ka puta mai a Gaylene Sciascia i teetahi hui kanikani Maaori. I toona waa oranga kua tiimatahia e ia eetahi waa ako kanikani i nga waahi peenaa i a Whitireia, aa, i mahere kanikanitia a *Moko* e ia, a, ka haria teenaa ki Haina me te New Zealand Ballet Company, aa, ko taana inaaiane i kei te aarahi ia i teetahi roopu kanikani ki Croatia, Slovenia me Germany.

In 1977 at Rongomaraeroa marae at Porangahau Gaylene Sciascia was part of a hui for Maori dancers. In Gaylene Sciascia's lifetime of contribution dance courses have been started at places like Whitireia, a production called *Moko* was choreographed by her and then taken to China with the New Zealand Ballet Company and she is presently taking a dance group on a tour of Croatia, Slovenia and Germany.

Mai i te tau 1983 he rahi kee nga mea i hoatu i a Tama Huata ki te ao kanikani Maaori o teenei wa, aa, he hononga nui ki te ao kapa haka me nga kanikani Maaori o neheraa i toona nohanga hei kaihautu o Te Matatini, te ahurei nui rawa i Aotearoa nei. Ko teenaa te kaiwhakatiimata me te CEO o Kahurangi Maori Dance

Theatre. Kei teenei he kaikanikani ruatekaumarua, he mahi tuuturu taa raatou, aa, e toru nga roopu e taiawhiao naa. Kua hari a Tama i te kanikani Maori ki te ao whaanui tae rawa atu ki Amerika ki te tokerau.

From 1983 Tama Huata has contributed in many ways to Maori Contemporary dance and with his role as Chairman of Te Matatini, New Zealand's largest performing arts festival, there is an important connection to kapa haka and traditional Maori dance. He is the founder and CEO of Kahurangi Maori Dance Theatre. This has 24 full-time dancers in three troupes that tour internationally. He has taken Maori dance to the world especially to North America.

Ko te mea tuatoru ko Stephen Bradshaw, kua taahuritia ia i te ao o te kanikani Maori mai i te tau 1984. Ko toona haerenga he rerenga i nga waa ako kanikani i te tari whai mahi i 1984 ki te whakatuuranga o Taiao i 1988, ki te whakahaerehanga o teetahi hui taumata moo te kanikani Maaori i teenei waa i 2009. Ko teenei hui taumata te mea karanga mai i te maheretanga moo *Koowhiti Matariki Festival of Maori Contemporary Dance* i 2010.

The third contributor, Stephen Bradshaw has moved and shaken the world of contemporary Maori Dance since 1984. His journey has taken him from labour department employment schemes involving dance in 1984 to the formation of Taiao in 1988 to the convening of a summit on contemporary Maori Dance in 2009. This summit ushered in the planning process for *Koowhiti Matariki Festival of Māori Contemporary Dance* in 2010.

Ko nga tohu tonu, ka haramai eena hari koorero ana. Kua whakairongia a Charles Koroneho he kii, he mea tuuwhera hoki, aa, ko nga whakaaturanga o eenei he

wahanga o nga hoatuhanga tohu. Ko teenei teetahi anoo aahua kotiti o Koowhiti, teetahi anoo mahi whakangaahau, whakamoohio hoki ki te whakamau tonu rawa i nga whakaaro o te minenga. Ko te whakaaro whakairo o Toki Pitangata; lock and key ka utua teenaa e Creative New Zealand, ka haria te toi whakairo ki a Koowhiti i too Charles Konehono whakaaro moo nga kii kia whakatuwheratia nga whakairo i whakakamaaramatia I whakaatuuhia hoki i runga ahurewa. Ka meatia teenei i te paanui peenei;

The awards themselves came with interesting stories. Charles Koroneho had carved keys and locks and these were displayed as part of the presentations. This was yet another twist to *Koowhiti*, another way of entertaining and holding the attention right up there. The design concept of Toki Poutangata; lock and key was paid for by Creative New Zealand and brought sculpture to *Koowhiti* as Charles Koroneho's idea of keys to unlock the carvings were explored and shown on stage. This is all described in the handouts as;

Embodying the mana of the awards is the Toki; symbolically representing a body, a form of technical potential and precision, an expression of the highest commitment to knowledge, culture and artistic excellence. The Toki is therefore a material depiction of Maori Dance; the history, creative aspirations and cultural foundation that practitioners are collectively working to unlock. The concept of Poutangata is metaphorically represented by the Awards Recipient, an individual celebrated for their pursuit of excellence and unlocking the full potential of Maori Dance and Performance. Their contribution and lifelong commitment is literally cut from the body of the adze and transformed into a symbolic key, an anthropomorphic manifestation.

Kanikani. Waa oranga. Whakaaro whakairo. Kia whakatuu whakangahau a Jenny Stevenson raatou ko Merenia ko Taanemahuta Gray tirohia nga mea e taea me nga taangata e puta!

Dance. Lifetimes. Design Concepts. When Jenny Stevenson and Tanemahuta and Merenia Gray throw a party look at what happens as well as who turns up!

I mua i te titiro anoo ko wai i puta ai e tika ana pea kia whakaarongia ko wai kaaore i puta mai. He aahua rerekee te putahanga mai o ngaa mea mai i te ao paaho, ko au mai i a a Kia Ora FM, Papaioia, he kaiwhakaahua hoki mai i te Dominion Post. Kiihai au i kite i eetahi atu mai i teenaa teihana reo irirangi peenaa, me kii, i te New Zealand Listener, Te Pouwhakaata Maori, Pouwhakaatu Tahi, Rua, Toru raanei, a, he mea rerekee teenei kia whakaarongia ai te pai noa o te mahi e kitea, rongohia hoki me te aronga o teenei moo te motu whaanui.

Before looking again at who showed up it was interesting who was not there. There was an uneven media presence with myself from Kia Ora FM, Palmerston North and a photographer from the Dominion-Post. I did not see anyone else from any other radio stations including National Radio or from other media like, say, The New Zealand Listener or MaoriTelevision, TV One or Three and this is remarkable given the sheer quality of the visual and aural work and its national significance.

Ko Fortuin te tino kaikoorero o te poo naa te mea pea ka piri ia i te nako o te kaupapa moo te motu whaanui i Koowhiti. He tangata mai i a Awherika ki te Tonga paku moohio ki te koorero Maaori, ka mau ia i te hirahira o te waa moo te kanikani mai i teenaa kokona, teenaa., aa, ka koorero atu ia i teenaa. Pai rawa ia ki a maatou mai i a

Aotearoa tae noa ki nga mea rongonui e noho aahua wahanguu ana!

Fortuin was the most loquacious speaker of the night and this was, I think, because he grasped the nettle of national significance in Koowhiti. A Maori speaking South African, as well as grasping it he really articulated the shared pride in the dance from all quarters rather than knowing what we all mean as per the rest of the Kiwi Digs.

I a Gregory Fortuin e koorero ana ka hoki tooku mahara ki taa Bernard Levin moo Kiri Te Kanawa i te niupepa e kiia nei ko te Times of London, te tangata tautoko rawa e haapai ana i te whetu ki te tihi tiiahoaho ai. He mea pai pea kia tuhi peenaa ai a Gregory i te Dompost! Kia waihongia eenei mea poka noa ki te taha kaaore kau he paatai he whakaaturanga teenei e piirangitia mai i runga e nga mema paremata, te Koromatua me taana Aapiha Tautoko, he mea i piirangitia raa hei tihi moo Matariki, piirangitia hei waa whakakotahi i a taatou. Ka puta ki te taringa, ki te hinengaro hoki te koohumuhumu moo teetahi waa whakataa moo te motu i te waa o Matariki.

Gregory Fortuin talking about *Koowhiti* reminded me of Bernard Levin in the Times of London writing about Kiri Te Kanawa, the gusher helping to push the star to shining point. A pity Gregory does not have a column in the Dompost! These curiosities and speculations aside there is no question that it was a show wanted on high, wanted by the parliamentarians, the High Court Judges and the Mayor and her Deputy, wanted as a point in Matariki, wanted for a shared celebration. The murmur of a national holiday to celebrate Te Matariki came to ear and mind.

I te tino pai o te whakaaturanga me te kiikii hoki o te

hoooro e tika ana pea kia whakaputa ai ki te taha o teenei mea te paatai moo te itiiti o ngaa kaitautoko. Ka puta mai a Mobil Oil, a Benson and Hedges me eetahi poutautoko peenaa i a Covent Garden, a Norman Kirk me Tiaare, HRH, hei hoa tautoko i a Kiri Te Kanawa. He ao iti rawa te ao toi i teena waa ki teenei inahoki kaaore kau he ipurangi noo reira he ngaawari atu pea te mahi tautoko i teena waa.

Kei hea te tautoko mai i te ao kamupene me te Kawanatanga moo te whakaaturanga peenaa i a *Koowhiti*? Kaaore kau i te pai maa Jim Stevenson me ngaa taangata o Te Papa Tongarewa e karanga atu ki te ao whaanui, a, kia toro kamakama atu ai hoki a Jenny raatou ko Taanemahuta ko Merenia ki nga mea moohio i a raatou kia taea ai te mahi.

With a quality performance and a sold out attendance the question of publicity and promotion might be put alongside another question about the lack of a substantial sponsor. Kiri Te Kanawa had Mobil Oil, Benson and Hedges and a mix of Covent Garden, Norman Kirk and, of all people Prince Charles behind her. And the world of entertainment and art was a smaller place without the internet so these things were more easily patronized and sponsored. Where is the support from corporate and government for a show like *Koowhiti*? It is simply not enough to have Jim Stevenson and the events people from Te Papa rallying the troops in support with Jenny, Tanemahuta and Merenia and all networking furiously to make things happen.

Atu i te pai me te kaha o te whakaaturanga he paatai nui e puta moo te katoa o *Koowhiti* tae noa mai ki eena i hoko tikiti ai moo te haakari, aa, ka puta hoki maatakitaki noa ai. Ko teenei teetahi o nga paatai e haangai ana ki te reanga o te toi, he mea whakarunga, he mea whakararo raanei, he mea whakakaati pea peenaa i te kuuaha hinengaro pea. I teenei pito me kii, ko *Dancing with the*

stars, aa, i teenaa pito ko te mahi naa te New Zealand Ballet Co pea. Kei teenaa kokona ko Kapa Haka, kei teeraa kokona ko Koowhiti.

Aside from the quality and power of the performance the whole event including those who bought tickets to the dinner and showed up to watch poses some pretty big questions. There is something of a brow problem as in high or low brow, or something of a block problem as in a mental block with all of this. Dancing with the stars is at one end of a spectrum while the work of the New Zealand Ballet Company is at another. Kapa Haka is in one corner and works like *Koowhiti* are in another.

Ko teenei rerekeehanga, teenei whakakaatihanga, kaaore teenei e paa atu ki nga mea e kanikani tonu ana wheenaa i a Jenny, Taanemahuta, Merenia me aa raatou kaikanikani. Engari e haangai ana teenei ki nga mea e maatakitaki ana pea. Nga mea kaaore e maatakitaki ana raanei. Ki a au noa ko te aahua o teenei minenga, he rerekee ki teenaa e kitea nei i ngaa ahurei kapa haka. Ki a au tonu nei kaaore te raarangi o ngaa taangata wheenaa i too te *Koowhiti* e kitea i nga ahurei o te New Zealand Ballet Company.

This difference of brows, this blockage, does not seem to apply to the people deeply involved in dance such as Tanemahuta, Merenia or Jenny or any of their dancers, But it might apply to those watching. Or not watching. The kind of turnout of Digs, Maori and Pakeha Dignitaries, at *Koowhiti* is not seen, at least in my experience, at Kapa Haka festivals. Nor, again in my experience at least, is the range of people attending *Koowhiti* seen at New Zealand Ballet performances.

Ka noho tonu te paatai; he aha kee teenei? Kanikani Maaori mai i te ao hou? Kapa Haka? Ballet Maaori?

Burlesque Maaori? Ka taea nga mea katoa, aa, ka pikia nga tihi teitei, hei taura te pai o taa Cat Ruka. He rerekee anoo teenei i aa Taa Apirana Ngata i muri i te Pakanga Tuatahi i a ia e karanga atu ki te iwi kia uru ai raatou ki te mahi waiata aa ringa kia whakahaapaingia te mahi ahurei me te koorero me te waiata i te reo Maaori. Kaaore he rahi te tuhituhi moo teenei take, aa, ka hoki te tangata ki te pukapuka pai naa Jennifer Shennan, *The Maori Action Song* i whakataa ai i NZCER i te tau 1984.

There is, of course the question; what exactly is this? Modern Maori Dance? Kapa Haka? Maori Ballet? Maori Burlesque? Anything goes and to great effect as in the case of Cat Ruka. Koowhiti may not have been what Sir Apirana Ngata had in mind after the First World War when he encouraged people to join concert parties as part of an attempt to foster Maori performance that itself encouraged people to speak and sing Maori. Nor is it something greatly written about and one goes back to Jennifer Shennan's good book, *The Maori Action Song* published by the NZCER in 1984 for a steer on the subject.

E tika ana pea kia uia ai te paatai moo te aro o te kanikani ki te motu whaanui. E taea teoritenga o te aronga o te Ballet ki nga mea o Ruhia me te Haka ki nga mea o Aotearoa/ Niu Tiireni? E hia nga haka e kitea i nga Commonwealth Games? Mai i teenei tirohanga ko koowhiti he whakatuuwheratanga o oo taatou ngakau i a taatou, kia whakahokia ai taatou ki te waa o naiaatonurawaatuneinaa.

It seems worth exploring the idea that dance might mean something for the nation. Can we compare Ballet to Russians to haka to New Zealanders? How many haka are to be seen at the Commonwealth Games? Considered from this perspective, *Koowhiti* was a way of unlocking our myths, of bringing us to

the moment of ourselves.

I te taha o teenei ko nga paatai e taatai ki noo wai raanei nga aahuatanga o te haka. E uia pea noo wai te whare o te kanikani Maaori (Brown 2003, Goldsmith 2009).

Along with this come matters of ownership and appropriation regarding the haka. It could be asked who owns the house of Maori dance (cf Brown 2003, Flavell 2010, Goldsmith 2009).

Hei aha raa, ko *Koowhiti*, te taperehanga o te maarama i te kanikani, kei koonei maa taatou e kite, aa, he mea whakakuukune whakaaro. He mea hou maa taatou e moohio, wheenaa i te motu tonu, Aotearoa/Niu Tiireni.

But whatever *Koowhiti*, the play of light in dance, is, it is ours to see, it is here and it is exciting. There is innocence about it all for us to experience like the country Aotearoa/New Zealand itself.

Kia hoki ai taatou ki te mahi i kore i taea ai e te ao paaho moo teetahi mea peenei i puta i Te Papa Tongarewa, e ai ki te whakaaro he kaatihanga kee teenaa. He peenaa i teetahi mea huna a *Koowhiti*, teetahi mea maa nga mea moohio e whai engari kau ra he kaatihanga kee e puta i te hinengaro o eetahi peenaa i nga mea i te ao paaho me te ao tautoko hoki...

Coming back to the patchy media coverage of something held at the national museum a block for work like *Koowhiti* seems to exist in the media though. It is as though *Koowhiti* is a secret, something for a cognoscenti with blocks for others in the silliest of places; media and sponsorship...

Engari raa kia tirohia teenei mai i te whakaaro o te

motu he putahanga taangata pai i *Koowhiti*, he pikitia teenei e whakahoki ana i a taatou ki te paatai ko wai kee tatou. Ko ngaa mea peenaa i a Fortuin, i a Prendergast hoki, nga mea aarahi whakaaro moo te haapori whaanui, he mea ngaawari rawa a *Koowhiti* ki a raatou. Ka puea ake te paatai moo taatou o te motu; kua whakaatu mai a *Koowhiti* i teetahi mea maa taatou katoa e pai noa atu? He peeraa pea, ki te hoki anoo raa ki a ia, i a Kiri Te Kanawa i nga mea i kiia ai nga Mobil Song Quests i te tekau tau atu i 1960. Ko te whakaaro i haria atu ai e nga Fortuins, nga Prendergasts hoki ko *Koowhiti* he mea pai kia kaitahitia ai e taatou, hei mea tuu hirahira maa taatou. Ka whakaae au.

But looking at it from a national or even a nationalistic basis there was a significant and telling presence, a social and political representation of who we are at *Koowhiti*. People like Fortuin and Prendergast, people who eventually lead opinion are exceedingly comfortable with the work as presented at *Koowhiti*. The question of shared national experience of the arts arises; has *Koowhiti* offered us something that we can all share in an unabashed way? Like, to refer to her again, Kiri Te Kanawa at the Mobil Song Quests in the sixties. The idea taken by the Prendergasts and Fortuins was that *Koowhiti* was something that might be shared and valued by all of us. I agree.

Ko Cat Ruka, he mea maarama ki te minenga taana moo nga mea kaaore e piirangitia e ia i taana mahi porotete. Kia whakaarongia a *Koowhiti* hei mea kotahi e titiro whakamua, he tino titiro i a Merenia raatou ko Taanemahuta ko Jenny Stevenson.

And of course so was Cat Ruka in her dance theatre work which told the audience what she did not want in her piece of protest. *Koowhiti* as a whole could be seen as a look forward

with some coherence by Merenia and Tanemahuta Gray and Jenny Stevenson.

Ka whai a Koowhiti 2011 ki te Whare Waiata o Te Whaanganuiatara i a Koowhiti 2010 ki Te Papa Tongarewa, aa, he rawe anoo ngaa rawa kei roto. He huu nui e tika ana kia kiia ai inahoki kaaore a Cat Ruka me eetahi atu i hoki mai ai i te whakaaturanga tuatahi.



Nkosinathi's South African Cultural Dance Group on stage in Wellington, NZ, in 2011. ©Stephen A'Court

Koowhiti 2011 at the Wellington Opera House followed *Koowhiti 2010* at te Papa Tongarewa, the Museum of New Zealand and excellent again were the riches therein. Without Cat Ruka and others returning from the earlier event, there were big shoes to fill.

Engari kaaore a Koowhiti 2011 i maatau ai kia oorite anoo i te whakaaturanga o 2010, ka taea keetia teetahi mea rerekee anoo. Ka eke a Aawherika ki runga marae.

But *Koowhiti 2011* did not try to repeat the 2010 event, it achieved something quite different. Africa came to the marae.

I timata a *Koowhiti 2011* i teetahi koorero naa Chris Finlayson, te Minita Kaawanatanga moo ngaa mea toi, tikanga, taaonga tuku iho hoki. Ka whakatakoto ia i te hoohonu o te waa i a ia e poowhiri ana i te roopu mai i te Komihana Teitei o Aawherika ki te Tonga. Ka whakarunga anoo raa a Merenia Gray i te raangai o te poo i taana mihi aataahua ki ngaa manuhiri.

Koowhiti 2011 began with a speech from Chris Finlayson, the Government Minister for arts, culture and heritage. He set down the significance of the occasion as he welcomed a group from the South African High Commission. Merenia Gray took the significance of the evening to an even greater level as she welcomed guests with consummate dignity.

Engari ko te kanikani te mea nui i *Koowhiti 2011*. He aha nga mea tino pai rawa atu? Ka whakahou kau raa a Taanemahuta Gray, te rangatira o te mahi teitei, i te kanikani rewa rawa atu i te whenua. He mahi miharo taana.

But dance was the main thing at *Koowhiti 2011*. What were the things that stood out? Tanemahuta Gray, the master of aerial work made dancing in the air all very fresh. His work was exceptional.

Ko teetahi anoo mea i tuu atu ai ko ngaa kaakahu. Mai i te timatanga he aronga mai i te Raawhiti i ngaa pootae-kanohi, ngaa here waewae, te koru i nikotia ai i te too o ngaa tarau poto rawa, he aahua Javanese pea i eenei mea.

Another thing to stand out was the costumes. From the

beginning, there was an Eastern influence in the mask-hats, the anklets, the stylised koru on the buttocks of the close fitting red shorts, something Javanese about these things.

Ko teetahi anoo mea ko te kaakahu uma o Tuirina Wehi, he mea pango, he mea teitei i te manawa hoki teena. Ka tuu atu hoki ngaa kaakahu kaha o eetahi o nga kaikanikani waahine. Ka kanikani a Tru Paraha i nga huu teitei, toona makawe pango e iri iho ana.

Then there was the high black bodice of Tuirina Wehi and the strong costumes for some of the female Maori dancers. Tru Paraha danced in high heels, her long hair black hair hanging down. .

Atu i te tino pai o te mahi naa nga mea o te hau kaainga ko te mea i whakamau ai i te hinengaro ko te haringa mai o Aawherika, o te roopu e kiia nei ko *Nkosinathi's Cultural Group* ki te Whare Waiata ki Te Whaanganuiatara.

Beside the excellence of the locals it was the bringing of Africa, of Nkosinathi's Cultural Group, all the way to the Opera House in Wellington that caught the mind.

He tohu rangatira teenei naa Taanemahuta raatou ko Merenia ko Jenny Stevenson, ngaa kaiwhakahaere o te poo. He manuhiri nga mea o Aawherika ki te Tonga, aa, ka whakaoti te roopu nei i ngaa wahanga e rua. He nui te pakipaki mai i te minenga moo raatou. I hoatungia ki a raatou te waahi mana moo te whakangaahau, aa, ka hopu raatou i teenei kia whakahoki rawatia ai he koha kanikani hirahira rawa atu.

This was a masterstroke by Tane and Merenia Gray and Jenny Stevenson, the organisers of the evening. The South

African dancers were manuhiri and both halves of the show finished with them to great applause from the audience. They were given performance pride of place and they took this with both hands and gave back a dance contribution of some magnitude.

He aronga mai i te Moana nui a Kiwa i eetahi waahi peenaa i te *Pehea Kou Piko? How is your spirit?*, he aahua Hawaii i teenei. Ko te kanikani i aarahia ai e Taanemahuta me Merenia, ka rapu, ka toro hoki teenaa ki eetahi wao hou. Peenaa raa te mahi naa ngaa kaikanikani i *Nkosinathi's Cultural Group*. He nekenga koi, he nekenga tinihanga hoki i taa raatou kanikani. He tino koa Ngai Kiwi i te *Gumboot Dance* i te patu waewae, te tuu waewae hoki i te whakaotinga o te wahanga tuatahi.

There was a Pacific influence in places with *Pehea Kou Piko? How is your spirit?* a piece with Hawaiian aspects. The dancing led by Tanemahuta and Merenia explored and went into new places. So did the dancers from Nkosinathi's Cultural Group. There were some sharp moves and some clever ones in their dance. The *Gumboot Dance* at the end of the first half impressed the Kiwi locals no end with its slapping and stomping of feet.

He mea hou pea ki eetahi i te minenga te pao me te nuku o te kanikani mai i a Aawherika.

The beat and the movement of dance out of Africa might have been new to some in the audience.

Ka eke a Aawherika ki runga marae, aa, ka whakatuu puehu.

Africa came to the marae and kicked up some dust.

Kei waaenganui tonu o teenei he aahua whakakoikoi

hinengaro. Ka puta mai a Future Fame hei mea uu kee, kaha hoki i taana mahi *Quantide*. Naa raaua tahi ko Mase Boog te whakaaturanga nei. He mea karanga ki te ngaakau teenei. Kei roo tonu i aa raaua mahi he whakaaro pea moo Mihaere Jackson me Abbot raaua ko Costello me eetahi nekenga kanikani mai i nga pikitia wahanguu, mai i te hiikoikoi ki runga atamira me te *vaudeville* hoki.

