

## Mā Te Wai Ka Piki Ake Te Hauora

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### ABSTRACT

Dealing predominantly with traditional Māori forms of music therapy practice that uses *waiata*<sup>1</sup> and *taonga pūoro*<sup>2</sup> as part of the healing process, this paper considers the cosmology, cultural, and *tohunga*<sup>3</sup> influences on current and emerging practices in contemporary New Zealand. It also discusses the influences of Western healing practices on Māori and vice versa. Rather than dwell on the differences in past practices, this paper focuses mainly on current practices that work towards collaborative partnerships with the profession of music therapy, and related disciplines that aim to heal and promote 'well-being' amongst people. The linking of appropriate Māori culture and therapeutic values and practices in contemporary New Zealand through *waiata* and *taonga pūoro* can contribute to holistic well-being.

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<sup>1</sup> *Waiata*: Māori song from traditional to contemporary forms.

<sup>2</sup> *Taonga pūoro*: traditional Māori instruments used for musical and medical purposes.

<sup>3</sup> *Tohunga*: literal translation is 'an expert'. In Māori society there were many *tohunga* who had special roles. This research focuses on *tohunga-rongoa*, a Māori healer.

The title of this paper is *Mā Te Wai – Ka Piki Ake Te Hauora*, literally translates as through water, music and spiritual connection brings about human 'well being'. The Māori word '*wai*' has three separate meanings in this title. First, *wai Māori* being fresh water, an important necessity and *rongoa*<sup>4</sup> in everyday life. Second, *waiata* (and *pūoro*<sup>5</sup>), being song and music as a Māori therapeutic practice. Third, *wairua*, the spiritual connection between the spiritual realm and human physical being for healing. All three aspects are examined to provide a deeper understanding of traditional practices used in ancient times, and current practices that employ *waiata* and *taonga pūoro* as a traditional means of healing in contemporary times.

#### KEYWORDS:

Waiata, taonga pūoro, hauora<sup>6</sup>, rongoa

### Background

An important part of the author's current PhD research involved the study of *waiata* and *taonga pūoro*, in order to construct a model for composing music in these idioms, and to encourage contemporary Māori composers to create new works. Further to this study, the author was very interested in the historical, cultural, spiritual and social significance of traditional Māori healing practices that employ *waiata* and *taonga pūoro*.

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<sup>4</sup> *Rongoa*: traditional Māori medicine.

<sup>5</sup> *Pūoro*: music.

<sup>6</sup> *Hauora*: well being, health.

The intention of this paper was to provide a brief overview of traditional Māori healing and therapeutic practices, and how they could be applied to current music therapy practices to promote the well being of all people whether Māori or non-Māori. This paper discusses *Ngā atua Māori* (Māori cosmology), *mauri* (life essence), *waiata* (song) in healing, *taonga pūoro* (traditional Māori instruments) in sound healing, Māori healing practices in the 21st century, and future research recommendations.

The author firmly believes that traditional Māori healing practices could prove valuable to the New Zealand health and medical services, and with ongoing discussions, and proper training by authorised personnel, all practitioners interested in incorporating these traditions would be able to provide a diverse range of services for the wellbeing of all New Zealanders.

The author has just returned from Te Kōkī, New Zealand School of Music, 2013 Music Therapy Conference held in Wellington. As a keynote speaker, the author discussed traditional Māori healing and therapeutic practices that employed *waiata* and *taonga pūoro* and found that people were very interested in these practices, but more so, that music therapists wanted to discuss the possibilities of incorporating *waiata* and *taonga pūoro* as alternative healing practices for their clients. In support to this a symposium is being organised in the near future to bring about *kauamatua*<sup>7</sup> and *kuia*<sup>8</sup>, Māori healers, music therapists, and

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<sup>7</sup> *Kauamatua*: elderly person, elderly man.

<sup>8</sup> *Kuia*: elderly woman



representatives from tertiary institutions to discuss this concept.

