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**Kia Tūhono i te Taiao e ngā Toi anō:
Re-connecting with the Natural World via
Experiential Multi-Disciplinary Assemblages.**

An exegesis presented in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of

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Karakia

Kia whakarongo ake au
ki te tangi a te manu nei
a te Mātui

Tu-i, Tu-i, Tu-i tuia

Tuia i runga

Tuia i raro

Tuia i waho

Tuia i roto

Tuia i te here tangata

Ka rongo te po!

Ka rongo te ao!

Tuia e te muka tangata

I takea mai i Hawaikinui

I Hawaikiroa

I Hawaikipamamao

Te Hono i wairua

Ki te Whaiao

Ki te Ao Marama

Tihe Mauriora!

The very senses of my body
are drawn to the cry of a bird

It is the Mātui

Calling tu-i, tu-i, tuituia

That it be woven above

That is be enmeshed below

That it be entwined without

That it be embraced within

Interlaced as with the threads of humanity

Let it be sensed in the night

Let it be felt in the light of day

Let it be embodied in the image of all beings

Born of the Great Hawaiki

Born of the Long Hawaiki

Born of the Distant Hawaiki

From the merging of the spirits

Out into the light

Into the world of light

Behold the essence of life, the ethos of life, the
principle of life. I sneeze and am born!¹

¹ Ancient karakia - Origin and author unknown. However the mention of the now extinct New Zealand Bush Wren (mātui/mātuhi) alludes to the notion that this karakia was composed sometime after māori settlement circa.1350 A.D.

Pepeha: Ko wai ahau?

Ko Mataatua taku waka

Ko Maungapohatu taku maunga

Ko Rangitaiki te Awa

Ko Tuhoe, Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāi Te Rangi ngā iwi.

Ko Ngāti Whare, Ko Ngāi Te Reu, Ngāto Rakaipaaka ngā hapū

Ko Waikotikoti, Ko Tatahoata, Ko Tānenuiārangi ngā marae

Ko Warren Douglas Maxwell ahau.

'Papatūānuku is our mother and deserves our love and respect. She is a living organism with her own biological systems for all her children whether man, animal, bird, tree, grass, microbes or insects.'

Maori Marsden – The Woven Universe².

² Maori Marsden, *The Woven Universe; Selected writings of Rev. Maori Marsden*. (Otaki: The Estate of Rev. Marsden. 2003), 45.

Abstract

This exegesis looks to support an inspired line of critical inquiry and music praxis through an indigenous lens. This is to enable and reaffirm holistic *re-connecting* to the natural world via multi-media assemblage centralising music composition, geo-placement, indigenous protocols and narratives.

I acknowledge the privilege of being offered this opportunity to explore, compose and assemble. I use this opportunity to recognise and redress my own disconnection from Te Taiao (the natural environment) and exploit this transformative opportunity to innovate artistically and holistically. As the Post-COVID, un-settled *hue* continues to hover over us daily, I am compelled to be ever more mindful and present; mindful of environment, *tohu* (signs), breath, people, movements and moments in my day.

I also take this opportunity to challenge New Zealand education music pedagogies. Currently, the most favoured instruction in New Zealand is by learning to read and comprehend western music theory. My intent here does not aim to disparage western music theory, but to augment and supplement the potentials of current western music pedagogies by acknowledging and activating *iwi taketake*³ composition techniques and encouraging a “cultural resetting” with our natural environment. I suggest that investigation and application of indigenous knowledge systems (including connection to the natural world) in music praxis, and considerations in general, could encourage holistic benefits of associative, cognitive potentials within New Zealand’s modernity. And as the original muse for ancient humanity, the answers can surely be found in nature - we just need to listen.

³ *iwi taketake* – original, ancient, indigenous peoples. Williams, Herbert William, and Bp Herbert William Williams. *A dictionary of the Maori language*. (Wellington: Legislation Direct, Reprint 2017).

The Journey from Quaver to Seal song

*Without your own language you are forced to use the tools of the colonizer
to think, record and interpret your experiences.*

Edward Tatoosh⁴

Growing up in Whangarei during the 70's and 80's, the omnipresent world of music that shaped my formative musical pathways consisted almost entirely of Western popular music. I remember how those catchy pop hooks and repetitive mnemonic lyrics would be emanating constantly from a radio somewhere in the house, permeating the hallways and living areas of our humble home. Music seemed to be activated as some kind of cerebral filter that blocked out your overly-energetic thoughts or give us some sonic existential affirmation that you were not alone in the universe. Western music was/is everywhere.⁵

I always had to have a radio playing somewhere; in the car, at work, even pulsing quietly during the night beside my bed. At school your attraction to a certain music genre became a type of social commodity that defined your subscription into a particular sub-culture or clique, forming life long friends ... or other.

Enthused "metallers" with matted mullets and studded wrist bands celebrated glam rock groups like *Quiet Riot* and *Motley Crue*, parading an air of curated rebellion. Then there were the beat street, break-dance groups with over-sized, "Transformer-esque" portable boom-boxes and faux Adidas tracksuits. On one occasion, I distinctly remember a group of rebellious punks blasting Elvis Presley and the Sex Pistols from their car stereos as some kind of paradoxical statement. Then there was everyone else – mainstream radio, status quo accepting, pimply faced teenagers looking for belonging, acceptance and hopeful hedonistic realisations.

⁴ Anne Milne, *Colouring in White Spaces* (New York: Peter Lang, 2017), 58.

⁵ As a broad categorisation, I contextualise 'western' music as being composed using traditional 'western' music theories, with lyrics written mostly in the English language. I also suggest that 'western' music places minimal musical emphasis on indigenous instrumentation, structure, language, purpose or value.

In a foreword to Lucy Greens illuminating text *How Popular Musicians Learn*, Robert Fripp of King Crimson writes, “How we acquire a taste for music is largely determined by our cultural environment, including our educational institutions. But fundamentally we are called by the music that calls to us.”⁶ The only music that “called” to me at *that* time was the music that I had been exposed to: Western pop music. The synaptic impact of culture, community and environment has a hyper-influence over the creative individual. Timothy Morton refers to hyperobjects as “...things that do not rot in our life time.”⁷

Although te reo Māori and Sign language are acknowledged as official languages in Aotearoa and Te Tiriti o Waitangi espoused as a constitutional partnership between Tangata Whenua, the British monarchy, Western law and governance, the western juggernaut has *plowed* through the New Zealand landscape favouring all manner of Western epistemologies. However (via the snail-like pace of bureaucracy) after many years of impassioned cultural recompense from Māori leaders, activists, academics, kaumatua and kuia (many of whom have since passed), I believe New Zealand to be experiencing a gradual, meaningful, domestic acknowledgement of Māori epistemologies, principles and values in relation to science, health, education, philosophies and the arts.

The deeply profound and insightful research of Dr Anne Milnes’ *Colouring in White Spaces* generously provides a brutal honesty of both past and present New Zealand education curriculum across many fields of study as being systemically and politically biased towards Western post-industrial values and methodologies that marginalise indigenous practices and principles. She writes “New Zealand’s education system has been largely silent on the topic of ‘Whiteness’, white privilege and supremacy, and the Eurocentric nature of our schooling policy and practice.”⁸ Although numerous cross-generational complexities and negative impacts of colonisation to Māori ontologies have been widely acknowledged through Te Tiriti o Waitangi settlements and redress, there is still much to be activated towards re-balancing Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations and holistic understanding within our education system.

⁶ Robert Fripp, “Foreword,” in *How Popular Musicians Learn*, ed. Lucy Green (Aldershot, Ashgate Publishing, 2001).

⁷ Timothy Morton, *The ecological thought*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 130.

⁸ Anne Milne, *Colouring in the White Spaces*. (New York: Peter Laing, 2017), 5.

A recent shift in government legislation⁹ to teach New Zealand histories in our schools brings optimism to a potential embedding of indigenous knowledge systems and practices that could enable equitable shared pedagogies, enabling Māori to live and succeed as Māori.¹⁰



Author (seated front row centre) as first Alto Saxophonist: Whangarei High School Big Band, 1985.

As first Alto saxophonist performing in the Whangarei Boys High School Big Band, I enjoyed the comraderie of our large ensemble; with weekly ambitions to collectively realise the hypnotic grooves of Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller, Count Basie and Duke Ellington. Our passionate band leader, the late Jim Thorne (pictured above) would hand out the scores covered in quavers and crotchets, and away we went! The grooves were intoxicating to us impressionable young adolescents with hopes and dreams of collective cohesiveness from those ‘little black dots’ splattered across the stave. For me, Western music played a huge role in shaping those formative years and has been influential enough to have lured me into a modest career of what I term “sculpting the invisible”.

