

Ōrotokare

Art, Story, Motion

A Brief Summary

1. *Ōrotokare: Art, Story, Motion* is a charitable trust dedicated to exploring and advancing 'indigenous theatre and performing arts'.
2. The work of the trust is to explore the traditional *whare tapere* (pā based houses of entertainment, storytelling and dance) and use this as an inspiration and a starting point for a new indigenous theatre.
3. The ethos of the trust is to be experimental, exploratory and *avant garde* seeking to find new ways of performing, new expressions of traditional ideas and innovative solutions to performance issues. In this way, *Ōrotokare* will find its distinctive niche in the arts landscape.
4. *Ōrotokare* maintains six programme areas arising from six traditional performing arts forms (or groups of forms). The trust explores each of these forms individually, experimenting with ideas found in traditional literature and their implications for performance. The six forms are:
 - *Ngā Haka* (Dance)
 - *Ngā Waiata* (Songs and song poetry)
 - *Ngā Kōrero* (Stories and Storytelling)
 - *Ngā Taonga Pūoro* (Musical Instruments)
 - *Ngā Taonga o Wharawhara* (adornments and clothing for performance)
 - *Ngā Tākaro* (games and amusements)
5. Additionally, the following themes and programme areas are included:
 - *Te Whare Tapere: Toward an Indigenous Theatre* – bringing the individual forms into a coherent whole, exploring *kawa/ritual*, architecture and performance spaces and localised storytelling, exploring a philosophy of indigeneity and indigenous theatre
 - *The Waituhi Project: Use of Forms from Other Traditions and Special Projects* – using forms from other traditions to assist with the development of the new *whare tapere* and its forms, allowing for collaborations and partnerships to take place
 - *Communications and Publications* – publishing and making available material about the work of *Ōrotokare*
6. The genesis of the trust is found in a doctoral dissertation entitled 'Te Whare Tapere: Towards a Model for Māori Performing Arts' by Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal. The inspiration and starting point for the work of the trust lies in this doctoral presentation of the old and new *whare tapere*.
7. Finally, the work of the trust will be inspired and informed by an emerging philosophy of 'indigenous theatre'. This philosophy will develop ideas pertaining to the nature of the performer, the role of

performing arts and theatre in society, the act of creation, performance spaces and localities and more.

8. Further information can be obtained from Dr. Charles Royal (Te Ahukaramū) PO Box 12446, Thorndon, Wellington.

What kinds of projects will Ōrotokare convene?

Light as a model for Dance

Te Haka-a-Tānerore is the paragon of male dance. *Te Haka-a-Hineruhi* is the model for excellent female dance. Each term concerns light – the former concerns the behaviour of light on a very hot day, the latter is the kind of light seen upon the dew in a crisp, clear morning. Ōrotokare will explore the question, what does it mean to use the behaviour of light as a model for male and female dance?

Sounds of the Natural World

In performing waiata, mōteatea and karakia, performers are encouraged to model themselves upon sounds of the natural world. For example, bird song is widely referred to as the model for singing (ngā manu tioriori) and for oratory (ngā manu kōrero). Other sounds of the natural world include the sound of rapids on a river (water across pebbles) a model for *pātete* (chants recited at pace), wind moving through valleys, heart beats, surf upon the beach and breath to name a few. What is this sound world which rises spontaneously from the natural world out of which human crafted sound might be fashioned?

Ngā Taonga o Wharawhara: Wearable Art and other Adornments

Ōrotokare will explore the use of traditional plant varieties to create clothing for performing purposes. These include the *paki*, the *maro*, bird feathers such as *te rautitapu*, cloaks and other types of adornments (such as *whakakai*, items suspended from the ear and *matakanohi*, masks) which concern the transformation of the individual into a bird, a lizard, a tree or a character.

Ngā Kakara, Ngā Panipani: Perfumes and Makeups

The traditional whare tapere employed varieties of makeups (panipani) and perfumes (kakara). These included the *raukawa*, *akerautangi* and *rauāmoa*. Ōrotokare will explore traditional plant resources as they may be used as makeups and perfumes.

Kawa: Rituals and Performance Venues

Much attention will also be paid the spaces and places in which performances may take place. This means looking at both the time aspects of performance (ritual, kawa) and its spatial aspects. Ōrotokare will experiment with types of *kawa* appropriate to a given space, time and purpose.

Kia kawea tātou e te rēhia: a Festival of Games and Amusements

A festival of games and amusements is also envisaged. The traditional whare tapere was replete with games such as wrestling (mamau) tōreherehe (toboggan), whakahoro taratahi (kite flying), mū torere (game resembling draughts), taupiripiri (foot race in couples) and many more.

Explanation concerning the name 'Ōrotokare'

Ōrotokare is the name of a locality, once the home of the 19th century Ngāti Raukawa ancestor Hūkiki Te Ahukaramū. Located west of Muhunua, Ōhau (Horowhenua), Ōrotokare was a small lake that became the home of Te Ahukaramū following his migration (and that of his people) from Maungatautari in the Waikato region.

The name Ōrotokare resonates with the term *kare-ā-roto* which is used to denote the passions of the heart. A *kare-ā-roto* is a person who has captured one's affections. Here Te Rangikāheke of Te Arawa uses the term in his telling of the love story of Hinemoa and Tūtānekai:

*Ano te rangi o te koauau o Tutānekai, me he ru na ano e ueue ana i
a tuawahine kia haere atu ki te kare-a-roto a tona ngakau
The melody of Tūtānekai's flute stirred her within to go to the
person who moved her heart.*

(Taken from *Nga Mahi a nga Tupuna*, by George Grey, Third Edition, Thomas Avery and Sons Ltd 1928.)

Website: www.orotokare.org.nz