## Introduction

The Māori cosmology begins with Io, the supreme god, and other Māori deities that created the world and the physical human being. According to Tiramorehu (1849):

Kei te pō te timatatanga o te waiatatanga mai a te  
atua.

Ko te ao, ko te ao mārama, ko te ao tūroa.

*It was in the night that the gods sang the world  
into existence from darkness,*

*into the world of light that created a world of  
music. (Translation)*

The creation of the world and all its inhabitants possess a special power gifted by Io, that being the power of *mauri*. According to Barlow (1991) "everything has a *mauri*, including people, fish, animals, birds, forests, land, seas, and rivers; the *mauri* is that power which permits these living things to exist within their own realm and sphere" (p. 83).

The Māori people were very connected to the gods, the universe, the earth and all its inhabitants through the power of *mauri*. Hence, the spoken words of Tānemahuta who created the first human being Hineahuone, "Tihei Mauri-ora".<sup>9</sup> In reference to this particular research the main focus is on

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<sup>9</sup> *Tihei Mauri-ora*: the sneeze of life, let there be life.



hauora or 'well-being' that is embodied within the *mauri* of the human being.

Further, mention must be made about the importance of *hauora* within the *whānau*<sup>10</sup>, *hapū*<sup>11</sup> and *iwi*<sup>12</sup>. As this important proverb states:

He aha te mea nui o te ao?

He tangata, he tangata, he tangata.

*What is the most important thing in the world?*

*It is people, the people, and the human race.* (Translation)

The Māori were therefore very concerned about the state of its people whether it be populating the tribe, survival or ensuring *hauora*, as life itself was pertinent to the survival and functioning of the tribe.

In the Māori world there were many remedies and therapeutic practices to ensure the *hauora* of the people were maintained. Although many of these practices have been replaced by Western traditions, some of these ancient practices still continue today and include:

- *Karakia*: Māori rituals for healing the sick. Linking the person to the gods;
- *Rongoa*: traditional medicine from the natural environment;

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<sup>10</sup> *Whānau*: family.

<sup>11</sup> *Hapū*: sub-tribe, the clan.

<sup>12</sup> *Iwi*: the main tribe, the nation.

- *Mirimiri, Koo Miri, Tā Miri, and Romiromi*: traditional practices of massaging and healing the body;
- *Waiata*: traditional songs for healing purposes, and
- *Taonga pūoro*: traditional Māori instruments for sound healing.

Although these traditional practices can be performed individually in some particular cases, in others it may be necessary to combine some or all practices, depending on the treatment or the person being treated.

In addition, mention must be made regarding the important role of the *tohunga* who performs the *karakia*, prepares the *rongoa*, sings the *waiata*, performs *mirimiri*, or plays *taonga pūoro*. According to Robinson (2005), “the *tohunga* is a spiritual person of great power and may be called the priest of Māori society” (p. 10). The *tohunga* is a spiritual person, and to the Māori very *tapu*<sup>13</sup>. The word *tohunga* is translated as a priest that denotes Western belief system, and a Christian denomination that differs from the Māori belief system. For the purpose of this paper, the *tohunga rongoa* refers to a healer, a spiritual leader, a knowledgeable scholar in ancient folklore, the mediator between the spiritual and physical worlds, and the caretaker of ancient practices.

The practices of the Māori *tohunga* were halted by the introduction of the Tohunga Suppression Act 1907, which aimed to replace *tohunga* as traditional Māori healers with

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<sup>13</sup> *Tapu*: sacred, powerful.

'modern' medicine. This had severe impact on Māori society during colonisation where traditional practices were outlawed, however continued behind closed doors. The effect of such a law impacted on the decline of *tohunga*, the loss of traditional knowledge and denying Māori indigenous rights to practice *mātauranga* Māori (Māori knowledge), that have been practiced for years. Western medicine and the doctor replaced the *tohunga*.

