



**Lost Souls in a Vast Land.**

**Recontextualising Māori *Kapa Haka* and the  
Construction of Home in Melbourne.**

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements  
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Doctor of Philosophy



Photo Credits: All photographs by the author.  
*Ngā Hapu Katoa* children, National Festival, June 1997

*This thesis is dedicated to the memories of*

*Carol Pirihī (d. 30/8/98)*

*and*

*Erin Aroha Pirere (d. 26/2/99)*

*who died while I was working with Nga Hapu Katoa.*

*Haere, haere, haere ra.*

## ***Ka Mate Kainga Tahī Ka Ora Kainga Rua***

*Kia ora koutou e ngā rangatira  
E karanga nei ia a tatou kia huihui mai  
Ki te whakanui i te kaupapa  
Whakapakari i to tatou Maoritanga  
Me whakamoemiti ki te kaihanga  
Me tangi kau noa ki ngā aitua  
Me mihi atu ki te whakaminenga  
Tena ra koutou ngā whanaunga-hoa.*

Greetings to all you Elders  
Calling to unite us all  
To endorse the purpose  
Of retaining our Maoritanga.

*Kia kaha kia maia kia u  
Korerotia te reo rangatira  
Pupuritia a tatou tikanga  
Whakaaturia ngā mahi ngahau  
Kia kite kiarongo ai te ao  
Ko tatou tenei te iwi Māori e.*

Let us praise our creator  
Let us weep [for] our departed  
Let us embrace the living  
Greetings to all our friends and  
family.

*Aue ngā ope paerangi koutou o te hau kainga  
Anei ra matou te kahui manene  
Kei te kimi oranga i tewhenua nui nei  
Hapainga mai awhinatia mai matou.  
Ka uia au te take i haramai ai  
Maku e ki atu “Anei ngā kupu*

Be strong be brave be firm  
Speak! Our noble language  
Retain! Our customs  
Display! Our cultural beauty  
That we, the Maori people  
Can be seen and heard by the  
world.

*Tuku iho a nga matua – tipuna  
Ka mate kainga tahī ka ora kainga rua”.*

*Kia kaha kia maia kia u  
Korerotia te reo rangatira  
Pupuritia a tatou tikanga  
Whakaaturia ngā mahi ngahau  
Kia kite kiarongo ai te ao  
Ko tatou tenei te iwi Māori e  
Ka mate kainga tahī ka ora kainga rua.*

To the visitors who have come from  
Our distant homeland  
Here we are the lost souls  
Seeking sustenance in this vast land  
Uplift and embrace us.

This *mōteatea* was composed in Melbourne. It expresses the hopes of the Māori who live here. The title of this thesis, ‘Lost Souls in a Vast Land’ paraphrases the final verse.

## Table of Contents

<i>Ka Mate Kainga Tahi Ka Ora Kainga Rua</i>			ii
Dedication			iii
Contents			iv
Declaration of Originality			viii
Abstract			ix
Acknowledgements			x
Map 1			xii
Map 2			xiii
Map 3			xiv
Tables and Plates			xv
Notes on Pronunciation			xvii
Glossary			xviii
Preface			xxi
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<i>Whakaeke:</i>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	<i>Mōteatea:</i>	<b>Leaving Home</b>	<b>11</b>
Introduction			11
The Early Māori Presence in Melbourne			13
Devlopments in New Zealand			20
i.    The <i>Treaty of Waitangi</i>			20
ii.   The Māori Wars			21
iii.  The Waitangi Legacy			22
The Māori in Aotearoa			23
Māori in Melbourne in the 1990s			26
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	<i>Waiata tira:</i>	<b>Settling Home</b>	<b>39</b>
The Māori in Melbourne			39
Culture Clubs			42

