Project: Composing and/or songwriting (hereafter "songwriting") with mātauranga Māori

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Title: Te Ua (Rain)

Domain: Māori, Music, and Legal Studies

Theoretical Framework: Māori Philosophy

This reflective essay addresses the question ''what can be learned about the tikanga (customary law) of songwriting with mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) by composing with taonga puoro (traditional Māori instruments)?''. It is the final piece of work for my postgraduate research in creative practice, 2022, at the ARA Institute of Canterbury (hereafter 'research'). The question, located in Te Ao Māori (the Māori world), revealed itself to me because I wrote a song in May 2022 for a SATB (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) choir called *Matariki.*

As soon as *Matariki* was completed, I had a 'bad feeling' with regard to the subject matter. To put it in a nutshell, my version of *Matariki* was uplifted from Professor Rangi Mātāmua's (2017) book *'Matariki : the star of the year'.* In Te Ao Māori, it may be considered inappropriate for me to write a song about *Matariki* by using a version from another iwi – even when this version is in the public domain.

As well as my criticism of *Matariki* from a proprietary rights point of view, my criticism of *Matariki*, from a songwriting point of view, was that I preferred traditional European musical elements over and above traditional Māori musical elements and, in doing so, had

created a waiata that 'permitted' the Māori musical elements to be included *if there was space*. Examples of European musical elements in the draft of *Matariki* are:

a. Traditional English folk song structure.
b. The vocal range for the majority of the parts is well over an octave.
c. Simple metre.
d. The song is in the key of C major.

In contrast, references to traditional Māori music were:

a. References to the Māori intervals which, "[e]xcept between phrases…have steps no greater than one, two or three semitones" (McLean, 1996, p. 242).
b. Glissando when terminating a phrase.
c. The subject matter is the god of wind, Tāwhirimātea.

Theoretical Framework

At the time of writing this proposal, I have located literature that contains insights into the Māori value system by the following authors: Barlow (1991), Patterson (1992), Durie (1994), Law Commission (2001), Barclay (2005), Mead (2016), and Opai (2021). Furthermore, I have located three textbooks specifically on Māori philosophy; *Exploring Maori values* (Patterson, 1992)*, Pacific Parables: Learning from Māori Tradition* (Patterson, 2014), and *Māori philosophy* (Stewart, 2021). I have added these insights to my experiences of living in Aotearoa/New Zealand, including my experiences within Te Ao Māori. To that end, the value system is likely to be influenced by the Whanganui hapū/iwi world view.

The value system of Te Ao Māori underpins what is considered to be tika (correct behaviour). Tikanga is a recent field of interest in academia. Professor Hirini Moko Mead

initiated the first university course in tikanga at Victoria University in Wellington in 1980. Of relevance to creativity is Mead's statement that "[t]here are many artists today who know little or nothing about tikanga and have much learning to do. The observance of the tikanga of creative work actually enhances the activity, gives significance to the work and elevates the activity as something special and highly valued" (2016, p. 282).

The importance of song in Te Ao Māori cannot be overstated; waiata was, is, and will always be a principal way to learn mātauranga Māori (Barlow, 1991, p. 151). Despite this, the only mention in the textbooks I could locate (at the time of writing) directly regarding the tikanga of songwriting is the following by McLean (1996) who writes "[t]o avoid distraction she placed herself under tapu or ceremonial restriction, avoiding food and the company of kinfolk until the task was complete" (p.214).

There is virtually no intellectual property law (IP) protection for mātauranga Māori. Accordingly, it is arguable this research has value because there is increasing concern about cultural appropriation. An example of this concern, is Waitangi Tribunal Report WAI262 which states:

> The claimants accepted that all cultures, including Māori culture, must grow and develop to survive...[b]ut, they argued, the existence of mātauranga Māori and taonga works in the public domain does not entitle others to use those works or that mātauranga in any way they wish... (2011, p. 40).

An example of cultural appropriation of music in Aotearoa/New Zealand is the Haka Party which was held by the University of Auckland Engineering students from 1954 to 1979 (University of Auckland, 2019). To elucidate, the University of Auckland states the students mocked the haka 'Ka Mate' by dressing in grass skirts, using fake taiaha, and scrawling fake

Māori motifs, or Māori names, on their bodies. The haka ‘Ka Mate’ is now protected Haka Ka Mate Attribution Act 2014 (hereafter “Act”). This Act is sui generis (one of a kind) legislation. In the schedule of the Act, it states “it is of great significance to Ngati Toa Rangatira that the haka is treated with respect. The values which Ngati Toa Rangatira seek to uphold are the ihi, wehi, and wana”.