⁹ Gazette Editors, “New Zealand Histories to be taught in all schools”. *Education Gazette*. Posted October 24, 2019. <https://gazette.education.govt.nz/articles/new-zealands-histories-to-be-taught-in-all-schools>.

¹⁰ Mason Durie, *Te Kāhui Pou -Launching Māori Futures*, (Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2003).

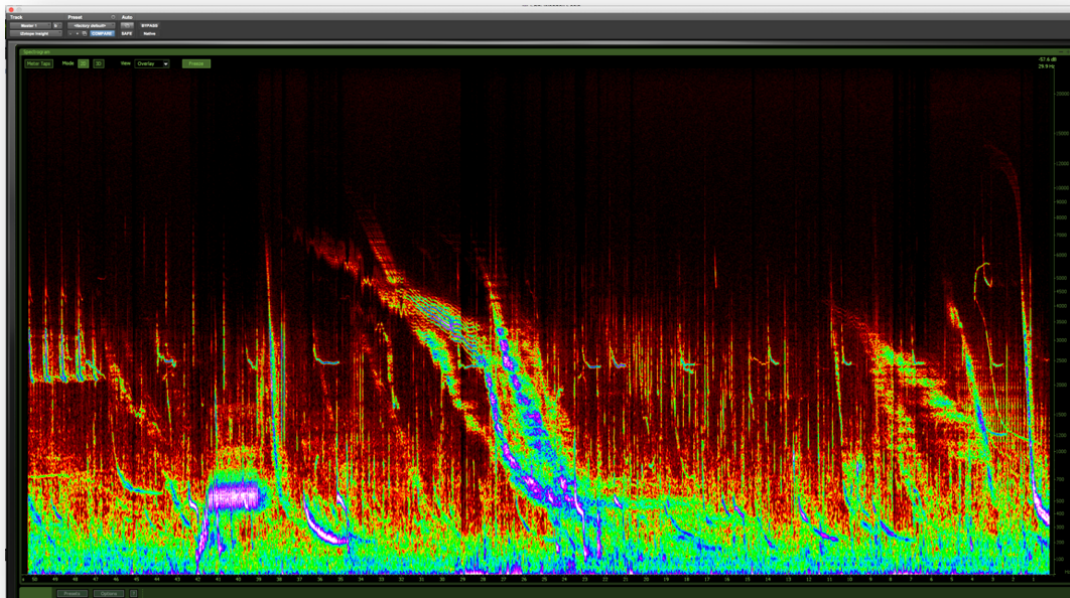
After leaving high school to take a building apprenticeship at the age of 15 years (music was not considered a career option at the time), I remember being able to tell the approximate time of day by the song that was playing on the local radio station- KCC FM. "Papa don't Preach" by Madonna indicated morning 'smoko' around 10am, "Summer of 69" by Bryan Adams signalled lunch and "We built this city" by Starship was usually time to finish for the day. Music was temporal and ubiquitous. At that time I was still relatively ignorant to *other* music potentials due to the fact that I had grown up in a very Western-centric, "white space."

With a few more years "under my belt," all throughout my undergraduate Jazz studies (Massey University, 1991 - 1994), I always felt a curious beckoning of sorts; an echo for *something other*. And although I still enjoyed learning about the technical discipline and widely nuanced idiom of jazz, a figurative shadow of investigation was usually not too far from my viscera, encouraging deeper exploration of my own cultural potentials and meaningful contribution to community.

In 2016, I had the privilege to travel to Antarctica as a sound engineer with Massey University lecturer and digital story teller Jason O'Hara. Our excursion down to the ancient continent (still relatively void of any major human impact) only lasted seven days but the trip was to have a profound affect on me. Our third day included an overnight camp to Robert Falcon-Scott's hut situated at Cape Evan's. After erecting our canvas tents out on the sea ice, we started the days activities filming interviews with scientists and divers going under the ice, setting up measuring devices on the sea bed twenty metres below. Later that evening, I submerged a hydrophone microphone under the ice and left it recording overnight. The microphone (borrowed from NIWA) was so sensitive, it was "hearing" peoples footsteps and the diesel generators through the two metre thick ice. I had to wait until everybody had gone to bed before I could push record. The seven hours of cacophonous, sonic intrigue that I captured that night altered my musical trajectory to this day.

The night recording captured a large number of Weddell seals submerged under the Ross Sea. Their sonic vocal range seemed to explore the full spectrum of what humans are capable of hearing and more. Certain tones reminded me of bird song, other sounds reminded me of the ominous grunts of a silver back gorilla. The range and scope of the seals *language* was mesmerising and mysterious. At certain points I thought I could hear a sound like someone

screaming under water and then bird song again, not unlike the musical dynamic of a Tui dawn chorus. A particular musical phrase that can be heard regularly was a type of descending pitch *glissando* with matched incremental rhythmic modulations, that slowed down as the descending pitch lowers¹¹ – a natural *ritardando*.



Audio Spectrum of Authors recordings under the Ross Sea detailing Weddell Seal 'language' (purple), 2016. Image – author.

I wonder if synthesizer designers Bob Moog or Dave Smith might have heard these ancient creatures and been inspired to design the legendary Mini Moog Synthesizer or the Prophet 5.¹² The Weddell seals' ability to create this kaleidoscopic range of sounds and melodies seemed limitless. This enlightening experience reinvigorated a number of compositional perspectives that had previously been unexplored or at least unconsidered by me; that potential motivations for ancient music making were inspired *by* the interdependent relationship that our early ancestors had with the natural world.

¹¹ Recording of Weddell seal by author can be heard here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HnBbNW57GldC_9zgFzkuWhUHVFXNS8pf/view?usp=sharing

¹² The Prophet 5 synthesizer (manufactured 1978) was the first polyphonic synth that could internally store sounds and sequences. The Mini Moog synth was one of the first analogue modular synthesizers built that combined voltage oscillators, filters and amplifiers. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minimoog>

Through a Māori lens, the genealogy of this interdependency is found in the cosmology of the creation story. Brian Flintoff writes “All the different types of Māori songs stem from the emotions displayed by the Gods (Atua) during the creation aeons”.¹³



Author at Field Camp on Ross Sea Ice, Antarctica, 2016. Image by Jason O’Hara.

Māori epistemologies acknowledge the reciprocal relationship and balance of interdependency between all living things; there is no separation. In the Māori world view, man does not have dominion over the beasts and the birds as states the Christian opus,¹⁴ but instead, upholds a symbiotic balanced relationship that must be acknowledged, rekindled and celebrated.

Sound archivist Bernie Krause¹⁵ cites Roman Emperor Constantine who, during his transition from paganism to Christianity in fourth century A.D., employed his priests to find a term that could separate man from the wicked, pagan, carnal wild of previous primitive existence.¹⁶ The priests chose *natura* as the term to describe the ‘wild.’ From a western chronological perspective, it seems that this was a pivotal moment, where the western cultural system

¹³Brian Flintoff, Hirini Melbourne, Richard Nunns. *Taonga Puoro*. (Nelson: Craig Potton Publishing, 2004).12

¹⁴ Genesis 1:26. Contemporary English Bible. God said, “Now we will make humans, and they will be like us. We will let them rule the fish, the birds, and all other living creatures.”

¹⁵ Bernie Krause is a renowned sound recordist and archivist of sound from the natural world. He is a composer, educator, naturalist and author. He has spent over 50 years recording the *biophony* of natural environments around the world.

¹⁶ Constantine lived 4th century A.D and was the first emperor to convert to Christianity. Bernie Krause, *The Great Animal Orchestra*, (New York: Back Bay Books, 2012). 140

began to disconnect from nature via religious and political imposition. The global *hyper-causality* of this individual act continues to resonate with us today as an un-ravelling of the ancient relationship between humankind and nature.

Te Pito: The 'Guts' of it all

We (the Western world) have thrown everything at the medium (music) – electronics, mathematics, scales and composition, logic, emotion, religious constraints... and yet true holistic connections to the soundscapes of the wild have hardly been tapped as sources of inspiration.

Bernie Krause¹⁷

If I examine my own music practice over the past twenty years, I feel extremely privileged that I am able to celebrate a modest amount of success from my musically inspired output (at least enough to have allowed a full time career in the arts). However, on temporal analysis of my musical development, the last decade has encouraged further exploration of composition and performance potentials to augment or expand on my Western music education. A large majority of my work to date has been very western, anthro-centric; utilising western instrumentations such as guitar, piano, bass, drums, synths and digital platforms with an added application of Western music theories like diatonic chord progressions, harmony and dissonance, melody and rhythm. And although I am extremely grateful for having the opportunity to study western music, the recent attraction for me to explore sounds from the natural environment, has provided an opportunity to break away from the cultural vacuum of western pop parameters and activate what I feel to be a more meaningful application of music potentials that resonate *for me*.

