CONTEMPORARY POPULAR WAIATA PROVIDE A PLACE OF BELONGING

*Maree Sheehan**

Abstract

This paper considers the use of contemporary popular waiata in promulgating a Māori worldview by expressing cultural identity and belonging. Waiata are a traditional medium, a practice through which Māori knowledge, histories, culture and language continue to be passed down from one generation to another (Ka'ai-Mahuta, 2010; McLean, 1996; Orbell, 1991; Smith, 2003). Similarities can be observed between traditional and contemporary waiata, in that messages are delivered through musical, melodic, rhythmic and harmonic motifs that are distinctively Māori. These musical and lyrical elements are expressed aurally and act as conveyors of cultural identity and a Māori worldview; that is, people feel a sense of connection, belonging and commonality when they either listen to or perform contemporary waiata. This paper looks specifically at "Tahi (Dance Mix)" (1993), a contemporary waiata performed by Moana and the Moahunters and composed by Moana Maniapoto, Hareruia Aperahama and Angus McNaughton.

Keywords

Māori music, waiata, "Tahi", Moana Maniapoto, cultural identity

* Ngāti Maniapoto-Waikato, Ngāti Tūwharetoa. Lecturer, Te Ara Poutama, Faculty of Māori and Indigenous Studies, Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand. Email:msheehan@aut.ac.nz

DOI: 10.20507/MAIJournal.2017.6.2.13

Introduction

Contemporary popular waiata offer a powerful expression of Māori identity and belonging. Contemporary waiata carry forward elements of traditional waiata on both the marae and the kapa haka stage through musical, melodic, rhythmic and harmonic motifs that are distinctively Māori. These elements, along with the use of te reo Māori and other cultural references, produce material representations of Māori cultural identity and the expression of a Māori worldview. Listening to and performing contemporary waiata emphasises Māori identity and encourages a sense of connection, belonging and commonality. This paper specifically looks at the "Dance Mix" version of the contemporary popular waiata "Tahi", which appeared on Moana and the Moahunters' 1993 album of the same name, as an example of how lyrical content, language, musical elements and performance of a popular contemporary waiata can express cultural identity and Māori knowledge.

This paper has been developed within a performance studies framework that integrates theory and practice, and is informed by Kaupapa Māori theory. Moreover, as a Māori composer and singer of popular waiata, I am primarily concerned with exploring how the words, sounds and gestures of popular musical performance produce social meanings that are significant for the way we understand culture and identity. Performance studies, insofar as it draws from ethnography and, in this case, ethnomusicology, allows for a more fluid analytical approach than those disciplines alone permit. Through my analysis of the successful waiata "Tahi", I illustrate how a Māori worldview and Māori cultural identity can be seen, and heard, and how the musical composition and performance of the song is a representation of cultural identity and Māori knowledge, which emanate from the combination of writing and performing our cultural stories in our language and utilising contemporary musical components to express sense of identity and belonging for Māori. This reaffirms contemporary popular waiata as powerful cultural expressions that can unite people.

Māori cultural identity has been traditionally linked to the connection to whenua, links to whakapapa through common tūpuna, and the connection to iwi, hapū and whānau (O'Regan, 2000). It is formulated within a complex set of interwoven cultural concepts, tikanga and understandings. For Māori, whenua is more than the physical manifestation of land; it relates directly to the concept of whakapapa as a symbol of Māori identity (O'Regan 2000; Pere, 1982). For Pihama (2001), whakapapa is a spiritual connection that brings together all aspects of te ao Māori. According to O'Regan (2000), whānau, hapū and iwi are bound by the common thread of whakapapa. It is important to recognise that the term "Māori" often obscures distinguishing characteristics of each iwi and the way in which we are individually and collectively members of our tribes (Webber, 2008). As a result, the association between tūpuna and the land is central to an understanding of tribal identity (p. 13). The waiata "Tahi" was conceptualised around the great migrational journey of our tūpuna and acknowledges the resilience, fortitude and unity they displayed. The song asks us to embody these qualities of our tūpuna in the here and now, linking us back to our whakapapa. Māori language is a fundamental factor in providing a pathway to the histories, values and beliefs of Māori people (Eketone, Gibbs & Walker, 2006). For Māori, the Māori language is the traditional form of expression. Furthermore, it is a vessel for the transmission of knowledge such as tribal histories, politics, environmental knowledge and whakapapa. The positioning of te reo Māori as a central thread in the waiata "Tahi" recognises the relationship between language and culture.