For the purposes of this creative research, I searched Trade Me for a musical product that breached the Act and I purchased a pen which the seller advertises as a “great funny gift to give he or she who has everything” (TradeMe, 2022). The pen has ‘Ka Mate’ printed in full on the back of the packaging without attributing the iwi.

Above: Pens that play ‘Ka Mate’

Above: Underwear with ‘Ka Mate’

After the ease in which I purchased a product online that breached the Act, I located and purchased a pair of underpants in the second store I visited which display the Haka ‘Ka Mate’ all over them. In order to meet the requirements of the Act, the underpants come with a removable label. Applying the law, it is highly likely the pen breaches S10(1)(a) of the Act because the pen does not attribute the iwi. Whether or not the removable label on the underpants is a breach of this section of the Act is difficult to say.

Richard Nunns

The most prominent musician to center his creative practice around taonga puoro is the late Richard Nunns. To reiterate, Richard emphasizes that taonga puoro are a journey in Te Ao Māori, of which, tikanga is fundamental. Significantly, both Richard and Brian are Pākehā. Richard states “[t]he difficulty of working as a Pākehā in the Māori world was especially intense in my generation. Māori had had enough of being studied and written about by others…Brian and I were greatly helped by Hirini [Melbourne]. If a locality said they wanted only the Māori performer (Hirini), not the Pākehā member of the team (me and Brian),

Hirini would say, ‘It’s all of us or nothing.’ Later, working alone, I have found that the instruments speak more loudly than the ethnicity of the player. The younger generation of Māori almost universally accept the playing of a Pākehā, and I am humbled by this, and glad that there are younger Māori players coming on” (2014, p.18).

I was fortunate to have worked with Richard on many occasions. I experienced Richard’s work to be highly respectful of tikanga. In that regard, I was surprised to read in his book *Te Ara Puoro* that he “provided a catalogue of instrument sounds for free use by the film-makers” of the film *The Lord of the Rings* (Nunns, 2014, p.119). These samples were then ‘morphed’ to the point “where it is extremely difficult to recognize the contribution of any single instrument in the finished score” (p.119).

I was surprised to read Richard’s comments because in draft two of *Te Ua*, I attempted to morph the tumutumu kōhatu (stones) to the point where they sounded like rain rather than stones. When I heard the result, I felt this to be a breach of tikanga because, when viewed through the theoretical framework of Māori philosophy, I felt I was implying the stones were ‘not good enough’. I removed the sound design that I had applied to the tumutumu kōhatu and dedicated extra rehearsal time to these taonga to achieve utu (balance).

Honouring the wairua and mauri of the tumutumu kōhatu was especially important to me because they were the catalyst for the realization that taonga puoro could accompany me in my journey in Te Ao Māori. To elucidate, I resorted to use tumutumu kōhatu when I could not find a taonga puoro player to accompany me for an aria from an opera that required taonga puoro; the aria was for a concert which directly coincided with the inaugural Matariki National Holiday festivities. Fortunately, Elise Goodge, a taonga puoro player from Whanganui, suggested tumutumu kōhatu be used to form the soundscapes (personal

communication, June 7, 2022). The Christchurch City Choir and I experimented with tapping, scraping, and rubbing the stones. During this learning process, I felt an increasing sense of the wairua of the stones and wondered about their whakapapa (genealogy). This ability for the stones to have a spirit and to have a genealogy is expressed by Stewart in her book Māori Philosophy as "all things are living" (2021, p.55).

Above: Tumutumu kōhatu, toy kōauau and plastic pipe

Following on from the tumutumu kōhatu, I experimented with a toy kōauau that I bought from Trade Me, which produced a tiny kōauau like sound, and a piece of plastic pipe which revealed an ominous trumpet-like sound. To this end, I realized the toy kōauau and plastic pipe were musically limiting. For the purposes of this research, I commissioned taonga puoro from master carver, and founding member of Te Haumanu, Brian Flintoff. I was fortunate that Brian responded expeditiously to my request and I was able to begin my creative research with taonga puoro almost immediately.

Above: Three kōauau and a hopurangi made by Brian Flintoff

Te Ua explores the wooden kōauau's ability to make wind-like sounds and bird-like song. The kōauau is essential to the decolonization of my creative practice because the kōauau defines the tonality, and establishes the range of notes I may access for the main melody. The kōauau has also awakened my ear to microtones. In *Te Ua*, I have not only used microtonal singing in the melody, but I have used it in the high vocal parts. Each of the higher vocal parts are designed to be different, in microtones, than the other.

