



Te Whare Tapere

Towards Indigenous Theatre
and Performing Arts

Te Ahukaramū
Charles Royal

The Traditional *Whare Tapere*

- Pā based houses of story telling, dance, games, amusements
- Various games included spinning tops, musical instruments, stilts and more
- Key mythic narrative concerns the death of Kae following the performance of a troupe of women in the whare tapere

The First Troupe of Performers

deities of the whare tapere

- Raukatauri, *goddess flute music*
- Raukatamea
- Ruhiruhi
- Itiiti
- Rekareka
- Ruahau-a-Tangaroa
- others

Instruments and Games

- pūtōrino, long flute
- kōauau, short flute
- tokere, castanet type instrument
- tī-ringaringa, hand game
- papaki hand game
- tī-rakau, hand game with sticks
- pakuru, chanting with sticks
- porotītī, spinning instrument

Dances

- waitoremi
- anaana
- puapua
- oni
- pōtēteke

The Dance of Tānerore

(the) trembling of the hands was an imitation of the dancing of Tane-rore, son of Hine-Raumati... and Ra...Ra lived half of the year with one of his wives, Hine Takurua the Winter Maid and the other half with Hine Raumati, the Summer Maid. Hine Takurua's home is in the ocean and her main task is that of preserver of the food the ocean produces, while Hine Raumati's duty is to ripen the foods of the land so that as her hour of departure draws near her bounty may be harvested for the nourishment of the children of men... "The dancing of Tane-rore", they would say. "See him tremble and quiver." Tane-rore, the paragon dancers

Te Kahureremoa

And so the woman rises to dance, as soon as she extends her arms exclamations of surprise and admiration can be heard it is as though her hands will leave her body, her fingers arch to touch the back of her hands; it is as though the suppleness of Paka's daughter has come from constant training and massage, she is the epitome of feminine grace and beauty in the dance; there are many sayings concerning the nobility, the sound tawa has its qualities, the inferior tawa has its qualities so it is said of the high born when they rise to haka that they have their style and the low-born have theirs, their hands look awkward...

19th Century European Descriptions

...in the evening a great feast was given to the people by Aimy (sic). During the greater part of the night, the women kept dancing a dance which is called Kane Kane (sic), and is seldom performed except when large parties are met together. While dancing it, they stood all in a row, several of them holding muskets over their heads; and their movements were accompanied by the singing of several of the men; for they have no kind of music in this country...

19th Century European Descriptions

The place of the concert and ball room with us was taken among the Maoris by the House of Amusement (whare-tapere or whare-matoro or whare-karioi). These particular houses were set apart for the young people at night in order that the sports and games, often carried on till dawn, might not disturb the rest of the elders. Here went on the different dances, etc., natural to the youth all the world over, and herein also most the wooing took place that resulted in marriages of affection. Dancing (haka, kanikani, etc.) was not performed in the manner of European dances in which partners of opposite sexes swing or step together. It was altogether posture dancing, generally by a considerable number of persons, sometimes all of one sex, sometimes with both. The principal of these (haka) was in high estimation, and the whole night through relays of dancers might exhibit their skill and elegance in different varieties of the dance. ...

Six Forms

- Ngā Kōrero, *storytelling, narratives*
- Ngā Waiata, *songs*
- Ngā Haka, *dances*
- Ngā Taonga Pūoro, *musical instruments*
- Ngā Taonga-o-Wharawhara, *adornments*
- Ngā Tākaro, *games and amusements*

Ngā Kōrero – Stories

- Many different kinds of stories
- Types of storytellers
- Terminology about the quality of performances

Ngā Waiata – Songs

- Many kinds of songs for every aspect of life
- Performance quality
- Circumstances of composition and performance
- Individuals and groups

Ngā Haka - Dances

- Haka does *not* mean war dance
- Haka is a generic term for dance
- *Peruperu* is the true war dance
- Light as a model for dance
- Models in stories pertaining to Tānerore, Hineruhi, Māui, Tinirau and more

Ngā Taonga Pūoro – Musical Instruments

- Renaissance led by Richard Nunns and Dr Hirini Melbourne of Ngāi Tūhoe
- Many are aerophones
- Many instruments were beaten and swung
- In a state of rediscovery

Ngā Taonga-o-Wharawhara Adornments

- Makeups (panipani)
- Perfumes (kakara)
- Feathers (huia, toroa, kōtuku)
- Clothing (paki whero)
- Items held in the hand (māipi)

Ngā Tākaro - games

- Te Whai-a-Māui (cat's cradle)
- Perepere (darts)
- Karetao (puppets)
- Mamau (wrestling)
- Tū mātia (spear throwing)
- Whakahoro taratahi (kite flying)
- Moari (swinging from a tree)



Ōrotokare: Art, Story, Motion

A Trust dedicated to indigenous performing arts and theatre

- Dedicated to exploring the six forms/categories of activities described
- An additional activity will consider how these various items can be brought together to form a 'theatre'
- The Trust will also be free to employ forms from other traditions to assist in the development of this new expression of the *whare tapere*

Towards a Philosophy of Indigenuity

- Humans are naturally indigenous to the environments in which they dwell
- These environments are linguistic, cultural, social, economic etc.
- An indigenous culture is particular about its relationship with the natural world



Haka Innovation Workshops 2006

- to explore perspectives on haka-dance found in iwi histories and traditions, particularly those not fully expressed in haka-dance today
- to use these perspectives to inspire the composition and performance of new haka-dance



Some Key Themes

- Understanding the relationship between collective and individual dance
- Rebalancing masculine and feminine in haka-dance
- Utilising elements of the natural world as models for dance
- Developing haka for the whare, the ‘interior’

Ōrotokare: Art, Story, Motion Trust

PO Box 54142, Mana

Porirua City

www.orotokare.org.nz

Email: charles@mkta.co.nz