## Mauri

As previously mentioned, all living creatures including the human being possess *mauri* from Io, the supreme god. This notion that living organisms possess unique quality, an élan vital, that gives them that special eminence we call life. As Victor Stenger (1999) writes:

Belief in the existence of a living force is ancient and remains widespread to this day. Called **prana** by the Hindus, **qi** or **chi** by the Chinese, **ki** by the Japanese, and 95 other names in 95 other countries, this substance is said to constitute the source of life that is often associated with the soul, spirit and mind.  
(Cited in the Scientific Review of Alternative Medicine, Vol. 3, No. 1)

In *hauora*, the *mauri* plays an important part during birth, death and the healing of the human being. According to Barlow (1991), "when a person is born, the gods bind the two parts of body and spirit of his being together. Only the *mauri* or power of Io can join them together" (p. 83).



Furthermore, the *manawa*<sup>14</sup> (the heart), provides the breath of life, but the *mauri* has the power to bind or join together both spiritual and physical beings resulting in life. In death, the *mauri* is no longer able to bind those parts together, and thereby give life, and the physical and spiritual parts of a person's being is separated (Barlow, 1991).

In the process of sustaining *hauora*, the *tohunga* being the mediator between the Māori deities and the physical being of the person, focuses on both *manawa* and *mauri* to restore health. The healing of the sick requires *mauri* to connect the person to god and the spiritual realm for spiritual intervention, and the *manawa*, or the human body to respond to traditional practices such as *karakia*, *rongoa*, *mirimiri*, *waiata* and *taonga pūoro* as tools for healing.

In healing, the *tohunga-rongoa* was knowledgeable in the make-up of the human body and how to heal. Robinson (2005) mentions, "understanding the workings of the soul and the body played a major role in diagnosing and healing patient" (p. 215). To expand on this, Robinson identifies different Māori terminologies used by Eldon Best and Teone Taare Tikao that describe the 'body of man'. Due to tribal dialects in the Māori language, Best differs from Tikao as shown in Table 1 below.

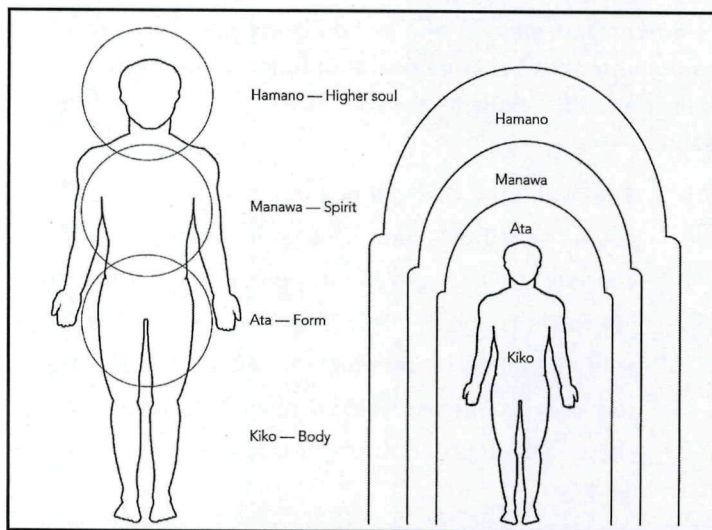
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<sup>14</sup> *Manawa*: heart, breath, emotion.

Meaning	Word by Best	Word by Tiako
soul	hamano	wairua
breath	manawa	hau
shadow	aata	āhua
body	kiko	kiko

*Table 1. Māori Terminologies as identified by Robinson (2005, p. 216)*

Further explanation is provided in the two diagrams in Figure 1 below. The left diagram depicts the souls seated on the body of man. The right diagram illustrates that the souls envelope the body like veils, somewhat like the rings of an onion.



*Figure 1. The soul of man (Courtesy of Robinson, 2005, p. 217).*

Understanding the makeup of the body and soul of man as illustrated in *Figure 1* leads to Māori health terms used when dealing with healing certain parts of the body, including:

- *Taha Hinengaro*: mental state
- *Taha Tinana*: the physical body
- *Taha Wairua/mauri*: the spiritual being
- *Manawa*: the heart, life source
- *Hā*: the breath, breathing
- *Hauora*: the breath of life, the 'wellbeing.'