Amongst all this there were some interesting features. Future Fame came through firm and strong in his *Quantide* series performed with Mase Boog. So evocative. Michael Jackson, Abbot and Costello and lots of routines from silent movies, shuffles and *vaudeville* came through their work.

He mea whakatoro hinengaro a *Hine-Hine-Collective*, aa, ka whakaatu raatou i te tipuranga hou e uru mai nei ki te kanikani o Aotearoa; te kaha hoki o ngaa waahine Maaori e whakatakoto ana i aa raatou anoo wero me oo raatou anoo whakaaro i te kanikani. Ka hoatu raatou i teetahi rapunga i te whakaaro o te kaikoohuru wahine.

Hine-Hine-Collective extended the mind and showed the new growth coming through in Aotearoa dance; the power of Maaori women stating their challenges and reflections in dance. They gave an exploration of the idea of the female assassin.

He whakapae i ngaa tauira o mua i te mahi naa Cat Ruka ki *Koowhiti 2010*, Tru Paraha raanei ki *Koowhiti 2011*, aa, he rapunga o te ngaakau aa raaua mahi.

There is a challenging of older forms in the work of Cat Ruka in *Koowhiti 2010* or Tru Paraha in *Koowhiti 2011* and their work is an exploration of the seat of mind.

He tirohanga whaanui rawa atu i teenei. Ko te kapu

whutupooro o te ao teetahi o nga ira i teenei waa kanikani. Ka kitea teenei i teetahi o nga kanikani Aawherika engari kaaore kau he rahi moo te whutupooro i eetahi atu whakaaaturanga.

There was a wider perspective to all of this. Part of the idea was a dance event during the Rugby World Cup. This did feature in some of the African dance but there was not a lot about rugby in other performances.

Ko te aahua, i noho ngaawari ai te roopu mai i te Komihana Teitei o Awherika ki te Tonga. He waa koa teenei ki a raatou i a raatou e pakipaki ana, pai ana hoki i nga mea kanikani. Ka tautoko a Celia Wade Brown, te Koromatua o te Whaaanganuiatara, i a raatou i aana katakata, haamama hoki.

The group from the South African High Commission seemed to feel at home. They had a fine time applauding and approving the dance events. Her Worship the Mayor of Wellington, Celia Wade Brown, laughed and cheered with them.

I whakatepea te poo i te hoatu o ngaa taaonga ki ngaa taangata peenaa i a Louise Bryant noo Ngai Tahu naana i timata ai i te wahanga tuarua i *Tumutumu*, peenaa hoki i a Taiaroa Royal i tuutaki pai ai ki te taaonga oranga roa. Ka whakahoki a Celia Wade Brown i ngaa ahuatanga o te poo ki te kaupapa i a ia e koorero ana moo te pai o te kanikani ki a ia i toona anoo waa pakeke ake.

The evening was wrapped up with the presentation of awards. to Louise Potiki Bryant of Ngai Tahu who started the second half with *Tumutumu* and a lifetime award to Taiaroa Royal. Celia Wade Brown took things back to ground level as she related the importance of dance to her while growing up.

He raahi kee nga mea i taea ai ki *Koowhiti 2011* i teetahi waa poto. Ko *Nkosinathi's Cultural Group*, naa raatou te *Pedi Dance* me te *Umzanzi* tae hoki raa ki taa raatou whakaotinga o te whakaaaturanga i te *Pantsula Dance*. Ki waaenganui tonu nga whakaaaturanga peenaa i te mea aataahua, *Rongo ma Tane* naa te *Merenia Gray Dance Theatre*. Ka kanikani a *Ivica Novakovic* o te *Stuttgart Ballet* i teenei whakaturanga. Ko ngaa kaupapa e whaingia nei i koonei, ka tata eenei pea ki eetahi i ngaa tuinga naa *Merata Kawharu* moo te waahi o te marae (*Kawharu 2010*).

So much happened in such a short time at *Koowhiti 2011*. *Nkosinathi's Cultural Group* performed *Pedi Dance* and *Umzanzi* as well as finishing the show with *Pantsula Dance*. In between were such performances as the exquisite *Rongo ma Tane* by the *Merenia Gray Dance Theatre*. *Ivica Novakovic* of the *Stuttgart Ballet* danced in this production. The themes followed here approached some of those written about by *Merata Kawharu* to do with the marae locale (*Kawharu 2010*).

He raahi kee nga mea hirahira i *Koowhiti 2011*, aa, ka kitea teenaa i eetahi aahua rerekee peenaa i te mihi aataahua naa *Merenia Gray*. He whakaotinga aataahua i te poo i te waiata naa *Mere Boynton*. Aapiti i teenaa ko te kauwhata rawe o te poo katoa; i nga waa katoa he mea whakakoi kiri i teenaa whakaaaturanga, teenaa raanei e whai ake.

There was a lot of class in *Koowhiti 2011* seen in different ways as in the elegance of *Merenia Gray* in her opening speech. *Toni Huata* finished the evening in marvellous form with a song by *Mere Boynton*. The fine way in which the evening was structured added to things; there was always an excitement about the next event.

He aha te koohaa i hoomai ai i a *Koowhiti* moo ngaa waa e tuu mai? E tika ana pea kia waanangahia ai te kaupapa me te aro o te mahi? Ka waiho a *Koowhiti 2010*, peenaa i a *Koowhiti 2011*, i eetahi whakautu pai me eetahi paatai pai hoki.

So what does *Koowhiti* offer for the future? What is the basis and direction of the work? *Koowhiti 2010*, like *Koowhiti 2011* leaves some good answers and some good questions.

Atu i ngaa whakaaro peenaa he poo teenei moo te kanikani. Ka taea te kanikani i runga anoo i te whakaaro aataahua. Mai i a Aawherika ka hoomai a Nkosinathi Chamo i teetahi ira mana hei aapitihanga rawe ki eetahi atu whakaaturanga i *Kowhiti 2011*.

Aside from such thoughts this was a night of dance. Dance happened with lots of grace. And then, Out of Africa Nkosinathi Chamo gave us a sense or power, prestige and dignity that added to the other performances in *Koowhiti 2011*.



Koowhiti ©Stephen A'Court Photography, ANZIPP

Bibliography

- Best, Elsdon *The astronomical knowledge of the Maori*, Wellington: Government Printer, 1986
- Bion, W R 1955, Group dynamics- a review, In S Scheidlinger (Ed) *Psychoanalytic Group Dynamics- Basic Readings*, New York: IUP
- Bion, W. R. 1961 *Experiences in Groups and other papers*, Routledge, London.
- Boal, Augusto 1995 *The Rainbow of Desire*, Routledge, London
- Brown, Michael F. 2003 *Who Owns Native Culture?* Cambridge: Harvard University Press,
- Cleave, P 2009a *Starting Points*, Campus Press
- Cleave, P 2009b *Te Pu Tapere*, the impulse to perform, Campus Press
- Cummins J 1996 *Negotiating Identities; education for empowerment in a diverse society*, Ontario: Canadian Association for Bilingual Education
- Flavell, Te Ururoa, Speech to Tapu Te Ranga marae, 2010
- Goldsmith, M. 2009 Who owns native nature? Discourses of rights to land, culture, and knowledge in New Zealand, *International Journal of Cultural Property*, 16, 325-339.
- Holmes, Paul 1992 *The inner world outside; Object Relations, Theory and Psychodrama*, Tavistock/Routledge London and New York
- Ka'ai. Tania, 2008, *The Role of Marae in Tertiary Education Institutions* Vol 1 tekaharoa.com
- Ka'ai Mahuta, Rachel Te Awhina, 2009 *The Impact of Language Loss on the Maori Performing Arts*
http://web.mac.com/tekaharoa/Site/Home_2_files/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20Journal_1_8.pdf
- Keiha, Pare and Moon, Paul 2008 *The Emergence and Evolution of Urban Māori Authorities: A Response to Māori Urbanisation*, tekaharoa.com Vol 1, No 1 pp1-17
- McDonald, Laurence 1995 Film as a Battleground: Social space, gender conflict and other issues in *Once Were Warriors*. In *Illusions 24 Spring: 15-23*
- Metge, J 2004 *A New Maori Migration: Urban and Rural Relations in Northern New Zealand*, Berg
- MEREDITH
 PAULHTTP://WWW.TEARA.GOV.TZ/EN/MATARIKI-MAORI-NEW-YEAR/1
<http://www.korero.maori.nz/news/matariki>
- Moon, P 2008 *A chequered Renaissance: The Evolution of Maori Society*, www.tekaharoa.com Vol 2 Pp 23-41
- Moreno, J L 1947 *The Future of Man's World*, New York Beacon House, Psychodrama Monographs
- Neocosmos, Michael, 2006 *From Foreign Natives to Native Foreigners: explaining xenophobia in contemporary South Africa*, Dakar: Codesria
- O'Regan H 2008 *Toituu te iwi: A Journey in the Evolution of Cultural Identity*, www.tekaharoa.com Vol 2 pp 77-88

- Salmond, Anne 1975 *Hui*, Reed, Auckland
- Shennan, Jennifer, 1984, *The Maori Action Song*, New Zealand Council for Educational Research
- Smith, Cheryl Te Waerea, 1993 The natives are restless, in Murphy, T(ed).

JENNY STEVENSON

Part Three: Aerial Dance in a Cultural Context

**Tanemahuta Gray: Director, Choreographer, Aerialist
Kōwhiti Productions and Te Ao Marama Tapui.**

*o te whenua,
o te rangi,
o waenganui*

*upon the land,
in the spiritual world,
and in between.*

***Wairua o te Puna
Hori Tait, 2002***

http://folksong.org.nz/wairua_o_te_puna/index.html

Tanemahuta Gray is currently a Director, Producer and Curator of Kōwhiti Productions, as well as a leading dancer, choreographer and aerialist, working with his own production company Te Ao Marama Tapui. In creating his own work, he has gone boldly where no other Māori contemporary dance choreographer has previously ventured - into the ether - the in-between world, where he fashions and presents his extraordinary, culturally-inspired aerial dance works.

The visual impact that occurs through inhabiting this liminal space within a theatrical presentation cannot be underestimated. In the case of Tanemahuta's work, the supernatural elements of Māori mythology can be depicted

with startling authenticity – whether as amorphous, floating beings or as twirling, spread-eagled shapes, suspended upside-down, by one leg. The draining of life-forces by the inhabitants of the underworld, can be symbolically illustrated through a slow and tortuous rising from the depths of dark places into the brightness of light; hovering in the atmospheric heights in a dream-like temporal place.



***Māui* – Photo: Stephen A’Court**

Tanemahuta has been using the aerial dance form for over ten years and it was an important element in the 2005, 2006 and 2007 performances of ***Māui: One Man Against the Gods***, his epic theatrical show depicting the foibles, follies and derring-do of an irascible super-hero. Aerial dance was still in its infancy in Aotearoa at that time and Tanemahuta was one of the first to realise its potential. At the time, seeing the adventures of Māui enacted in this manner, was a revelation

and for many New Zealanders, their first glimpse of aerial work in an arena outside of the circus's Big Top.

Critic John Smythe reviewing *Māui* in *Theatreview* wrote:

For me, apart from the rich story content, abiding memories include the white sprites flying and whirling through the air within the auditorium, eerie aerial spectres catching light in the blackness beyond the stage...

(<http://www.theatreview.org.nz/reviews/review.php?id=719>)

There is a significant difference between traditional circus skills such as the flying trapeze and the performance of aerial dance, but the demarcation has lessened in recent years as modern circus, such as Cirque du Soleil has emerged. Prodigious aerial feats have become a recognised theatrical tool with the ability to ignite jaded imaginations and to progress theatre into the realms of fantasy, much-beloved by electronic-gaming users.

In terms of Māori dance the impact is compounded by juxtaposing such lightness of being against the earth-bound kapa-haka form. For Tanemahuta however, aerial dance is also a means to enhance the narrative element of theatre:

Our cultural stories tend to be so dynamic and three dimensional, that aerial is the obvious progression that our works can take to aid the storytelling in those stories. It allows the mythic and epic to come to life in a grandiose and spectacular way. It is exciting, and challenging to achieve, and allows one to go deeper into the stories and their visual depiction and symbolism within them.

It also allows barriers to be broken down and re-evaluated into a new cultural context. It feels like it is a similar path to that of our tohunga of old who went around breaking the tapu off certain areas, so the land and resources could be reclaimed and used by the next generations. I believe the cultural dance form needs to continue to develop and innovate in its journey towards rich self-expression and to help us understand

ourselves from our past to our present and onto our future.

(Tanemahuta Gray: 13/06/12)

Learning to dance in the air rather than on the ground is however, a challenge in itself. In their seminal book, *Aerial Dance* (2008 Human Kinetics) Jayne Bernasconi and Nancy Smith identify the movement vocabularies of aerial dance:

And, just as in all dance forms, the dance itself is not the discrete movements but the flow of the movements – in fact the transitions.....It's one thing to know vocabulary and how to execute a series of moves or skills in aerial vocabulary; it's another entirely different thing to integrate the vocabulary into a seamless blend of transitions to form a work of art.

(Bernasconi & Smith 2008:6)

Bernasconi and Smith pinpoint this feature as being the defining point of difference between aerial dance and aerial circus arts; the latter often being more a series of tricks or stunts that incrementally elevates the audience's levels of excitement until the final most-difficult feat is executed.



Māui – Ngā hau e whā – One of the Four Winds

Photographer: Diederik van Heyningen, Lightworkx Photography

Aerial dance can perhaps be broadly defined as imagery-in-motion; a form that expands the parameters of dance into a spatial zone where anything is possible and where the shapes or images created are not limited to the capabilities of the individual dancer. The air of the performance space becomes the canvas, the dancer the brush with which to create the forms or illusionary effects.

Tanemahuta gained his own aerial experience while working for the Argentine dance company, De La Guarda, one of the world's leading aerial theatre companies. In 1999, selected as one of only fourteen performers from among the 1,800 who auditioned for the London season, Tanemahuta went on to perform with De La Guarda for a further five years, in Las Vegas, Buenos Aires, Amsterdam, Berlin, Seoul and Sydney.

The show was an interactive performance with the audience standing in a room, looking up at the performers in the air. It was described by American reviewer Jon Pareles in his 1998 review in the *New York Times* as a “whiz-bang universe”, with a cast that was “indefatigable “under the headline: “Happiness is to Fly and Swing and Slam”.

To dance at this level, aerial performers must be very strong, physically and be able to work with a variety of aerial rigging and apparatus. The rigging holds the apparatus, which in turn holds the dancer. The rigging must be especially designed to accommodate the specifications of the performance space and it is a given that the technical aspect of aerial dance is of equal importance to the artistic.

In his own work, Tanemahuta usually works with a dancer in a harness that is attached by rope (looped through a pulley), to a climber who literally climbs up and down a ladder or truss structure, counterbalancing the dancer's weight, to allow them to move up or down and through the air. He describes the type of equipment that is used:

The ropes we use are dynamic (slightly stretchy) or static mountaineering ropes, that have different properties depending on the aerial display. If you are jumping off a wall or tower into the air, you want to use a dynamic rope, but for straight counter-balancing it is a static rope. The other key equipment is a petzl am'd swivel, which is on the end of the rope, and allows the performer to rotate 360 degrees without twisting the rope. Each new aerial idea requires a technical design

element to achieve the desired outcome. De La Guarda are exceptional at re-inventing how to fly in unique and imaginative ways, and build the technical equipment and harnesses to achieve these feats.

(Tanemahuta Gray: 13/06/12)



Māui - Fire Princess in Mahuika's lair

Photographer: Diederik van Heyningen, Lightworkx Photography

Tanemahuta describes the elements of the aerial dance form and how a dancer needs to accommodate them to work

successfully:

A combination of timing, co-ordination, strength, flexibility and communication are all vital elements to successful aerials. Timing is key for safety, and making sure you hit the aerial movement at the right moment, working with the swing and give in the rope. Co-ordination is very important, as some of the things one will do, require re-training the body to be able to do them. (Like running with your body lying horizontally against a wall). Strength is vital in the back and abdominal core, to be able to move in the harness effectively. Flexibility, to allow the legs to express the movement in the air, as much as the arms and body, whilst also being able to condense oneself into a little ball for spinning. Then there is communication between aerialist, climber and crew (not always verbal), as one needs to know how the rope dynamics and angles work, to get the best movement in the air, and to also know when there is the right tension to launch off from. Most of it is visual and physical communication. It is like a pas-de-deux in the air between climber and aerialist. (Watching from side stage can be just an entrancing, to see the physical dynamics working).

(Tanemahuta Gray: 13/06/12)

Creating the choreography for aerial dance must take all these elements into consideration. Dancers can work with performers who are ground-based, on stage, or they can work in pairs in the air, but when they are alone in the air it is much more difficult as Tanemahuta describes:

The tricky thing with aerials, is that once you are in the air, and do not have a physical object (or another dancer) involved in the movement to work off, you are simply stuck in the air unable to do much. Therefore we use towers to fly off, performers to work off, and control ropes for crew to be able to manipulate the aerialist in the air with.

(Tanemahuta Gray: 13/06/12)

Centring the aerial dance form within a cultural context has been however, the most innovative aspect of Tanemahuta's practice. The extraordinary potential of using this form in Māori contemporary dance can be glimpsed in one of his most recent works Taniwha, described by Tanemahuta below :

I also worked in Taniwha at the Auckland Museum last year, which had lots of aerial moments (working with EARTH from Australia who also worked on the Australian Olympic Games Opening Ceremony). That was a great experience to get my creative aerial skills working with the EARTH climber and directors to enhance the story of Tāwhaki collecting the 3 baskets of knowledge.

(Tanemahuta Gray: 13/06/12)



Taniwha – Photo: Jenny Stevenson

In addition, last year, Tanemahuta worked with his sister and fellow-Kōwhiti Director, Merenia Gray on choreographing her new duet for Kōwhiti Dance 2011 at the Wellington Opera House as part of the Real New Zealand Festival Rugby World Cup season. Entitled Rongo-Mā-Tāne, the work is concerned with the deity Rongo-Mā-Tāne and “his crossing divide between providing crops and peace for humanity, and fighting the forces that will destroy that harmony providing role” (Tanemahuta Gray: 13/06/12). It is part of a much larger piece called Black Light. In this work Tanemahuta himself performed the aerials in a duet with another ground-based dancer; the two creating extraordinary inverted mirror images of each other, like a reflection in water.

Tanemahuta’s next aerial-dance project is a collaboration with musician Tiki Taane entitled Tiki Taane Mahuta which he hopes to present in an arena setting:

For Tiki Taane Mahuta, it is the story and development of the 7 characters in the production which will determine who uses aerial displays to enhance the story-telling and what work will be floor-based. Thus far, I have created one aerial number being an upside down aerial tango to “Always on My Mind”. The story is of a wife who has lost her husband, and lives with his physical memory (and he of her), from their different spheres. The aerial allows one to personify the holding of one’s memory and scent of one’s beloved, but the memory will always slip out of your hands. The reality of life and the pain of loss attempts to be conveyed in the work that provides a twist in the original interpretation of the song.

(Tanemahuta Gray 13/06/12)

Nominated for the arts category of the 2011 Wellingtonian of the Year Awards, Tanemahuta has created a strong presence for Māori dance in the capital, as well as in other parts of the country and overseas. In 2011 and earlier this year he has worked on events such as WOW: World of

Wearable Art Awards, Arohanui - The Greatest Love, (a haka-theatre production produced by Te Matatini), Taniwha Lóng for the Chinese New Year Festival and the Oceania representative work at the World Expo Opening Ceremony in Shanghai (to his largest worldwide audience in 2010). In addition he presented Kōwhiri Dance 2011 and aerial and contemporary kapa haka excerpts in Auckland venues “The Cloud” and the waterfront Main Stage for the Rugby World Cup Real New Zealand Festival.

Tanemahuta and his co-directors have great plans for the future of Māui: One Man Against the Gods and the Kōwhiri Festival. There is little doubt that he will remain at the forefront of Māori contemporary dance for many years to come. His innovative work as an aerialist has set him apart and will ensure the evolution of Maori dance in ways that the tīpūna had never dreamt of.

Tuhia ki te rangi!

Jenny Stevenson, 2012



Tanemahuta Gray – Photo: WCC

Bibliography

- Wairua o te Puna**, Hori Tait, 2002;
(http://folksong.org.nz/wairua_o_te_puna/index.html)
- Aerial Dance**, Jayne C. Bernasconi and Nancy E. Smith (2008)
Human Kinetics.
- Answers to Questions**, Tanemahuta Gray, (13/06/12)

MEREANA GRAY

Part Four: Dance Biography

Merena Gray lives with her husband Mark O'Brien and their three children in Wellington. She graduated from the New Zealand School of Dance in 1990 with a diploma in teaching and contemporary dance performance. Merena is an Associate of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dance and holds an Advanced Royal Academy of Dance certificate. Merena has taught both abroad and in New Zealand (at the New Zealand School of Dance, Toi Whakaari- New Zealand Drama School, the Wellington Performing Arts Centre and at Whitireia, Dansens Hus in Copenhagen and Studio Harmony in Paris). She is the founding director of *Raising The Barre – Freelance dance classes for Wellington Professionals* at the Royal New Zealand Ballet studios.



Merena Gray

Merena came out of Wellington Girls College in 1986 bound for a Rotary exchange in Toronto, Canada. Her interests at that stage included English, French, Classical Studies, Drama and History. Her subsequent qualifications include Year One in the Bachelor of Arts in Film and Theatre in 1999. She has studied Past Masters, Maori, and New Zealand Pacific Literature. Her teaching and leadership expertise was sharpened with a course and graduation from the New Zealand School of Dance. Merena's leadership and directorial talent were shown at an early stage in her career in 1997 when she was the Assistant Director of the Footnote Dance Company. Her academic development continued and in 1990 Merena wrote a thesis on *The spirituality of Maori Contemporary Dance*.

Merena started Merena Gray Dance Company (MGDT) in 1994.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KKRD4PpM_tI&feature=plcp

This company is a developing dance theatre that is informed by kapa haka, contemporary dance and classical ballet. Merena herself takes on several roles in the company including those of choreographer, performer and teacher.

And then there is Merena's experience. In 2011 she gained a Creative New Zealand Te Waka Toi Grant to choreograph *Rongomatane*. Also in 2011 she gained a Creative New Zealand Te Waka Toi grant to curate *Koowhiti*. In 2011 Merena also got a Real New Zealand Festival grant to produce *Koowhiti Dance*.

As well as these things, in the same year, 2011, Merena gained a Wellington City Council grant to administer *Raising The Barre*. Before that in 2010 she got a Creative New Zealand Grant to produce *Koowhiti Matariki Festival of Maori Contemporary Dance*. In 2003 Merena gained a Creative New Zealand Grant to produce *Te Mana* having gained in 2002 a Toi Maori Aotearoa Commission to create *Te Mana* and a

Creative New Zealand Grant to create *Wild Civility*. In that year Merenia was the Inaugural recipient of the Tup Lang choreographic Scholarship.