No matter where they come from, people have always sung, chanted, danced, stomped, jumped and rhythmically moved together to create unity and unleash individual and collective

energy. Whether it is in celebration, grief, remembrance, healing or preparation for war, these cultural activities and rituals bind a community together in a purposeful, active manner (Keiha & Pio, 2015; Spiller & Wolfgramm, 2015). A Māori worldview is "comprised of a complex of spiritually endowed life-energies" (Spiller & Stockdale, 2013, p. 150) and, as a significant Māori practice, waiata are defined by the constant interplay of these life energies, the elements of breath, energy, intention and spirituality expressed by people through melody, harmony and rhythm. Within the understandings of listening to and performing of contemporary popular waiata, there is a place of growth and discovery that looks at honouring and nourishing ourselves while creating spaces for others through "holding relationships as sacred responsibilities" (Salter, 2011, p. 154), whereby people can feel a sense of connection, belonging and commonality.

"Waiata" is the generic term used for the medium in which Māori narrative is transmitted by way of chant or melody in the various forms of waiata tangi, waiata aroha, waiata-ā-ringa, waiata poi, mōteatea, pao, oriori, karanga, karakia and tauparapara, pātere and kaioraora (McLean & Orbell, 1979). There has been a substantial amount of research undertaken on traditional Māori waiata (Ka'ai-Oldman, 2003; Kāretu, 1993; McLean, 1996; Orbell, 1991; Smith, 2003); however, there is comparatively limited research on contemporary popular Māori waiata, although there are various studies of what contemporary waiata Māori incorporate, such as the use of te reo Māori and distinctive melodic, harmonic and rhythmical arrangements with kaupapa-driven thematic lyrics (Aperahama, 2006; Hauiti, 2010; Ka'ai-Mahuta, Ka'ai & Moorfield, 2013; Papesch, 2013; Smith, 2011). This includes the significant and substantial contribution of kapa haka in the 20th and 21st centuries (Ka'ai-Mahuta, Ka'ai & Moorfield, 2013; Kāretu, 1993; Papesch, 2013; Smith, 2011). Kapa haka is a responsive expression of Māori identity and as a performing arts practice acts as a vehicle for Māori to engage in their language, culture and traditional practices, thereby retaining and reclaiming Māori knowledge and cultural understandings (Whitinui, 2008).

In performance, both in traditional and in contemporary formations, waiata embody ihi, wehi and wana. In Valance Smith's terms, ihi can be understood as intrinsic power; it is awe-inspiring (personal communication, January 25, 2016). He adds that wehi is the reaction of awe and respect from the recipient to the physical manifestation of ihi, and wana is the synergy of aura and passion that occurs during the performance, encompassing both performers and audience. These are the overarching principles of haka and waiata.

Contemporary popular waiata from the 1980s to the present continue to express Māori knowledge and culture through lyrical and musical elements. The 1980s was an era of significant Māori language revitalisation efforts and saw the development of Māori language immersion education (Winitana, 2011). It was also a time when many Māori were protesting for land rights and against social, political and economic struggles, and this was being expressed through contemporary waiata written by Māori composers such as Joe Williams from the band Aotearoa, Ngatai Huata from Black Katz, and the late Hirini Melbourne, whose 1976 waiata "Nga Iwi E" became a well-known protest anthem. Other contributing factors that led to increased exposure of contemporary kaupapa-driven waiata in more public forums was the allocation of funding by the New Zealand government to promote diverse local television, radio and music. Two state-owned enterprises emerged as a result of this investment: Television New Zealand in 1980 and Radio New Zealand in 1995. In 1990 the autonomous Crown entity New Zealand on Air began funding Māori radio and by1993 they were funding 22 tribal Māori radio stations. The further development of Māori radio from 1995 onwards is primarily linked to Te

Māngai Pāho, another autonomous Crown entity (Matamua, 2006). These broadcasting developments meant that waiata Māori, both traditional and contemporary, had a vehicle to be disseminated to wider audiences (Sheehan, 2016).