“Cultural Dance As Life Experience”	45
<i>Ngā Hapu Katoa</i>	56
Performance Events	64
a. Competitions and Festivals	64
b. Professional Performances	65
Performance Contexts and Meaning	69
<b>CHAPTER THREE:                    <i>Waiata:</i>                    Musical Home</b>	<b>78</b>
Pre-Contact Music	80
Vocal Music	80
Recited Songs and Dance Styles	81
Sung Songs and Dances	87
Musical Instruments	89
Aerophones	89
Bullroarers and Whizzers	89
Flutes	90
Trumpets	91
Idiophones	93
Contemporary Māori Music Performance	95
<i>Kapa Haka</i> in New Zealand and Melbourne	100
Promoting Culture	102
<b>CHAPTER FOUR                    <i>Waiata-a-ringā:</i> Teaching Home</b>	<b>105</b>
The Tutor	106
Tutors and Their Work	107
Transcription 4.1: <i>Taniwha</i>	111
Transcription 4.2: <i>Oma Rapeti</i>	113
Rehearsals	115
A Balancing Act	117
The Tutor as Cultural Inventor	123
Transcription 4.3: <i>A Home Among the Gum Trees</i>	125
Transcription 4.4: <i>Kia Ora Kiwi</i>	127
Mainstream Influences	132
Transcription 4.5: <i>The Fly</i>	137

<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b>	<b><i>Haka Poi:</i></b>	<b>Recreating Home</b>	<b>142</b>
Festivals			144
The Aotearoa Festival			145
The Victorian Regional Festival			150
Preparing for a Festival			158
The 1999 Victorian Regional Festival			161
Victorian Regional Festival Rules			174
<b>CHAPTER SIX</b>	<b><i>Whaikorero:</i></b>	<b>Changing Home</b>	<b>184</b>
Change			185
The Creative Process: Invention vs. Construction			186
Illustration 6.1: Hobsbawm and Ranger's three overlapping types of invention			193
Acculturation and Change			202
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN</b>	<b><i>Haka:</i></b>	<b>Globalising Home</b>	<b>218</b>
<i>Ka Mate</i>			220
Example 7.1: <i>Ka Mate</i>			221
English translation			222
Transcription 7.1: <i>Ka Mate</i>			223
<i>Ka Mate</i> as a Commodity			227
Transcription 7.2: <i>Let's Learn Gaelic</i>			228
Example 7.2: <i>Ev'rybody Haka Mix</i>			230
Music as a Commodity			237
Ownership			240
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b><i>Whakawātea:</i></b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>247</b>
<b>Appendix 1:</b>	<i>Treaty of Waitangi:</i>	English Version	257
		Māori Version	260
		English Translation	262
<b>Appendix 2:</b>	Consent Form		264
<b>Appendix 3:</b>	General Member Survey		265
<b>Appendix 4:</b>	Interview Questionnaire		266

<b>Appendix 5:</b>	Alternative Translations of <i>Ka Mate</i>	269
<b>Appendix 6:</b>	Letters of Permission	271
<b>Bibliography</b>		<b>272</b>
	Conversations and Interviews	285

## **Declaration of Originality**

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution. To the best of my knowledge this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis. Some material resulting from this research is in the process of being published.

Signature: .....

Date: .....

## Abstract

*Kapa haka* (literally, ‘row dance’) is the Māori term for ‘performing arts’, an apt description as *kapa haka* combines many genres of *haka* or ‘dance’, and *waiata* or ‘song’ within the performance. In recent years, the development of a series of formal competitions, or cultural festivals as they are better known, in which teams of Māori performers, *rōpū*, compete against each other, has provided a mechanism not only for the preservation of traditional Māori *kapa haka*, but also for the creation of new dances and the perpetuation of the tradition both in Australia and in New Zealand. *Kapa haka* is immediately recognisable as a distinctively Māori performance genre, and is regarded by the Māori themselves as a significant part of their culture and identity. For Māori who have migrated to Australia participating in the performance of *kapa haka* reinforces this sense of identity, of being Māori. The responsibility for the maintenance and creation of *kapa haka* lies with the tutors, men and women with either the knowledge or the passion to teach this aspect of Māori culture, aided by their *kaumātua*, ‘elders’. In the process of teaching and creating *kapa haka* in Australia the tutors are recontextualising the performance, catering to the needs a non-Māori audience, may possess a limited knowledge of Māori traditions, and the needs of the performers whose own knowledge may be as limited as the audience. This recontextualisation in turn leads to the reinvention of the perception of ‘home’, a pervasive notion used by all migrant Māori to describe New Zealand, and the invention of a new home, one that is inhabited by the new generation of Australian-born Māori. This study will examine the performance and creation of *kapa haka* in Melbourne as a dynamic and changing phenomenon, rooted in the past but adapting to the socio-cultural community removed from its ancestral home, and to document the place of *kapa haka* in the Māori community of Melbourne and its importance as a mechanism for the creation of a Māori identity whereby the Māori can retain their link with their past and with New Zealand.