In 2001 Merenia was a Committee member for Te Ope O Rehua, Toi Maori and in 2000 she won a Dorothy Daniels Memorial Award to assist in creating *Wild Civility* and a Te Waka Toi Creative New Zealand Grant to choreograph *Pounamu*. In 1999 she received an Arts Board Creative New Zealand Grant to workshop *Wild Civility* and in 1998 she gained the award for Best New Work for *Alchemy*, in the Wellington Fringe Festival.

In 1995 she won the Creative New Zealand Study Grant, to study in Paris at the Choreographic Theatre with Enrique Pardot. In 1994 Merenia attended The Australian – New Zealand Choreographers Forum in Melbourne, Australia and was a facilitator with Jean Claude Gallotta in Grenoble, France. In 1994 she won a Creative New Zealand Choreographic Grant to create *Interiors versus Exteriors* (I.V.E.). In 1992 Merenia won a United States Information Service Scholarship to attend the International Choreographers Workshop at the American Dance Festival, Duke University, North Carolina.

In 1992 she won the Creative New Zealand Grant to create *Hono Tai- Where the two seas meet*. As an indication of her organisational and leadership abilities in 1999 Merenia was the Student representative to the board, New Zealand School of dance.

The Merenia Gray Dance Company has been described as 'a freelance contemporary dance company that focuses on creating innovative multicultural Dance Theatre.' As the artistic director Merenia likes to work with people who have been 'classically trained with a secure contemporary technique and who have strong affiliations to Maori culture'.



Rongo - Ma - Tane (MGDT) Kowhiti 2011 Wendy Smith
Performers Tanhemahuta Gray and Ivica Novakovic

The kaupapa or philosophy followed by Merenia is that one of the principal elements that influences her dance theatre is tikanga Maori. Merenia traces to Ngai Tahu, Waikato and Rangitane and is inspired by the dance potential of kapa haka (traditional Maori performing arts). From her early work as a choreographer, such as *Ko au- the self* (1992), Merenia has regularly incorporated Maori influences in her choreography and explored themes relevant to her bi-cultural heritage. Merenia's aim has been to develop dance theatre that is informed by kapa haka, contemporary dance and classical ballet.

The combination of Maori and other dance forms is not always straightforward. For example Mark Hamilton in a recent thesis says of this combination;

'New Zealand's biculturalism is most frequently expressed through a binary juxtaposition of ancient Māori and modern Pākehā culture.' Hamilton 2010: 15

Merena Gray has historically been involved in a combination of traditional Maori dance forms and global forms of dance. As mentioned above this bicultural aspect of Merena's dance work started as early as 1992 with *Hono Tai – Where the two seas meet*. Merena has helped to steer *Koowhiti* into a central position with regard to a range of bicultural possibilities, wider perhaps than those intimated by Hamilton.

Merena believes, "Maori culture has the potential to play a profound role in dance theatre because of its spiritual energy. Dance is a form of performance art that goes beyond words and pictures to communicate with its audience via the poetry of movement. Dance reaches people through its ability to speak to the human condition by evoking an emotional and spiritual response. The Maori essence of wairua shares these characteristics and so lends itself well to being an integral element of dance performance."

Merena Gray and her company have been around since 1994, a time when Maori contemporary dance was finding its way. They have been part of and to some extent represent a 'new wave' of dance in Aotearoa/New Zealand that started in the early 1990s and has continued to the present day.

Merena's performance work includes *Roimata* a solo work at Connect Dance festival launch at Soundings Theatre, Wellington and which will be performed at Tempo 2012 in *Tuakana*.



Rōngo –Mā – Tāne MGD T Kowhiti 2011 Opera House
 Stephen A'Court Photographer
 Tanemahuta gray and Ivica Novakovic

Black Rain - Merenia Gray Dance Theatre - Kowhiti 2010
 Stephen A'Court

In 2010 *Black Rain* was performed at *Koowhiti*, Soundings Theatre, Wellington.

Going back through Merenia Gray's career, in 2008 She performed in *Settlement* with Hans Van den Broeck from Brussels. In 2007 *Laudate Dominium* was a solo work she choreographed and performed at The Right Royal Gala, The Opera House, Wellington. In 2003 there was *Te Mana* at Soundings Theatre, Wellington. In 2002 *C.O.R.E* was produced and performed as a duet with Cellist Janet Holborrow, at Bats Theatre, Wellington.



Black Light Stephen A'Court

Merena intends to develop *Black Light* into a 40 minute work, through undertaking a six week workshop from mid May 2013, with eight key dancers. The experience and capacities of these dancers shows the depth of the Merena Gray Dance Company going forward. Her ideal cast she has lined up to work with are:

Taane Mete of Ngati Kahungungu and Ngati Koroki. Taane graduated with honours from the New Zealand School of Dance in 1988 and is considered one of this country's most outstanding and versatile dancers. His 22 years of experience has seen him perform with companies such as Footnote, Douglas Wright, Taiao Dance Company, Fusion Dance Theatre, Michael Parmenter's (Commotion Company), The Royal New Zealand Ballet, Human Garden Dance Company and Atamira Dance Collective. Taane was also a founding member and a senior dancer for Black Grace Dance Company. In 2007 Taane joined forces with Taiaroa Royal and together they formed Okareka Dance Company Ltd.



Taane Mete

Another member of the workshop is Natalie Hona. Natalie is of Maori and Dutch descent and she spent her childhood in Auckland enjoying a range of dance styles including jazz, tap and ballet. At the age of 17 she moved to Wellington to study full time at the New Zealand School of Dance and completed the National Diploma in Contemporary Dance and Performance. Natalie has since danced with Black Grace Dance Company performing with them in their New York, Mexico and Hawaiian tour, as well as with the Grass Roots New Zealand tour. She now dances with Java Dance Company in Wellington which most recently performed *Back of the Bus* at the Otago Arts Festival in Dunedin.



Natalie Hona

Jack Gray will bring extensive experience to the *Black Light* workshop. Of Ngati Porou, Ngati Kahungunu, Ngapuhi and Te Rarawa descent Jack was the founder of Atamira Dance Collective in 2000 and has held various roles including director, choreographer, dancer and Trustee member. He toured their works to Hawaii (2008), New Caledonia (2008) and Australia (2009). Jack has travelled widely throughout the

world, having had scholarships to Austria (2001), France (2002) and placements teaching, choreographing and performing throughout Europe. His focus on developing his art form has been furthered through participation in the Asia Pacific Young Choreographers Project in Taiwan (2005) and the Indigenous Choreographic Lab in Western Australia (2010). Jack has danced mainly for projects that involve Maori kaupapa such as *Wild Civility* with the Merenia Gray Dance Theatre in 2001, *Maui (One Man against the Gods)* 2006-7, *Te Karohirohi (Orotokare)* 2007-11 and *Flintlock Musket* 2009. Jack has made and toured his own works throughout New Zealand and has recently completed a development workshop with Atamira Dance Company based on research to do with his whakapapa back to Mitimiti through his maternal lineage. As well as dance, Jack also teaches dance at all levels and is a freelance writer for Theatreview and DanzNet and has written for Dance Europe magazine (2001-3).



Jack Gray

Bringing another set of influences to the workshop is Brisbane born Anita Hunziker. Anita trained at the New Zealand School of Dance majoring in Contemporary Dance and joined Footnote Dance in 2005 when she toured nationally and internationally and worked with some of New Zealand's leading choreographers. As well as Merenia Gray these included Malia Johnston, Michael Parmenter, Claire O'Neil, Sarah Foster and Jeremy Nelson. Two highlights were performing *Mtyland* by Claire O'Neil at the 2010 New Zealand International Arts Festival and representing New Zealand at the 2010 Shanghai World Expo where she performed *Purlieu* by Malia Johnston. Anita won Best Female Performer at the 2010 Tempo Dance Awards and received the title of Pocket Rocket in The Listener Art Awards. More recently Anita was involved in the 2011 Auckland Arts Festival, performing in the award-winning dance theatre work, *The Show Must Go On*, by French choreographer Jerome Bel.



Anita Hunziker

Contributing yet another set of influences is Bianca Hyslop. Bianca is a member of the Atamira Dance Company

and has danced in the 2010 development workshop, *Hou*, The Matariki short work tour, *Whetu* featuring choreographers such as Stephen Bradshaw, Charles Koroneho and Jack Gray. She also toured with Atamira in Louise Potiki Bryant's work *Taonga*. This year, Bianca has just completed Charles Royal's project, *Te Whare Tapere*, dancing in Orotakare and was most recently a part of Atamira's 2011 *Hou* workshop.



Bianca Hyslop

Merena Gray attracts a diversity of high quality talent and this is exemplified in Rebecca Sutherland. Rebecca trained at the Wellington Performing Arts Centre and The New Zealand School of Dance. Since this time she has enjoyed a varied and successful creative Career all over the world and is currently based in London. Most recently, she created one of the lead roles in Sadlers Wells biggest musical venture to date – SHOES. She helped in workshoping and creating material for

the new West End show *Ghost* and also continues her ongoing work of her one woman show. She created the role of Juana la Puta in the *Eternal Damnation to Sancho and Sanches* choreographed and directed by Javier de Frutos which was part of *In the Spirit of Diaghilev* produced by Sadlers Wells. She has been workshopping 2 new plays for Rufus Norris and the National Theatre (London) and has also assisted in directing and choreographing a production of *Cats* in New Zealand.



Rebecca Sutherland

Adding to the riches of the Merenia Gray Dance Company will be Craig Berry. Craig is one of the world's leading exponents of contemporary dance. After graduating from the New Zealand School of Dance in 1998, he has toured the world extensively and he has being the recipient of many dance awards. He has being a major inspiration for many choreographers and audiences alike. Craig has worked with Garry Stewart, ADT, Douglas Wright, Shona McCullagh, TAS Dance, Raewyn Hill, Gideon Obermenzig, Sue Healey, Leigh

Warren, Nigel Jamieson, Michael Parmenter and Merenia Gray in Capital Theatre productions, *Song and Dance*. Over the past few years Craig has not only had the privilege of working with incredible choreographers he has also had the honour of working with sensationally talented dancers. Dancers who continue to inspire him, teach him and help him grow as a performer every day. Currently he is performing in *Rapt*, a new work with Douglas Wright.



Craig Barry

Other dancers such as Tanemahuta Gray who is extensively discussed elsewhere in this Special Collection are involved in the Black Light workshop.

As well as the influences that these dancers bring Merenia Gray is also influenced by such New Zealand dance luminaries as Mary Jane O'Reilly. Merenia quotes Mary Jane in her desire to construct 'Simple strong ideas of dance, which will create work with soaking vocabulary, enrichenings on simple ideas'.

And it is worth remembering some of the other influences on work by Merenia such as *Black Light*. There is the poet Hone Tuwhare and the painter Ralph Hotere. Merenia firmly believes in 'the value of a process of cross-fertilisation of ideas and concepts, which inevitably creates new understanding of the subject matter'.

Merenia Gray is prepared to look to new technologies and an example of this in the development of *Black Rain*, in the coda to this work, is a collaboration with Antony Nevin who developed an animation design from a software package called *Programming for Black Rain*. Their intention is to develop an interactive environment which senses movement of the dancers' bodies and allows the performers to directly influence dynamic digital representations in the performance space. Merenia Gray and Antony Nevin propose to explore the relationship of the dynamics of the performer's action to digital content and the feedback loop that is formed by this relationship. This is a circular call and response as performer responds to system and system reacts to performer.

Coming back to earlier work, the Merenia Gray Dance Company has been well reviewed consistently over many years. Recently Ann Hunt said of Rongo ma Tane in DANZ Quarterly Review;

'its striking sculptural quality evoked *Whakairo* and contained strong aerial work by Tanemahuta Gray and a dynamic performance by Ivicia Novakovic', DANZ Quarterly Review 2011

Further back in time, Jennifer Stevenson in the Dominion Post of October 17 2003 said of *Te Mana*;

'Choreographer Merenia Gray has created her most important work to date, with her premiere of the enigmatic and soulful *Te Mana*, in a short season at Te Papa's SoundingsTheatre'

Before this Deirdre Tarrant in the Capital Times of Oct. 16 2003 said;

'I left the theatre reminded of our responsibilities as NewZealanders to cherish our chance to be keepers of future generations, "ko te taonga whare tangata.'

Before these shows there was *Wild Civility* in 2001 at Te Whaea Theatre, Wellington. And before that again Jennifer Shennan in The Evening Post of Thursday June 7 2001 said of *Wild Civility*;

'it's a non-stop hour of carefully prepared and sequenced dancing ...poignant evidence of Gray's bicultural aesthetic. May I suggest you slip along to Wild Civility....you'll find confirmation in dance of the things you want to believe in.'

Even further back on March 12th 1998 Jennifer Shennan had reviewed *Alchemy* at Bats Theatre in the Wellington Fringe Festival saying;

'Alchemy - dance - play magic not to be missed. The Alchemy of the title is at work in the choreography.... phone BATS early to book yourself on the waiting list for what will inevitably be a sell - out season. Ahakoa iti, he pounamu.'

Alchemy was given Best New Work in the 1998 Fringe Awards.

Earlier shows included *I.V.E. Interiors Versus Exteriors* in 1994 at the Taki Rua Depot Theatre in Wellington.

Merena Gray has been consistently busy throughout her career. Her choreography includes *Tino Rangatiratanga*, Royal Academy of Dance International summer school, Te Whaea, Wellington in 2012.

In 2011 there was *Rongo -Ma -Tane*, at the Opera House, Kowhiti Festival. Before that in 2010 there was *Palumbo* at the Wellington Commercial dance course, graduation.

Also in 2010 there was *Black Rain* (NZSD students) and *Entangled* and (Footnote) Soundings Theatre, Kowhiti Festival.

In 2009 there was a Black Rain workshop for NZSD students. Before that there was *Te Mana* in 2008 at the Footnote Dance Company's nationwide tour.

Between 2005 and 2007 there was *Mauī- one man against the Gods* at the Civic Theatre, Auckland and the St James Theatre, Wellington. Merena was the Contemporary Dance choreographer for *Mauī* and started with workshops in 2004, moving through to rehearsals in 2005 for the world premiere at the Westpac St James Theatre in Wellington. Merena repeated this role in the 2006 season in Christchurch's Isaac Theatre Royal and for the three city tour in 2007 of Auckland (Civic Theatre), Hamilton (Founders Theatre) and a return

season to Wellington. Merenia also reworked the Pou dance and helped Tanemahuta with the aerial flame *pas de deux* during the recent excerpts of Maui presented at *Koowhiti Dance 2011* and the performances at The Cloud and Queen's Wharf Mainstage in Auckland for the REAL NZ Festival for which Te Ao Marama Tapui received \$80,000 to stage the performances in Wellington and Auckland.

Going back to 2003 Merenia performed in *Te Mana and Entangled* with guest artists from the Royal New Zealand Ballet at Soundings Theatre, Wellington. In 2002 there was *Time turned to stone* a Royal New Zealand Ballet workshop in Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Song and Dance* at the Opera House.

In 2001 there was *Whiri-Koka Whiri-tangata* at Footnote Dance Company and *Wild Civility* at Te Whaea Theatre and she choreographed in 2000 *Into the woods* with Director Miranda Harcourt. In 1999 she choreographed *Pounamu* with the Auckland Dance Company and Richard Nunns and Hirini Melbourne performed live alongside The Dorian Choir for WOMAD.

In 1998 Merenia was the Principal Choreographer for the Wearable Arts and there was also *Alchemy* at Bats Theatre with Director Jim Moriarty. Going back to 1997 there was *Valley of the Birds* at the Opera House with 850 children and *Rough Fusion* with the Footnote Dance Company. In 1994 there was *Lust Lovers Love* with Isadora's Tribe and *I.V.E.*, at Taki Rua Depot Theatre.

In 1993-1994 Merenia worked with the Footnote Dance Company in Wellington and with that company she choreographed Poutokomanawa, which she was inspired by a tour to Gisborne while staying on the marae at Nuhaka.

Merenia Gray works locally and globally and this goes back to her earlier days. Between 1996-8 she danced with Upper Cut Danse Teatre in Copenhagen Denmark. She danced for renowned New York Choreographers Doug Varone and David Dorfman.

In 1992 there was *Hono tai- where the two seas meet* at the

Taki Rua Depot Theatre and *Ko au*, a solo work she created for Hono Tai and subsequently performed in America,(which she received a scholarship to study at Duke University North Carolina to the American Dance Festival, Spain,(Seville for Expo) Munich, Paris, Denmark, Australia and returning to Christchurch for the *Aukaha Kia Kaha Festival* for Ngai Tahu.

To complete a stellar year in 1992 she auditioned in London and got a job for 3 months dancing with Artgenossen in Munich, Germany.

In 1991 Merenia worked with the Taiao Dance Theatre in Auckland, Directed by Stephen Bradshaw and in 1989 there was *Teeteekura- a beginning from an end* in Hong Kong at the DaCi Conference.

With this personal and group history of contribution to dance going back over two decades there is also the whakapapa links to the Greater Wellington area through Rangitane and other links. Rangitane go back centuries in the area and when Merenia talks of traditional arts in her case the links are strong and deep. Other important links are that Merenia is the daughter of Tiahuia Gray, a well established figure in the Wellington and national cultural scene. And of course Merenia is the brother of Tanemahuta and with him a collaborator in *Koowhiti* and other ventures.



Tiahuia, Merenia's mother, in a Ngaruwahia Kapa Haka group .Tiahuia is in the second row second from the right.

Merenia has an extensive range. As well as the performances above she was the principle choreographer to the *New Zealand Wearable Arts Awards* (1998) and Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Song & Dance* (2002) as well as *Time Turned To Stone* (2002), for the Royal New Zealand Ballet.

Merenia Gray has a whakapapa that involves Tainui, Ngai Tahu and Rangitaane connections. Regarding the latter she stands in a long line of Rangitaane leaders other female leaders of note being Ruth Harris and her daughter Danielle and before them Mererikiriki and others in the Manawatu section of Rangitaane. On her Tainui side Merenia traces to Princess Te Pua Herangi.

Merenia is a diplomat. She is a navigator charting a course through play, through dance. In finding her way Merenia Gray has been involved with the Royal New Zealand Ballet in *Time Turned to Stone* 2002, Capital Theatre Productions in *Song*

and *Dance* 2002, the Footnote Dance Company in *Poutokomanawa* 1993, *Rough Fusion* 1997 and *Whiri Koka Whiri Tangata* 2000, the New Zealand Wearable Arts Awards 1999 Nelson and the Auckland Dance Company in *Pounamu* for WOMAD 1999 Auckland Town Hall.

Merenia is brand conscious. And conscious of corporate sponsorship. The idea that dance is the Cinderella of the arts does not seem to occur to her. Again there is the mix of confidence and skills along with a very strong work ethic.

Merenia is a kind of floor leader for *Koowhiti*. She gives speeches and organises people in lobbies and at banquets associated with *Koowhiti*. The best example of this was her speech to Chris Finlayson and the South African High Commission in the lobby of the State Opera House in Wellington at *Koowhiti 2011*. Merenia is a hui leader. She knows the protocols and how to use them; her home ground is the interface of the arts, government and corporate affairs with a dash on the international in Wellington.

One unusual or at least different thing about *Koowhiti* is that the principals come out front. Merenia leads this as she addresses people in the lobby at *Koowhiti 2011* or organises people at the banquet at *Koowhiti 2010*. Merenia leads by example but Tanemahuta and Jenny Stevenson the other producers of *Koowhiti* are by her side.

This shows several things about *Koowhiti* such as a style of micro management or at least close management of events. It also shows how tight the dance community is in Wellington and across New Zealand. People who teach dance are also dance critics, writing about their former pupils, people who dance also 'do the door' and there is a collapsing of such distinctions as the front of the house and the stage. Some of this is the Great New Zealand Attitude where, supposedly, there are no class or vocational barriers.

In this case though it is to do with the strength of personality, the diplomatic and management expertise, the skill in arts patronage and confidence of Merenia Gray closely

backed by Tanemahuta and Jenny. But Merenia's dance work is central to the *Koowhiti* events and is at the core of *Koowhiti* business.

Bibliography

- Balme, Christopher. 1996. Between Separation and Integration: Intercultural Strategies in Contemporary Maori Theatre. In *The Intercultural Performance Reader*, edited by P. Pavis. London; New York: Routledge.
- . 2007. *Pacific Performances: Theatricality and Cross-Cultural Encounters in the South Seas*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan
- Barba, Eugenio 1991 *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: The Secret Art of the Performer*. London; New York: Published for the Centre for Performance Research by Routledge.
- Barba, Eugenio, and Ferdinando Taviani
- Berger, John. 1972 *Ways of Seeing*, London: British Broadcasting Corporation; Penguin
- Bordo, Susan. 1993. *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 1999. *The Male Body: A New Look at Men in Public and in Private*. New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux.
- Fraleigh, Sondra Horton. 2004. *Dancing Identity: Metaphysics in Motion*, Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Huizinga, Johan. 1949 *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-element in Culture*, London: Routledge & K. Paul.
- Salmond, Mary Anne. 1975 *Hui: A Study of Maori Ceremonial Gatherings*, Wellington, NZ: A. H. & A. W. Reed

JENNY STEVENSON

Part Five: Dance Biography



Jenny Stevenson at the National Ballet School. Jenny is in the centre and Janne Blanche is on the left, Jennifer Carson on the right.

In 2009 Jim and Jenny Stevenson were jointly awarded an Absolutely Positively Wellingtonian Award for contribution to the city and community and for the establishment and continuing support of Wellington Performing Arts Centre 1987-2009. With Jim and on her own as well Jenny has done an immense amount for the arts, especially dance, in Wellington over a long period of time.

That period starts with Jenny graduating from the then New Zealand Ballet School, later the New Zealand School of Dance in 1968. Beginning with appearances on *Happen Inn*

there follows a substantial career involving performance, administration and leadership. Jenny danced with the New Zealand Ballet Company and then the Australian Dance Theatre.

Between 1971 and 1985 Jenny danced solo, in cabaret and with groups such as the Red Mole Theatre Company.

Between 1974-1977 Jenny Stevenson founded and directed the Dance Centre, the largest non-ballet dance studio in Wellington.

Following this between 1987 and 2008 Jenny founded and managed the Wellington Performing Arts Centre, a Tertiary and Community Institution, an NZQA registered PTE, accredited to deliver Locally Approved Courses. This involved 800 tertiary and community clients per week

As if performance, administration and leadership were not enough from 2001 to 2011 Jenny Stevenson has been a dance critic and commentator for Radio New Zealand. Between 1996 and 2006 Jenny was the dance critic and columnist for the Dominion and Dominion Post (circulation 98,000).

At an early point in the development of biculturalism and multiculturalism in Aotearoa/New Zealand between 1988 and 1991, Jenny Stevenson was the choreographer for the Pacific Island Theatre Group (Auckland) and South City Dancers (Wellington).

Coming up to the present day, in March-July, 2011, Jenny Stevenson was engaged by Wellington City Council and DANZ to create the draft format for the Wellington Dance Festival in 2012. Jenny Created the Festival Launch Programme in July, 2011 and also created a Wellington Dance Festival Programme for a proposed 2012 festival and created the framework for a Charitable Trust and appointed Trustees

And from 2010 there has been *Koowhiti*. There are three main pillars in *Koowhiti* and they are Tanemahuta and Merenia Gray and Jenny Stevenson. These three have sustained matters through the performances of *Koowhiti* in 2010 and 2011 and seem set to do so again in 2013 with an

academic symposium.