It appears that early travelers to Aotearoa/New Zealand did not like traditional Māori singing. Elsdon Best called it "monotonous and tuneless" (Best, 1925, as cited in McLean & Orbell, 2004, p.18). It may have been that the use of microtones, which is fundamental to traditional song performance, is difficult for the European ear to recognize and become accustomed to. However, when I applied these microtones in *Te Ua*, I found this musical language expressed the depth of emotion the piece needed.

It is arguable that the kōauau has taught me that it is tika for songwriters to use microtones in their songs. However, this is very difficult to do within a European structure because microtones are considered to be 'out of tune' to the European ear. To that end, I

experimented with the use of microtones in a piece I wrote for this research called *River Will Carry Me* (Kapohe, 2022); this song uses non-Māori tonality through the use of jazz chords. I discovered that when I used microtones, my singing became discordant with these jazz chords. In the end, the best I could do was revert to the use of quarter tones for the chorus with the result the piece ended up sounding like jazz.

The inability to use microtones to any degree in songwriting (unless, perhaps, the songwriting is atonal) has led me to another learning; it may be tika to seek structures located in traditional Māori music-making. An example of this is a piece called *Tangaroa* by Tiki Tane. *Tangaroa*'s structure is that of a chant and, underpinning the chant, is a drone. A drone creates space for the singers in *Tangaroa to* engage with microtonal singing such as the sample of the female voice which can be heard chanting throughout the song. Moreover, Tiki Tane plays a pūmoana in the performance of *Tangaroa* at the Vodafone New Zealand Music Awards 2008; the pūmoana (a conch shell trumpet) is considered to be a voice of, the god of the oceans, Tangaroa (Flintoff, 2004, pp.48-50). This pūmoana sits comfortably, from a musical perspective, within the context of the chant and drone. In other words, it sounds as though it 'belongs', as opposed to say, sounding 'off key' in the way that my microtonal singing sounded in my experiment with *River Will Carry Me.*

Whakapapa (genealogy)

During my research, I felt Rēkohu/Wharekauri/The Chatham Islands (hereafter 'Rēkohu') was calling to me and, as far as I knew, I do not whakapapa to Rēkohu. "Whakapapa is the genealogical descent of all living things from the gods to the present time…[e]verything has a whakapapa" (Barlow, 1991, p.171). Whakapapa is a "central construct" of Te Ao Māori (Komene, 2009, p. 14). Accordingly, my research has involved a visit to Te Kooti Whenua

Māori/Māori Land Court to explore my whakapapa. To that end, I have obtained the will of Mihaere Pera, my great-grandfather.

Importantly, for the purposes of this research, I eventually discovered that, through Mihaere Pera, I whakapapa to Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki. To elaborate, 123 prisoners, and the families who decided to accompany them, the majority of these people being Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki, were illegally deported to Rēkohu under inhumane circumstances by the Crown (Waitangi Tribunal, 2004, p. 736).

The first draft of *Te Ua* was written when I had instinctual knowledge of this. This is possible if viewed through a Māori Philosophical Framework. Stewart states "past events do not lose their significance, and ancestors can collapse the space-time continuum to be co-present with their descendants" (2021, p .3). The second draft of *Te Ua* was written as I was becoming intellectually aware of this. Significantly, in the second draft, before I was aware of what happened on Rēkohu, I added well over 70 audio files of an intake and fast exhalation of breath as well as a tangi. Moreover, I added a long reverb to the end of the audio files. I now wonder if the breath signifies the loss of life due to illegal acts by the Crown? Or, if the trail at the end of the song represents the souls returning to Hawaiki? Or, if the tangi that occurred, and was recorded, is the crying of the women in the rain at night?

The instruments used in the first draft of *Te Ua* are reo (voice), tumutumu kōhatu (stones), and kōauau (flute). *Te Ua* was written and recorded at the beginning of my taonga puoro journey. Hence, my playing ability on the kōauau was limited. Applying the theoretical framework of Māori Philosophy, in particular, the whakaaro that everything is living, I am able to view my limited playing ability from the perspective that the instruments were in the process of revealing their voices to me *in their own good time.* Notably, the kōauau