## Acknowledgements

This research would not have been possible without the co-operation and advice of many, many people. There are many people I would like to thank, who assisted and supported me throughout the process of researching and writing.

Firstly I would like to thank my supervisors, David Goldsworthy and Ron Adams. David encouraged me to seek out the Māori community for my fieldwork and has encouraged me throughout the long process of researching and writing up the results. Ron has inspired me with his enthusiasm for the topic and challenged me to expand my thoughts and ideas in ways I would never have imagined. He has continued to be supportive of my efforts to incorporate cross-disciplinary thinking and has become both a friend and mentor.

A special thanks needs to be extended to Sally Montgomery and Boyd Smith for reading over the material and offering suggestions and advice, to Pauline Marshall (my mum!) and Kim Potter for their unwavering support with many hours of unpaid child care, and to Denise Marshall, IT genius and life saver who salvaged a good deal of “lost” material from an unstable PC.

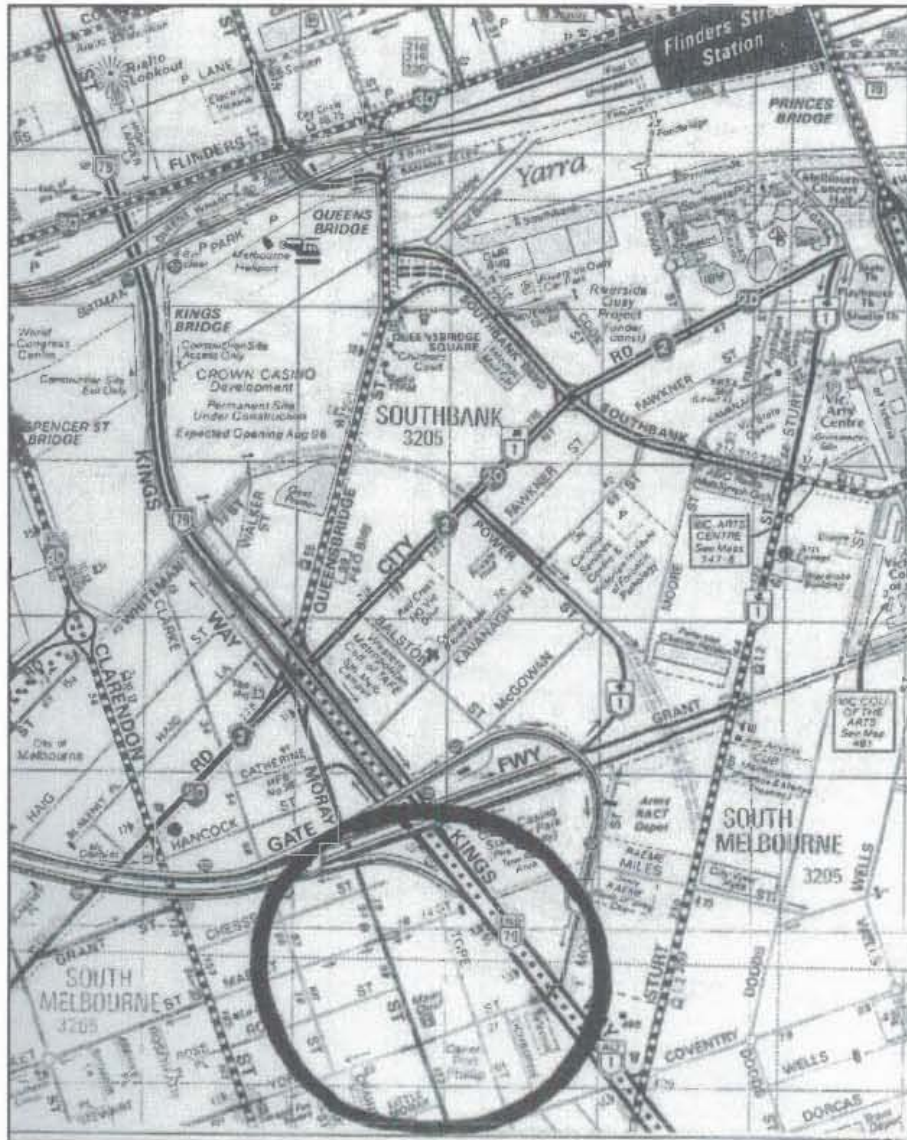
From its beginnings in March 1995, the members of the *Ngā Hapu Katoa* culture club, and many of the other Māori I have met in Melbourne have supported this research. I am indebted to all those who have contributed to and advised on the development of the material that has been included. I can never adequately thank everyone for their assistance. I can only hope that this thesis will do justice to their story and their wonderful culture. I wish to thank: Karlene Pouwhare, Maadi and Molly Te Kaahu, Leeanne ‘Langers’ Roa, Trish and Wiki Graham, Gina and Cedric Mehana, Leona and Alan Paniona, Prinny Tuai, ‘Little’ Leanne Tuai, Frank and Doris Smith, Mere Pirere, Selma and Narelle Smith and Wahine Brown from *Ngā Hapu Katoa*. From the wider Māori community I wish to thank George Hallett, Dorelle Reihana, Lesleigh Taiapa, Sonny Abraham, Tuini Dennis and Maahi Tukapua.