The *mauri* (and *mana*<sup>15</sup>) of a person is the main concern of the *tohunga rongoa* to restore health in times of sickness. Robinson (2005) explains the role of *tohunga rongoa* during healing:

The healing of the *tohunga-rongoa* can be seen as having two stages here. One is the opening of the channels to let *mauri* run its course, thus power, or life force, is able to heal. The second is the *aka* or vine, the blueprint by which the *āhua*<sup>16</sup> transforms this potential energy into correction vitality. How these two stages are brought into action is by *karakia*. (p. 229)

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<sup>15</sup> *Mana*: power, authority, prestige. Mana is the enduring, indestructable power of the gods (Barlow, 1991, p. 61). Likened to mauri, everything has mana including the human being.

<sup>16</sup> *Āhua*: form, approaches, practices.



## Waiata

The previous sections have provided an account of the close relationship that Māori have with Io the supreme god, and other Māori deities, the universe and earth, and that everything exists through the life binding element *mauri*. The paper now considers the traditional practices of *waiata* as important *tikanga*<sup>17</sup>, and a valuable tool for healing.

Traditional *waiata* refer to different classifications of Māori chants that are part of the older form of Māori music as explained by Mclean (1965):

The other kind of Māori music (Māori chant) has a long tradition dating back to the beginnings of the Māori people. Even today it remains associated with the old values and institutions of Māoridom. It exhibits, in consequence, great tenacity of style. (p. 36)

There are many classification and sub-classifications of *waiata*, and too many to mention in this paper. However, in light of the healing process, it is significant to explain the importance of *karakia*, known as recited songs, usually performed by the *tohunga*; *oriori* (lullabies), and *waiata hou* (contemporary songs for the purpose of healing).

Ancient *karakia* were known only by *tohunga* who performed certain rituals. This knowledge was never shared and kept secret to the *tohunga* and tribal folklore. Every tribe had their chosen *tohunga* and a repertoire of *karakia* for use in all kinds

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<sup>17</sup> *Tikanga*: customs, traditions, rituals.

of situations including healing. Every *karakia* was considered *tapu*, or sacred in text form, function, and delivery as a mediation between the *tohunga*, the person being healed and the Māori deities

The following are two examples of *karakia* cited by Robinson<sup>18</sup>. The first example is used when collecting the *miro* leaf and the *karakia* is an invocation of the life force essence to empower the healing plants into effectiveness; and the second example is used to heal a broken bone.

Example 1:

E Miro taketake mai i Hawaiki<sup>19</sup>

Ka pū mai i Hawaiki

Ka weu mai i Hawaiki

Ka more mai i Hawaiki

Ka rito mai i Hawaiki

Ka aka mai i Hawaiki

Ka aka mai i Hawaiki

Ka tipu mai i Hawaiki

Ka pua mai i Hawaiki

Ka hua mai i Hawaiki

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<sup>18</sup> *Karakia*: Examples 1 and 2, courtesy of Raupō Publishing (NZ) Ltd and author Samuel Tīmoti Robinson.

<sup>19</sup> *Hawaiki*: the name of the Māori homeland from whence they migrated across the Pacific Ocean and founded Aotearoa, New Zealand.

Hara mai aue tiki hua

Hai rongoa mō...

Hai oranga mō...

*Oh great Miro that sprouted in Hawaiki*

*Grew tap root in Hawaiki*

*Grew secondary roots in Hawaiki*

*Grew rootlets in Hawaiki*

*Grew the shoot in Hawaiki*

*Branched in Hawaiki*

*Leafed in Hawaiki*

*Blossomed in Hawaiki*

*Bore leafbuds in Hawaiki*

*I have come to get your leafbuds*

*For medicine for.....*

*For long life .....*

(2005, p. 235)



Example 2:

E Tiki e, hōmai te ruruku  
Rukutia, taroia, tamaua  
Toro te kiko. Arawa i o uaua  
Tēnei hoki te tutaki ka mau