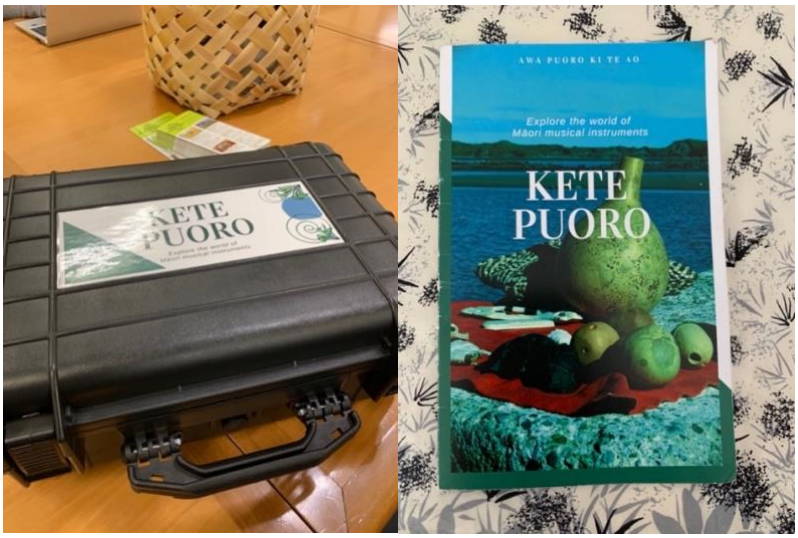
provided me with every sound that was required to produce the first and second drafts of *Te Ua*.

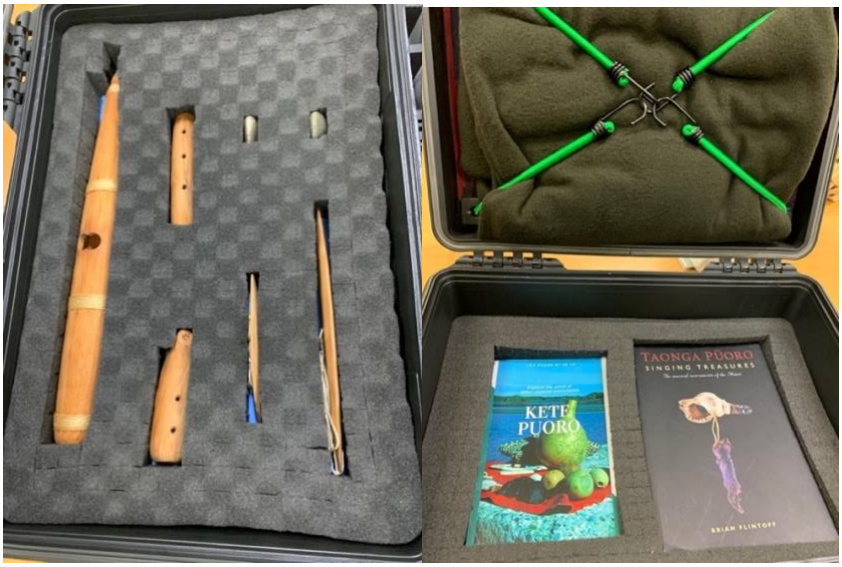
Te Kore (unorganized potential)

Barlow writes "European writers have translated Te Kore as 'nothingness'…but to the Māori mind Te Kore is the source of all things…[i]n a state of Te Kore, there existed unlimited potential for 'being' although it had no organized form" (1991, p.55). In order to learn how to bring forth the voices of the taonga puoro, I followed Brian's opinion in his book (Flintoff, 2004, p.23), and in private communication, that the starting point for learning taonga puoro is the natural world. Accordingly, my research has involved a weekly visit to Riccarton Bush, visits to the Awa and Moana of Whanganui, and listening to bird sounds on the Department of Conservation (New Zealand) website. Underlying these efforts is the whakaaro that the instruments will speak *when they are ready*. I must be patient and wait for the unorganized potential, Te Kore, to pass, for, it is from Te Kore that all things come. To that end, I have tried to play by simply whistling or blowing into the instrument and expecting nothing in return. In practice, it has been very difficult for me to accept the chaos of sounds issuing forth from the instruments because I have a long history with European instruments which have continued in an unbroken tradition; a tradition which is supported by the institutions of this country, including libraries that loan out learning resources.

I became so frustrated with the peeping sound of the kōauau that I went to Whanganui a second time. I played to Te Awa Tupua. However, the kōauau sound did not improve. I then visited my cousins, Sandy and Jas, who are librarians at the Whanganui District Library. Unbeknownst to me, the library loan out taonga puoro as if they are a book. This initiative is made possible by the Whanganui taonga puoro group called Awa Puoro Ki Te Ao.

Fortunately, the instruments were available and we had a lot of fun ‘giving them a go’. It soon became obvious that Sandy and Jas had no trouble playing the instruments despite this being their first time doing so. I could not even make a sound out of the porotiti which is, amongst other things, a child’s toy. I felt a mixture of emotions, including feeling a bit miffed, because ‘I was supposed to be the musician’. To that end, the taonga puoro have reminded me of the tikanga of whakaiti (making oneself small). In my case, to have some humility.