Then there the additions to the base, Cat Ruka and Tru Paraha, Polynesian dancers, Hip Hop artists. Jenny is able to reach out to most sections of the dance world.

Koowhiti has taken traditional kawa in the interaction between tangata whenua and manuhiri and developed that as part of performance in the times before and after performances. This attention to protocol had an added aspect with the coming of Africans to dance in 2011.

There is a consciousness of sponsors, patronage and brand amongst the three principals and this works so that all three are involved in beginnings and ends, entries and exits, banquets and cocktails. *Koowhiti* is a model of community engagement and Jenny supports Merenia as does Tanemahuta as Merenia takes the role of hostess. And then Tanemahuta and Merenia support Jenny in matters of planning and so it goes.

All three are multi stranded with talents in performance, organisation and leadership but Jenny has more experience and runs matters behind the scenes to a degree and this is the more remarkable in that voices never seem to be raised. Jenny knows, as do Tanemahuta and Merenia, how to extend; there are workshops, conferences, presentations and reflections as well as displays. These extensions take participants beyond the event of *Koowhiti*.

There is an emphasis on technical strengths throughout and this applies to lights, sounds, front of house and stage as well as to the dance itself. And with this there is a sense of integrity, of brand.

There is a sense of inclusiveness that Jenny brings from her years of running the Wellington Performance Arts Centre. People feel welcome as participants- spectators or performers.

And with this comes a sense of standard so that when people are given awards at the end of a *Koowhiti* event there is a meaning and a resonance to that; *Koowhiti* provides a fair and accurate reflection of quality in the dance world of

Aotearoa- New Zealand, a benchmark of standards.

This puts a premium on curation; who is there and what happens is a statement. That statement is a platform for reflection allowing reports back on dance experience. This includes relating to indigeneity and there are analogies with BLAKDANCE founded in Australia in 2005.

We could talk about *Koowhiti* and capital; real capital in the form of money as well as social capital. There might not be much of the former but there is a lot of the latter. *Koowhiti* has the capacity to attract funds, to garner good references and to connect with power brokers in Wellington and the world. And then there is the stock of intellectual capital in the form of video footage, royalties, websites and other matters.

Jenny Stevenson has come to be a symbol of this capital along with Merenia and Tanemahuta Gray and others involved with *Koowhiti*.

TANEMAHUTA GRAY

Part Six: Dance Biography



Tanemahuta Gray at the World Premiere of “The Lord of the Rings” - “The Return of the King” in Wellington. Photography by Jamie Ogilvie.

Tanemahuta Gray is married to Yumiko Olliver-Gray and has three children; Keilani Kisako Gray, Akira Kahu-a-Rangi Gray and Tamarererangi Jack Gray. Family is important to Tanemahuta and that applies to his parents, brother and sister Merenia as well as the wider whanau, hapu and iwi.

Tanemahuta Gray like his mother Tiahuia, his sister Merenia and others in his family works with intensity. There is

something of a family ethic where things are done well and with integrity as well as a high degree of concentration. That ethic and its fruits can easily be seen in the amount of high quality work accomplished by him in what follows. This was built on a skills foundation laid early with tutors like Lynne Harrison for dance, Paul Jesson for piano and Hewitt Humphrey for speech and drama, and then further refined by mentor Kevin Baddiley.



Tanemahuta Gray
Photography – Nick Servian

Tanemahuta took up the role of Maori Dance Tutor at the New Zealand School of Dance in May of 2012. He was a recent nomination for the arts category of the 2011 Wellingtonian of the Year Awards. He was the Contemporary and Maori Cultural tutor at Whitireia Performing Arts in Wellington in 2009-10 and accompanied them to Slovenia, Croatia and Germany on the CEOFF Festival Tour in Europe in July 2010. He is an ex board member with Taki-Rua Productions, and

currently chairman of Kapiti Kids Motivational Trust. Tanemahuta also teaches Maori and Kapa Haka part-time at Te Ra Waldorf Steiner School, and teaches a New Maori Dance Course at Kapiti College, Otaki College and Wellington College, alongside numerous workshops in schools for DANZ.

As well as his local standing Tanemahuta has a global profile. This is seen in his aerial theatre experience. From 1999 - 2004 Tanemahuta has performed with *De La Guarda*. One of 14 performers chosen in 1999 from among 1,800 who auditioned for the London season, Tanemahuta has performed with *De La Guarda* in London, Las Vegas, Buenos Aires, Amsterdam, Berlin, Seoul and Sydney. His experience included being performance captain for the Las Vegas and Buenos Aires seasons.

In April 2010, Tanemahuta directed and co-choreographed the Oceania representative work (from New Zealand) at the *World Expo Opening Ceremony* in Shanghai. The 23 strong New Zealand performance was seen by over one billion people worldwide. The opening ceremony had 2000 performers including Jackie Chan, Andrea Bocelli, pianist Lang Lang and music by Quincey Jones and Tan Dun. Tanemahuta followed up this trip in early June 2010 as the cultural performance representatives for the Wellington City Council Mayoral Delegation to Beijing, Shanghai (*World Expo*), Tianjin and Xiamen alongside violinist Elena. They made their international premiere of three of his new choreographic works with compositions by Tiki Taane.

So we have a local made good internationally. And Tanemahuta is tangata whenua tuturu, someone who traces back centuries in Aotearoa with strong links to his local area. Of *Ngai Tahu*, *Rangitane* and *Waikato* descent, Tanemahuta has supplemented his professional dance training and aerial theatre experience with an ongoing love for *tikanga Maori*. That love came through his mother Tiahuia and her role in such things as the Ngāti Pōneke kapa haka group and her skill at karanga. The keys to the Maori performance world were

handed to Tanemahuta and his siblings by Tiahuia as they all attended concerts and competitions and shared Tiahuia's connections in Wellington and beyond. At the same time Tanemahuta's family influenced him in standard dance classes and he was inspired to dance after watching his sister Merenia and the students at Lynne Harrison's academy of dance perform *Beatrix Potter*. It was here that his passion for dance was ignited.

A conversational speaker of *te reo Maori*, Tanemahuta's study of Maoritanga has focused, in particular, on mastering *kapa haka* (traditional dance and fighting forms). Tanemahuta has performed in two national *kapa haka* competitions (with *Ngāti Pōneke*) and, in October 2008, attended his 17th *taiaha* training camp at Mokoia Island, Rotorua as an *ahorei* (senior regional tutor) under the mantle of Mita Mohi. Drawing on these skills, in 1997 Tanemahuta choreographed and produced *Te Ao Hurihuri- The Changing World*, a two hour dance work that explored his bi-cultural identity. Along the way he graduated from the *New Zealand School of Dance* in 1994.

Tanemahuta has also self devised and tutored *Korari* workshops which are contemporary movement and language workshops combining *taiaha* and contemporary dance skills with language. He has taught over 6000 students and adults of all ages and in several countries. He is on the NZQA panel to revise the New Māori Dance unit standards as part of his tutoring. And then there was *Maui- One Man Against The Gods*".

In 2001 he conceived and began building his major work "*Maui – One Man Against The Gods.*" www.mauitheshow.com A 40 minute pilot production was staged in February 2003, with the world premiere performed at the Westpac St James, 2005. 15,000 people attended that season and the show toured further to perform in Christchurch in June 2006, and a 3 city tour of Auckland, Hamilton and Wellington in April/May 2007. Over 76,000 New Zealanders have now seen the show over 7

performance seasons nationwide from 2003 – 2011 as well as 50,000 at an exhibition at TheNewDowse in partnership with the Royal NZ Ballet and the NBR NZ Opera in 2008/9. Then there is the DVD of *Maui* and that has sold and been viewed by thousands of school students.



Tama-Nui-Te-Rā (Sun God played by Te Kohe Tuhaka) and Two Hau (winds) from *Maui – One Man Against The Gods* – Isaac Theatre Royal, Christchurch.

Photographer – Diederik van Heyningen, Lightworkx Photography

Maui has received rave critical reviews and a production ensemble of over 60 people have helped to build this show including Gareth Farr, Richard Nunns, Andre Anderson, Geoff Pinfield, Gillie Coxhill, Martyn Roberts, Tolis Papazoglou, Merenia Gray, Tamati Patuwai, Mere Boynton, Toni Huata and Taiaroa Royal. The full show now tours with 38 people and despite its large scale, can be packed in within 1.5 days. This combination of skill offstage and organisation offstage is shared with sister Merenia and Jenny Stevenson the other principal in *Koowhiti*.



Māui (played by Tamati Patuwai) and Two flame dancers (Tairaroa Royal and Liana Yew) from *Maui – One Man Against The Gods* – Isaac Theatre Royal, Christchurch

Photographer – Diederik van Heyningen, Lightworkx Photography

Tanemahuta was nominated as Best Emerging Director at the Chapman Tripp Theatre Awards for the pilot version of *Maui* in 2003. The pilot also won 3 NZ Fringe Festival Awards. *Maui* also received the awards for best lighting for Martyn Roberts and best composition for Gareth Farr at the 2007 Chapman Tripp Theatre Awards.

Here is a person who can take a major item from his own cultural stock like *Maui* and deal with it in a performance as well as relate to work in culturally different settings. In February 2012, Tanemahuta choreographed and directed *Taniwha Loong*, the opening ceremony performance number for Wellington's Chinese New Year Festival at the TSB Arena. *Taniwha Loong* combined five performance groups including the internationally acclaimed Chinese Dragon team, a Shaolin Monk martial arts team and local Kapa Haka performers to Tan Dun's music from the movie soundtrack *Hero*.

From both the cross cultural and the Maori work Tanemahuta has emerged as a leader. In 2011 Tanemahuta was the artistic director on *Arohanui – The Greatest Love*, a Haka Theatre production with Te Matatini National Kapa Haka Inc and directed alongside Annette Wehi (te Waka Huia) and Jim Moriarty. This was staged as a major event of the Rugby World Cup REAL NZ Festival in Wellington and Auckland from October 6-21. Arohanui was also presented alongside Kiri Te Kanawa's Rugby World Cup concert at the Vector Arena on October 22. Tanemahuta directed and co-choreographed the opening South Pacific Section for *WOW- World of Wearable Art Awards 2010* at the TSB Arena in Wellington and was charged with garment choreography for the NZ Icons and Illuminated Illusions (UV) sections in the 2011 season. He is a guest choreographer for the Air New Zealand South Pacific Section for the upcoming 2012 season.



Māui (Tamati Patuwai) and his brothers (Te Puoho Katene, Kereama Te Ua) pulling up the North Island of New Zealand.

Maui – One Man Against The Gods – Isaac Theatre Royal,
Christchurch

Photographer – Diederik van Heyningen, Lightworkx Photography

People turn to Tanemahuta for advice. Just as *Koowhiti* has become a place where awards are given out so Tanemahuta is turned to for estimations of quality in dance. Tanemahuta was a guest tutor at the Royal Academy of Dancing International Seminar held in Wellington in January 2012. He was the Contemporary Dance tutor alongside tutors from Britain, Australia and New Zealand in this flagship seminar that comes to New Zealand once every four years. He has also judged the Wellington Regionals of Stage Challenge, and provides written advice on what makes a strong presentation in this stage competition form.

Production, especially production outdoors is a major strength. Tanemahuta has produced and directed 16 productions and outdoor events. His versatility with events can be seen in such things as when, in October 2006, he directed his first outdoor festival event called the *Elements Carnival* in Palmerston North, working with the NZ Army and Ohakea Airforce Iroquois abseil team, Strike Percussion, The Manawatu Pipe Band and Batucada. He followed this up with a second *Elements Carnival* in October 2007 in Arena Manawatu performing with Te Piringa Kapa Haka troop, The Ohakea Airforce Band, IPC Taiko drum team and the Massey University Fire Poi troop. Over 100 performers, cast and crew played a part in each production.



Tanemahuta Gray at the World Premiere of “The Lord of the Rings” - “The Return of the King” in Wellington. Photography by Jamie Ogilvie.

Then there was the historic *Tribute08 – A Vietnam Veteran Commemoration* reunion in Wellington in 2008. This included nine events being held in Wellington city including the Basin Reserve, Parliament Grounds and Buildings, Civic Square, TSB arena, National War Memorial and an Honour Parade through Wellington city. It is here that the range of Tanemahuta might clearly be appreciated. Tanemahuta worked with the Wellington City Council Events Team and the Tribute08 team lead by John Dow and Chris Mullane. The events included the Whakanoa Ceremony and Parliamentary Welcome by the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition at Parliament and vigil of thirty seven photos of NZ Killed in Action lying in state in Parliament, the Honour March from Civic Square to Parliament, the Civic Welcome at the Civic Square with Ngāti Pōneke, four Wellington Colleges and the NZ

Army and NZ Army Band, the TSB Arena Reunion with 2500 veterans and family members attending at Queens Wharf, the Vietnam Era Concert *Good Night Vietnam* held at the TSB Arena over two nights, the Memorial Service held at the National War Memorial, Buckle Street, the Basin Reserve final Commemoration and Celebration service with major NZ Defence Force involvement, the Theatre Production *Ka Mate, Ka Ora* partnered with Te Rakau Trust held at Capital E Theatre, Civic Square and the Vietnam Exhibition – *Not just a 12 month Tour* held at the NZ Academy of Fine Arts.

Tanemahuta worked with a multitude of stakeholders and experts in their field including Frankie Stevens, Ray Columbus, Russell Morris, Suzanne Lynch, Charlotte Yates and The Maori Volcanics for the Vietnam concert and Paul Riley of the National War Memorial, Andrew Beattie, Darryl Stevens and Glenda Ramsay of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (VCO office), Major Peter Stitt of the NZ Defence Force, and Dwayne Bloomfield of the NZ Army Band. In addition, Tanemahuta worked with exhibition curator Luit Bieringa, Te Rakau Trust directors Jim Moriarty and Helen Pearse-Otene, and Wellington City Council Event Director's Lauren Fantham and John Dawson.

All of this experience was brought to *Koowhiti*. As the co-curator, director and producer of *Koowhiti - Matariki Festival of Maori Contemporary Dance* held in June 24-27 2010 at Te Papa bringing together 12 of the country's leading Māori choreographers Tanemahuta put together dance performances, forums, lectures, workshops and dance film screenings including a big screen presentation of the full show of *Maui- One Man Against The Gods*. Tanemahuta then co-curated the second season of *Koowhiti Dance 2011* at the Opera House from Sept 15-17 again with Merenia Gray and Jenny Stevenson. He staged excerpts of Māui and Tiki Taane Mahuta at *Koowhiti* as well as in Auckland for the REAL NZ Festival. 15,000 people viewed the aerial and contemporary kapa haka excerpts in Auckland in the Cloud and waterfront

Main Stage.

Tanemahuta has had his mentors and his father as well as his mother should be mentioned along with, from the age of sixteen to twenty three, Kevin Baddily (ex Royal New Zealand Ballet). Kevin helped Tanemahuta with dance and also encouraged him to audition for roles like that of Riff in *West Side Story* at Wellington Musical Theatre's Opera House production alongside Delia Hannah and Ross Girven. This was Tanemahuta's first musical experience. He followed this with the lead in Webber's *Song and Dance (2003)*, also performed at Wellington's Opera House. Tanemahuta has played the Shakespearean roles of Puck (*Dream*) and Horatio (*Hamlet*) during his Wellington College school years. He performed in his own duet *Past/Present/Future* in *Koowhiti* 2010.

Tanemahuta has collaborated effectively with many people but there are several key combinations that seem set to recur. One of these is with Tiki Taane as he works towards raising the finances to stage his next major work and build this production into an aerial dance work He is building the shows narrative, which has been inspired and developed around the eclectic mix of Tiki's two albums *Past Present Future* and *In The World of Light*. Tanemahuta is really interested in building a strong narrative story to a contemporary dance work,

Dance, particularly aerial dance has been an adventure for Tanemahuta Gray. Memorable times include participating in the parade for the 'Return of the King' of the Lord of the Rings series. This involved an abseiling walk going forwards down the walls of the Embassy Theatre in Wellington One hundred and twenty thousand spectators looked on.



Tanemahuta Gray at the World Premiere of “The Lord of the Rings” -
“The Return of the King” in Wellington’s Embassy Theatre.
Photography by Jamie Ogilvie.

Tanemahuta is deeply involved in the new things happening with *Koowhiti*. There is an academic symposium planned. The directors also aim to continue the engagement with international indigenous dance companies, and sharing our connections with other companies worldwide. They are also looking to tour the works nationally and internationally in the long-term future.

LINDA ASHLEY

Part Seven: Culturally different dances in the New Zealand arts curriculum: Understanding about fusion, tradition and making dances in context

INTRODUCTION

This paper explores issues and opportunities that can arise in teaching about culturally diverse dances from contextual perspectives, as expected in the dance component of *The New Zealand National Curriculum* (New Zealand Ministry of Education, Te Tahuhu o te Mātauranga, 2007, (hereafter referred to as *NZC*)). Teaching of the arts is also guided by *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* for Māori-medium schools, and I will not be commenting on this document in this paper. In focusing specifically on teaching about fusion dance in formal education such as practiced in schools and tertiary institutions, the nuances of intercultural borrowing, as they can impact on teaching, are explored. I ask: 'How can teaching about fusion dance contribute to meaningful education in culturally appropriate ways?'

I draw on selected aspects of my doctorate ethnographic investigation (As completed at The University of Auckland in 2010), and from my new publication to be published later this year, *Dancing with difference: Culturally diverse dances in education*. As a means of annotating the concerns that the teachers in my study raised, the paper integrates examples of Māori contemporary dance choreographers who work in fusion

dance and who feature in dance learning materials as provided by the Ministry of Education. I also reflect on some of my own experience in dance education in order to annotate some of the underpinning theoretical and practical issues.

First, however, I outline some aspects of my personal dance whakapapa, by which I hope to give the reader a sense of why this particular topic was of interest to me. Having worked for over thirty years in dance and dance education in both the UK and New Zealand, my teaching has developed from: undergraduate studies at I. M. Marsh College, University of Liverpool; Masters studies at the Laban Centre, Goldsmith's College and The University of London; and doctoral study at The University of Auckland, New Zealand. I also have a background in contemporary dance technique, choreography and performance. Since 1996, through my writing (Ashley 2005, 2005a, 2007, 2008, 2011) and working life in various contexts, including schools, universities, teacher education, various communities including prisons (as a visitor only!) and theatre, my interest has been drawn to consider how best to support learning about dance for a diverse range of people. I migrated to New Zealand, Aotearoa in 1997, and worked in teacher education at the Auckland College of Education, specialising in dance education from 1998 to 2004. In 2005, I was appointed as Senior Lecturer, and Academic and Research Leader for the Bachelor of Dance Programme at AUT University, Auckland. I retired from this post in 2010. I worked in an advisory capacity for the New Zealand Ministry of Education, and was employed by them in 2000 to develop a video resource designed to support teachers implement dance in *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2000, (hereafter referred to as the ANZC)). I have also worked in developing Dance Achievement Standards for the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA). I see this touchstone of experience to be every bit as valuable as, and indeed informing of theoretical

and academic studies as associated with dance and dance education.

As with many professional dance educators, I have had a rich, varied and enriching working dance life. I see myself as a dance educator whose skills lie in a Eurocentric tradition, however I feel that I am now better prepared to facilitate those who work in different traditions, and, moreover, feel strongly about accommodating them as part of equitable and sustainable practices in dance education. When I set out on the doctorate research I had no specific politically transformative agenda. Later in the journey, however, issues of cultural ownership, appropriation and commodification came to the fore, and these required examination of how teaching about culturally diverse dances contextually, as expected by both the ANZC and the NZC, could affect the lives and livelihoods of freelance dance specialists, teachers, learners and, indirectly, the actual dances. Therefore, a major feature of my work is a focus on the implications that different approaches to teaching about culturally different dances have for building a dance education that is socially just, ethical and sustainable.

My doctorate investigation built on previous research into New Zealand dance and arts education (Barbour, 2004; Bolwell, 1998; Buck, 2003; Hong-Joe, 2002; Sansom, 1999; Thwaites, 2003). Broadly speaking, this relatively recent wave of research has been generated by the inaugural inclusion of dance in New Zealand's national curriculum framework, as first published in the ANZC in 2000, and later mandated by government in 2003. My investigation was the first to study teaching about culturally diverse dances. This particular paper provides an opportunity to further extend my research, and for this I am grateful to the editors of *Te Kaharoa*.

Structure of the paper

Following the introduction to the overall purpose of the paper, a brief outline of the methodology used in the doctorate inquiry is presented, followed by some explanation of the key terms used throughout the paper.

Following this, some general background to dance education and its relation to western contemporary theatre dance is described, taking the form of embodied tracings through time and space. I am using 'embodied' from within a social model of the human condition, wherein embodiment becomes meaningful once understood as intentional action in a person-centred, sociocultural world (Varela, 1995; Barbour, 2004). The inclusion of fusion dance in formal educational settings, such as schools and universities, is presented as an unfolding of the embodied practices found in the cultural legacies that are manifest in both dance education and contemporary theatre dance. In this section, some background to dance in the New Zealand National Curriculum is also presented.

The main section of the paper discusses the teaching of making and understanding about fusion dance in relation to the ANZC and the NZC, and consideration is given to pedagogy that can contribute to a profile of bicultural, culturally democratic and sustainable dance education in New Zealand. Drawing on my doctorate inquiry, a culturally diverse range of voices including Māori, Sāmoan and Tongan indigenous dance specialists, teachers in schools and professional dance educators are synthesised with relevant literature and examples of Māori fusion dance. Issues pertaining to what could make up culturally appropriate innovation as fusion and its relationship to traditional dances are also considered.

The final section draws on the discussion and is driven by consideration of providing equitable support for both traditional and contemporary dance artists when their works are studied in education.

METHODOLOGY

In 2004, as a means of examining teachers' thoughts about their teaching and some of their teaching about dance in the dance component of the then current *ANZC*, I designed an ethnographic, interpretive investigation that ran until 2006. Rather than the traditional ethnographic strategy of total immersion into specific communities, I chose to look at "slices of social life" (Charmaz, 2003, p. 270). The research question of the investigation asked: 'What concerns, dilemmas and opportunities arise for teachers when teaching dance from a contextual perspective?'

The empirical information that was gathered in the form of the research participants' thoughts, actions and views on their teaching-lives provided insights into how the *ANZC* was being interpreted and implemented by a culturally diverse range of teachers and dance specialists.

Methodology directs the choice of methods for collecting and analysing data. Three sets of data were collected from:

1. Teachers on an in-service teacher dance education course, with the researcher in dual role as lecturer and participant observer (2004).
2. Questionnaires from teachers in schools across New Zealand (2005).
3. Four focus groups for: primary and intermediate teachers; secondary school teachers; tertiary dance educators; and genre-specific dance specialists, with the researcher as moderator (2005/6).

Ethnographically, the question of how to increase the visibility and make sense of the research participants' perspectives raised considerations about the selection of suitable methods to analyse and interpret data. I selected a grounded theory method because it provided a systematic process of analysing the multiple perspectives of the participants and the researcher. Via analysis and

interpretation, substantive theory that was grounded in the data was extricated, revealing the multiple perspectives of the participants in an “analytic-trail” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 145). The trail provided a means to refine each stage of data collection. In keeping with grounded theory, data analysis was continuous and accumulative over the duration of collection, and systematically used to constantly compare and, later, triangulate data. As one stage of data collection informed the next, it was possible to develop a coherent interpretive process based on both the data collected and my experiences of that time.