*O Tiki, give here the binding*

*Draw together, tie up, hold fast*

*Stretch out the flesh. Fasten your sinews*

*Now the junction is made fast* (2005, p. 235)

From traditional *karakia* emerged Christian prayers that were administered by ministers or priests from different religions and/or *kaumatua*<sup>20</sup>. These specific prayers connected to the Christian god, *Ihowa*<sup>21</sup> and *Ihu Karaiti*<sup>22</sup>. Here is a Christian prayer used in the *Pai Mārire* Faith of the *Kīngitanga*<sup>23</sup>. This particular prayer pays homage to the *Kīngitanga*, to *Kīngi Tūheitia*, the sick, and the people gathered at the morning service.

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<sup>20</sup> *Kaumatua*: Māori elders and leaders.

<sup>21</sup> *Ihowa*: Jehovah, God almighty.

<sup>22</sup> *Ihu Karaiti*: Jesus Christ, the son of God.

<sup>23</sup> *Kīngitanga*: Māori king movement. Courtesy of Waikato-Tainui Tribal Trust.

*Pai Mārire Karakia*

Tō tiakinga māramatanga e te Atua

Ki tō mātou kīngi a Tūheitia

Ki ngā tinana e māuiui ana

Ki a mātou katoa i te ata nei

Nāu te korōria

Nāu te korōria

Nāu te korōria – a – a

Rire rire hau

Paimārire

*Oh god, bless and care*

*Towards our King Tūheitia*

*To the many that are stricken with illness*

*Towards us that are gathered together this  
morning*

*The glory is yours*

*The glory be to you*

*The glory is yours*

*Goodness and peace to one another*

The *oriori* were lullabies which Simmons (2003) defined as “*Oriori* or *Pōpō* are lullabies: sung on the birth of a chiefly child and afterwards recounting the deeds of his ancestors and the myths and history of the tribe” (p. 9).

Lullabies were important *rongoa*, not only to put the baby to sleep, but during illness, calming the baby so that the healing process can take its course. Whether the *oriori* was being sung by the mother, father or other kinfolk, it was important for the baby to connect to the human voice and the melody and rhythm of the song for calming effect and family reassurance. Furthermore, to educate the child, the *oriori* was a way to connect the child to personal genealogy, tribal affiliation, tribal history, myths & legends and important events. One could say, that the *oriori* played a dual role, healing and educating.

The following are two examples of *oriori*. The first example is a traditional song composed by Enoka Te Pakaru of Te Aitanga-ā-Mahaki tribe. In the lullaby there is mention of the coming of the *kūmara*, sweet potato. Only the first verse of this very long *oriori* is provided, which contains 60 lines of lyrics altogether. The second song is a contemporary *waiata* that the author’s mother sang to her during childhood.



Example 1:

*Pōpō*

E tangi ana tama ki te kai māna  
Waiho, me tiki ake ki te Pou-a-hao-kai  
Hei ā mai te pakake ki uta rā  
Hei waiū mō tama  
Kia hōmai e tō tupuna e Uenuku  
Whakarongo! Ko te kūmara ko Parinui-te-rā  
Ka hikimata te tapuae o Tangaroa  
Ka whaimata te tapuwae o Tangatora  
Tangaroa! Ka haruru!

*Lullaby*

*My son, Tama, is crying for food  
Wait until it is fetched from the Pillars-of-netted fodd  
And the whale is driven ashore  
To give milk for you my son  
Verily, your ancestor Uenuku will give freely  
Now Listen. The kūmara is for the Beetling-Cliff-of-sun  
Beyond the eager bounding strides of Tangaroa  
Lo, striding to and fro is Tangaroa, god of the sea  
Tangaroa! Listen to his resounding roar!*

(Ngata & Jones, 1961, pp. 152-161)

Example 2:

Moe mai pēpi  
Kaua e tangi  
Ka hoki mai a māmā  
Apōpō

*Sleep oh baby*  
*Don't cry*  
*Mother will return again*  
*Tomorrow*

As Māori music evolves, so too do the practices of composing *waiata hou* and increasing the repertoire of Māori *waiata*. Here are two examples of *waiata hou* – contemporary songs that can be used for healing, and to connect the patient to the gods and the natural elements of the environment, as part of the healing process. These *waiata* have been obtained from the DVD, *He Oranga He Oranga – Healing Journeys*, produced by WickCandle Film (2007)<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> *Waiata*: Me Hiki and Kei Te Pari Mai | Te Tai courtesy of WickCandle Film and the composer Aroha Yates-Smith.