Above: Whanganui District Library loans out taonga puoro to the public

Sandy suggested I “think like a Māori” (personal communication, September 2022). I knew what she meant. She meant relax and stop analysing everything. However, in practice this was difficult, especially as I am trained in a complex system of breath support called ‘appoggio’. To that end, I persisted to use the appoggio system, without success. Finally, the frustration overwhelmed me and I gave up ‘trying’. In late November, a month before this research was due to end, I blew an extraordinary amount of air into the kōauau. I blew through every wenewene (fingerhole) and both ends. I used diaphragmatic system. Finally, the kōauau sang forth in its beautiful voice. The instrument had taught me Te Kore.

Applying tikanga by analogy

Prior to recording *Te Ua*, I read literature about vocal pedagogy, including vocal pedagogy in traditional Māori Music. The literature considering contemporary vocal pedagogy is in its infancy (LeBorgne & Rosenberg, 2019, p. 287; Hoch, 2018, p. 3; Hall, 2007, p. 570; Roll, 2019, p. 155), including the controversial technique of belt which is similar to shouting. I experimented with belt during my recordings of the first draft of *Te Ua* because contemporary Māori performance is beginning to experiment with belt. Belt is produced by using the thyroarytenoid (TA) muscles to shorten and thicken the vocal folds (Edwin, 2007a, p. 212).

The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) performers and teachers Streeton & Raymond (2014) write “[a]t best [belt] can be a thrilling theatrical effect and at its worst it can lead to the destruction of a promising voice” (p. 134). This view is shared by classical vocal pedagogists William Vennard (Vennard, 1968, cited in Edwin, 2007b) and Richard Miller. In 2004, Miller wrote:

> To request a female singer to carry her chest voice into the upper range is to encourage her to hold her vocal folds in a dense configuration while raising pitch, thereby inhibiting normal vocal-fold elongation. As a result, the singer approaches upper range by induced *registration malfunction* [emphasis added]…I must also objectively note that some popular belters seem to enjoy long performance careers. Most do not. (p.152)

Applying a Māori Theoretical Framework, I wondered if 'registration malfunction', may be considered a violation of tikanga. I sought an analogy in another Māori art form. An example is the mahi of the late Erenora Puketapu-Hetet; a weaver whose work is deeply embedded in tikanga and demonstrates deep respect for the natural environment (Patterson, 1992, p.20). An example of this can be viewed in the film *Tu Tangata: Weaving for the people* (Greenberg, 2000) which has filmed Puketapu-Hetet teaching her mokopuna how to use flax sustainably. Accordingly, after viewing Puketapu-Hetet, I came to the conclusion that I would choose to use a more sustainable vocal technique.

The experience of Robert Wiremu in developing vocal technique in the context of tikanga was instructive here. Robert is a Professional Teaching Fellow at the Faculty of Creative Arts and Industries, University of Auckland. He has had an extensive career in performing, composing, arranging, and teaching, with an emphasis on vocal pedagogy. Significantly, Robert recorded Douglas Mew's (1998) piece *The Lovesong of Hinepouri* with Associate Professor Dr Karen Grylls ONZM and the New Zealand National Youth Choir.

In *The Lovesong of Hinepouri*, Robert debated, explored, and tested different vocal techniques with Karen. Eventually, Robert and Karen decided upon the use of the head voice which Robert describes as hutu/tangi (Wiremu, Personal communication, 2022). I find

Robert's performance beautifully haunting. Interestingly, the use of hutu/tangi does not appear on the recordings of traditional Māori music (McLean& Orbell, 2004). Rather, the men use a high degree of nasality. Moreover, taonga puoro players refer to the trumpet sound as ' the male voice' and the flute voice as 'the female voice'. Therefore, it may be that a male singing with this hutu/tangi quality, in other words, 'the female voice' is a modern development.

Draft Three of *Te Ua*

By draft three of *Te Ua*, I had become intellectually aware of my whakapapa to Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki. Moreover, I had read the full Waitangi Tribunal Report WAI814. The draft begins with the pūtōrino. Importantly, Richard writes "[a] pūtōrino is shown in the carvings of many great ancestors, held by them as a token of their mana and power" (2014, p.70). Indeed, Richard regards the instrument as the "principal of all the taonga puoro" (p.69). A pūtōrino may be played by both the embouchure (the male voice) and transverse method (the female voice).