Head of School of Art Institute in Chicago, Professor Frances Whitehead makes a similar observation with her own artistic trajectory. Having made a successful gallery career for herself through many years of study and practice development, Whitehead one day realised

¹⁷ Bernie Krause, *The Great Animal Orchestra*. (Location: Back Bay Books, 2012), 135.

that her own practice had come under self-scrutiny and self doubt. She writes, “My studio practice kind of went black. I walked away from a very vigorous gallery career. One day I woke up and I had stopped believing in them.”¹⁸ A serendipitous event occurred for Whitehead while gardening when, from out of the ground, she dug up a large piece of rotting carpet that had been buried in her back yard. This simple comprehension of post-industrial existentialism in modern America became the catalyst to acknowledging the traditional gallery space as a “bankrupt metaphysic.”¹⁹ Whitehead realised that her own artistic directives were calling her away from the norm of gallery-centric practice, towards a post-industrial role as an embedded civic artist.

In June of 2019, I attended the North American Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) conference at Waikato University where a number of generous indigenous speakers shared perspectives, values and methodologies of their own practices. Sara Moncada of the Yaqui Nation, Colorado, spoke to “The Re-Traditioning of Tradition” as a process to revive, encourage and embed indigenous histories and knowledge into songs, dance and storytelling. Although cognisant of modern digital and physical storage capabilities, as part of this project, I also implement the embedding mātauranga māori (māori knowledge) into these MFA works as a celebratory exemplar of indigenous practices.

Native song is often considered the most ancient of art forms. Housed in the realm of oral traditions, Native song carries within its forms and structures, more than harmonic sound and lyrical signatures; they are in fact home to the oldest collective knowledge of the people.

Sara Moncada²⁰

¹⁸ Frances Whitehead, “How an Artist Became a Leader on a \$90 Million Infrastructure Project,” Forecast (n.d.): <https://forecastpublicart.org/how-an-artist-became-a-leader-on-a-90-million-infrastructure-project/>

¹⁹ Whitehead: <https://forecastpublicart.org/how-an-artist-became-a-leader-on-a-90-million-infrastructure-project>.

²⁰ Sara Moncada is a Yaqui educator, dancer, filmmaker, author and cultural arts advocate. Moncada, Sara, *Cultivating Creation: Exploring Traditional Ecological Knowledge of Native Song*. Graduate Master's Theses, Capstones, and Culminating Projects. 2018. Pg22.

From a design perspective, I acknowledge the fundamental importance of objective – the “Why”. My “why” has become the central reference or figurative tūarā (backbone) for these multi-layered narratives. My “why” informs the decision making process, from research content, construction, techniques, interviews, activations and improvisation. My “why” has manifest into the title of this suite of works:

Kia tūhono i Te Taiao e ngā Toi anō;

Re-connecting with the Natural World via Experiential Multi-Media Assemblages.



Numerous digital music plugins available as free downloads.²¹ Image source: www.wolvescanriot.com

As audio production technologies continue to develop exponentially, many composers employ said technologies, resulting in a vast array of diverse and innovative responses. It seems that with each new day, some exciting new digital plugin is announced to the world and a *new* music genre is released and commercialised.

With the accessibility of portable tape recorders in the 1950's, New Zealand composer and arranger Brian Hands managed to achieve what I believe *some* success of connecting with nature by embedding pre-recorded bird song into his contemporary large ensemble

²¹ A digital application that affects another digital file when applied e.g. reverb, delay, compression, modulation.

arrangements. In his 1981 record “Melody Of The Birds (New Zealand Birds Of The Forest),”²² we hear his large ensemble providing a bed of orchestration beneath an arranged layer of pre-recorded native New Zealand bird calls. However the mechanics of the compositions are still heavily bound in western music theory and harmony. Even though there are numerous potentials to arrange a musical “dialogue” between orchestra and bird song, to me, there does not seem to be any equitable attempt to integrate or weave any parts of the orchestra with any of the bird calls. The intent to celebrate New Zealand’s diverse bird life is clearly stated in Brian’s works, but the blunt, brutalist fusion of recorded bird sounds with the orchestra, leaves this listener feeling like this exercise was a promotion of technical innovation rather than a meaningful connection to the natural world. Or it could have been a conservative ear that just accepted the brutalist result rather than make the attempt to tune an entire orchestra to a bird!

American composer Bernie Krause’s book *The Great Animal Orchestra* has been a central source of reference for this MFA exhibition²³. His holistic values and philosophies around music functionalities and nature align greatly with the directive that I have been looking to activate, whereby I am actively acknowledging sounds from the natural world. While Krause has great respect for composers who are inspired *by* nature, to his thinking (and mine), many composers’ intentions to celebrate nature never quite achieve the multi-layered, complexities woven into what our environment naturally provides. Therefore they never quite activate the *tūhonotanga* (connection) of being totally immersed by the vibrant cacophony that nature endows.

I find that, however respectful, brilliant, and conscientious that performance pieces may have been, in reality, few of the musical works that claim nature as an inspiration speak to the essence of any natural environment I know.²⁴

Krause makes an example of Beethoven’s “Sixth Symphony,” supposedly incorporating *voices* of the quail and the cuckoo using traditional western instrumentation but not managing to manifest the same human experience that occurs when immersed *in* nature. In one of his

²² Brian Hands, “Melody of the Birds (New Zealand Birds of the Forest)” © Viking Sevenses Ltd. Released on: 14 Nov, 2011. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1v1KxPQef1c&list=PLJFDDRvxl-gcgNNizyOF-AYC7jTp1mrum>

²³ Krause, Bernie. *The great animal orchestra: finding the origins of music in the world's wild places*. Little, Brown, 2012.

²⁴ Krause, *The Great Animal Orchestra*. Pg145.

letters to his publisher, Beethoven expresses his deep love of nature and his acknowledging the sounds of the countryside:

*No one can love the country as much as I do. For surely woods, trees and rocks produce the echoes that man longs to hear.*²⁵

Krause sites numerous other renowned composers lauding nature as the primary muse for their certain works but never quite managing to mirror the multi-layered sonic kaleidoscope that we find when situated *in* nature.²⁶ At this point I think it prudent to acknowledge how far technological advancements have come in terms of recording, sampling and digital composition techniques. Beethoven was not privy to the modern conventions of digital samplers, hydrophone Condenser microphones, D.A.W. devices and global satellite communications; the advanced technology of Beethoven's era was the piano, orchestra and choir.

I was recently invited to be a funding moderator for the 2020 Wellington Jazz Festival. The applications were of an extremely high standard and I was hugely impressed by the diversity and cultural fervour of the seventy three entries. There were five grants of \$10,000 to present to each successful applicant; one of which had to go to a person with Māori whakapapa (genealogy), which to me was very progressive and exciting for a jazz festival. In making my way through all of the applications, I was pleasantly surprised to see that many applicants alluded to being inspired by Te Ao Māori or they implied a musical intention towards embedding a kaupapa Māori theme into their work. However while numerous acknowledgements for mātauranga Māori implementation was progressively encouraging, when listening to the demos supplied via various URL google links, I found it challenging to discern any substantial musical reference to what they were proposing. Many of the works, while musically complex and cerebral, offered traditionally nuanced compositions that reflected classic American jazz influences and pedagogies such as the work of Charles Mingus, Branford Marsalis, Art Blakey and many other renowned jazz ensembles. On analysis, only a

²⁵ Chris H. Gibbs, "Beethoven's Symphony No. 6 in F Major, Op. 68," NPR Music, Published June 12, 2006. <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5478661>.

²⁶ For example see the compositions of Charles, Ives, Mozart, Einojuhani Rautavaara, Vivaldi, Debussy, Messiaen, George Crumb, Paul Winter et.al.

few hopeful applicants had really *woven* their musical intentions from Te Ao Māori into their practice. In other words, the theoretical intent to connect with Te Ao Māori was still being delivered using a Western idiom; a jazz inspired composition with a Māori title.