Key terms

For the purposes of this paper, I am using the term ‘dance’ as one which most, but not all cultures, use to refer to human movement that is intentionally and culturally shaped in time, space, dynamics and relationships, as fitting to specific aesthetics and functions in performance and / or participatory events. Moreover, dances are envisaged as having semantic and syntactical properties which can overlap or run parallel with vocal languages, and dance is not viewed as one universal language but as many languages.

Other terms that are key to setting clear parameters for this paper are dance education (and some related other terms); fusion dance; hybridity; enculturation and acculturation; and tradition.

I use the nomenclature of ‘dance education’ as a standalone curricula area that is historically associated with Eurocentric and North American legacies generated in the early twentieth century by pioneers such as Rudolf Laban (1960, 1988) and Margaret H'Doubler (1974). Dance education is acknowledged as a significant dimension underpinning of dance in the NZC. ‘Creative dance’, as often associated with dance education, is used in relation to improvised explorations of movement for its own sake (as with an abstract set of Laban’s movement concepts such as space or time), or with

making dances about everyday themes, images or feelings using selected movement concepts, or with choreographic applications of recognised compositional devices and structures, or some combination of all three. Creative dance, along with associated terminologies such as modern dance, contemporary dance, postmodern dance (as anti-dance), all relate in some way to the embodied practices of making dances from within a Eurocentric theatrical and / or educational ideology.

In this paper, 'fusion dance' is recognised as occurring when dances from different cultures, or even the same culture but having different movement vocabulary or ideologies, are blended together interculturally. At this time of cultural globalisation, interculturalism is recognised as a hot topic in contemporary discourse about culture generally (Chakravorty, 2010). Anthropologist of dance Andrée Grau (1992), however, alerts us as to how interculturalism, in the form of cultural borrowing, can affect people differently when there are unequal power relations. These are issues that seep into the fabric of this paper, especially in relation to implementing cultural democracy in dance education as an underpinning philosophy of the arts in *NZC*. In relation to intercultural fusion, postcolonial, cultural critic, Homi Bhabha (1994) argues that a third cultural space is created when cultures hybridise. Hybridisation is a prevalent concept in postcolonial, cultural criticism. Russian semiotician and literary theorist, Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) described it as occurring when two social languages mix within the limits of a single encounter. The two different linguistic consciousnesses could be separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation, or by some other factor. Dance and dance education, therefore, are deemed as potentially active in such encounters.

Acculturation, is used in this paper in reference to embodied practices as learnt within second-culture experiences. As in first-order enculturation, acculturation

engender develop learning about self, Other¹ and the world. The process is seen as the same when applied to acculturation, as occurring through contact with cultures after those of origin, and this also contributes to building a sense of identity. A perspective of fluidity is required when considering cultural identity, in itself an arguably obsolete and passé concept in the postmodern world. Identity is especially pertinent to conceptualise individuals and cultural phenomena when reconstrued as multiple, or fused. It is, however, also recognised as in use in everyday public life “to understand the world we live in as well as imagine other worlds” (Grau, 2007, p. 203).

Saving, arguably, the most controversial term until last, ‘tradition’ is a term that was identified by critical, cultural theorist, Raymond Williams as “the process of reproduction in action” (1981, p. 184), incorporating deliberate continuity, “by selection and reselection of those significant received and recovered elements of the past” (p. 187). Complementarily, it is suggested that traditional dances publicly display the “longevity of human memory... the continuity of human experience, as successive generations re-present dancing” (Buckland, 2006, p. 15). Of course, the romantic notion that any singular, pre-modern traditional culture can be reconstructed, or even theoretically understood in any complete sense, has lost all credibility in recent decades. There is also, however, a need to register the simultaneous existence of the new with the traditional, wherein the latter is not necessarily emphatically habitual, automatic, authoritative, stable or pre-ordained. In depicting tradition as both, “transformation and recycling” (Kaeppler, 2004, p. 310), continuity and change can co-exist, and a symbiotic co-existence of innovation alongside reproduction of previous legacies is established.

¹ “Other” is a term that, in 1991, Edward Said referred to as “fashionable, but still useful” (p. 52).

BACKGROUND

In this section, firstly a brief tracing of some of the overlapping genealogies of dance education and western theatre dance is presented. As ethnographer of dance Theresa Buckland (2010) alludes to, tracing the significance of the past in the present can enhance understanding of how embodied collective memories are expressed through dance. In focusing on certain embodied practices in dance education and western theatre dance, as set within specific contexts and shifting time frames, overlapping ideologies come to the fore in terms of the practices of the teaching about creating dances that fuse different cultures. The second component of this section comprises a somewhat succinct overview of some relevant aspects of the dance component of the *NZC*, in relation to teaching about dance.

In the early twentieth century, as a more liberal worldview prevailed in both education and the arts and in the West, creativity, the individual and holism became potent forces. Authenticity was endowed with the characteristic of individual innovation, as opposed to emanating from the received wisdom of passed on traditions. From a perspective of modern dance's traditional association with creativity, innovation, individual expression and the modernist icon of the *avant garde*, a list of pioneers includes Rudolf Laban, Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey and Mary Wigman, amongst others. In the now well-known history of early modern dance in the twentieth century, dances from different cultures were borrowed and acculturated, that is to say adopted and adapted as creative stimuli from which to make new 'modern' dances in a fusion process—interculturally. In contextualising early modern dance ethnically as a Eurocentric art form, Joan Frosch (1999) identifies pioneers such as Isadora Duncan, Mikhail Fokine, Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn, because of their shared proclivity for the mis/appropriation and modern adaptations of the dances of other cultures.

In creative dance there is a traceable legacy of similar embodied practices, such as identified in this early example of the modern, creative dance education tradition of appropriation in which learning involves making: “A primitive dance accompanied by a drum, using climax and anticlimax” (Preston, 1963, p. 133). At that time in the development of dance education, appropriation of the Other (known and unknown) was assumed to be benign. Subsequently, anthropologists have cogently argued that there is no such thing as ‘primitive dance’ (Keali’inohomoku, 1983; Williams, 2004), and dance educators’ awareness of inappropriate intercultural borrowing in dance has grown.

Importantly, the arts curriculum in the *NZC* is underpinned by pluralist and culturally democratic paradigms, as indicated by the following list of cultures that all students should be given the opportunity to study during their school years,

the bicultural heritage of Māori and Pakeha as expressed through art forms, traditions and histories; the art forms of the Pacific Islands, and international and global art forms, including those of North America and Asia. (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 1999, p. 17)

In the dance component of the *NZC*, however, creative dance and choreography are carried on the page within a strand of their own, named Developing ideas in Dance (DI). Making dance is a predominant feature of dance education resources and teaching materials such as those provided online by the Ministry of Education’s TKI website.² In the

² *Te Kete Ipurangi (TKI) – The Online Learning Centre*. TKI is a bilingual portal and web community in which quality-assured educational material for teachers, school managers, and the wider education community are provided. It is an initiative of the Ministry of Education - <http://artsonline.tki.org.nz/>

dance curriculum, as with drama, music and visual arts, there are three other curriculum strands. The strands frame the learning areas and Achievement Objectives of the curriculum, they are: Practical Knowledge in Dance (learning about dance movement vocabularies of self and others, (PK)); Communicating in Dance (performing, viewing and responding to dance (CI)); and Understanding Dance in Context (UC)). I have included the abbreviated forms of the four strands as commonly acknowledged by teachers here for ease of reference throughout the rest of the paper. The interface between these strands can, I argue, give rise to some interesting issues and challenges for teachers in terms of developing the students' understanding *about* culturally different dances contextually, particularly when fusion dance is at issue, but also when teaching about making dance.

Working within the context of New Zealand dance and dance education, I became interested in teaching about dance from contextual perspectives in schools because of the inclusion of a separate Understanding Dance in Context (UC) strand in the ANZC. I was interested in finding out more about how teachers saw their teaching about dance contextually. Before the ANZC, dance was likely to be the least familiar subject to many teachers, and less familiar even than the other arts, but some teachers would have had skills and experience in teaching creative dance (Sansom, 2011). However, teaching *about* a range of culturally different dances was likely to be new to many. In 2005, the New Zealand Ministry of Education set up an Arts Reference Group for *The Curriculum Stocktake Marautanga Project* to advise on the upgrade of the whole New Zealand Curriculum Framework that produced the revised NZC. The main brief for this group, of which I was part, was a rewrite of the Arts Achievement Objectives. In those meetings the arts educators discussed the need for more guidance for teachers in integrating the UC strand across all four art forms. It became apparent that the strand was presenting teachers with challenges. In the 2000

ANZC, the UC strand appeared as fourth in the list of strands. By 2007, in the revised *NZC*, the UC strand had been shifted to top of the list, and this move seemed to consolidate the provision of a suitable research platform for my inquiry.

As relevant to this paper, within the dance component of the *NZC*, I identify four potentially overlapping areas that can impact on teaching about fusion dance:

1. Teaching about culturally diverse dances contextually
2. The twentieth century legacy of creative dance
3. Teaching about and making fusion dance
4. Teaching about culturally diverse traditional dances

These four threads are woven throughout the following discussion.

NEW ZEALAND / AOTEAROA STEPS AND VOICES – DISCUSSION

Teaching about culturally diverse dances from contextual perspectives

So often you can do your PK, DI, CI all together, and the UC strand can get left out. And I really hate putting it in because I haven't put it in anywhere else, y'know? UC has been forgotten. (Gill, secondary school teacher)³

Even though many teachers in my study were meeting the *ANZC* pluralist ideology by teaching some culturally diverse dances, this observation, collected from a focus group, reveals

³ In line with The University of Auckland ethical approval, the teachers' and dance educators' commentaries are presented using pseudonyms. The only exceptions to this were the three dance specialists Niulala Helu, Keneti Muaiaava and Valance Smith who requested that their names be used, and their instruction was followed.

how some teachers were not fully implementing the ANZC, insofar as they were not all teaching *about* dance. In my investigation, and there is inadequate space to present all the data in this paper, some teachers referred to the UC strand as “scary”. Many of them were not teaching about dance contextually because they felt that it needed too much preparation, time to teach and was too theoretical, preferring what they saw as the other three practical strands, or the “doing strands”, as some teachers referred to them. This theory / practice split could well exacerbate the difficulties that some teachers associated with the UC strand. Also, many of them felt that they had inadequate dance technique to teach culturally diverse dances, and often they invited guest specialists to supplement their own skill sets. The data showed that guest specialists were a popular solution to providing a culturally diverse range of dances. In schools where dance was well-established, the supplementary provision made a valuable contribution to learning, as illustrated by these secondary school teachers’ comments:

Dee: “A lot of our experts are our ex-students, so that there’s no problem... He won’t start the *sasa* until there’s complete silence and the kids just do it for him. And I get extra time... only positive experiences.”

Jo: “Keneti—he’s okay, but with other traditional Island teachers they teach as they have been taught, and that method doesn’t go along with the way that we teach anything in NZ. I always have quite a bit of dialogue with people coming to explain what our kids are like and talk to them about the way that I discipline the kids, so that they are coming in very clear [about] how the school works, especially if they haven’t been taught in the New Zealand system.”

Other data from the focus groups and the questionnaires revealed that guests sometimes struggled to adapt to and

could lack appropriate pedagogical strategies for teaching a range of abilities, experiences and interests inclusively:

Pat: “As many specialists as possible, and Keneti’s passion, enthused the kids, but some don’t know how to break it down for dancers and non- dancers. A hip hop specialist for our dance troupe—he was good teacher but didn’t know how to get them to perform it, so I had a lot of work at the end.”

Teaching understanding about culturally diverse dances, it became clear, was calling on skills, knowledge and experience that some teachers found outside their pedagogical range, and the alternatives were not always successful either. Overall, I feel that the teachers’ perceptions were a valid response to the practical and theoretical expectations of the UC strand, especially if we consider what is expected of teachers:

One thing that I would really like to emphasise is how these strands really interrelate. You’re not going to be doing UC without doing PK, DI, CI as well, but the temptation sometimes is to do the other three then we suddenly realise we haven’t done the UC strand. But the UC strand can often be the focus for what we do and integrated into the other parts of the scheme as well. This strand is not separate but needs to be integrated into units. So that we’re always aware of the context of whatever it is that we’re doing. (Liz, tertiary dance educator)

This observation, from a focus group discussion, is pivotal to how the strands, and theory and practice, are expected to integrate during teaching in relation to fully implementing the dance curriculum. The expectation to integrate strands raises various questions. For instance, how, in the PK strand, learning a few ‘moves’ is unlikely to provide a sufficient

theoretical base from which to develop understanding about culturally different dances. However, as with many issues connected with this topic, a counterpoint position often arises, and here it takes the form of a realisation that learning movements from a particular dance can help to develop understanding when experienced alongside complementary theoretical understandings. The following description provides some clues as to how theory can be made culturally and historically meaningful during the physical experience of dancing:

In teaching Tongan dance it's best to teach our ancient dance first. Firstly, it is so easy for the dancers no matter how you've danced before because it's a sitting dance, therefore your legs don't have to do movements only the hands. You explain the dance and when the dances were introduced into Tonga... actually it's a borrowed dance, our ancient dance, that's during the peak of our empire, the Tongan Empire. And we borrowed those dances and it marks a history, it marks a time for Tonga, how Tonga at that time has been. Within that it gives the student a feel of what we're doing I think... but they have that feeling of being dominated by a little kingdom and they come from somewhere else to bring their best food and they have to smile although they are colonised. Those kids will feel what it was like and that brings out the spontaneity in Tongan dance. This makes the emotions and I've noticed it works. (Tongan dance specialist, Niulala Helu in the dance specialist focus group)

In describing how he teaches, taking into account the physical needs of the learners alongside the socio-historical and cultural significances of the dances, Helu's teaching is clearly based on a culturally informed perspective. It blends the PK, CI and UC strands. His description provides some important insights, particularly with regard to how culturally informed and informative teaching of this kind situates

dancing as part of a living oral heritage carried by dance specialists from specific communities.

There is, I feel, a real need to examine the complexities that can arise when teaching for the development of understanding about dance as different cultural terrains are traversed, and especially when, in fusion dance, the cultural boundaries between them can become permeable, semi-permeable or remain intransigent. Tanemahuta Gray, one of the directors of Kōwhiti, for instance, teaches Koorari, a contemporary kapa haka form in which Mau Rakau (taiaha), contemporary dance and hip hop are fused. It also provides basic Māori language skills. It is such cultural boundaries and possible fusions into which the paper now journeys. The difficulties that the teachers talked about, I argue, could be exacerbated when it comes to teaching about intercultural, fusion dance, and in the next section I discuss why this may be so when teaching creative dance, which all the teachers in my study were including in their teaching.

Teaching creative dance and making fusion dance

In this section, I consider how, when the DI and UC curriculum strands interface in teaching creative dance the outcome could support and inform teaching the making of fusion dance. Remembering that Eurocentric creative dance, as an embodied legacy from western dance education, was likely to be more familiar for teachers in my study than teaching culturally diverse dances, it is not surprising that, from all the three sets of data, they appeared to be relatively comfortable with teaching it. Creative dance appeared in the data as improvising using Laban's movement concepts, sometimes along with everyday imagery and ideas for imaginative stimulus and use of choreographic devices. Laban's terms are known in the *NZC* as the Dance Elements, and they appear in the document as part of the Practical

Knowledge (PK) in Dance strand, where they are depicted as useful for exploring personal dance vocabulary.

In the curriculum, however, these terminologies receive no acknowledgement of their cultural source, making them, and the creative learning activities associated with them, in effect contextless. In this way, the theory of the Dance Elements is thoroughly integrated into practice on the pages of the curriculum document, arguably, in such a way that it seems almost invisible in comparison to the theoretical expectations of the UC strand. With such theory hidden in the curriculum page, it is not really surprising that the teachers in my study were teaching creative dance from within a practice/theory split, that is to say without any of the contextual background attached to the practice of creative dance from within embodied legacies of a western dance education paradigm. This strategy would indeed save teachers time in terms of preparation and teaching. The Eurocentric ideology of the creative individual can, it appears, permeate dance education from within its progressive, liberal educational paradigm to the possible marginalisation of other cultural worldviews on making dance. This problem could, I suggest, be addressed by including some contextual understanding of dance education itself when teaching creative dance, integrating the DI and UC strands.

In curriculum terms, if creative dance in the DI strand remains separate from the UC strand it could become a hegemonic force, concealing and /or marginalising cultural differences in the process of making dance. I suggest that recognising all dance making as being culturally contextual could inform teaching about making culturally different dances, offer deserved recognition and support to the dancers of minority cultures, and contribute towards sustainability of the dances within educational settings and the dance world more generally.

The connected issue of making fusion dances seems to present an opportunity for scrutiny of how these might be

structured and / or created in ways that can be culturally different from the western creative dance model. A recent example of fusion dance, which could be most helpful in guiding teachers in teaching the making of fusion dance, can be found in *Taniwha Loong* (2012, Tanemahuta Gray), produced for the Chinese New Year Festival in Wellington. As creative director, Gray, of Kōwhiti Productions, worked closely with the Festival director Linda Lim, and other teachers and dance specialists from local Māori and Chinese cultural communities.



Figure 1: *Taniwha Loong*. Chinese New Year Festival. Photo: Neil McKenzie [Online Fotos](#)

In *Taniwha Loong*, the boundaries between educational and community contexts and related embodied practices become permeable, fusing Chinese Dragon Dance, Lion Dance and Shaolin martial arts with Māori wero, haka and taiaha. Welcoming visitors onto the land of tangata whenua (Te Ati-awa), this celebration of cultural diversity is contained within

the overall choreographic structure of a traditional powhiri. As with Gray's previous successful production of *Maui* (2005), *Taniwha Loong* could prove to be a popular resource for teachers, especially in highlighting the creative processes and approaches that were involved in making this fusion dance production. There are three particular features that strike me as helpful, amongst many others. First, Gray chooses the choreographic formal structure of the piece to be that of a powhiri and this represents, I suggest, a cultural approach that is different to western dance structures. On this point, developing understanding of culturally different approaches to making and form in dance arises as a possible area for further exciting research into Pacific dance. Second, Gray draws on similarities in movement style and spirituality of the two cultures' dances and martial arts, shaping seamless and culturally sensitive moments of blending, such as when the Chinese Lion picks up the taki (offering) from the challenge as a substitute for the picking up of lettuce leaves in the Chinese tradition.⁴ The community involvement and sharing of oral heritages is a third important dimension of the work that carries potential for teaching the making of fusion dance in schools, insofar as the collaboration that took place between various dance and martial arts specialists led to making a fusion dance balancing the two cultures; a cultural democracy was fabricated.

Gray has 17 years experience in dance in education, across all sectors from early childhood to tertiary, and his work has much to offer in terms of how teachers in schools can approach teaching creative dance that fuses culturally different dances in appropriate ways. His perspective seems to revolve around notions of bringing Māori haka, beliefs and epistemologies into the present via fusion dance, making them vibrant and expansive in the 'now', whilst following appropriate borrowing of other culturally shaped dance

⁴ A fuller description of *Taniwha Loong*, by Teurikore Biddle can be found in *DANZ Quarterly*, 7, Autumn 2012, pp. 2 – 3.

vocabularies, form and beliefs. A perspective that could be seen as responding to Sir Apirana Ngata's dream that the "worthwhile elements of the old Māori culture, the things that belong to this beautiful land, may be preserved for the New Zealand nation" (as cited in Armstrong, 1964, p. 8).

The implication for teachers, arising from this discussion, is that, if creating fusion dance is to make a contribution to meaningful, pluralist, culturally democratic and ethical dance education, cultural sensitivity to the dance making processes and structures as well as the dances' different traditions, movements and significances, in theory and in practice, are prerequisites. In relation to creative dance making, I suggest that there is a gap in teachers' understanding of its whakapapa. Indeed, filling this gap could help teachers who are comfortable with teaching creative dance, but struggle with knowledge and skills in culturally diverse dances, to integrate the DI and UC strands within their pedagogical range. In curriculum terms, when the DI and UC strands interact there can be some thought provoking crossings of cultural boundaries and terrains.

Teaching about intercultural, fusion dance

As ethnographer Franz Boas argued in 1888:

It is not too much to say that there is no people whose customs have developed uninfluenced by foreign culture, that has not borrowed arts and ideas which it has developed in its own way. (1940, p. 631)

Whilst recognising Boas' observation as potentially operational in teaching dance within the NZC, I suggest that teaching about fusion dance can require some sophisticated understanding of the accompanying contextual principles and significances. In my investigation, for instance, discriminating

between contemporary and fusion dance forms was problematic for some teachers, as revealed in this conversation between secondary school teachers in a focus group. I asked them to talk about their teaching in relation to the UC strand:

Gill: “Year ten, modified down for year seven, worked on kowhaiwhai patterns and looked at how we can work Māori dance movement in with those. Also looked at the Ministry of Education video, *Ihi FrenZi*,⁵ ballet with the Māori item and how the two things fuse together.... [Also] study of *tapa* cloths with Polynesian dance at year nine, and kowhaiwhai at year ten. Kowhaiwhai because I wanted to make sure there was a New Zealand element. Using NZ poetry, music.”

Jo: “Well, the way I use kowhaiwhai is a way which is more about how it makes you feel inside. Actually make the exact move with your body and then find the feeling, so it’s more a process...”

Gill: “That’s how I use it—they find movements that correspond to the pattern. How do I reproduce that?”

Jo: “So in some ways it’s more a DI than a UC? But there is a bit of background there when we do give some understanding.”

Pat: “Kowhaiwhai as stimulus only nothing else to do with Māori dance. We don’t have any Māori students either. Not that that means you can’t do it but it’s primarily a choreography unit.”

Gill: “Because my kowhaiwhai unit is a contemporary unit, but we borrow and it gets to that feel that dance does actually borrow from other places... but I actually went and saw the head of Māori language and said: ‘How do you feel about me using some of the Māori dance moves I’ve got here, I’ve got them on a sheet.’ And she said: ‘Yes, yes, no problem, as long as

⁵ *Ihi FrenZi*, was a bicultural project between the Royal New Zealand Ballet and kapa haka group Te Arawa, Te Matarae I Orehu. A video resource for year 9 to 13 students was produced (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2003).

they understand them.’ But it’s then putting them in, saying how do I take this, which I understand and recognise as a traditional move? How can I use this in a contemporary piece and then bring their other bits and pieces in. So the focus for the kowhaiwhai is of course haka, but what you’re trying to teach them is how to use the space and how to make pathways. But you’ve given them that as a sort of context and allowed them to pull those other things in.”