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Trembath, John Whiteoak, Maryanne O'Neill and the staff and management at the Māori Chief Hotel for additional advice and material, assistance and moral support.

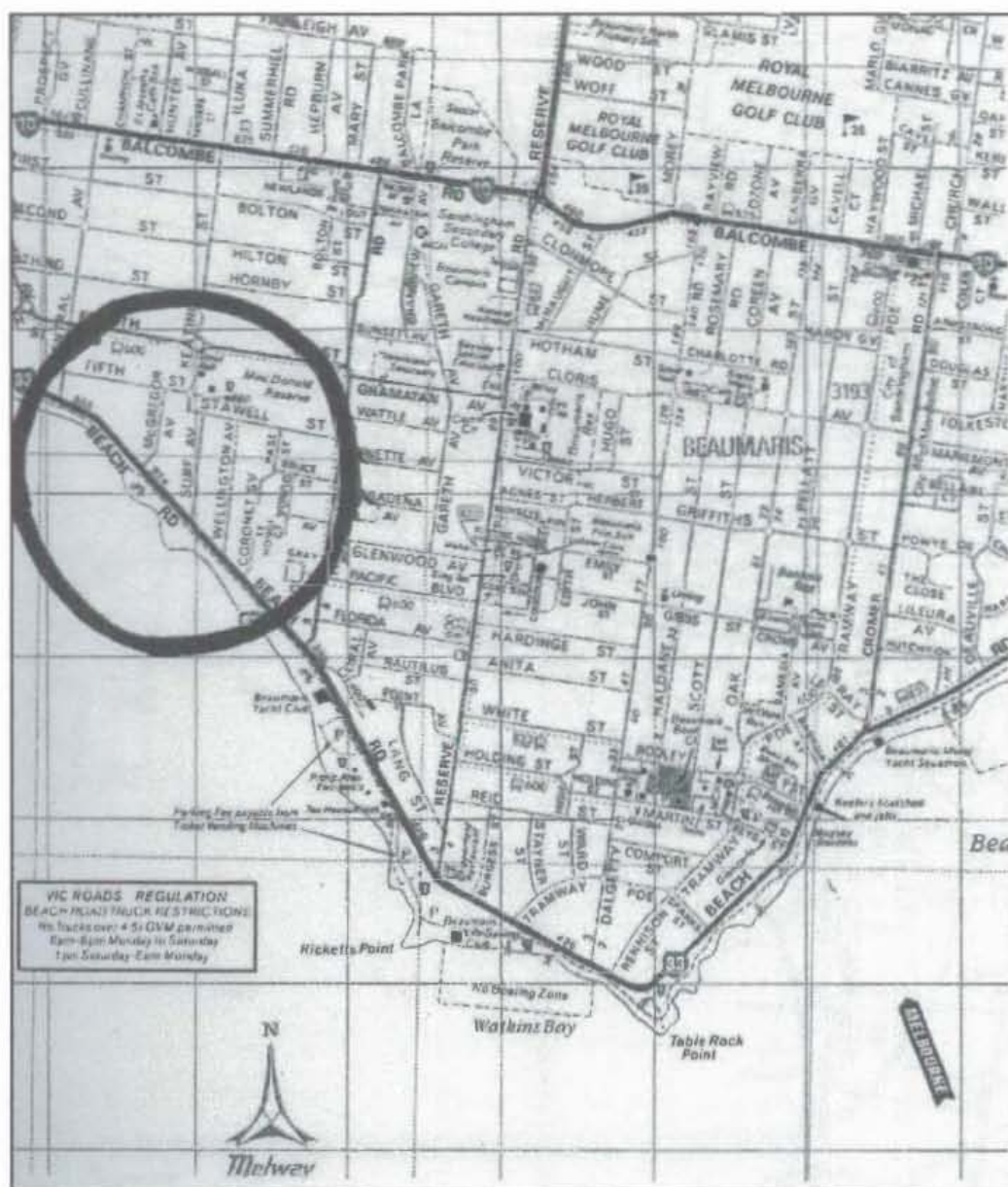
Finally, I would like to thank my son, Robert (Ropata), who spent the first four years of his life as a *tamariki* ('child') in the Māori community in Melbourne, and the next three putting up with me *in absentia* at the computer or in university libraries while I completed the literature surveys and the writing up the drafts. It's all over now and you can have my undivided attention!