*Me Hiki*

Me hiki

Me hiki

Me hiki te whakaaro

Kia tau ai te mauri

I roto i ahau

Mauritau

Mauritau

Kia tau ai te mauri

I roto i ahau

*Uplift*

*Uplift*

*Let my thoughts be uplifted*

*To settle the mauri deep*

*Within me*

*Be calm*

*Calm the mauri*

*Calm and wellbeing*

*A sense of peace within me*

(Aroha Yates-Smith, 2007)



*Kei Te Pari Tonu Mai I Te Tai*

Kei te pari tonu mai te tai

Kei te whiti tonu iho te rā

Kei te karetao o te moana

Au e miria ana e te wai

Te Wai, Te Wai

He wai tai piri mai

He rongoa whakaora

He rongoa whakaora

I taku tinana

E okioki nei i te poho

I te wai marino o Hinemoana

*The tide is still flowing*

*The sun still shines*

*Down upon me*

*And I am caressed*

*By the rippling surface*

*Of the sea*

*The water, the water*

*The ocean water envelops me*

*A life giving salve*

*Healing my body  
As I lie on the breast  
Of the ocean  
On the gentle waters of Hinemoana*

(Aroha Yates-Smith, 2007)

### **Taonga pūoro**

Prior to European settlement in the 1800's, *taonga pūoro* instruments were used as musical, forewarning, and healing instruments. As the European began to settle in New Zealand they brought with them their language, customs and traditions, lifestyle and music. Due to the introduction of European music and instruments, and the introduction of Christianity, traditional Māori instruments gave way to popular European instruments. As such, *taonga pūoro* became an instrument of the past. According to Dorothy Buchanan and Keri Kaa (2002), *taonga pūoro* were now only found in museums rather than on the marae. These traditional Māori instruments lay silent in these museums, until the 1980's saw a great revival in the interest and the use of these instruments by advocates such as Hirini Melbourne, Richard Nunns, Brian Flintoff and others. The revival focused on extensive research of *taonga pūoro*; the reconstruction of these instruments, and the relearning of how to play these intrinsic instruments.

In ancient times these instruments had multiple purposes in Māoridom. Here are examples of those particular functions:

- Toys and games – referring to the pūrrohū (pūrerehua), the bullroarer, McLean (1996) writes, “in Polynesia, the bullroarer was used as a children’s toy and the same use is attributed by Willians to New Zealand” (p. 75).
- Calling birds – the karanga manu or kōauau pūtangitangi are calling flutes. “The player is able to mimic several kinds of bird calls” to lure birds during hunting (Flintoff, 2004, p. 39)
- Warning people – the pūtātara and the pūkaea instruments were used to gather the people and in dangerous situations, to warn people. Best (1976) writes about the pūtātara, “the noise is as rude as can well be imagined. These conches are sometimes used in war to collect a scattered party” (p. 288). The pūkaea or sometimes referred to as a war trumpet, “They were sounded by watchmen on duty at a fortified village or pā to signal the approach of an enemy or to show that the pā was on the alert” (McLean, 1996, p. 181).
- To evoke the gods – Best (1976) writes about the huhū (another name for the bullroarer) was used to call on the gods to bring rain. He also writes:  
  
He would go forth with a bullroarer and handful of ashes, throw the ashes toward the south (the rainy



quarter) and commence to sound his huhū by swinging it round, at the same time turning his back on the south in an insulting manner, so that it would become angry and send a storm. (p. 294)

- Māori rituals – In Taranaki, according to Purchas (1914), “bullroarers were called mamae and the whirling noise was used to dispense evil spirits at the lying in of a dead chief” (p. 231).
- Therapeutic benefits – the healing powers of the porotiti or humming discs were “used as an aid towards arthritis, to clear mucus from sinuses” (Flintoff, 2004, pp. 57–58).