I have left this lengthy exchange intact because I think that the flow of their conversation makes clear how the teachers gradually realised in the course of the conversation that, although the starting points for making dance were Māori or Polynesian visual art, there was relatively little or no teaching about Māori, Polynesian or fusion dance contextually. The teacher’s comment that “in some ways it’s more a DI than a UC” draws attention to the possibility of conflating a western creative dance approach with understanding about cultural difference or fusion in *dance*. Playing the major role in learning activities, the process of developing dance ideas from the Dance Element of Space, as defined by Rudolf Laban’s movement analysis, to embody designs from Māori and Pacific visual art as movement patterns in the air or on the floor could be seen as a dominant cultural influence. A brief personal narrative may help to heighten awareness of the embodied legacy of Eurocentric creative dance that was operating in this focus group discussion. The book that was a major text during my undergraduate studies in the 1970s, features individual movement improvisations manipulating the abstract concept of the Dance Element of Space, as a dancer draws patterns in the air and on the floor (Preston, 1963). This improvisation may sound familiar to some dance educators, and is one that I have developed in my own teaching and choreography, albeit in different guises, for many years.

In terms of fusion dance, the Māori “dance moves”, mentioned in the teachers’ discussion, were taken from a text

and seem to be lesser emphasised than learning activities that lie within a western creative dance genre. Interestingly, the identification of the bicultural *Ihi FrenZi* professional dance theatre production as being fusion dance is questionable because the haka was performed in the first half of the show, and the ballet separately in the second. There was a short fusion section which made up the show's finale. As an example of fusion dance, the simple juxtaposition of two culturally different dances on the programme order could be viewed as a somewhat minimal approach to fusion.

Teachers who were working in this way could also be seen as taking their lead from work such as that of Māori contemporary dance choreographer, Moss Patterson. Some of them were familiar with his work, *Kura* (2006) that appears in the Ministry of Education DVD resource for years 9-13, *Dancemakers* (2006), in which six contemporary dances, choreographed for *Footnote Dance Company*, are featured and annotated with commentaries about their themes, creation and production. *Kura* is the third of a trilogy made for *Footnote* in which Patterson has used kowhaiwhai designs as stimulus for his choreography. On the DVD, Patterson describes the dance motifs as looping flicks and curls that have an ongoing, cyclical feel and make up pathways that the dancers move on. He also describes the importance of dancers supporting each other's heads and necks with the hands as being evocative of a sense of trust and connection. There is commentary about the use of the body's own momentum as being characteristic of western contemporary dance, and the lack of emphasis on the face and eyes. Such characteristics do not seem to resonate with particularly traditional Māori movement or beliefs, although there is an implication that the kowhaiwhai imagery carries a sense of linking past, present and future through blood ties of New Zealanders. A third intercultural dimension of *Kura* is the circular, flowing movement characteristic of the Japanese martial art, Aikido.

So, one may now ask, how does fusion fit into this matrix of dance making? Is this in fact western contemporary dance operating in its twentieth century modern process of appropriation as concomitant with ideologies of Eurocentric dance education? Where do the cultural beliefs that lay behind say Māori kowhaiwhai patterns figure in all of this, and how could that dimension of the dance's expression shift the cultural balance of what is being taught?

If we, however, shift attention to Māori contemporary dance choreography *Mauri*⁶ (2003, Stephen Bradshaw for *Atamira Dance Company*) we can identify a continuum for 'new' Māori dance defined, as Bradshaw articulates, as such because it is nourished by Māori spiritual beliefs and its own past. Moreover, *Mauri* fuses dance vocabularies from traditional Māori haka and waiata-ā-ringā with those characteristic of western contemporary dance, in what he has described, interestingly, as "a carving in free air" (as cited in Rae, 2003). Translated as life force or essence that exists in natural phenomenon and in people, Bradshaw has made substantial tracings of *Mauri* in relation to Māori theology (Bradshaw, S. personal communication, July 20, 2012). The Ministry of Education DVD resource for schools, *Contemporary Dance Aotearoa* (2004) features *Mauri*, and learning materials are on the TKI site. Bradshaw's work, as with Gray's *Taniwha Loong*, could be read as a hybrid that opens up a third cultural space. I look to perceptive commentary here from Māori visual arts educator, Jonathon Mane-Wheoki (2003) who, in his critique of the ANZC, claims that the document "does not recognise Pakeha arts as a localised acculturated identity" (p. 89). In the sense that contact between two cultures can bring about a two-way exchange of culture, his observation about Eurocentric arts in the curriculum is informative of the issues that are considered here. Bradshaw's, Gray's and Patterson's Māori contemporary dances could be

⁶ Three special performances of *Mauri* were given at the original Kōwhiti Festival, in June 2010, (performed by dancers from *Atamira*), on Te Marae at Te Papa Tongarewa.

interpreted as fusions of differing cultural equilibriums, and could make for some interesting further discussion and research. Such inquiry could also, as noted by Margaret Mutu (2004), facilitate such traditions and artists to become players in the dominant discourses in education and research.

In the online TKI learning materials, fusion dance appears as a standalone dance genre in relation to a DVD resource, *Discovering dance: Dance styles in Aotearoa New Zealand* (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2006). This resource was specifically aimed at supporting teachers to include the UC strand and it went free to all schools in New Zealand. It covers a wide range of culturally different dances. The predominant emphasis of these online learning materials in relation to fusion dance is on Indian classical dance as a part of the fusion that makes up Bollywood dancing. New Māori dance is mentioned in the form of a learning activity in which an ABC western musical and choreographic form mixes waiata-a-ringā (A), another dance genre e.g. contemporary dance (B) and a fusion of the two characteristic movements (C). Gray's Koorari could also fit well in this form based exercise in fusing current dance trends such as hip hop with traditional Māori movement.

The reader may now have a sense of how contentions and confusion could arise when fusion dance can fluctuate along what could be identified as a spectrum of how dances from different cultures are hybridised. On the one hand there seems to be some predominance of a western contemporary ideology of appropriation behind fusing dances, and on the other a hybrid wherein those same western creative principles vocabularies and approaches (and those of other cultural dances) are acculturated. To treat all fusion dances as the same could be seen as culturally misleading.

I argue, therefore, that for some teachers, such as those in my study, who may be struggling with teaching about culturally diverse dances because of lack of physical skill or time or cultural knowledge, teaching about fusion dance could

bring with it the need for understanding of not just one set of contextual perspectives but two, or maybe more. In the case of continuum, Māori contemporary dance a bicultural teaching agenda would be required, one wholly and suitably in keeping with the Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The teaching would need to address two different sets of: dance vocabularies; choreographic processes; socio-historical lineages; and cultural practices and ideologies, including possibly spiritual and other embodied significances. In fusions of multiple cultures the permutations add up as required. It seems that the challenges of teaching about the cultural significances of fusion dance, although answering a pluralist agenda, could demand a great deal of teachers in terms of theory and practice.

Teaching about traditional dance

At a time when the world of dance is, on the one hand, seemingly becoming more like fusion cookery there is another faction promoting isolation and preservation of tradition, and this brings to mind the potential for education to traffick in the signs of Other's cultures (Smith, 2005). In this section, the concept of tradition and its relation to fusion and innovation in dance are discussed, and another matrix of intersecting concerns for teachers is revealed. Challenges in identifying cultural differences or similarities when aspects of a dance are either recycled or transformed are examined. How, if at all, may fusion approaches to making dance and understanding about dance as cultural tradition co-exist in dance education? I suggest that in endeavouring to discern how the process of making dance could be culturally different may shed some light on a complex issue.

In my investigation, the group of Pacific dance specialists discussed their dance traditions at length, and provided some particularly informative data about how tradition and

innovation operate in their dance heritages. Valance Smith provided this Māori perspective:

That's where the importance of our kaumatua, our old people, come in because they're really the policemen of our culture. They make sure things are done this way. That's not to say they're traditionalists, they're very much in tune with change and all that. But still change has got to come from somewhere.

Sāmoan dance specialist, Keneti Muaiava gave a similar description of the source of his dance heritage that informed his teaching:

But what my argument is that there is something called traditional Sāmoan dance and that is what our parents were doing, y'know what I mean? It's like you can say that whether it was traditional or contemporary you had to learn what they were doing before you can teach the next generation. Today we're trying to get an advisory council put back in Sāmoa. They used to call them *tafugas*. You'd have *tafugas*—the carpenter, the fisherman; the best in the trade. My dad's brother I'm named after was a *tafuga* in dance. He was the first to do the knife dance in Sāmoa. Y'know the only reason they started doing the fire dance was because they lit both ends of the knife – and that's tourism y'know?

This attitude to dance ownership and innovation could sound, to some readers, like a somewhat paternalistic and restrictive practice to maintaining dance traditions. Others may feel affronted by the intervention of tourist market on the development of traditional Sāmoan *siva* (dance). However, such judgements can also be evaluated as those of outsiders, and the indigenous owners of the dances appear to see things quite differently.

Sensitivity surrounding fusion in relation to innovation in traditional dances is made all the more troublesome, in terms of teaching about dance contextually, if we consider that fusion can also play a part in making traditional dances:

To introduce a new movement into Tongan dance I usually look for a Sāmoan movement and I take that - a movement that can be moulded into Tongan. Now the last 10 years I've introduced into Tonga the *fatupasi*, the slap dance, slowly let it infiltrate little by little. Tonga has its own slap dance but only one standard style. You have to add more, but - how I did it? In Tonga there's only four basic motifs in our dance, and those four have created so many more. And we've borrowed movements from Fiji, and I've noticed when I was learning from the masters how they borrowed it... they mould it and to make it as a motif. So for example (*demonstrates with hand gesture*), this is a Tongan motif. So if you borrow something you mold it and make it as a motif. Don't just use it and make it look contemporary... and what I've noticed is that the oldies they like it because it is made as a motif. (Niulala Helu, in the dance specialist focus group).

I feel that this is one of the most telling commentaries that I collected because it captures a slice of a choreographer's process from a culture other than my own, and is one I had not heard described in this way before. It paints a picture of a dancer / choreographer who is informed about what innovation in his dance tradition involves, how when innovating Helu refers to the elders of his community, how slow the process of innovation can be, how his process differs from what is described as just looking 'contemporary', and, most informatively, how innovation in Tongan dance can involve intercultural fusion. The other dance specialists were in agreement with Helu that: "Contemporary style is fine so long as you have a traditional base. Otherwise you are..."

without authority and without mana” (Valance Smith). Compromising their dances was a topic that the three dance specialists’ spent some considerable time discussing. They were clearly concerned about what they considered to be inappropriate, intercultural dilution of their traditions with dance vocabulary from different cultures such as hip hop or Eurocentric contemporary dance. In this regard, social theorist and member of the Frankfurt School, Theodor Adorno’s recognition that once outside of the original context traditional culture is vulnerable, because “the pretext of improving, [may bring about] barbarically mutilating it” (1993, p. 223), certainly resonates. Or there could be a contention that “by domesticating the exotic... we are left not with an accessible exotic, but only with the domestic” (Fleming, 1995, p. 7).

Contentions that could arise around what may be seen as inappropriate appropriation are articulated by British classical Indian dance artist, Nina Rajarni, who deliberately avoids fusion. She is concerned about the possible extinction of Indian classical dance via the ever-increasingly popular dilution with western dance vocabularies, and so she retains a strictly traditional movement vocabulary, contextualised in contemporary stories and costumes reminiscent at times of a Bollywood narrative. In resisting the modern movement interlopers, Rajarni states: “Fusion is not wrong, but it’s wrong for me” (Winship, 2007).

Further insight into the dance specialists’ view of linking tradition, fusion and innovation is given in this discussion:

Keneti Muaiava: “I don’t want that argument about: ‘Oh, oh, why are you borrowing from that other tradition?’ Learn what you’re talking about first before you question it.”

Niulala Helu: “Will you be touching on cultural motion? Like what we’ve been touching on is the borrowing of movement. There is this big, big motion within Polynesian society.”

Valance Smith: “But that’s how our action song came about eh? Back in 1910 there was an exhibition down in Christchurch, and all these indigenous groups came along, and Māori were there, and some Pacific Island groups as well. We didn’t used to have uniform actions and then we saw a Cook Island group and a Tongan group perform. So we saw—all the visionaries of the time saw—uniform actions which very much portrayed the lyric, and so the very first action song for Māori was about the motion of ocean and the sharing of each other y’know. That’s important, not to be static and idle in time and space, but y’know evolving – survive actually.”

In this conversation, it becomes clear that intercultural borrowing between different Pacific Island dances is common practice that has its own culturally specific boundaries. Niulala Helu’s description of a surprise encounter in Auckland with an elderly Sāmoan woman, who had worked with Queen Salote in Tonga, further highlights diffusion of authentic dance heritages across Polynesian islands, and how also dance specialists such as Helu source their cultural knowledge and innovatory processes from living heritages in their communities:

She told me [about] when she first learned the Sāmoan *tau l’uga*, in 1926. But they mould it into Tongan.... Queen Salote always maintained that Tongans owe a lot to Sāmoa and she embraced the Sāmoans.... She used to have Sāmoans coming to Tonga all the time and through that they learned and they moulded that slowly.

He learnt that she was one of the first Tongan dancers to learn the *tau l’uga*, and his commentary is telling in terms of a specific intercultural exchange. From this perspective, culturally informed and informative teaching is situated in

dancing as part of a living oral heritage as possessed by dance specialists from life in their own communities. Access to such information for teachers in schools could prove challenging.

Similar clarity about tradition and change also featured in Keneti Muaiava's description of how innovation in *sasa* can only be achieved properly "once every stone has been turned over", indicating that appropriate innovation is found in the minutiae of the *sasa* dance vocabulary, as known to experienced practitioners in that genre. Muaiava reiterated: "Yeah, there's nooks and crannies all over the place. You've just got to know how to get there." From this perspective, a prerequisite to innovation would be some rote learning of culturally specific dance vocabulary, annotated by concepts of cultural significance and appropriateness and, as mentioned above, these were the areas with which some teachers in my study struggled.

The dance specialists' worldview has some sound reasoning behind it when we consider their concerns about how their traditional innovative approaches are susceptible to appropriation by others. Niulala Helu's description of meeting a Tongan man who had been providing dance repertoire for a local church group exposed concern about the maintenance of appropriate innovation in dance traditions in *his own* community, intraculturally:

What is Tongan dance when it is taught? The last five, six years every Tom, Dick and Harry is claiming that this is Tongan dance so the debate right now is which one is correct? Funnily enough yesterday a cousin invited me for a barbeque. There was this Tongan guy—he told me that he borrowed the words from 15 different songs and borrowed the movements! Apparently he has about 15 videotapes and he watches them and takes words and the movements. Now, that's what's happening now with our dance! And then he asked me for advice. So I told him; the first advice is to go and learn compositions from the 1920s to the

1960s.... He says: 'But I have a business to run.' So [I said] 'You have to choose.' This was just yesterday and that is an example of what Tongan dance is now.

In my investigation, teachers in the focus groups used words such as “honouring”, “authenticating”, “respecting”, and making sure to avoid “pilfering” someone else’s culture. The teachers also discussed the importance of acquiring appropriate advice to authenticate culturally sensitive teaching strategies when working with Maōri heritage was as described here by intermediate teacher Max:

I have a Maōri woman comes into school just to check on things I’m doing from time to time. I said to her, ‘Look I want to work on a haka.’ She said to ensure that the actions go with the words’ meaning. So things have really freed up. I remember trying that a few years ago, and you weren’t allowed to. You had to have permission.

Another issue raised by Max was for the teaching itself to be culturally relevant in terms of making the learning meaningful:

My main goal offers something more—with kapa haka it’s creating a group that work together.... Celebrating Maōridom—the action songs are a vehicle for celebrating that togetherness, that awareness.

The underpinning communal values of kapa haka, as captured in this statement, emphasise bringing the performers together and these have been recognised as being an essential part of New Zealand dance education (Bolwell, 1998; Melchior, 2011).

Two of the secondary school unit plans that were submitted with the questionnaires worked on NCEA

Achievement Standards in performance of Māori kapa haka, (rakau) and Sāmoan *sasa*. Both of these dances were taught by visiting guest specialists and allowed for some personal creative input from the students, although within certain cultural restrictions, as advised by the respective guests. For example, one teacher wrote about checking with a visiting Māori dance specialist about “tikanga... when developing moves to make sure they were okay.” She also wrote about being aware of working in a “culturally sensitive” manner.

On the in-service course during the peer teaching assessment, some of the teachers were successful in combining innovation within parameters of traditional dances. For instance, Lulu, a Cook Island dancer and primary school teacher, led a lesson in which after learning some traditional Cook Island dance vocabulary the teacher-learners were supported to create their own actions to go with the song’s lyrics as well as include known traditional movements. In another group, primary school teachers Areni and Flo also taught dances based on their indigenous cultural knowledge and expertise. They showed how they fused Tongan and Sāmoan hand gestures whilst also highlighting the subtle differences between the two styles in the use of the finger gestures.

However, other teachers seemed uncertain about tradition and its relationship with innovation and intercultural fusion, as summed up during a focus group by secondary school teacher Jo:

For me it’s fusion, and I’m not qualified to say what is traditional. I mean that’s a whole other argument. ‘What is traditional dance?’ Um, it’s that whole thing that was talked about at the conference of course. I use *tapa* and so it’s definitely fusion, because I’m not focusing on the genre itself. I’m more focusing on what they can make up from the stimulus.

Using Sāmoan *tapa* cloth designs as a stimulus for Eurocentric creative dance, as mentioned here and in the previous section, is quite different from innovation in Sāmoan traditional *siva*, or fusing dances from the two Polynesian cultures. Understanding about the relationship between hybridity and tradition can be nuanced, and the question then arises how, in their daily teaching, teachers may implement the differences between western appropriation of others' dances or acculturation by others as they teach about fusion dance.

In my study, when responses indicated that culturally relevant innovation was active, as with Niulala Helu's reflections, it became clear that traditions are not unchanging, but that understanding how it is appropriate to change them depends on a deep knowledge of what they are in the first place; a strategy also apparent in Gray's *Taniwha Loong*. The view that transformation and recycling of the old within more of the old is less emphasised in the face of fusion with the new, and the concerns for sustainability of traditional dances, and the dancers who dance them, are important concerns of this paper. If making new dances is to be seen as important in teaching about culturally different dances, and I question if it is, then consideration of the effects of recycling of more of the old within the old, rather than fusion with the new, could be a helpful strategy for teachers. I emphasise that with some traditional, innovatory practices *less is more*, and innovation is not judged by *how many* differences make it new but by the *intracultural*, relative quality, as judged by people from that culture.

So, clues are provided as to both how and who may be best positioned to discern between and teach about culturally different dances, or which is traditional or fusion, and if fusion, within which cultural 'continuum' it may or may not be primarily embodied and owned. If innovatory practices in making dance can hinge on specific customary heritages, and I think that they can, then possible relationships between

tradition, fusion and innovation can become a necessary part of teaching that relates to the UC strand, and making dances in the DI strand requires circumspect treatment. I feel that these are important considerations that intersect with teaching about culturally different dances and their associated cultural boundaries that may be crossed freely or enforced by customs control.

Implications

In this final section, drawing on the above discussion, questions are raised around who may be able to: provide best practice in teaching about culturally different dances; discern what is traditional; create dances and fuse in culturally appropriate ways; and how such people may be best supported in educational settings. It is important to point out that some of the teachers in my study were providing quality teaching about dance as expected by the *NZC*. My concern is providing for teachers who feel that they need extra expertise and support, or for provision of value added teaching that draws on the substantial DVD and online resources that are already in circulation, as provided at substantial cost and effort by the Ministry of Education.

Asking the question: “What are our responsibilities to the people whose lives and cultures we study?” (Frosch, 1999, p. 269) offers dance education a starting point for further reflection in terms of how to ethically accommodate the cultural owners of the dances, and who teaches what in educational settings. Such matters were clearly of concern to the dance specialists in my study, who talked about who should be teaching dances from their culture, and the qualifications and experience that may be considered appropriate. Kapa haka specialist, Valance Smith suggested “5,000 hours” as the time necessary for total immersion in a culture, which would provide sufficient experience to obtain a qualification to teach. The opportunity to honour individuals

who are expert in their own specific dances is, I contend, a crucial consideration because an insider view may be surprisingly different, for instance, teaching dance *itself* can become a cultural issue, as kapa haka expert Valance Smith explains:

Yeah when you're in that environment, though, you're pretty much confined within the framework of the curriculum. Unfortunately, a lot of what you're going to teach is going to be based on stuff like this (*indicates to the list of curriculum objectives*), but like I said the dance would probably be one of the last things I would teach. When we're trying to teach new students about Māori culture for the very first time we have a holistic approach to dance which is the whole culture and so, take powhiri as an example, being informed and uninformed of the correct procedures and tikanga around the marae.

Thinking back to the popular strategy of guest specialists that teachers in my study used to supplement their own pedagogical range, reintroduces the difficulties that resulted in terms of inappropriate teaching styles. Providing for classes that are mixed in terms of interest, motivation, culture and so forth is not the same as teaching groups who choose to attend, and who may be working for competition or towards examinations in dance. However, are such difficulties avoidable if more of a team-teaching or partnership model were to be applied? In my study, some teachers on the in-service course adopted a team approach as they organised themselves for the peer teaching assignment, describing it as: "Working as a group was a little like planning in a syndicate". Tasks shared in groups included: physical skill teaching; framing questions; producing learning materials; writing up the planning in terms that implemented the ANZC; resource provision; second language use; and advising on the physical learning experiences from a learner's perspective. A mini-

syndicate model could help teachers to build productive partnerships with guest teachers. In the words of tertiary dance educator Liz, the teachers in schools have a number of important roles to play when hosting guest specialists:

Guest expert-teachers-responsibilities? Pay them.
Have kids prepared for what the person does-goals.
Support the kids and visitor-reflect on goals,
management of class. Participate, learn alongside
children and showing value of the expertise.

This list represents a raft of roles and responsibilities for teachers which could help towards bridging the gap, as discussed earlier, that can arise for guests who are unfamiliar with teaching from an inclusive paradigm as operational in dance education in schools. Investing time into establishing teaching partnerships, pre-planning and teaching together, for instance, could be mutually worthwhile.

This situation brings to notice another possibility that guest specialists may be looking for ways that they can improve their pedagogical range so that they can make a more appropriate contribution in formal educational settings. Currently, this would involve extensive study in tertiary teacher education, and financial restraints could be problematic in that these dance artists may not necessarily be in domestic situations that could allow pursuit of such courses. Moreover, as dance artists, their artistry and community involvement are their points of difference, and their strengths, so reducing that portfolio could be counterproductive for everyone.

The possible advantages of dance artists teaching in relation to DVDs and other resources which focus on their specific choreographic works include learners' engaging with a culturally informed blend of the physical and cultural understandings. Bearing in mind that it is unlikely that any single artist can visit all schools, the DVDs and online

resources remain vital as core to support learning experiences. Perhaps, however, a greater push towards formalising and funding connections between TKI and DVD resources and a dance artist's availability for teaching that specifically relates to their own creative works could be a way of supporting the dance specialists, and also of increasing quality provision of teaching about culturally diverse dances in schools. Such formal connections could increase communication between schools and artists more than the occasional ones that are described here by Gray:

It is via word of mouth and people contacting me by email, after I have met them teaching at teachers' conferences (like the TRCC conferences or DANZ workshops and purchasers of the Maui resource kits), is where I tend to pick up freelance contract work in schools. I haven't pushed hard to find extra contract teaching work, but with more focused commitment to promote my courses within schools, I am sure that I would be able to pick up some more short term teaching contracts in this fashion. (Gray, T., personal communication, July 24, 2012)

'DANZ in Schools LEOTC' (learning experiences outside the classroom), as supported by the Ministry of Education, is a supportive scheme in this regard, connecting experienced dance artists to work in schools. Similarly, the New Zealand Ministry of Education online register of dance specialists *CAFÉ*, (*Community Artists for Education*)⁷ also helps to create awareness of dance specialists who are interested in working in schools. However, in the *CAFÉ* scheme screening for authenticity and guidelines for payment of the guests are still the responsibilities of individual schools.