Above: A pūtōrino in the narrow Whanganui style, made by Brian Flintoff

Brian said to me that he only had a narrow piece of wood available. He then realised this narrower pūtōrino was perfect for me due to my Whanganui whakapapa; the Whanganui pūtōrino are narrower. To this end, Mauri Tirikatene, of Whanganui, says the male voice (the trumpet sound) was used to call the people together and female voice (the flute voice) "could weep to mourn some tragic news of the day" (Tirikatene, cited in Nunns, 2014, pp. 75-76). Hence, it is my intention to include the flute sound of the pūtōrino to accompany the tangi at the end of the third draft of *Te Ua*. This will be a very special moment for me as a musician; not only will I be able to play the pūtōrino in the manner that Tirikatene describes (of great importance to me due to my Whanganui whakapapa) but I will be able to use this music to lament what occurred on Rēkohu with regards to Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki.

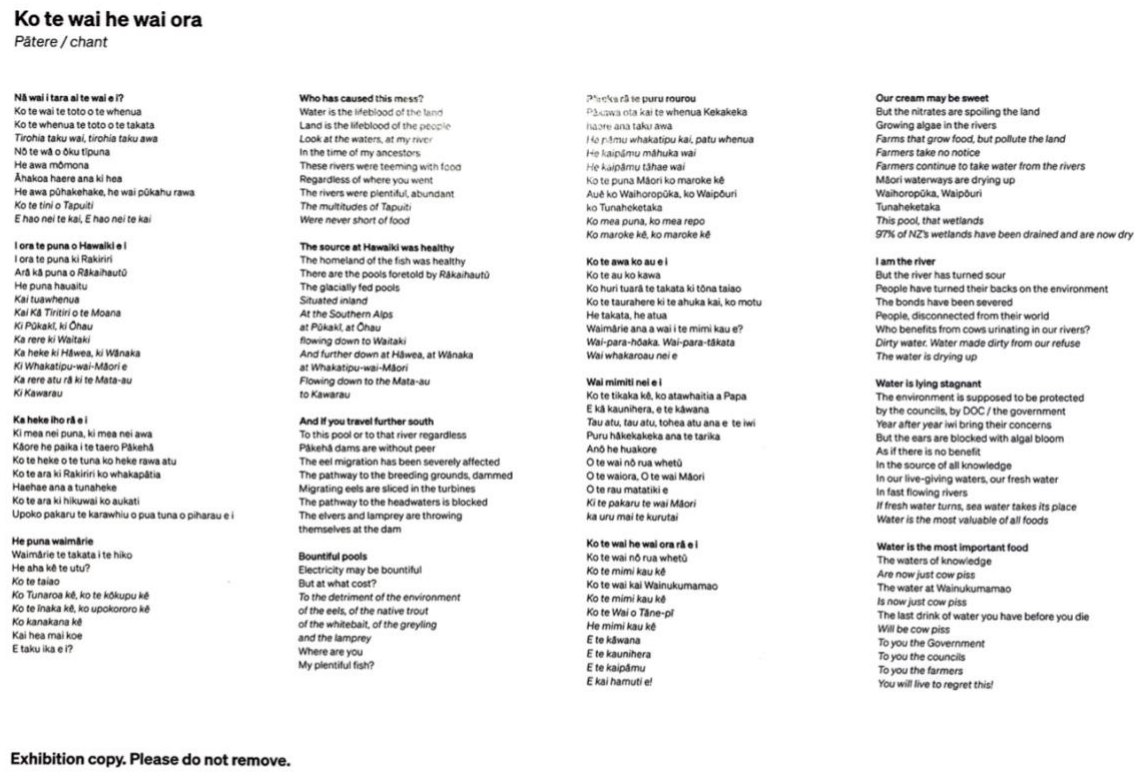
Conclusion

The focus on learning to play taonga puoro has assisted me to begin the process of retraining my musical ear and thought; a process which, if viewed through the theoretical framework of Māori Philosophy, is inseparable from journeying into Te Ao Māori. In this research, the use of the taonga puoro in *Te Ua* led me to discovering my whakapapa to Te Aitanga-a-Māhaki, not only intellectually, but emotionally. This emotional connection was the element missing in *Matariki*. To this end, Mead states "whakapapa is belonging, without it an individual is outside looking in" (2003, p.43).

Traditionally, proprietary rights, generally speaking, belong to whānau and/or hapū and/or iwi. Of significance to this research, and further research, is that Māori songwriters may be increasingly tempted to use mātauranga from another iwi. One reason for this is that technology is making it easier and easier to gain access to the mātauranga of another iwi.