Considerations around how early Indigenous Māori societies utilised taonga puoro in every day life are numerous. To early Māori living in New Zealand, the function of sound and music had a wide range of uses. These days, we celebrate taonga puoro mostly as a much needed form of cultural revitalisation or for education purposes. However it is noted that early Māori also had very pragmatic uses of musical composition. For example *Karanga manu* were often used to lure birds for consumption. The *porotiti* was used as a remedial instrument to clear nasal passages of sick children. The instrument was played over the child's head while they slept. The low humming vibrations travelling between instrument and patient would cause the mucus to break up and clear the nose passage.²⁷

An exemplar of social functionality of music in early Māori culture comes in a rare 1949 recording at Columbus Recording Studios in Wellington.²⁸ The recording captured Henare Hāmana from Moawhango, who as a boy, learned how to whistle the song of the Huia as a means to snare the now extinct bird. This was a common practice amongst Māori to lure birds to their demise for food and feathers. While I have no intention of snaring birds for consumption or feathers, my focus returns to the integral bond that early Māori had with nature for the simple rationale of survival, acknowledging interdependent bonds between humans and birds for wellbeing, and where music was used for gathering kai, remedial medicine practice, connecting with spiritual realms via Atua (deity or elemental guardian), and in assisting in temporal rituals or occasions. Music was highly regarded and valued as an integral agency for living well for whanau, hapū and iwi.

²⁷ Brian Flintoff, *Taonga Pūoro. Musical Instruments of the Māori*, (Nelson: Craig Potton, 2004), 57.

²⁸ Robert Batley, Henare Hāmana. *Recreation of Huia Calls*. Recorded 1949, Radio 2YA, Wellington. Audio. 03'52". <https://www.ngataonga.org.nz/blog/nz-history/the-call-of-the-huia/>

The Gallery, the Frame and the Kō

During the process of constructing these new works, I needed to consider *where* I might exhibit. Being that the compositions were geographically and historically inspired by the place where I reside, it was suggested during a critique session that I situate the exhibition in Featherston. I then deliberated further on exploring the potential around re-defining my preconceived notions of what a gallery *is* and what it could *be*. Further consultations with contributors encouraged me to de-construct pre-conceived notions of a “traditional” gallery space and think outside the box.

In her encouragement of developing oneself as a “civic artist,” I again refer to Frances Whitehead and her suggestion of the notion that “there is no box,”²⁹ Artists need to think wider than traditional gallery spaces, media and functionalities. This open license of gallery space potential offered the liberty to consider the *subject matter* of these works *as* the exhibition spaces, that is the lake, the forest and the mountains *are the galleries*. Therefore my works are exhibited in the spaces that ngā waiata (songs) speak to.



Otairua Reserve facing Wairarapa Moana, Featherston. Image by author, 2020.

²⁹ Quoted during a masterclass, Worser Bay, Wellington. M.F.A Wānanga, Feb, 2019 (N.R)

To this end, I have situated two of these works within Otauira reserve, a small three hectare park situated along State Highway 2 at the boundary line to Featherston. Between 1970 and the late 1980's, the site upheld the prestigious community function as the local rubbish tip! Ironically today, this slightly elevated ex-dumping ground has one of the only elevated views of Wairarapa moana (lake) from which one can see several other sites of historic significance, including Ngā Waka o Kupe, Aorangi Maunga, Jury Island far to the south and Ngā Pae Maunga o Remutaka and Tararua mountain ranges. But the most pertinent detail for me is not only found in the panoramic views, but historically what the name "Otauira" signifies.

Through research I have found many origin stories of the name Pae Tu Mokai o Taura, the Māori name for the region pre-dating European settlement in 1849 by Henry Burling.³⁰ Though we will never be able to determine the true origin of place names, the mana (prestige) of this small hillock is acknowledged by the fact that it *was* named for a reason of significance.

A number of oral korero were generously shared with me from local kaitiaki environmentalist and educator Rawiri Smith (Ngāti Mūretu, Ngāti Kahungunu, Rangitāne)³². Ra spoke of how pre-European contact, the area around Featherston was acknowledged by local hapū as a *Taupahi* or a seasonal place for gathering food and where kai was abundant. Crayfish, eel, birds and a range of edible roots plants and flora were available from mahinga kai or food gathering areas. It is noted that the birds were so tame, they could have been somebody's pet – hence the term *mokai*. So his pūrakau (story) of the area was that it is a good place for catching birds.

Another korero tells us of Hine Taura who was the sister of Te Rerewa; a Rangitira who lived at Lake Onoke (Lake Ferry), and who was of Rangitāne/Ngāti Ira descent. Hine Taura lived at Mahia Peninsula (circa 1600 a.d.) and bore a son, Te Rangitāwhanga. Later when Te Rangitāwhanga became chief, local fighting in the Mahia region provoked their hapū to move down to the Wairarapa region to live with his uncle, Te Rerewa (Hine Taura's brother).

³⁰ H. A. L. Laing. 'Burling, Henry', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, first published in 1990. Te Ara - the Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1b49/burling-henry> (accessed 29 November 2020).

³² Ra Smith, 'The naming of Wairarapa' Edited and published by Dean Cronin. Video. 04'59". <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85x7ElzC3LY>. July 2020.

On arriving in South Wairarapa, Te Rangitāwhanga offered many gifts of weapons, cloaks and various artifacts to Te Rerewa in exchange for land. Te Rerewa responded by saying, “I will not part with my home for your cloaks, but I should do so for the bowl [canoes] of your ancestors.”³³

Te Rangitāwhanga built four waka for Te Rerewa and the exchange was made. One of those waka was named Otairā (possibly after Hine Tauira). The other waka were named Kahutara, Te Ara-o-Tawhaki, Potaka and Kiriwai.³⁴ It is noted in *The History of Maori in Nelson and Marlborough* that Te Rerewa’s lament before departure was sung from ‘Otira Hill’ near Featherston.³⁵

It has been from the passion and generosity of Ra Smith that much of the content of these stories has come to me. It is another thing to note, that a lot of this content can be found online or in written form, but I tend to absorb the information far *better* when given as an aural account. To this end, I remember narrative and detail much better via the passion and sincerity of a good story teller, like Rawiri Smith.

The Frame

To digress a little from Māori name for Featherston, in his candidly generous book *The Real Frank Zappa Book*, Zappa describes the most important thing in art as being the “Frame”. “Without this humble appliance, you can’t know where the Art stops and the real world begins.”³⁷ Alongside the use of the natural environment as a gallery space, I exploit narrative and imagination as my frame. To the human eye, sound and music are intangible and invisible. That is, we can’t physically touch it or see it. But, like all other art forms, music can have a profound affect on us. To this end the physical manifestation of sound is a movement of particles described as *waves* (compression and rarefaction) through a medium that, when

³³ Ben Schrader, 'Wairarapa region - Māori settlement', Te Ara - the Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/wairarapa-region/page-5> (accessed 27 November 2020)

³⁴ Elsdon Best, *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*. Volume 27 No.105, *The Land of Tara and They Who Settled it*. Part 2. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1918. 13
http://www.jps.auckland.ac.nz/document//Volume_27_1918/Volume_27,_No._105/The_Land_of_Tara_and_They_Who_Settled_it_Part_II,_by_Elsdon_Best,_p13

³⁵ Hilary Mitchell and John Mitchell, *History of Maori of Nelson and Marlborough*, Vol. 2 (Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2004), 78.

³⁷ Frank Zappa and Peter Occhiogrosso, *Real Frank Zappa Book* (Location: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 140.

reaching our ears, activates minute hair cells inside the cochlea, which are then converted to electrical pulses and translated into sound by neural processing.

From our first breath as babies, we begin to accumulate a vocabulary and comprehension of sounds, colours, smells, textures and other senses. Later in life, an experience like my *Kia Tūhono i Te Taiao* journey will then be interpreted as a palette of sensory experiences that each individual has had (or not) with the experience itself—an addition to each person's palette of “sonic colours”—perhaps an awakening to a whakapapa or layering of interconnected senses. In the case of these works, the “Frame” becomes the individual's holistic constitution or palette of previous sensory experiences.

The Kō

“Ahakoa te Kō, he aha te kaupapa?”

What ever tool we use, what is the objective.”

Sir Derek Lardelli³⁸

The Kō was an early māori digging implement used to find tubers, fern root and also for cultivating purposes. The above mentioned whakaaro (thought) was generously offered by kapahaka expert, tohunga ā tāmoko, visual artist and composer Derek Lardelli at a Creative New Zealand hui held in Dec 2017. I consider what tools I have used for these new works and also my ‘Why’ behind choosing them. I also reflect back to the kaupapa; *connecting to the natural world around me.*

In these digitally enhanced times of *progress*, we have the luxury (and distraction) of digital abundance. It seems there is an some kind of digital application or plugin for every need. The ease and speed of creating a broadcast quality composition using samples, bass loops, synth lines, even vocal samples, allows us to create a completed song with relative ease. So in this age of digital ability and the relative ease of producing broadcast quality music, the question needs to be around the ‘Why’ of the exercise.