# Map 1: South Melbourne



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## Map 2: Beaumaris



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## Tables and Plates

Table 1.1: Census population distributions for Māori residing in Melbourne	27
Table 1.2: Results of 1996 Census.	27
Plate 1	35
Plate 2	36
Plate 3	37
Plate 4	38
Table 2.1: Māori clubs in the Melbourne area (from 1995-2001)	49
Table 2.2: <i>Ngā Hapu Katoa</i> tribal make-up	58
Table 2.3: <i>Ngā Hapu Katoa</i> Club officials, 1996 – 1999	64
Plate 5	72
Plate 6	73
Plate 7	74
Plate 8	75
Plate 9	76
Plate 10	77
Plate 11	141
Table 5.1: Host cities and years for the Aotearoa Festival	146
Table 5.2: Regional areas as prescribed by the Aotearoa Festival	147
Table 5.3: Classification of items in the Aotearoa Festival	148
Table 5.4: Venues for the Victorian Regional Festival from 1996-1999	151
Table 5.5: Classification of items in the Victorian Regional Festival	156
Table 5.6: Aggregate placings for the 1999 Victorian Regional Festival	169
Plate 12	182
Plate 13	183

## Notes on Pronunciation

### The Māori Alphabet

*Te reo Māori* ('the Māori language') contains the same number of vowels but fewer consonants than English. The Māori alphabet is as follows:

A, E, H, I, K, M, N, Ng, O, P, R, T, U, W, Wh.

Where there is no equivalent sound in Māori, words will be adapted to sound Māori, for example Robert becomes *Ropata*, Victoria becomes *Wikitoria*, and guitar becomes *kitā*.

'Wh' is sounded as a breathy 'f', for example *whakaeke* is 'fakaeke'.

'Ng' sounds like the ng at the end of 'song'.

### Macrons

In Māori, vowels may be elongated or short in sound. A macron is used to identify an elongated vowel. Vowels elongated with macrons are ā, ī, ō and ū. For example ā sounds like 'aah'. Vowels without macrons are short in sound, for example *patu*.

## Glossary of Terms

All Māori words in this thesis are italicised. The English equivalent of each Māori word in the text will be given once. Thereafter all words in *te reo Māori* will stand alone.

### A

<i>Aotearoa</i>	‘Land of the Long White Cloud’, New Zealand
Aotearoa Festival	the Aotearoa Traditional Māori Performing Arts Festival, held biennially in New Zealand

### H

<i>Haere mai ra</i>	a greeting, welcome
<i>Haka</i>	dance
<i>Haka ngeri</i>	men’s dance
<i>Haka peruperu</i>	men’s war dance performed with weapons
<i>Haka poi</i>	women’s dance performed with <i>poi</i>
<i>Haka taparahi</i>	men’s posture dance
<i>Hangi</i>	underground oven, feast of food cooked in a hangi
<i>Hapu</i>	sub-tribe or conceived in the womb
<i>Hope</i>	hands on hips
<i>Hui</i>	a gathering
<i>Hurihuri</i>	to turn around