During this research, I experienced mamae (pain) as a result of the use of mātauranga Whanganui (Whanganui knowledge) by Māori artists who exhibited the work *Ko te wai he wai ora* in the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū exhibition *Māori Moving Image*. To elaborate, the work, directed by Rachael Rakena (Kāi Tahu, Ngāpuhi), manipulated the Whanganui Iwi standing "Ko au te Awa, ko te Awa ko au" (*) within the pātere (chant) which accompanied the visual media. I experienced mamae because, similar to the tumutumu kōhatu, I felt my wairua was 'morphed' until I was unrecognizable. This is what the accompanying sheet to the exhibit stated:

Ko te awa ko au e i	**I am the river**
Ko te au ko kawa	But the river has turned sour
Ko huri tuarā te takata ki tōna taiao	People have turned their backs on the environment
Ko te taurahere ki te ahuka kai, ko motu	The bonds have been severed
He takata, he atua	People, disconnected from their world
Waimārie ana a wai I te mimi kau e?	Who benefits from cows urinating in our rivers?
Wai-para-hōaka. Wai-para-tākata	*Dirty water. Water made dirty from our refuse*
Wai whakaroau nei e	*The water is drying up*



Ko te wai he wai ora
Pātere / chant

Nā wai i tara ai te wai e ī?
Ko te wai te toto o te whenua
Ko te whenua te toto o te takata
Tirohia taku wai, tirohia taku awa
Nō te wā o ōku tīpuna
He awa mōmona
Āhakoa haere ana ki hea
He awa pūhakehake, he wai pūkahu rawa
Ko te tini o Tāpuiti
E hao nei te kai, E hao nei te kai

I ora te puna o Hawaiki e ī
I ora te puna ki Rakiriri
Arā kā puna o *Rākaihautū*
He puna hauaitu
Kai tuawhenua
Kai Kā Tiritiri o te Moana
Ki Pūkaki, ki Ōhau
Ka rere ki Waitaki
Ka heke ki Hāwea, ki Wānaka
Ki Whakatipu-wai-Māori e
Ka rere atu rā ki te Mata-au
Ki Kawarau

Ka heke iho rā e ī
Ki mea nei puna, ki mea nei awa
Kāore he paika i te taero Pākehā
Ko te heke o te tuna ko heke rawa atu
Ko te ara ki Rakiriri ko whakapātia
Haehae ana a tunaheke
Ko te ara ki hīkuwai ko aukati
Upoko pakaru te karawhiu o pua tuna o piharau e ī

He puna waimārie
Waimārie te takata i te hiko
He aha kē te utu?
Ko te taiao
Ko Tūnaroa kē, ko te kōkupu kē
Ko te īnaka kē, ko upokororo kē
Ko kanakana kē
Kai hea mai koe
E taku ika e ī?

Who has caused this mess?
Water is the lifeblood of the land
Land is the lifeblood of the people
Look at the waters, at my river
In the time of my ancestors
These rivers were teeming with food
Regardless of where you went
The rivers were plentiful, abundant
The multitudes of Tapuiti
Were never short of food

The source at Hawaiki was healthy
The homeland of the fish was healthy
There are the pools foretold by *Rākaihautū*
The glacially fed pools
Situated inland
At the Southern Alps
at Pūkaki, at Ōhau
flowing down to Waitaki
And further down at Hāwea, at Wānaka
at Whakatipu-wai-Māori
Flowing down to the Mata-au
to Kawarau

And if you travel further south
To this pool or to that river regardless
Pākehā dams are without peer
The eel migration has been severely affected
The pathway to the breeding grounds, dammed
Migrating eels are sliced in the turbines
The pathway to the headwaters is blocked
The elvers and lamprey are throwing
themselves at the dam

Bountiful pools
Electricity may be bountiful
But at what cost?
To the detriment of the environment
of the eels, of the native trout
of the whitebait, of the greyling
and the lamprey
Where are you
My plentiful fish?

Pāreka rā te puru rourou
Pākawa ota kai te whenua Kekakeka
Isaore ana taku awa
He pāmu whakatipu kai, patu whenua
He kaipāmu māhuka wai
He kaipāmu tāhae wai
Ko te puna Māori ko maroke kē
Auē ko Waihoropūka, ko Waipōuri
ko Tunaheketaka
Ko mea puna, ko mea repo
Ko maroke kē, ko maroke kē

Ko te awa ko au e ī
Ko te au ko kawa
Ko huri tuarā te takata ki tōna taiao
Ko te taurahere ki te ahuka kai, ko motu
He takata, he atua
Waimārie ana a wai i te mimi kau e?
Wai-para-hōaka. Wai-para-tākata
Wai whakaroau nei e

Wai mimiti nei e ī
Ko te tikaka kē, ko atawhaitia a Papa
E kā kaunihera, e te kāwana
Tau atu, tau atu, tohea atu ana e te iwi
Puru hākekakeka ana te tarika
Anō he huakore
O te wai nō rua whetū
O te waiora, O te wai Māori
O te rau matatiki e
Ki te pakaru te wai Māori
ka uru mai te kurutai

Ko te wai he wai ora rā e ī
Ko te wai nō rua whetū
Ko te mimi kau kē
Ko te wai kai Wainukumarnao
Ko te mimi kau kē
Ko te Wai o Tāne-pī
He mimi kau kē
E te kāwana
E te kaunihera
E te kaipāmu
E kai hamuti e!