³⁸ Sir Derek Lardelli is composer, visual artist, tamoko and kapahaka expert. This statement was made at a Creative New Zealand hui in 2017. (N.R)

Thirty odd years ago if my *kaupapa* or objective was to produce a popular song, the tools needed would be to book out a studio in Wellington (usually at a hefty cost), rehearse the band, produce the song and strategise a marketing campaign to fit both demographic and budget. In the case above, the desired kaupapa was to *produce a hit song*. So the tools (figurative Kō) required to achieve that objective might have been pop song considerations such as:

- the style or genre of the song
- tempo and harmonic choices
- song duration of approximately 3'30" is usually accepted for popular mainstream
- accessible formulaic pop song structure
- *Popular Music* Music Production techniques
- marketing tools used to promote the song for revenue and profit.

However when considering these MFA works for this exhibition, the objective is to *connect* myself and potential participants in a meaningful, tangible way to the surrounding natural environment. So the tools that I chose to utilise were:

- Local mana whenua narratives.
- Physical geo-placement of myself and participants.
- Indigenous composition techniques.
- Music Production techniques that align with kaupapa i.e. hydrophone mic, Go-Pro HD camera & other.
- Multi-media digital technologies.
- Marketing tools used to promote the songs for participatory experience and cultural awareness.

Process and Techniques

Numerous meditations arise when considering the process of music composition:

- What provocation inspired the composition?
- What is the objective?
- What tools will I utilise to attain these objectives?
- What forms or structures will I consider?
- What parameters might determine the context or “Frame”?

Having already acknowledged that the main objective underpinning these MFA works is to re-connect to the natural world, my remaining thoughts move to process and dissemination, which in themselves have numerous potentials.

To explain, process for me usually commences with a seed-like provocation. What objective is holding this kaupapa together? Is it a simple melody that manifests while driving to work? A spontaneous improvisation? A discussion with somebody that inspires a response? Or a Masters of Fine Arts proposal?

My process usually has some kind of starting point that may contribute to some agency or that may result in some form of cathartic, creative output.

My developed process for these MFA works demanded that theory become practice where the imagined sound assemblage be “sculpted” into a medium that might affect myself and any participant in some way. The process is the critical part where the composer imagines the “colours” needed that will provoke a certain reaction, which then moves on to experimentation with instruments (digital and analogue) to produce the aforementioned imaginings.

As a regular user of digital reverbs, in formulating the work “Hotu Manawa”, I *imagined* what the audio source recorded beneath Wairarapa Moana would sound like, enhanced via certain reverb settings created by my Ultraverb Space Environment plugin. By understanding the capabilities of what this particular digital reverb, I was then able to imagine the result and realise it through to fruition.

Over twenty years as a composer and music producer utilising various technologies, I have become reasonably adept at comprehending the use of audio effects in music recording. Harmonic manipulators such as delays, reverbs, modulators and filters enable the user to distort or change the original sound source to suit the desired outcome. It has been through these two decades of practice that I have gained confidence in using these applications to achieve a musical objective. Enhanced comprehension of reverberation parameters has also given me an understanding of how sound manipulation can do the same for the experience of the participant. Historically, I have used reverb plugins to transport or situate the listener *into* other spaces through an aural experience; situating the listener “in the room with the band” or “in a cave with the cellist.” Even though I may have recorded said cellist in their lounge at home, I am able to *place* the cellist in a digitally fabricated space and transport the listener through use of digital reverbs.

As part of Adam Art Galleries 2019 “Passages” exhibition, Florian Hecker’s “Formulation, 2015” celebrated spatiality and the physical movement of sound around the gallery.³⁹ An array of small speakers were situated in such a way that as the participants moved around the room, the soundscape emanating from the speakers would *lead* or direct us through the gallery.

This revision of sound being physical in its unseen form was inspiring. The physical manifestation of sound as being invisible to the human eye and therefore intangible presented a sense of mystery, much like guessing what ingredients are in a hot stew wafting from the kitchen whereby we are using only our sense of smell. Through Florian’s work, I was reminded that sound is a physical manifestation, manipulating air particles in the form of sound waves – a minute but powerful physical form. I started to think about exploiting sound as a trans-locating device, with a contradicting ability to mentally “transport” the listener to another space/time without having to physically move them. I exploited this device heavily in all of these MFA works as a means of connection the listener *to* a desired space and/or time.

³⁹ Passages: Luke Fowler, Florian Hecker, Susan Philipsz. Adam Art Gallery. Curated by Stephen Cleland, 16 February – 21 April 2019



Passages: Luke Fowler, Florian Hecker, Susan Philipsz. Curated by Stephen Cleland, 16 February – 21 April 2019.

Image courtesy of the artist, Sadie Coles HQ, London and Galerie Neu, Berlin.

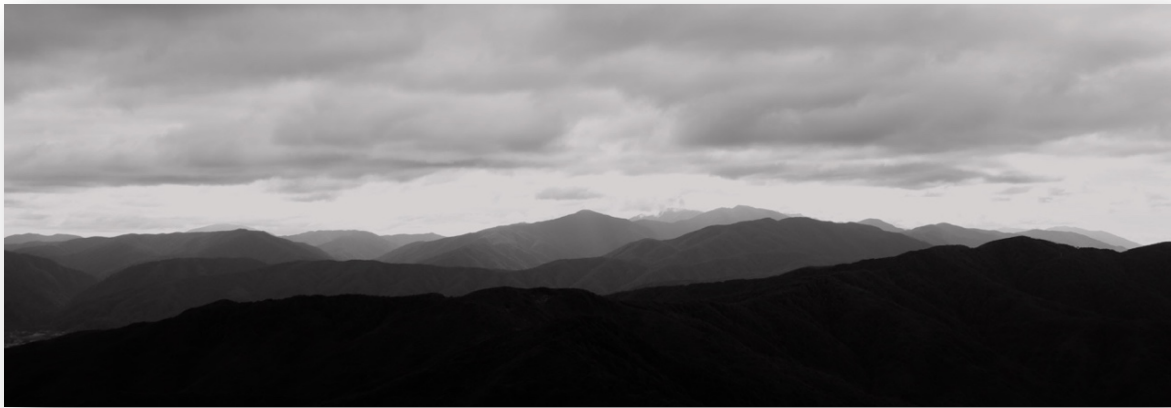
During the mid 90's I was extremely honoured to have been asked to join popular māori soul/funk band "Southside of Bombay." The band had recently gained international recognition with one of their songs "Whats the time Mr.Wolf"⁴⁰ featuring in the iconic film "*Once Were Warriors*."⁴¹ We had a performance booked at Ratana Pā just south of Wanganui and had decided to stay a few days to enjoy the hospitality of the Ratana followers⁴². During this stay, I got talking to one of the local kaumatua, Te Kotahitanga (Manny) Abraham, who was also a phenomenal jazz guitarist. We were sitting outside looking out over the local mountain range when Manny started to tell a story about the *old people* using the contours and horizon line of mountains to create melodies for waiata.

⁴⁰ Southside of Bombay's, "Whats The Time Mr Wolf" was released in 1992 and became second best selling single in 1994. <https://www.thecoconet.tv/songbook/islandjams/southside-of-bombay-whats-the-time-mr-wolf/>

⁴¹ Directed by Lee Tamahori, 'Once Were Warriors' became an iconic N.Z. film depicting a turbulent and violent life inside a māori family living in South Auckland. Released 1994.

⁴² The Ratana church has both religious and political motivations. Started in 1928 by Tahupōtiki Wiremu Rātana, the movement has a large global congregation that focuses on Christian principles woven with Māori equality and redress. Keith Newman, published 5 May 2011, reviewed & revised 4 Apr 2018. <https://teara.govt.nz/en/ratana-church-te-haahi-ratana/>

As a fresh graduate out of jazz school, I was absolutely astounded at this approach for melodic inspiration. As I looked out at those mountains, it made complete sense to me. This shared piece of local knowledge was so impactful, it has remained with me for the past three decades. The concept was re-awakened during this recent MFA inquiry where I have been given the opportunity to explore melodies from the contours of mountains as an Indigenous *tool* for music composition within these works.



Tararua Ranges. Melodies inspired by contour of mountains. Image source – Author.