⁷ <http://artsonline2.tki.org.nz/arts-cafe/considerations.php>

Teachers in my study, however, raised concerns about their budgets to pay visitors. The problem of a lack of funds was implicit in one teacher's explanation of how: "We chose people who agreed to come for free!" Here Jo, one of the secondary teachers, explains her budget situation:

I'm not keen on teaching Polynesian dancing because I don't have the knowledge. I'm lucky—I've got a school that give me \$450 for guests to come in. That only equates to 9 hours. Oh—that was for last year, this year they've upped it to \$700. So, I mean that's giving me 14 hours of specialists at around \$50 an hour. This is enough because the kids only need a two hour workshop.

The intermediate and primary school teachers' focus groups also provided information about teachers' budgets to pay for dance resources and guest teachers.

Max: "\$2000, dance; \$2000 drama and another \$1500 for the kapa haka—large school."

Anne: "Mine's \$300. I did try and put in for \$2000, but they gave me 150 and so I upped it to \$300."

Brenda: "We have an activities budget for the class—parent paid."

Teachers also mentioned how the dance budget and staffing ratios were often less than that given to the other arts. Financial concerns that compounded the difficulties in providing a range of culturally different dances included finding money to pay guests from low budgets, and uncertainty about appropriate rates of pay and the amount of time guests are given to teach.

Payment and the lack of time to teach their indigenous dances is something that concerned the dance specialists in my study. They drew attention to the need for more time to teach and I came to realise that they were operating a teach-and-run strategy in the school visits; two hour workshops for \$100 (based on Jo's figures above). I suggest that Ministry of Education could provide some guidelines for rates of pay and the time best suited for certain activities for guest dance specialists, and in turn these could assist in informing the

setting of budgets for dance departments. A combination of lack of dance expertise *and* money could present some teachers in schools with considerable challenges in terms of providing learning experiences in and about a range of culturally different dances. For teachers in schools dealing with these intersecting fiscal, temporal, pedagogical and authentication issues, in their busy daily schedules, it seems that very little is straightforward when it comes to providing a culturally diverse range of dances and teaching about them.

In closing, I draw attention to the issues covered in this paper have multiple dimensions to them and that it has not been possible to present them fully. Perhaps one of the more important considerations emerging from this paper, however, is the opening for empirical research into best practice in teaching about culturally different dances. In what I see as a general need for increasing discourse about the impact of cultural diversity on teaching dance in schools, areas that could be exciting are teaching about and making fusion dance. I also see a need to investigate how specialist teachers could be supported to develop their pedagogy to teach traditional and fusion dances for formal educational settings, with a particular focus on the use of oral heritages that combine dancing with teaching about dance. Inclusion of the dance specialists who hold the cultural knowledge that is inherent in the pluralist underpinnings of dance in the NZC is as important, I contend, as including culturally diverse dances themselves because over time nurturing the living heritages makes a vital contribution to dance education that is sustainable, ethical and culturally democratic. I leave the last word to the late Christopher Hitchens (2011), who as for many troublesome issues had an uncanny way of finding the right words to capture an essence of a problem:

I affirm that the forces who regard pluralism as a virtue, “moderate” though that may make them sound, are far more profoundly revolutionary (and quite likely, over the long term, to make better anti-imperialists as well). (p. xviii)

References

- Adorno, T. (1993). *Minima Moralia* (1974). (E. F. N. Jephcott, Trans.). London: Verso.
- Armstrong, A. (1964). *Māori games and hakas: Instructions, words and actions*. Wellington, NZ: Reed.
- Ashley, L. (2005). *Dance sense* (2nd ed.). Tavistock, UK: Northcote House Publishers.
- Ashley, L. (2005a). *Dance theory & practice for teachers: Physical and performing skills*. Invercargill, NZ: Essential Resources.
- Ashley, L. (2007). The Youthanasia of dance: A research nexus diary of dance in tertiary education. *Waikato Journal of Education*, 13, 104–122.
- Ashley, L. (2008). *Essential guide to dance* (3rd ed.). London: Hodder Educational.
- Ashley, L. & Nakamura, A. (2011). Finding a balance: Dance making on a Bachelor of Dance programme in New Zealand. *Research in Dance Education* 12(3), 221–236. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14647893.2011.614329>
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination*. Texas: University of Texas Press.
- Barbour, K. (2004). Embodied ways of knowing. *Waikato Journal of Education*, 10, 227–238.
- Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The location of culture*. London: Routledge.
- Boas, F. (1940). *Race, language and culture*. New York: Macmillan.
- Bolwell, J. (1998). Into the light: An expanding vision of dance education. In S. B. Shapiro (Ed.), *Dance, power and difference* (pp. 75–95). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Buck, R. (2003). *Teachers and dance in the classroom: “So do I need my tutu?”* Unpublished doctoral thesis. University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand.
- Buckland, T. J. (Ed.). (2006). *Dancing from past to present: Nation, culture, identities*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Chakravorty, P. (2010). From interculturalism to historicism: Reflections on Indian dance. In A. Carter & J. O’Shea (Eds.), *Routledge dance studies reader* (2nd ed.) (pp. 273–283). London & New York: Routledge.
- Charmaz, K. (2003). Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (2nd ed.) (pp. 249–91). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Corbin, J. & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Fleming, B. (1995). Looking out: cultural imperatives in writing about World Dance. In D. Gere (Ed.), *Looking out: Perspectives on dance and criticism in a multicultural world* (pp. 1–21). New York: Schirmer Books.
- Frosch, J. D. (1999). Dance ethnography: Tracing the weave of the dance. In S. H. Fraleigh & P. Hanstein (Eds.), *Researching dance: Evolving modes of inquiry* (pp. 249–282). Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Grau, A. (1992). Intercultural research in the performing arts. *Dance Research Journal*, 10(3), 3–27.
- Grau, A. (2007). Dance, identity, and identification processes in the postcolonial world. In S. Franco & M. Nordera (Eds.), *Dance discourses: Keywords in dance research* (pp. 189–210). London: Routledge.
- H’Doubler, M. N. (1974). *Dance: A creative art experience*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Hitchens, C. (2011). *Arguably*. Sydney, Australia: Allen & Unwin.

- Hong-Joe, C. M. (2002). *Developing dance literacy in the postmodern: An approach to curriculum*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Griffith University, Queensland, Australia.
- Kaeppler, A. L. (2004). Recycling tradition: A Hawaiian case study. *Dance Chronicle*, 27(3), 293–311.
- Keali'inohomoku, J. W. (1983). An anthropologist looks at ballet as a form of ethnic dance. In R. Copeland, & M. Cohen (Eds.), *What is dance?* (pp. 533–549). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Laban, R. (1960). *The mastery of movement*. (Rev. ed. By L. Ullman). London: Macdonald Evans.
- Laban, R. (1988). *Modern educational dance* (3rd ed.). Plymouth, UK: Northcote House.
- Melchior, E. (2011). Culturally responsive dance pedagogy in the primary classroom. *Research in Dance Education*, 12(2), 119-135.
- New Zealand Ministry of Education. (1999). *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum: A background paper*. Retrieved November 22, 2007, from http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout_document&document
- New Zealand Ministry of Education. (2000). *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* (12711). Wellington: Learning Media.
- New Zealand Ministry of Education. (2003). *Ihi FrenZy: The making of a dance* (10666). Wellington: Educational Resources.
- New Zealand Ministry of Education. (2004). *Contemporary dance Aotearoa: three New Zealand dance works*. Wellington. Learning Media.
- New Zealand Ministry of Education. (2006). *Discovering dance: Dance styles in Aotearoa New Zealand*. Wellington: Learning Media.
- New Zealand Ministry of Education. (2007). *The New Zealand Curriculum* (32646). Wellington: Learning Media.
- Preston, V. (1963). *A handbook for modern educational dance*. London: Macdonald & Evans.
- Rae, B. (2003, April 2). Carving in the air. *The New Zealand Herald*, p. 8.
- Said, E. (1991). *Musical elaborations*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Sansom, A. (1999). The meaning of dance in early childhood. In S. Graham (Ed.), *Dance Research Forum: Collected Research Papers* (pp. 49–65). Auckland: Dance Aotearoa New Zealand.
- Sansom, A. (2011). *Movement and dance in young children's lives: Crossing the divide*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Smith, H. A. (2005). Peircian theory, psychosemiotics, and education. [Electronic version]. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 37(2), 191–206.
- Thwaites, T. (2003). Multiliteracies: A new paradigm for arts education. In T. Thwaites, (Ed.), *ACE Papers: Working Papers* from the Auckland College of Education (pp. 14–29). Auckland: Auckland College of Education.
- Varela, C. (1995). Cartesianism revisited: The ghost in the moving machine or the lived body. In B. Farnell (Ed.), *Human action signs in cultural context: the visible and invisible in movement and dance* (pp. 216–293). Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press.
- Williams, D. (2004). *Anthropology and the dance: Ten lectures*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois.
- Williams, R. (1981). *Culture: Selected essays*. Glasgow: Fontana.
- Winship, L. (2007). Indian dance: Prize-winning classical choreography. Retrieved April 5, 2007, from

<http://enjoyment.independent.co.uk/theatre/features/article24154101.ece>

PETER CLEAVE AND TANEMAHUTA GRAY

Part Eight: Questions on Māui – One Man Against the Gods: Questions compiled by Peter Cleave and answered by Tanemahuta Gray

1: Why did you decide to perform about Māui?

The original idea for the production of “Māui – One Man Against The Gods” commenced with Te Ao Marama – The Awakening World, the creation story of our world through the lens of the Māori. From that beginning, the journey to bring in Māui’s epic life story and present it in a theatrical re-telling just unfolded as the ideas for the show continued to develop from Te Ao Marama, (our world’s first dawn and the development of new life).

What really captured me with Māui, was that being of both godly and human status (*ira atua* and *ira tangata*), he was an inherently interesting ancestor to delve into and to understand our own humanity through his incredible escapades and the humanistic emotional drive working within this charismatic tipuna of ours. I always felt that Māui Mata Waru (the eight faces of Māui) to me was the eight personality types of the human personality. Māui provides us with the most interesting insight into the human psyche, with his trickster personality and gregarious nature as a powerful advocate of human progress.

Māui’s spectacular feats to control the elements also provide a visual feast and an opportunity to stage these legends in spectacular ways. That has also been a great attraction to try and uplift the stories of this special tipuna and translate them in a way that the Maori spirit that resides

in them can be shared by all people who love to visit the theatre, and the magic that the theatrical artform can be applied to ideas and story-telling.

Finally, the telling of a parental love story for a wayward child who cannot be controlled provided a rich emotional tapestry for us to mine the challenges and heartache that parents feel raising and preparing their children for the big wide world.



Te Ao Marama – The world’s first dawn: Photographer:
Diederik van Heyningen, Lightworkx Photography

2: Why take Māui to the sky as in aerial dance?

The three dimensionality of Māui’s epic feats surmounting the most rigorous of elemental challenges, and godlike exchanges was the obvious factor in bringing Māui’s story to the air. I had never seen storytelling of our ancestors and gods done in an aerial manner before, so felt it would be a worthwhile exploration from previous interpretations of him in the

traditional haka performance styles we normally see him represented by.

Being able to fill the stage, and transform the performance space, and also to break the 4th wall and perform out beyond the proscenium arch have always intrigued me after my career performing with De La Guarda. However we initially conceived staging Māui in a warehouse setting, but it was David Inn's (CEO of both the New Zealand international and Auckland Festivals) that encouraged us to take it into a proscenium theatre, which was excellent advice. Finding a way for the aerialists to fly over the heads of the audiences was all about trying to get the audience to be interwoven within the elemental journey of Māui's life. Theatre to me is about risk, and what better way to create a kinaesthetic experience for a seat-bound audience than to have the aerial winds circling above their heads, in a dynamic manner to break into the audience's space.

The usage of fabric in the show, also allowed us to bring that kinaesthetic staging into the audience realm, especially with the "wave sheet" that flew over the heads of the audience from the Gods/Gallery to the pit. What I wished was for the audience to follow the foetus of Māui being handed into the ocean, and descend right down with him into the seas depths. It was a technical feat that I felt truly created a sense of awe in the audience that would ideally create an emotional connection of what would have been going through Māui's mind, as he descended into the oceans as a helpless infant. Connecting an audience's empathy with Māui's present feelings was the key driver to further developing a narrative and emotional connection with our audience, and utilising a large material transition to achieve that goal.

The aerial also allowed us to easily develop the characteristics of our elemental characters within the production, and gave us the opportunity to find new movement vocabulary, to enrich the qualities of the fire, wind and water elements that were choreographed aerially.



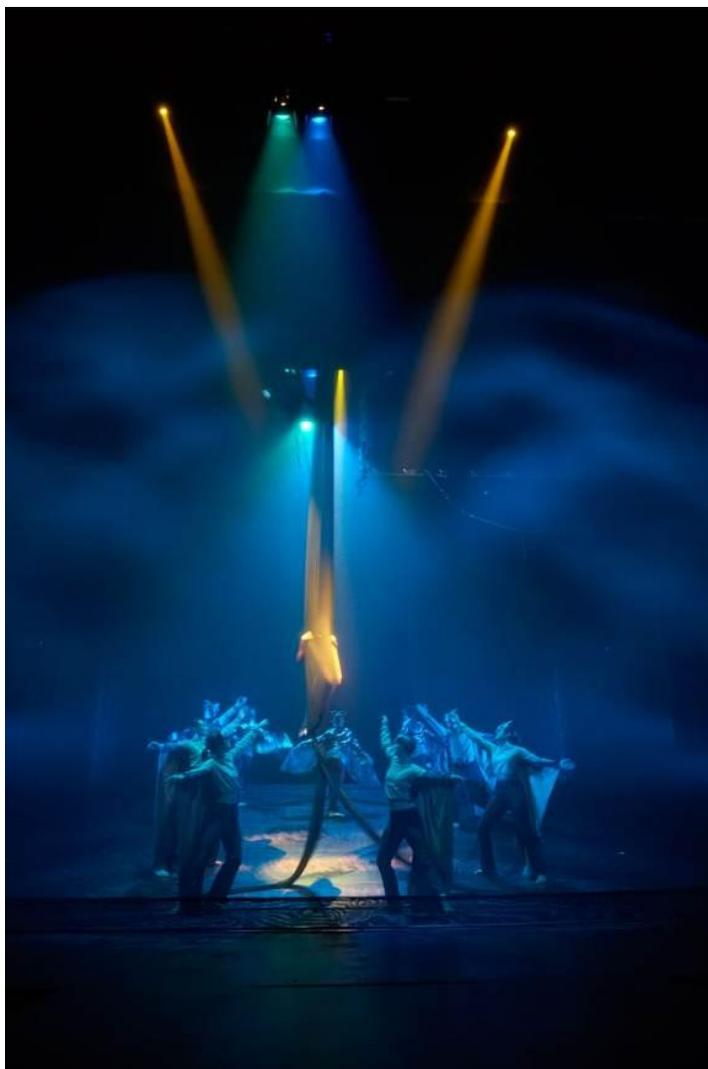
**Tama-Nui-Te-Rā (Sun God played by Te Kohe Tuhaka) and
Nga hau (The Winds)**

Photographer: Diederik van Heyningen, Lightworkx
Photography

3: The sea features in Maui myths. How do you deal with the sea from an aerial perspective?

In addition to the wave sheet explained above, the scene continued with the baby foetus of Māui descending into the water, and the fish and jelly-fish flying in the air, serve to both establish the water element, and secondly create a new womb for the baby. The jelly-fish were one of my favourite aerial threads to the production, as we worked with the climbers who were counter-balancing the jelly-fish, to create the motion as if they were pushing through the water, and then retracting back up again to build momentum, to descend deeper once more. The duet between climber and aerialist to create this quality, and the delicacy of the subtle manipulation of the hands and fingers of the performers gave such a strong image of the jelly-fish form of movement, right down to its tentacles.

The second scene with the capturing of Te-Ika-A-Māui (Māui's great fish being the North Island of New Zealand) was developed so that by the second outing of the production in Christchurch's Isaac Theatre Royal the elder brothers of Māui paddled their canoe (*waka*) and a silk sheet was sewn to the material canoe helping us to create the image of the canoe riding the waves. It was a strong way to open the show's second half, when our first attempt with dry ice was just not reliable enough to maintain the oceanic image we had originally hoped for. The sheet also allowed us to have performers underneath the material, to manipulate it in a way that waves would travel across the ocean, and build in intensity when the storms began to develop during the fish's capture. These storms were personified by our four winds (*ngā hau e whā*) which Māui harnessed in the production to pull up the great fish, and show his power to control the elements to his needs. The winds had grey material connected to them that were tied off into the pit, and it created an image of 4 elemental fishing lines (or whirlwinds protruding from the sea) hauling up the great fish of Māui!



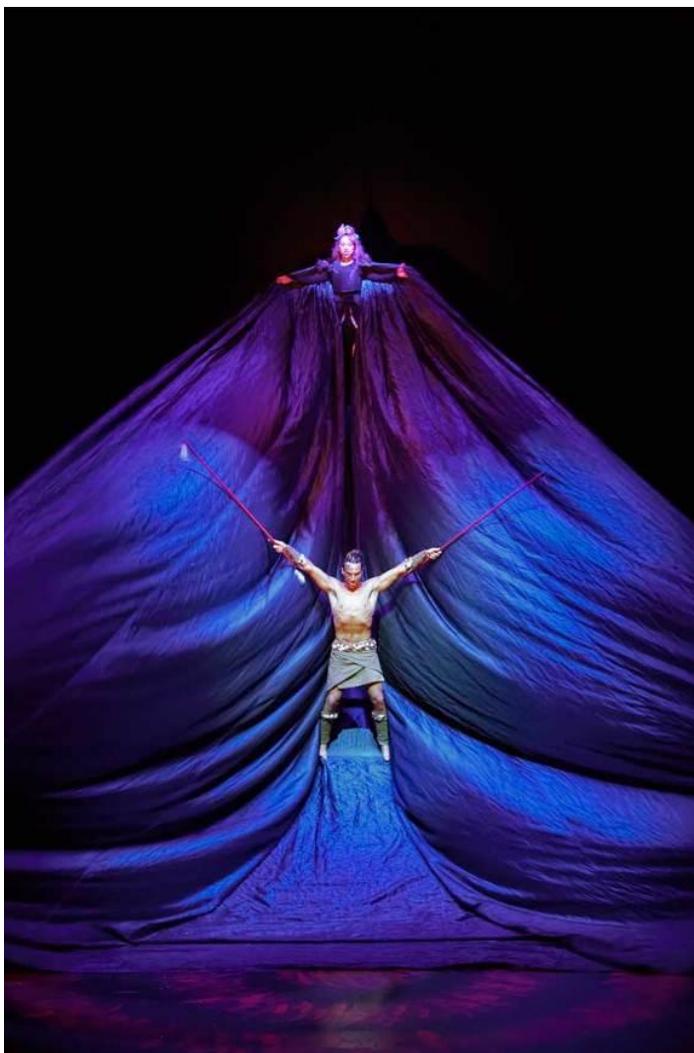
Māui in his underwater womb.

Photographer: Diederik van Heyningen, Lightworkx
Photography

4: If we think about the origin of death is there an application of Maui's death in Hine-Nui-Te-Pō in today's world?

I look at this question in regards to Māui's hubris. Māui is an ancestor and trickster who was always trying to defy mortal man's limits. He was extremely successful in so many of his feats; however there was the one limit he had no right to cross (defeating Hine-Nui-Te-Pō and establishing immortality for humankind). With this limit in mind, I look into our time period at the incredible excesses by the power-brokers within the hedge funds of the World banks that led to the 2008 financial global crisis. The arrogance to leverage 30 times the financial ledger as the Lehman brothers attempted shows a similar egregious hubris of these bankers to attempt to cross what was a totally unacceptable threshold.

Many people are suffering the effects of the greed and hubris of financial and political leaders and dictators where peoples' lives are merely pawns who are at the mercy of the decisions of these powerbrokers. Whereas Māui's instincts were for the long-term benefit of humankind, how many of our leaders are making decisions which have similar motives to what Māui was trying to achieve? Māui's sacrifice certainly wasn't with the same purpose as Jesus Christ's ultimate sacrifice for the "sins of humankind", but I believe there is a major difference to his pursuit of immortality, and belief in his right for it, than what I see as purely personal motivational greed by other supposed world leaders. Māui provided us with a self-sacrificing lesson in going beyond ones means. I don't believe our society is listening to or heeding these lessons.



Hine-Nui-Te-Pō (played by Toni Huata) and Māui (Tamati Patuwai).

Photographer: Diederik van Heyningen, Lightworkx
Photography

5: Māui pōtiki and Māui whakatoitoi; the idea of Maui as a cheeky, risk-taking, impudent youngest child. What application does this have to your performance, the aerial aspect of that for example?

Māui always uses his talents and his tenacity to achieve his means. However he is not remiss in utilising cheeky, devious, or arrogant behaviour to undertake the successful accomplishment of a task, or to cause misfortune and distress to another person or being. In our presentation of Māui we didn't focus on all the stories that paint Māui in a bad light like the transforming of Irawaru into a dog, or creating the stretched neck of a turkey as I have heard in other kōrero. However his youngest born position in his family is used to present the determination of a youngster to outdo his older siblings. His will to succeed is strong, and he will use any means (cheeky or otherwise), to run the ship. This is strongly demonstrated in his hiding on his brothers' waka (canoe), and then bending the will of his brothers to support him in catching the biggest fish known to humankind.

The major story against authority was Māui and Tama-Nui-Te-Rā (the Sun God). In the development of the story, we took some artistic licence by making Tama-Nui-Te-Rā the surrogate father of Māui, with an ambition to experience the joy of having a human child which was beyond his capabilities as a Deity (Tama-Nui-Te-Rā in essence undertook to be the morphed roles of Māui's real father Makea-Tutara and his Great Uncle or Tohunga who raised him called Tama Nui ki te Rangī or Irawhaki in other kōrero). The similar names of Tama-Nui-Te-Rā and Tama Nui Ki Te Rangī always resounded that this might have been a possibility, as it was the sun that played a major role in keeping the stillborn Māui alive and developing into a newborn, to be discovered and raised by Tama Nui Ki Te Rangī. So they both played very important life-giving roles. In our version, with Tama-Nui-Te-Rā raising Maui through his childhood and guiding him on his life's path, it set up the key narrative of a child's rebellion against its parent, to

find a place for itself and identity within the cosmos. Just as the primordial gods of Tāne, Tangaroa and Tūmataunga had rebelled against their parents, to find more space to breathe and move and flourish (the creation story of Te Ao Marama), so Māui followed the same pattern against Tama-Nui-Te-Rā. Māui trapped Rā in a strongly made net, and by emasculating him, obtained his power of flight. The aerial 3-Dimensional flying allowed us to show Māui at the height of his full powers, and to take his headspace into a belief that he could tackle the insurmountable challenge of immortality by killing Hine-Nui-Te-Pō from within her body, reversing the birth process in his entrance into her birth canal and repelling death forever.