For the purpose of this research, *taonga pūoro* were used as a ‘healing tool,’ as part of ‘sound healing,’ practice. Here is a description of a sound healing session by Robinson (2005):

Usually a consultation involves massage of certain points to open the channels of mauri through the body before treatment is given. Sound is then applied to the areas of the body that call for treatment to be used. Sound applied in the form of various musical instruments and also deep chanting where the voice is made to resonate. With a specific problem, such as an injury, most of the attention is placed on that area. Sometimes the problem can be more an emotional than a physical one. If this is the case the tohunga

uses hypnotherapy while doing the sound healing. (p. 243)

Table 2 provides a list of *taonga pūoro* used for sound healing for various illnesses.

Taonga Pūoro	Illness	Application
<i>Kōhatu</i> – stones	Relieve pain in the back and joints	Stone is laid on the painful area; the tohunga taps the stone with hammer, to locate the injured area before treatment and massage (Robinson, 2005, p. 245).
<i>Porotiti</i> Whizzing disc	Clear sinuses Help arthritis Soothe rheumatism	Spinning the porotiti creates ultrasonic vibration. It may be spun over the chest of sleeping children suffering from colds, influenza and bronchitis (Robinson, 2005, pp. 245–246).
<i>Kōauau</i> Māori flute	Heal broken bones Ease labour Promote growth of plants	Each style of playing demands respect and is used in different modes of healing (Robinson, 2005, pp. 246 & 248).
<i>Pūrerehua</i> <i>Bull roarer</i>	Migraines Arthritis Sinuses	Spinning the pūrerehua creates ultrasonic vibration for healing (Kōmene, 2012, personal communication)

Table 2. *Taonga pūoro* 'Sound healing'

## Practices in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

This paper reveals traditional Māori practice in sound healing that employs *waiata* and *taonga pūoro*. Ancient knowledge about the use of *waiata* and *taonga pūoro* as healing tools has

survived into the 21st century, whether in its original form or adapted to modern means. The book *Tohunga: The Revival – Ancient Knowledge for the Modern Era*, by Samuel Timoti Robinson (2005) provides insight into the work of *tohunga* today including the role of *tohunga* in healing. However, it is fair to state that some, if not, a vast amount of traditional knowledge has been lost due to the Tohunga Suppression Act 1907, and the introduction of Western alternative healing and medicine.

This particular topic has been researched, discussed, written about, revived and practiced to benefit the wellbeing of all people. This supports that Māori value holistic healing practices and the passing down of information from one generation to the next. Not only has this practice been beneficial to Māori, it has interacted with other health traditions and organisations throughout New Zealand especially in the area of *rongoa* – traditional medicines.

The integration and exchange of *rongoa* knowledge amongst Pākeha<sup>25</sup> doctors has been ‘an eye opener’ as Cram, Smith and Johnstone (2003) report from personal interviews with Māori patients:

Some of the participants talked about using both Māori and Pākeha medicines. These participants had often found Pākeha general practitioners to be very understanding of their use of *rongoa*, and some went to great lengths to impart knowledge to their doctor. In such cases, the interchange was usually with a

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<sup>25</sup> *Pākeha*: a person of European descent.



doctor who took time to listen to a patient and was willing to acknowledge other forms of healing, although possibly because they see them as harmless. (pp. 3–4)

Furthermore, other Māori healing practices have been active in marae settings, especially *mirimiri* amongst adults and elders alike. The Manu Aute Whare Oranga o Manurewa Marae Services provides three types of *mirimiri*: traditional 'hands on' massage, hot stones massage therapy, and restorative healing massage.