To this end, in 2018, I was commissioned to write the opening music for the New Zealand Arts Festival here in Wellington. The entire opening was to be based around celebrating traditional Polynesian navigation and our peoples' pioneering spirit. Five traditional Waka Hourua (Ocean-going double hulled craft) were going to be sailing into the Wellington Harbour. This was a feat not seen for over a thousand years!

Much of my research in composing the songs revolved around collecting stories and style of waiata from around the Pacific including pre-European contact traditional songs from Samoa, Rarotonga/Cook Islands and Tahitian *pate*⁴³ rhythms and functions. As a member of the design team for the opening, I was also invited to contribute to the creation of the narrative by interweaving traditional Polynesian star navigation, the exploits of the famed navigator Kupe and his wife Kuramarotini, and from the five Waka Hourua themselves.

⁴³ Samoan percussion instrument traditionally used to communicate over long distances during war. AhChing, Peter Leiataua. *Polynesian Interconnections: Samoa to Tahiti to Hawaii*. Hawaii: Lulu Press Inc, 2013.

As a composer this enabled me to forge a stronger connection and deeper relationships with the whakapapa, histories, characters, and with the Waka Hourua as well. For the latter, I explored musical potentials for all of the Waka Hourua that provided musical differentiation between them e.g. a rare traditional Samoan pre-missionary song called “Ma Li’e Tagifa” for the waka Guualof’a; a love song was for the waka named Ngāhiraka, which celebrated Sir Hector Busby’s first wife; a dubstep inspired song for the waka Te Matau ā Maui and whose crew was made up of a group of youthful eco-warriors. After much research and iterations of songs, most of the compositions came with relative ease except for “Hinemoana”. For some reason I really struggled to start this waiata. I had researched and used a lot of Polynesian musical elements, as in the other songs. But to differentiate “Hinemoana” from the other waiata, I needed to find some *other* music elements.

My resolution came by returning to the recordings I had made in Antarctica. Listening through the seven hours of recordings, I found a section of audio where a particular seal was *singing* one note every two or three seconds.⁴⁴ Here was a tempo and the *seed* of a provocation that I could start a composition with. I then began to develop the song using lyrical celebration of subsurface but Polynesian relationship with Hinemoana. I therefore had a strong, meaningful connection to frame this composition around—all thanks to that Weddel Seal swimming around, “singing” its song beneath the Ross Sea of Antarctica!

⁴⁴ Recording of ‘Hinemoana’ can be heard here:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1C5lpRPQjR7aZyJ2nCdFBIZSLOyPtZBr/view?usp=sharing>



Traditional Waka Hourua 'Ngāhiraka mai tawhiti' at NZ Arts Festival Opening, 2018. Image: Monique Ford

Waiata #1 - 'Hotuhotu Manawa'

With the privilege of hindsight, I believe this piece encapsulates the kaupapa (rationale) behind re-locating my family from Wellington to Featherston in 2006. When constructing this piece, I can *now* comprehend that the “threading of strands” was what deepened our connections to the Wairarapa region and community over these past fourteen years. These connections have manifested through various activations particularly via our embedding ourselves in community; sending our tamariki to the local school; contributing to social events; riparian planting local wetlands or fund-raising for a local cause. Such analysis of my own connections to Featherston has also come from meeting other like-minded members of the community and learning pūrakau or stories about this town and the surrounding whenua. The lyrics to this waiata make reference to three pūrakau.

First, how peace was made between Wairarapa iwi and Wellington hapū⁴⁵ who had invaded the Wairarapa in the early 19th century, second, a story about a special cave in the hills of Ngā Waka ō Kupe demonstrating chiefly prowess, and third, of Hine Taurira, an historic woman of significance in this area.

To explain this further, it was in July of 2018 that invitations via social media were sent out to any residents living in Featherston who might be interested in forming a kaupapa Māori incorporated society to have local body Māori representatives on the Māori Standing Committee (M.S.C) as part of South Wairarapa District Council (S.W.D.C), which I attended and put my name forward as a committee member. From this hui, Pae Tū Mokai ō Taurira Inc.Soc (P.T.M.O.T) was established and two representatives were delegated to sit on the M.S.C board. Featherston now has a Māori voice at local regional council. I am thus embedding myself and my artistic output as valued contributions into the community.

P.T.M.O.T soon got underway with one of our first initiatives, to write up our core values (tikanga) and processes (kawa). It became very clear that one of our biggest initiatives was to revitalise our local waterways, the local whenua and Wairarapa Moana itself.

Wairarapa is primarily agricultural farming country and according to the Greater Wellington Regional analysis (See image below) almost 60% of land use in the Wairarapa region is used for farming, 9.7% for forestry, with 28.6% left in native reserve. Agriculture including dairy, beef and sheep farming practices make up 5% of New Zealand's G.D.P, however recent acknowledgements by government are encouraging more eco-focused, regenerative farming practices. This will be a long and arduous process but well worth the investment. I hope to consider these works as some small agency, contributing to the process of looking toward innovative eco-conscious practices.

⁴⁵ Te Wharepouri of Ngāti Te Whiti had settled in Wairarapa 1840's but was ousted by Kahungunu Chief Nukupewapewa. Peace was made when Nukupewapewa returned the wife and daughter of Te Wharepouri to him. Heather Bauchop, *Ngati Ira and Rangitane in Te-Whanganui-a-Tara to 1865* (Wellington: Waitangi Tribunal Commissioned Report, 1997), 13.

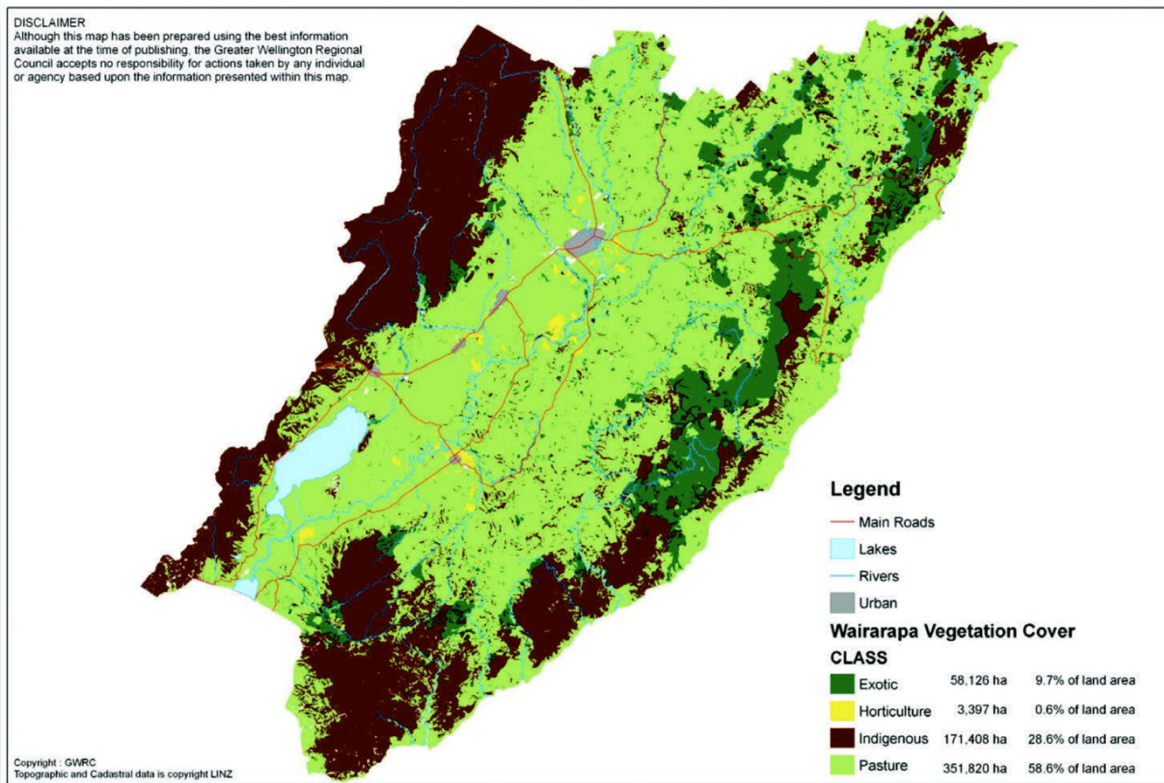


Image showing primary land use in the Wairarapa. Image sourced Greater Wellington Regional Council, 2006.

In referring back to the waiata “Hotuhotu Manawa” (which translates to *beating heart*), Lake Wairarapa is acknowledged as the *mauri* of the area for local hapū and iwi alike. *Mauri* is defined as an ultimate life force or ethos. Wairarapa Moana is also considered the “beating heart” of the Wairarapa. A 2006 report commissioned by the Ministry for the Environment⁴⁶ noted that Wairarapa Moana was super-trophic, meaning it was very close to having no oxygen and therefore having no life able to live in it. The “beating heart” and *mauri* of this area is considered very sick.