### I

<i>Iwi</i>	tribe
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### K

<i>Kaea</i>	leader
<i>Kaea tāne</i>	male soloist
<i>Kaea wahine</i>	female soloist
<i>Kai</i>	food
<i>Kākahu</i>	uniforms
<i>Kapa haka</i>	lit. ‘row dance’, performing arts
<i>Karakia</i>	prayer
<i>Karanga</i>	welcome
<i>Katoa</i>	all, many
<i>Kaumātua</i>	Elder
<i>Kia ora</i>	hello, a greeting
<i>Kawanatanga</i>	governor, a transliteration from English language
<i>Kōhanga reo</i>	nest, a children’s culture class including language and <i>kapa haka</i>
<i>Kōrero</i>	to speak, news, language
<i>Kōrero Maori</i>	to speak (the Māori language)
<i>Kōauau</i>	aerophone
<i>Kupe</i>	belly, abdomen

**M**

<i>Marae</i>	tribal home
<i>Mahi</i>	work, employment
<i>Mata</i>	prophetic songs, ancient recited chants
<i>Moana</i>	sea
<i>Moko</i>	tattoos
<i>Mōteatea</i>	lament, recited musical poetry

**O**

<i>Oriori</i>	lullaby
---------------	---------

**NG**

<i>Ngā hei</i>	ornament worn around neck
<i>Nguru</i>	a type of flute

**P**

<i>Pahū</i>	a slit gong made from stone or wood, used as a signalling device
<i>Patu</i>	short club
<i>Pakihiwi</i>	shoulders
<i>Piupiu</i>	flax kilt
<i>Poi</i>	soft ball attached to a length of rope
<i>Pounāmou</i>	greenstone
<i>Pōrutu</i>	a type of flute
<i>Pōwhiri</i>	a meeting
<i>Puha</i>	thistle, eaten as a vegetable
<i>Pūkaea</i>	a wooden trumpet
<i>Pūkana</i>	stare wildly, distort the countenance
<i>Pūtātara</i>	shell trumpet
<i>Pūtorino</i>	a type of flute

**R**

<i>Rōpū</i>	‘team’ [of dancers]
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**T**

<i>Takahia</i>	raising and lowering right foot in the dance
<i>Taiaha</i>	long spear-shaped club
<i>Tamariki</i>	children, children’s <i>rōpu</i>
<i>Tāne</i>	man
<i>Taniwha</i>	sea monster
<i>Taonga</i>	treasure, prize, trophy
<i>Tapu</i>	taboo
<i>Taringa</i>	ear
<i>Tau</i>	recited incantations, ancient <i>mōteatea</i>
<i>Tēnā koutou katoa</i>	greetings to you all
<i>Te reo Māori</i>	the Māori language
<i>Tikanga</i>	protocol
<i>Titiro</i>	look
<i>Toa</i>	warrior
<i>Totara</i>	a tree native to New Zealand

**U***Upoku*

head

**W***Waewae*

legs

*Waiata*

song

*Waiata karakia*

ritualistic songs

*Waiata tangi*

laments for the dead

*Whakaeke*

entry part of a performance

*Wahine*

woman

*Waiata*

traditional chant

*Waiata-a-ringa*

choral song

*Waiata-a-poi*

poi song

**Wh***Wānanga*lit. 'lore of the wise', a weekend retreat of intensive *kapa haka* practice*Whaikōrero*

oratory

*Whakarongo*

listen

*Whakawātea*

exit part of a performance

*Whaikōrero*

speech

*Whānau*

family, also used to describe clubs

*Whāre*

home, house

*Whētero\**

protrude (poke out the tongue)

*Wiri*

shaking of hands during dance

\* Also means to pass wind in some dialects.