Our cream may be sweet
But the nitrates are spoiling the land
Growing algae in the rivers
Farms that grow food, but pollute the land
Farmers take no notice
Farmers continue to take water from the rivers
Māori waterways are drying up
Waihoropūka, Waipōuri
Tunaheketaka
This pool, that wetlands
97% of NZ's wetlands have been drained and are now dry

I am the river
But the river has turned sour
People have turned their backs on the environment
The bonds have been severed
People, disconnected from their world
Who benefits from cows urinating in our rivers?
Dirty water. Water made dirty from our refuse
The water is drying up

Water is lying stagnant
The environment is supposed to be protected
by the councils, by DOC / the government
Year after year iwi bring their concerns
But the ears are blocked with algal bloom
As if there is no benefit
In the source of all knowledge
In our live-giving waters, our fresh water
In fast flowing rivers
If fresh water turns, sea water takes its place
Water is the most valuable of all foods

Water is the most important food
The waters of knowledge
Are now just cow piss
The water at Wainukumarnao
Is now just cow piss
The last drink of water you have before you die
Will be cow piss
To you the Government
To you the councils
To you the farmers
You will live to regret this!

Exhibition copy. Please do not remove.

Above: The exhibition copy (photograph taken with permission) of the kupu (words) of *Ko te wai he wai ora*.

A question for further research could be whether or not Rachael sought permission from Whanganui Hapū/Iwi? And, if not, why not? To that end, I have been a part of many projects which have called upon me to sing whakapapa kōrero of other iwi. In order to do so, the producers of the project have arranged for me to meet the recognised leaders of the iwi. This is important because, in the end, it is my voice that sings forth the mātauranga.

Engagement with Māori takes time. Sometimes this has involved noho marae (sleeping on marae) and substantial kōrero to find links. When this engagement happens, the performance is joyous. On one occasion, the premiere of New Zealand Opera's *Hōhepa*, there was an emotional haka from Whanganui iwi at the end of our performance. Later that evening, the people gathered around us and sang; we were enveloped in sound and

movement. Iwi were joyous because the composer, the late Jenny McLeod, a Pākehā, had involved Whanganui iwi throughout the process of composing the opera. After all, it was their/our story. To this end, Mead writes:

> Often the question is asked: How was it that our ancestors were able to create such beautiful art forms and produce such fine and measured work? There are many answers to the questions. An obvious one is that the artists worked with their people and for their people in a cultural context. They all shared. There were shared beliefs and shared values. Creative work was highly respected and protected. The artists were learned people who were well versed in the background knowledge pertaining to their art forms and they knew the rituals. Perhaps the most powerful reason why our ancestors produced great art was that such work was placed under the tapu of creative work (2003, pp. 253-254).

As well as the value of whakapapa, I have come to understand the value of Te Kore through the taonga puoro. This has been a difficult learning for me because I have approached European music with a greedy determination to succeed. However, the reward of achieving the sound of the kōauau has reminded me there are other ways to achieve knowledge, and, with regards to rediscovering these taonga puoro, it is arguable that Te Kore is our *only* way. In that regard, I do not think it was an accident that Brian said that he has made his “best pūtōrino ever”; a pūtōrino modelled on the Whanganui type (personal communication, September, 2022). I believe this ‘accident’ is Te Kore, put into motion by our ancestors and the work of people, such as the late Hirini Melbourne, the late Richard Nunns and Brian Flintoff, who have had the passion to engage with māoritanga and dedicate their life’s work to Te Ao Māori.

My plans for future research is to continue with taonga puoro. Originally, they were intended to only be a musical anchor for *Te Ua*. However, they have become much more; in the absence of being able to speak Te Reo, and therefore be able to sing the traditional Māori songs, taonga puoro have provided me an outlet for songwriting with mātauranga Māori.

Many questions have arisen from this research. The most pressing question for me is how my future work can be brought into a cultural context, and, what developments would arise from this? To that end, I often ponder how my work would develop if I was to return to the Whanganui River? Would the kōrero of, and with, Te Awa Tupua inform my work? If so, how?

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*It is inappropriate to reference this evidence of Whanganui Iwi standing with APA.