This dire ecological and cultural provocation led me to *weave* an underwater recording of Wairarapa Moana, with a recording of our daughter’s heart beat from one of our first ultrasound examinations. The assemblage of recorded sounds is an acknowledged method of modern music composition used especially in hip hop and contemporary dance music.

⁴⁶ Keith Hamill, “Snapshot of Lake Water Quality in New Zealand” 2006, Ministry for Environment, Hamilton. <https://www.mfe.govt.nz/sites/default/files/snapshot-lake-water-quality-nov06.pdf>

The intent here is to personify Wairarapa Moana with a confluence of the above mentioned audio samples and to reconnect the listener with the lake. The experience was also augmented by situating the participant at Otauira Reserve overlooking Wairarapa Moana as a connecting agent to enhance the relationship via site-specific placement. The reader might also take note that as a thematic composition tool, the rhythm and tempo of my daughter's heart beat *in-feotus* is also used as a tempo marker for the waiata "E Ngā Atua". I weave the three works together using place, melodies, tempos, textures and indigenous narratives.



'Totara Dulcimer' by author with totara appropriated from Wairarapa Moana acknowledging 'Rata' karakia, 2019.

On appropriating the large Totara driftwood (pictured above) from Wairarapa moana, I sang the Rata karakia⁴⁷ repeatedly during the entire process of obtaining the ancient, ephemeral log. As a reciprocal activation of re-traditioning iwi taketake practices, the agency of karakia and acknowledgement to Atua gave authenticity to these works.

⁴⁷ Reference to waiata#2 – Te Tatau Pounamu.

Hotuhotu Manawa (Beating Heart)

Here! Here! Visions are here.
Where they made peace.
But first came stealth by night to put out the
biggest fire with his light foot.
Te Kakapi, treasured daughter of Te [Whare]
Pouri⁴⁸.
After a time she was freed to her home fires
of the white Feather (Te Ati Awa).
Tauwharerata was that place.

There! There! The cave of chiefly prestige.
The ones who jump the highest with ochre
palms lay thier claim, thier mana, thier fame.
The champions remembered in song for all
time.
That cave named Hui-te-rangi-ora⁴⁹
Ngā Waka o Kupe is there!

Here! Here! A special bird flies this way.
The mist holds fast
Onto the prestige of Hine Taurira.
She who brought peace.
Here is Pae Tu Mokai.
And the world turns
To the world of light.

Nei rā. nei rā. Ka puta mai ngā tūruapō.
Kua ū te māungarongo e ā rāua e.
I te Pō whakatoke tipoko te ahi kaitā
Nōna kapukapu ko ia kē te Rangatira.
Ko Te Kakapi he motoi, te puiaki o Te Pouri
Ā tōna wā, kua wete ia ki te ahi o te
Raukura.
Ko Tauwharerata e tū ake nei e.

Arā! Arā! Ko te āna
Whakawehi o ngā Rangatira he
tauwhawhai mōwhiti
E paki teitei e te kokowai⁵⁰
Ko ia te toa mo ake tonu atu.
Koina nei te tuhitanga
Ko Hui-te-rangi-ora te ana rā
Ko Ngā Waka o Kupe kei reira!

Nei rā, nei rā, ka rere mai he manu tipua.
Pupuritia te koku nei.
Te piki kōtuku ā Hine Taurira.
Nāna te rongomau
Ko Pae Tu Mokai e tau nei.
Ka hurihuri te Ao
Ki te Ao Marama

⁴⁸ Angela Ballara. Links and sources for 'Te Wharepōuri, Te Kakapi-o-te-rangi', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, first published in 1990. Te Ara - the Encyclopaedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1t85/te-wharepouri-te-kakapi-o-te-rangi/sources> (accessed 1 December 2020)

⁴⁹ Ngā Waka o Kupe is the name given to some hills east of Martinborough. T.W.Downes. *The Life of Nukupewapewa* (Wellington National Library: Royal Society of New Zealand, 1912), 375.

⁵⁰ Kokowai – Red Clay. T.W.Downes. *The Life of Nukupewapewa* (Wellington National Library: Royal Society of New Zealand, 1912), 375.

Waiata #2 - Te Tatau Pounamu (The Greenstone Door)

“Te Tatau Pounamu” is a *connecting* song that re-instigates a gratitude of Nature's reciprocity through a Polynesian lens. It is also a song that exemplifies the use of geographic markers as political boundaries. As an integral part of this experience, the audience participant is positioned, looking up at the forest clad inclines of Remutaka and Tararua mountain ranges. The first audio introduction begins to merge with the exterior sounds through the listener's headphones, creating a spatial uncertainty. Gradually the headphone audio increases incrementally to the point where the listener has been *transported* up into the mountain clad bush via the audio. The listener hears the sound of the protagonist navigating through the dense bush, breaking twigs lying on the mossy forest floor, scraping, breaking, falling and bashing. Sporadic rhythms are created from a broken gait through low lying Titoki branches and supplejack vines. The birds are “laughing” at him, but their chatter soon dissipates as he begins his karakia remembering Rata; the one who forgot to recite his karakia.⁵¹

<i>Rātā ware, Rātā ware</i>	<i>Rātā the inconsiderate</i>
<i>Noho Noa koe</i>	<i>Who sits obstinate</i>
<i>Tuatua noa koe</i>	<i>Whose stubbornness is blatant</i>
<i>I te wao tapu nui ā Tāne</i>	<i>In the great realm of Tāne</i>
<i>Koia whekī</i>	<i>Wood chips flying this way</i>
<i>Koia whekā</i>	<i>Wood chips flying that way</i>
<i>Rere mai te kongakonga</i>	<i>Flying around us (proximity)</i>
<i>Koia I riri</i>	<i>They adhere</i>
<i>Koia I mau</i>	<i>They hold</i>
<i>Rere mai te maramara</i>	<i>Chips fly</i>
<i>Koia I riri</i>	<i>They adhere</i>
<i>Koia I mau</i>	<i>They hold</i>
<i>E tū tāmaota</i>	<i>Stand fresh and green</i>
<i>E tū atā whakaarahia e</i>	<i>Stand tall once again</i>

⁵¹ Rewi Poia, “Karakia Māori: Māori Invocations to Spiritual Authorities”
A Journal of Māori Studies Raumati (Summer), volume 9, number 2 (2010): page15.

There is a pause ... and then we hear the next stanza (author's lyrics)

<i>Tū au ōu reo rawa kua rongorongo</i>	<i>I stand here and absorb your abundant voices</i>
<i>Tū au tōu ihi ake kua rongorongo</i>	<i>I stand here and sense your ancient awe!!</i>
<i>Kō koe te hau ō te tatau pounamu</i>	<i>You are known as the gateway to peace</i>
<i>I waenganui i te karu o te ika ā Maui</i>	<i>Between the eye of Maui's fish</i>
<i>Me te tini ō Tara e!</i>	<i>And the numerous of Tara!</i>
<i>Tāku tuatahi he mihi ake nei</i>	My first step is to acknowledge our ancient relationship.
<i>Kō tāua kē i tuia, i tuia, i tuia nei!</i>	That was already woven between us.
<i>Tuarua kia whakatūhono ai i ā</i>	Our second step is to reconnect with our departed Ancestors.
<i>Tāua tipuna wehewehe e!</i>	
<i>Tuatoru korowaitia ngā mokopuna!</i>	Our third step is to nurture future generations
<i>Tuawhā me mate au hei ururoa!!</i>	Our fourth is to die like a hammerhead shark!!
<i>Ko Remutaka i whakaingoatia</i>	Remutaka you were named
<i>E te rangatira ko Haunui-a-Nanaia!</i>	by the great chief Haunui-a-nanaia!
<i>Tūturu ā whiti whakamaua kia tīna</i>	These bonds have now been acknowledged
<i>Haumie, hui e, tai ki E!!</i>	Let it be done!!