## Preface

I first encountered the Māori culture club *Ngā Hapu Katoa* in October 1994 when I was planning my wedding. My (now) former husband was from Auckland and had planned for us to spend our honeymoon in New Zealand. I decided to surprise him with a Māori performance as we arrived for the wedding reception and called a Māori acquaintance of his. He referred me to Wahine Brown; a woman he knew was involved with a dance group. I spoke with Wahine and she gave me the telephone number of Maadi Te Kaahu, the president of the *Ngā Hapu Katoa* culture club. I explained what I wanted to Maadi, and I booked the group. As the reception was to be held on a boat on the Yarra River, we arranged for the club to perform on the dock as the guests arrived and Maadi quoted me a fee for the fifteen-minute performance. January 14<sup>th</sup> 1995 arrived and at 6:15 the guests arrived at the dock. When Terry and I arrived we were informed that there had been a change of plan as the dock was made of concrete. When we entered the main cabin of the boat we were greeted with a piercing *karanga* ‘welcome’ followed by fifteen minutes of spine tingling song and dance that was the topic of conversation for the rest of the night. Many guests commented that they thought the Māori would sink the boat with their vigorous stamping. Unfortunately, I remember very little of that evening, except relief that the day was over. But I remember the awe I felt as I watched *Ngā Hapu Katoa* perform.

Terry and I left the next day for New Zealand and visited all the usual places – the boiling mud pools at Rotorua, the Coromandel Peninsula, the glow-worm caves at Te Kuiti, and the Bay of Islands. I visited the Treaty House at Waitangi and learned about the Treaty of Waitangi, the Māori Wars and Hone Heke and the flagpole. I learned how the *piupiu* ‘flax kilts’ used in dancing were made. I saw the home of the Maori Queen as we drove across the Waikato River in Ngaruawahia. I drove through the suburb of Otara where the movie *Once Were Warriors* was filmed. But the whole time I never expected that I would engage in a study of Māori culture. I had just applied for Ph.D. candidature at the University of New England, and had been planning to continue with my research in Micronesia. But I now faced a

financial dilemma. I had spent the last term of 1994 working as a replacement Drama and Music teacher at Santa Maria College and the position was not renewed at the end of the year. It was February. I had no job, no money and a new husband, and I now had to face the prospect of finding a different research topic. My supervisor, Dr. David Goldsworthy, suggested I consider working with one of the migrant communities in Melbourne. He had students in Armidale working with the Cook Islander community, and in Melbourne I had a much wider choice. He knew of no one currently working with either the Melanesian or Polynesian communities. I thought about the difficulties in establishing contact with communities and the work I would have to do tracking down a people, then I realised that I had already established a link with members of one community. I called Maadi Te Kaahu and put my proposal to him. He recommended I approach the club's committee of management in writing, and I duly received an invitation to address their March 1995 meeting. Many of them had performed at my wedding reception, and they joked about how they had tried to sink the boat. When asked how long I thought my study would take, I responded that I expected to have completed my work by the end of that year. At the time I was expecting to do a comparative study of four to five Polynesian communities in Melbourne. By the time I had to begin writing up my results, three years later, the entire topic was about the Maori community, I was a member of the *Ngā Hapu Katoa* committee, I had attended language classes, performed with the club on a number of occasions, my son, born at the end of 1995, was a member of the 'babies' group and had been on stage since he was six months old, and my 'twelve month' project had become a running joke in the club.

At all times we were welcomed into the *whanau*, 'family', that is *Ngā Hapu Katoa*, and it was with much regret that I left Melbourne in April 2000 to take up a teaching position following the breakdown of my marriage. At the time I left, *Ngā Hapu Katoa* had gone into recess. When I completed writing up my thesis in early 2002 the club was still in recess and did not compete in the Regional Festival at the end of October in 2000, nor again in November 2001 (Smith, B. Pers. comm. 11 February 2002). This was the cause of much sadness among the older club members, as the club had never missed a Festival since its formation in the early 1980s. Other problems have added to the club's woes since then. *Ngā Hapu Katoa* has survived many changes, and although members still meet socially and the catering group is still working, it is still unclear whether it will become active again in the near future,

and the longer the club remains inactive, the more difficult it will be to re-form. Members are optimistic that this will happen, but have got on with their lives, filling the void with family and work commitments. Some have joined other clubs and still participate in 'culture', and others are enjoying the break (Graham, T. Pers. comm. 14 February 2002), but *Ngā Hapu Katoa* continues to exist in the hearts of those who stood in line and performed, and they live in hope that one day they will again don their *te kakahu* and *moko* and retake the stage.

*Ngā Hapu Katoa e karanga kite iwi e  
Kua eke mai nei, ki runga te marae e.*

*Ngā Hapu Katoa* is calling the people  
Who have arrived at the *marae*.