In reference to 'sound healing' the Raukatauri Music Therapy Centre in Auckland was opened in 2004 to provide Western music therapy for special needs children. It is New Zealand's first music therapy centre instigated by singer and songwriter Hinewehi Mohi, her husband George and daughter Hineraukatauri. Whilst the centre utilises Western music therapy approaches, vocals and an assortment of traditional musical instruments including *taonga pūoro* (*kōauau* and *pūtorino* – Māori flutes) are employed.

The traditions of *karakia* and *waiata* have been and still are an important part of Māori society. They are performed at many functions and different settings including the marae. Due to extensive research there has been some collection of *karakia* and *waiata* that served the purpose of healing. It is important to note that the practice and delivery of *karakia* and sacred *waiata* are assigned to special people such as *tohunga* and *kaumatua* who are qualified and authorized to perform such traditions. After all, as Barlow (1991) writes, "the object of

karakia is to find favour with the gods in all activities and pursuits (including healing)" (p. 37).

In conclusion, the revival of traditional Māori healing practices has led to the establishment of, Ngā Ringa Whakahaere o te Iwi Māori, a national board of Māori healers, in 1993. As Durie (1998) writes, "this was a conscious move taken by healers and their followers to adopt a more public profile and seek recognition as part of the National Health Service" (as cited in Ahuriri-Driscoll, Hudson, Baker, Hepi, Mika & Tiakiwai 2008, p. 3). Although the board does not represent all healers, it advocates on behalf of affiliated members and for more formal recognition of traditional healing practices. The board has also been involved in formulating accreditation procedures for healers, and has contributed to the development of national traditional healing service standards (Durie, 1996; MoH, 1999).

### Conclusion and further research

This paper has examined traditional and contemporary practices of 'healing' amongst Māori and within contemporary New Zealand. It has only touched the surface of such a diverse topic, and presented here as an introduction to Māori healing practices that feature *waiata* and *taonga pūoro*.

As Māori healing is about sustaining cultural knowledge and practices, and the environment, Māori healers are still subjected to pressures of globalisation and western society ideals, and that these practices are still seen as an alternative to a more acceptable Western medical tradition. However, there is still value in traditional Māori medicine and healing practices that could be beneficial to New Zealand mainstream

health services via careful consultation as Ahuriri-Driscoll et al., (2008) suggest “Transitioning for a ‘practice’ based approach to one of ‘service’ delivery requires careful negotiation of challenges in terms of changing relationships, expectations of quality, and maintenance of capacity” (p.1).

This paper shares some *mātauranga* Māori (Māori epistemology), with the aim that further research and development of indigenous health knowledge, that informs traditional healing (like Māori), and in producing the type of evidence necessary to support the development of *rongoa* (medicine, cure) and traditional healing services within mainstream health systems.

Future research should focus on collecting *karakia* used for healing (depending on *tohunga* and *kaumatua* that wish to share such sacred knowledge) and learning the delivery of such *karakia*; a collection of traditional and contemporary *waiata* that can be used for healing purposes (and made available to practitioners); more information about *taonga pūoro* use in healing (and the playing of such instruments for different treatments); and a current directory of all services that provide Māori healing as part of their *hauora* service.

Mauri tū – Mauri ora

Mauri noho – Mauri mate

*When one takes care of one’s health, life prevails*

*When one neglects ones health, life diminishes*



## Acknowledgements

The author would like to acknowledge the University of Waikato and the Kura Toi Tangata for their support towards this research.

Furthermore, the Māori proverb *Ehara tāku toa i te toa takitini, engari he toa takitini*<sup>26</sup> transmits my appreciation to all participants (personal communication), authors and publishers for their valuable insights and knowledge in support to this research as detailed in the reference section and for their permission to include figures, text, and song lyrics to support this paper.

Finally, I would like to thank Te Kōkī New Zealand School of Music for their invitation to present as a keynote speaker at the 2013 Music Therapy Conference in Wellington. This inspired me to undertake such interesting research into Māori healing practices.

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<sup>26</sup> *Māori Proverb*: translates as 'my efforts and achievements are not mine alone, but a group effort.'

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