The youngest born tends to have a great chance to show their flair, as the elder siblings have paved the way for them to copy and learn from their mistakes, and learn their talents quickly to navigate life's challenges more easily. I think Māui is a good example of this empowerment of the youngest child.



Māui 3D fly, having emasculated the powers of Rā.

Photographer: Diederik van Heyningen, Lightworkx
Photography

6: Māui the inventor- he invented things that people needed such as harnessing light and fire - the slowing down of the sun, a place to live as in fishing up the North Island, and other things. What need to be invented today?

Māui in my opinion is the greatest of tipuna, who was able to harness the natural elements and understand and utilise them to control one's environment. The show presented the children's storybook versions of this tipuna, but one needs to look deeper into the more resounding messages that the great achievements of Māui are possibly trying to represent.

The trapping and slowing of the sun god Tama-Nui-Te-Rā is a metaphor for understanding the annual calendar cycle, and the best times to plant, nurture and collect crops for survival of the people. The fishing up of the North Island of New Zealand is a metaphor for the star signs and navigational pathways to follow to arrive at New Zealand from the Pacific Islands. The fish is literally fished up over the horizon as it comes into view from the prow of the waka that journeyed to Aotearoa /New Zealand. Stories are always the best way to pass on key knowledge and points of reference to achieve certain tasks, and Māui provides us with many of these guiding points and life's lessons. A further example given to me by Toa Waaka (who played our original Tama-Nui-Te-Rā) is the brothers cutting up of the land and creating mountains and valleys being a metaphor for not knowing what your neighbour is doing on the other side of the mountain, and thus mistrust is built by not being able to see each other's daily activity.

Māui provides the vital message that we must continue to look to nature for our answers in how to tread correctly in this world. In a time of major climate change, and excess usage of the world's resources, Māui would inspire us to look at nature and see how we can invent ideas to store the carbon as cleverly as the oceans and the trees are currently aiding us in doing this job. How can our atua (gods) provide insight and awareness into preserving the food resources for ours and

future generations? The knowledge is there from our past, but radical steps need to be taken with the world's population heading towards 9 billion by 2050. As Maui harnessed fire from Mahuika, or trapped the sun to control the time of day, isn't that an obvious statement to collect the daily free offering of power of the sun in a highly sophisticated way, and eliminate the need for any nuclear, coal, oil or any other climate change impacting electricity sourcing. We certainly have the brain capacity to find a way to make this one source feed all our needs, but the will is not there. This refers once more to the greed and hubris of mankind, being unable to move forward as a collective for the greater good of all species on the planet. The Māori and other indigenous cultures have the divine awareness, that the human form is the tēina (younger sibling) of our older species of animals (tuākana) on the planet. We must understand our place, and guide the world with the gifts of thought and creativity that we have received over our species development.

7: Similarly what about Māui the explorer? What spaces need to be explored today? Cyberspace?

A key question for me in looking at this question is the travelling that Māui did, when squeezed between the legs of Hine-Nui-Te-Pō, and his journey into another dimension of existence. Where did Māui travel in this journey between his life and death?

Can this transformation into new dimensions be our answer to solving realistic universal space travel to other planets, solar systems and galaxies, by bending dimensions and moving millions of light-years away with ease (through worm holes or other such pathways within our Universe). If our planets species are to survive the limited time span of our sun, we need to harness these abilities to a truly refined level to be true explorers of the Universe. I think our ancient cultures and civilisations have information that was further

ahead than our current thinking is, and it is worth investigating the astral travelling abilities of our tipuna.

If we also look at his transformative powers to polymorph into birds and seas creatures throughout his lifetime, there is an element of ancestral abilities that has been lost to us. Our tipuna were known to ride whales, and communicate easily with animals. We appear to have lost the finely tuned skills of our ancestors in today's existence. I think there is a psychic and telepathic connection that could be re-harnessed to further develop the untapped percentage of our brain that we haven't used yet. Einstein mentioned that we use only 5-10% of our brain's capacity. Tapping into the other 90-95% could provide mind-boggling discoveries and paths that will take our human interest in exploration into a whole new stratosphere.

There may be answers through our discovery of cyberspace and the creation of the internet, but my instinct is that this discovery is taking us towards becoming more robotic or android in our makeup, and losing our senses and connection with nature. However nature would certainly have provided the blueprint and insight for the internet and World Wide Web to be created in the first place. It has many more major discoveries in store for us to explore, and we must not lose touch with Nature's ongoing lessons of discovery.

8: Māui as an isolate, a loner. How did you deal with Māui's relationships with other people such as his older brothers, Mahuika, Hine nui te pō and others?

Our staging of Māui's legends had its main narrative drive as a parental love story and tragedy of losing a child. In the show the parental figures in Maui's life are his mother (Taranga) and surrogate father (Tama-Nui-Te-Rā). Taranga loses her son twice and Rā once respectively. They are not able to convince their beloved son to work within the mortal limits of mankind, and both live with the knowledge that whatever they had done, Maui had an ambition, drive and solo determination to go his

own way. It was this self-determination that is such a powerful driver in the human experience to go out and pursue one's dreams, and Māui is a great example of this.

Māui had an interesting relationship with Hine-Nui-Te-Pō as from his infancy he knew that she held a sway over the decision to keep him alive or dead. It was his life's ambitions to take the control of his destiny into his own hands and find a way to diminish Hine's power over him. Destiny always has a way of catching up with one, but Maui's method to try and circumnavigate that was to tackle the challenges he faced in an individualistic way in most cases. It was his at times shocking actions that bred fear in those around him (and awe and respect), and this also developed his loner type antics, as his brothers had no wish to be around him. We focused the story towards the point that the brothers did not like the fact that his talents were notably superior to theirs, so they wouldn't allow him any chance to shine ahead of them. This increased Maui's individualistic streak, and deviousness (as noted by hiding in the boys waka), to outdo his brothers, and earn their respect out of fear and awe. That Māui even dared to face death and challenge Hine-Nui-Te-Pō halfway through the second half was the turning point for the brothers to accede the mantle as head of the family to Māui, and journey along his destructive path until they themselves were not needed anymore. His loner style increases as his hubris increases, and Māui loses a clear picture of himself, whereas those around him can easily sense the fall from grace that he is setting himself up for.

Finally in regards to Mahuika the fire goddess, we focused on the characterizations of her fingernails of flame, and in particular a fire princess, whom Maui dances a ground and aerial tango with. In this duet, we see the first signs of the sensuality and sexual physicality that Māui possesses, but also his psychopathic tendencies to extinguish her life without a moment's remorse. This act is enacted in a bid for Māui to entice the raging inferno he needs Mahuika to release to claim

fire for humanity for eternity. It is generally amongst our most lonely and isolated members of society that we tend to find the most psychopathic members of society, (David Gray and the Aramoana tragedy for example), and one of Maui's eight faces allows us a window to see this darker side of society. Our challenge is to make sure that the community stays connected and does its best to eliminate the isolation and disenfranchisement of its members.



Māui Pae (played by Michael J Koloi) and Māui in battle.

Photographer: Diederik van Heyningen, Lightworkx

Photography

9: Do you see continuity from one myth to another or do you see each myth as being discrete?

For our production of “Māui – One Man Against The Gods” we felt it was imperative to bring the narrative together under one arc of Māui's life, and understand his personal development as he tackled each different task. This was quite different from most of the written or performance formats of Māui which looked at each myth as an episodic sequence, without the

connection of where Māui the person was at, when he undertook these great feats. However the best book I read during my research of Māui that took a comprehensive narrative journey is Hana Hiraina Erlbeck's superb "Māui : the legend of the demi-god Māui Tikitiki-a-Taranga, (Auckland , NZ : Reed 2000). This book provided a superb narrative of Māui, building a path of how to combine the myths and show Māui's life story develop at the same time.

Trying to build a production in this manner is much more demanding and tricky, as one can easily get caught up in the story-telling with a dead end that doesn't make sense, and have to go back to the drawing board again. I was fortunate to develop the story with my co-writers Geoff Pinfield and Andre Anderson, and we spent several years mulling over the story, and re-drafting it again and again after each season, so that it would make more sense to us. Our ambition was to make Māui as real and thus empathetic to our audience, and Tamati Patuwai and the rest of our cast and artistic team were extremely helpful in helping us understand and represent our tipuna in the strongest manner possible. That understanding continues to this very day, as a little more is revealed through conversations and experiences and realisations that my ongoing life path provides along this creative journey.

10: How, as a performer did you re-create Maui's face?

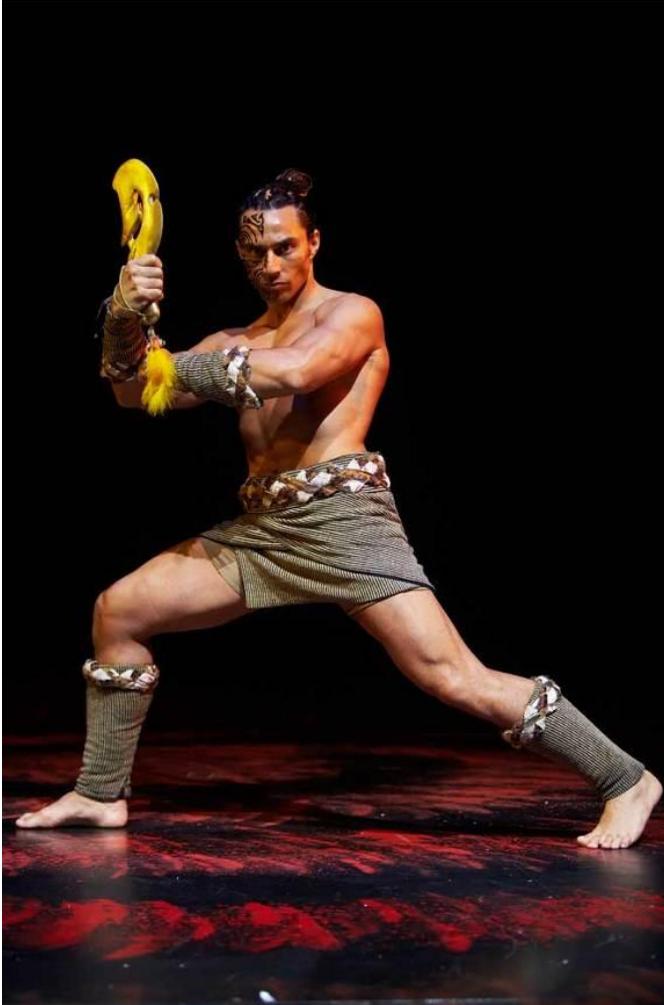
On a physical and visual level, we worked with tā-moko that was designed by Hemi Te Peeti and constructed by Robini Peachey using stencils and glitter to bring forth the demi-god status of Māui. Only half his face was to have moko, relating to his connections as a god to the legend of Uetonga and Niwareka; but it also provided a chance to visually show the two worlds he had to move within. He was never fully comfortable in either world (another reason for his loner personality), and we wanted the facial moko to help enhance that internal battle going on within him.

The strongest development of Māui's characterizations however came from our superb lead in Tamati Patuwai. Tamati used his knowledge and incredible acting talents to discover the essence of Māui and bring his wairua and mauri into the theatre and rehearsal rooms with us. There were times onstage in our season in Auckland where I watched Tamati disappear and Māui morph into his place. Such was the potency of his performance, and ability to walk the threshold between playing a character and incarnating a tipuna. It was an intense experience to be a part of, and the journey was certainly never easy. All I was guided by was a faith that we had to bring forth the essence of this revered tipuna in a way that made sense to the whole team, and through humility, open the channel to the secrets and magic and mana of this great tipuna.

Further developing the "face of Māui" we went deeper into his physical and emotional being, and plotted the points in the production when Maui's energy centre started in his head, with the youth and lightness of ambition, (with limited worldly awareness), and then as the show progressed, the weight of his performance sunk lower into his throat, heart, guts, and finally his pelvis area. This I believe was how we created such a transformation of Maui from the loveable and charismatic personality into a toxic, arrogant and power-consuming character, which helped define the essence of man's decline in moral status.

In the building of Māui, and in trying to bring the production to life, there was always an ancestral support around me, guiding my steps to help bring this story to fruition. When the support waned, I knew I was making the wrong decisions somewhere. When the support was strong, I knew we must be heading in the right direction, with the right integrity to our tipuna. I certainly felt that I was merely the caretaker, and that Māui was happy for me to play a role in presenting one version of his life story. Whether that continues to be the case in the future will be a mystery, but I feel

extremely humbled and blessed to have been able to walk this far with our tipuna sharing a tiny portion of his immense wisdom with us.



Māui-tikitiki-a-Taranga (Tamati Patuwai)

Photographer: Diederik van Heyningen, Lightworkx
Photography

11: What were the costumes and props used in your performance and why did you select them?

Māui used a myriad of costumes and props in the production, and our costume designer Gillie Coxill and her fabulous team of costume constructors did an incredible job to bring all the ensemble elements and lead characters to life. We had over 400 costume component parts with our Pou whakairo ensemble figures having from 7-9 parts to them per performer. These included an exquisitely carved head piece and body parts by Winiata Tapsell, who carved them out of polystyrene for the mould, and then used clay foam to build the hundreds of masks and designs.

Another costume highlight was the 9 metre by 14 metre long cape of Hine-Nui-Te-Pō which altered the stage spacing whenever she was on stage. It truly was a remarkable feat of construction by Gillie and her team to make the idea of Hine's all-encompassing power alter the actual stage space.

The knit-weave of the brother's and Maui's costumes was also a very clever and modern strategy by Gillie brought to the Pākē kārure (shoulder capes) and rāpaki and tātua (panelled skirt and belt). The different sizes of the brothers' costumes showed the comparative status from tuakana (eldest) to tēina youngest brothers.

We also utilised a lot of silk to build the fabric set /props that in essence were manipulated by the performers both on and off-stage to create the pillars of fire, and ocean waves and bolts of light from Ra's domain. The plan for the soft set materials was to allow the stage space to be altered, with the bonus that the material could be folded up and not take up too much weight or size in the overall scale of a touring production.

Other key props in the production were the heru (hair comb) that Taranga wrapped the baby Māui within, and he wore throughout the show, which allowed her to identify him as her baby she had cast out into the ocean. Finally there was the kotiate-inspired patu (club) that Rā gave to Māui on his

journeys that aided him to control the winds, and pull up the great fish (Te-Ika-A-Māui). This patu (named Manaia Ki Te Rangi) was a replacement for the jawbone of Muri-Ranga-Whenua in the stories of Māui, as we decided against adding that story into our narrative for this production, to minimise the amount of lead characters in the production, who appeared once, and never appeared again.



Nga Pou Whakairo – The carved pou figure ensemble (Sacha Copland, Taiaroa Royal & Claire Lissaman in the front row).

Photographer: Diederik van Heyningen, Lightworkx
Photography

12: What is the contemporary relevance of Māui?

Māui is our guide as to all the magnificent values and ambitions that humankind should strive for, and at the same time, a warning of all our inherent weaknesses and failings as a human race. He provides us with a mirror to ourselves, whatever the generation, to know what is socially acceptable, and what isn't. The trickster archetype is experienced in many

cultures, and performance artforms as a conscience (like Lear's Fool) for keeping our hubris in check.

Māui is heroic, and it is how our lives should be lead with that charismatic heroism.

13: Who are the culture heroes today that are like Māui? Superman? Neo from the Matrix? Ko wai ranei?

One needs to look at the super-heroes, and see whether they also hold the charismatic and heroic values alongside the hubris and arrogance that is Maui's downfall. The closest for me would actually be the recent versions of Batman. The character of Bruce Wayne has an arrogance in his daily persona that is utilised to keep people off his scent that he is indeed Batman. However as Batman he has a hugely humble personality, and prepared to sacrifice his own good name to benefit Gotham City. He also undertakes heroic feats, whilst being misunderstood by the local populace. He is a contrived loner, and many areas of his personality could tie in with Māui and his humanistic characteristics. A key ingredient missing however is that he has no godly birthright, and Māui is never pretending to be somebody else.

Perhaps the closest super hero to Māui with a godly and human birthright is Hercules. Their similarities have given rise for Māui to be called the Hercules of the Pacific.



Māui training with Rā in the sun realm.

Photographer: Diederik van Heyningen, Lightworkx
Photography

14: What made your treatment of Maui a hit? How did you manage to renew an interest in Maui?

A few things I think helped make Māui draw such a positive response from the audiences (over 76,000) who have experienced elements of the live show and many thousands more from the DVD of the production. Firstly the aerial element was unique, and it was an extremely strong aerial show, with the first time in the world that aerials had been placed beyond the proscenium arch in a lyric theatre.

Secondly, we were bringing exciting and bold Māori theatre and story-telling, into the theatrical venues usually graced by Ballet, Opera and Musical Theatre. Once the positive word of mouth came out about the show, people who normally would not make the excursion into the Māori world to have a Māori experience, were able to have one in the comfort of the theatre that they would see their usual theatrical fare within. This provided a great bridge-building opportunity for the country, as Māori also came into the theatre (when usually only 4% of

Māori attend theatre), to experience our own stories alongside seasoned theatre attendees and other sectors of our society.

Thirdly, the different artforms and styles in the production meant there was quite possibly something for everyone's taste in the theatre.

In the end however, it is extremely hard to work out why it was successful when other productions are not. My instinct is that Māui himself was behind the surge in publicity and interest by the people who wanted to connect with the stories of their childhood in a unique and different way.



Hine-Nui-Te-Pō (played by Olivia Violet-Robinson) coming to claim Māui from his mother Taranga (played by Toni Huata).

Photographer: Diederik van Heyningen, Lightworkx
Photography

15: Is there something universal about Maui so that audiences in, for example, Las Vegas, can relate to his character and the myths associated with him?

I would like to think that there is something universal about Māui that would relate to all peoples around the world, regardless of their culture. We all have super heroes, and we all have a trickster element in our culture. We all love to laugh and cry and Māui provides us with these experiences.

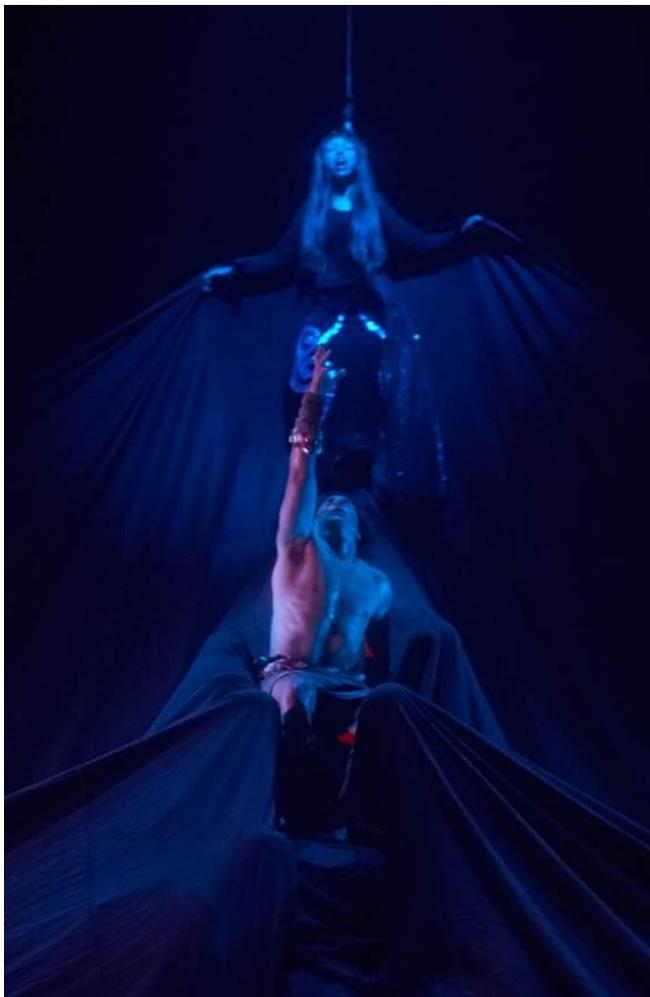
If the cultures that come to see Māui are interested in understanding human values, then Māui would provide a strong point of reference to themselves I would believe.

However it is the spiritual connection within the work where I think the production can resonate on a level of connection that is based on mutual respect of connectivity to a divine element and ancestral bond. These are unifying forces to connect people all over the world who wish to be integrated in sharing a oneness of experience together.

Finally, just the fact that the myths of Māui stretch as far west as Thailand and across to the West Coast of South America, and many of the Pacific Island Groups in between helps us to realise what a huge oceanic expanse of recognition that this great tipuna of the Pacific has. It is quite fitting to name him our Hercules of the Pacific!

Naaku iti nei

Tanemahuta Gray



The death of Māui within Hine-Nui-Te-Po's embrace.

Photographer: Diederik van Heyningen, Lightworkx
Photography

Section Nine: Concluding comments

Koowhiti has achieved a central position in the arts in New Zealand and that is described in Part Two and attested by those who came and where the events were held.

There are some analogies with contemporary dance elsewhere. The beginning of BLAKDANCE in Australia happened with an event in 2005 entitled *Creating Pathways*. In 2012 the people involved in *Koowhiti* are creating pathways for the future development of Maori contemporary dance in Aotearoa/New Zealand. *Koowhiti* provides a platform for that development.

One of those pathways is to do with reflection and there are suggestions of an academic symposium to be held in 2013 under the auspices of *Koowhiti*. This Special Collection is itself a reflective exercise and this may be seen in Linda Ashley's article in Part Seven on dance education and in Tanemahuta Gray's writing in *Questions on Maui* in Part Eight.

There comes a point when a consideration of the achievement so far and on its own might be made and this has been attempted in this Special Collection.

As well as the description of *Koowhiti 2010* and *2011* there has been Jennifer Stevenson's consideration of Aerial Dance and the work of Tanemahuta Gray in Part Three. Here there is an achievement, one of several, that together take *Koowhiti* into a unique position globally as well as locally.

The Dance Biographies in Sections Four, Five and Six offer a resource to students of dance. They provide a set of portals into the world of contemporary and other dance forms in Aotearoa and the world as well as giving an idea of the achievements by individuals and groups over the last half century.

It may be that *Koowhiti* allowed Maori contemporary dance to become more widely recognised. In 2010 *Koowhiti* had a central position in the Matariki festival at Te Papa and in 2011 it was one of the major arts events run in conjunction with the

Rugby World Cup.

Along with this it might be suggested that *Koowhiti* has forged a place for Maori contemporary dance in matters of race relations, biculturalism and general community relations. One thinks of the descriptions in Part Two of Gregory Fortuin, a former race relations conciliator, and his speech at *Koowhiti 2010* and the speeches made by Kerry Prendergast and Celia Wade Brown at *Koowhiti 2011* and *2011*. And then there are the community service awards for principals in *Koowhiti* described in the Dance Biographies.

In this Special Collection Dance Biographies have been set out in Parts Four, Five and Six. These give a personal dimension and a scope for the contributions made.

With regard to the photographs and links in this Special Collection. it is said that every picture tells a story and a picture is worth a thousand words. Music and the spoken word provide more texture and the advantage in an online journal such as tekaharoa.com is that these can be seen in the same space as the written text. The Editors of this Special Collection thank the Editorial Board of tekaharoa.com for the opportunity to present.