Waiata #3 - E Ngā Atua (Oh Deity)

I refer to this waiata as a “work song” that acts as an agent of connection to a specific activity. This song asks the audience or participant to reflect and celebrate the work taking place. The tools used to connect participants to the underpinning objective is to situate audience members onsite and engage them in the exercise of kaitiakitanga by becoming an active agent rather than a seated, passive audience. Therefore, the audience or listener is actively connecting to lyric that depict certain Atua (deities or elements) who in Te Ao Māori are directly related to the activity that is occurring. Through hearing and comprehending the waiata, participants are encouraged to connect with those Atua as a means to remember and

acknowledge what the collective reciprocal intention is. In this case it is to revitalise, to return health and well being to the place via replacing loss of *mauri*⁵². For example, participants might be gathering kai moana, so a potential song lyric might directly reference Tangaroa (Atua of the Waterways and Ocean) as an appreciation of that relationship for survival. Musical provocation might then be inspired by rhythms, patterns, sounds from the water bodies. In the case of the waiata “Hotuhotu Manawa”, I used the sound recorded by the camera moving through the water, then added a long reverb tail to give a sense of underwater surrealism. Rhythms can also be heard with the water trickling over stones on the bottom of the river. Acknowledgements to Atua might be considered in all aspects of modern activity as a praxis of comprehending the action of appropriation and the reciprocity required from an indigenous perspective.

In the case of this next particular work song, the lyrics speak directly to Tāne (atua of the forest and all living things), where the pūrakau is passed from the *kāhu* to us (he tangata). Each plant we return to whenua is mentioned to remind us of our whakapapa connections to place. These new trees, shrubs and plants and new relations to us; they are kin to our present generations and those to come.



10,000 native plants at Lake Domain, 2020. Image – Author.

⁵² Maori Marsden defines ‘Mauri’ as being the bonding element that holds the fabric of the universe together. *The Woven Universe: Selected writings of Rev. Maori Marsden*. Otaki: The Estate of Rev. Maori Marsden, 2003, pg45.

E Te Atua

E Te Atua (*Elemental entities*)

Tuia mai (*weave us together*)

Whakahono (*to join us*)

Ōu uri nei (*your descendants*)

Konei au (*I'm here*)

Tiakina (*nurturing*)

Āku teina (*my young siblings*)

Ōu uri nei (*your descendants*)

E Te Atua

Tūwhititia mai (*roll over*)

Kua oho (*We have been awoken*)

E te niho nei (*by this thorn*)

Te Manuka

Kia tārora (*hold fast*)

Tukumate (*the pathogen*)

Hei te wehe (*until expiration*)

E Te Atua

Ataata mai (*We Reflect*)

Kanohi pau (*eyes blinded*)

E te ware nei (*by forgetfulness*)

Harakeke

Tuia ake (*bind well*)

Kawe ake (*Carry on*)

Kete ora (*kete of life*)

E Te Atua

Puna maroke (*the springs are dry*)

Putā noa (*the world over*)

Kore he roimata nei (*too dry for tears*)

Mingimīngi⁵³

Mate wahine (*menstrual pains*)

Mate tākihi (*kidney complaints*)

Kia hauora (*be of healthy a vigour*)

E te morehu (*Oh survivors*)

E Hoki mai (*return*)

Kia uru (*and re-connect us*)

ōu moroiti nei (*your ancient hapu again*)

Nā te one (*From the soil*)

Papa kiri (*the skin of the mother*)

Te whenua (*The placenta*)

Kia mōmona (*be fertile*)

Kua hoki au ki taku Ūkaipō

(*I am returning to my ancient home*)

⁵³ Source: Pip Williams, *Te Rongoa Māori*. (Auckland: Penguin, 1996), Pg45.

Exemplifying the practice of embedding historical events and information into song, the second stanza makes reference to Covid-19 pandemic as a *niho* or sharp object. The metaphor historically embeds this global account as our local rationale to focus on active kaitiakitanga (stewardship). Verse four makes reference to climate change (*puna maroke – a dry spring*) and verse seven embeds the knowledge that manuka roots have the ability to “hold” and contain E-coli bacteria until expiration.⁵⁴ It is from these applied interfaces of performance that I suggest the notion that the activation of physicality need to be encouraged in order to have meaningful connection to Te Taiao in order to contribute. In these times of music saturation via digital music platforms like Spotify, Bandcamp and Soundcloud, it is not enough *for me* to compose a song about the natural environment and then disseminate into the digital cloud. Rather I place myself, audience and music *in* the environment to *be* activated as an embedded community member.

All three works offered here are woven together by a common narrative. Each waiata is written and experienced from a first-person perspective where (via lyric and sound) the listener *becomes* the protagonist. Each stanza is passed between three characters as we transition between each song.

To recap, “Hotuhotu Manawa” relays the memories of a water-borne character, speaking to their memories of certain places around Wairarapa Moana. “Tatau Pounamu” speaks to and celebrates the personified role of the Remutaka mountain range as a physical representation and reminder of peace between Wellington iwi and Wairarapa iwi. The korero is then passed on to the *kahu* (Harrier Hawk) as we listen to “E Ngā Atua” and look down on the rohe (area) of Pae Tu Mokai ō Tauria (Featherston). We then finish the korero by passing the final stanza back to ngā tangata (humans) as active kaitiaki of this environmental partnership.

The overarching narrative therefore represents and reminds us of our symbiotic reliance upon and obligatory relationship to all things.

⁵⁴ Greenhouse experiments revealed that manuka and kanuka could reduce the survival of E. coli and Salmonella sp. in soil compared with pasture. Gines, Maria Gutierrez et.al. *Manuka Planting for Water Quality*. Institute of Environmental Science and Research, Dec 2017.

https://www.waternz.org.nz/Attachment?Action=Download&Attachment_id=3046

Jessica Hutchings writes: “This reciprocal relationship between land and people is a fundamental aspect of Māori cultural identity and lays the foundation to a complex and interconnecting values system.”⁵⁵

Conclusion

Through these new works I feel extremely privileged to have been encouraged to innovate and expand my music practice to a place where I feel more energised about my own re-connection and obligations to our natural world. As mentioned earlier, after twenty odd years in the music industry, I had meandered into a creative slump in terms of artistic direction and social efficacy. Via my modestly successful career to date, I was eager to creatively explore a new direction that (in my mind) might contribute something meaningful to my community. Personally, I feel that this new direction of inspired activation and connection has been extremely rewarding and effective in terms of providing both meaning and contribution. If we remember the karakia at the beginning of this exegesis, it was the *song* of the Mātui bird (extinct) that looked to weave and entwine the bonds between humans and the natural world; “Interlaced as with the threads of humanity ... Let it be embodied in the image of all beings”.

Lucy Green’s *How Popular Musicians Learn* provides evidence of a progressive “classroom” shift towards popular music studies being preferred by both student and teacher alike.⁵⁶ With pedagogical acceptance of composition methodologies like sampling, beat making and exponential developments of technological advancements, Green’s study (1998) now also needs to be revised. Even though I have used western music theory as a basis for my career to date, with the use of music making tools like digital sampling devices, effects and

⁵⁵ Jessica Hutchings, *Te Mahi Māra Hua Parakore: A Māori Food Sovereignty Handbook* (Location: Te Tākupu, Te Wānanga o Raukawa, 2015), 48.

⁵⁶ Green, 158.

connecting narratives, I find myself innovating away from the language of the staff and delving into a wider scope of music potentials inspired by nature and narratives. I would encourage New Zealand Music Education institutes to explore the addition of alternative composition and performance techniques using said technologies paired with cultural research. Considerations into music making could be offered in music education alongside western music pedagogies such as:

- comprehending environment as an agency of performance and composition.
- acknowledging Te Tiriti o Waitangi as a pedagogical guide for music praxis.
- narratives that connect music to place, historic events and environmental issues.
- Explore cultural functionalities of music other than entertainment i.e., embedding of knowledge and histories into song, healing potentials of frequencies or acknowledging temporality in both composition and performance.

My praxis will continue to explore *iwi taketake* composition techniques with the kaupapa in mind of offering alternative composition methods to anyone looking to expand their own music practice. Te Taiao will always be at the core of future transformative works because Te Taiao embraces all elements of nature, including us.

Thinking back to Sir Derek Lardelli's words "Whatever tools we use, what is the objective?" My objective has been to question and re-wire my own cultural existentialism that is immersed within New Zealand's western-centric 'white-space'. Via the resonating words of Sara Moncada, the Yaqui Nation, Educator and Performance Artist I mention earlier, she advocates that "relationships with one another, other beings and the natural world, bring us into engagement in the collective reciprocal links that connect us in the commonality of creation."⁵⁷

Through this Degree experience, I continue to be inspired and connected by melodies, rhythms, smells, textures, experiences and provocations found *in* Nature, forming stronger connection to and acknowledgement of our Natural World.

⁵⁷ Moncada, Sara, "Cultivating Creation: Exploring Traditional Ecological Knowledge of Native Song" (2018), Pg7.

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