Ngoingoi Pēwhairangi (Ngāti Porou) and Dalvanius Prime (Tainui, Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Ruanui, Tūwharetoa, Ngā Rauru, Pakakohi, Ngāi Tahu) exemplify the ability of Māori composers and producers to write contemporary popular waiata in te reo Māori and utilise Western music genres to appeal to a mainstream audience. Pēwhairangi's contribution to, and expression of, Māori knowledge and culture significantly impacted the ways she composed waiata in te reo Māori. In her words, she wanted "to give people something to sing about" (as cited in Ka'ai, 2008, p. 82). This was most famously illustrated in Pēwhairangi and Prime's (1984) hugely popular and iconic waiata "Poi E", one of New Zealand's most successful and galvanising Māori pop songs. It was number one for four weeks in 1984 and spent a total of 22 weeks on the New Zealand music charts ("Poi E", 2016).

Some contemporary waiata composed between 1980 and 2000—such as Black Katz's "Devolution #1" composed by Ngatai Huata (1983) and the first New Zealand reggae bilingual waiata "Marangā Ake Ai" composed by Joe Williams (1985) of the band Aotearoa with its lyrics advocating "freedom from oppression"—are recognised as songs of protest (Hauiti, 2010). One of the most well-known protest songs in the 1980s was Melbourne's "Ngā Iwi E", composed to promote Māori rights and highlight the racial discrimination and injustices perpetrated by the New Zealand government.

In the 1990s, Māori composers like the members of Upper Hutt Posse, Moana Maniapoto, Hinewehi Mohi, Ruia Aperahama and Emma Paki were writing contemporary pop or hip hop waiata in te reo Māori or both English and te reo as a way of expressing and reclaiming their language and culture. Popular genres such as hip hop, funk, reggae and house were vehicles for kaupapa-driven waiata and waiata that incorporated te reo Māori in ways that would appeal to mainstream radio and youth audiences. More recently, there has also been a growth in the number of Māori reggae bands and dub artists, such as 1814, Katchafire, Dallas Tamaira (the front man of Fat Freddy's Drop), NRG Rising, House of Shem, Sons of Zion, Trinity Roots, and Kora. However, although some of these Māori composers are heard on New Zealand mainstream radio, there is still a significant lack of contemporary Māori waiata in te reo Māori being played. Fortunately, the growth of iwi Māori radio, whose earliest beginnings date back to the 1920s, provides a platform that supports and prioritises waiata in te reo Māori (Sheehan, 2014). The establishment of Māori Television in 2004 also contributed to a more visible recognition of Māori artists and waiata Māori.

Moana Maniapoto (Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Tūhourangi, Ngāti Pikiao) has been regarded as one of the most significant voices in the Aotearoa music scene since her first release in 1982 (Bourke, 2016). She is mana wahine, a political activist who continues to write and produce contemporary Māori music that legitimises and brings Māori language and culture into the mainstream. In 2016, Maniapoto's significant contribution to music and the impact on New Zealand's culture was recognised by the Australasian Performing Right Association when she was inducted into the New Zealand Music Hall of Fame. Her success has inspired other artists, and has contributed significantly to the empowerment and strengthening of te reo Māori and mātauranga Māori. According to Royal (1998), "mātauranga Māori is created by Māori humans according to a set of key ideas and by the employment of certain methodologies to explain the Māori experience of the world" (p. 1). The remainder of this paper explores how Maniapoto contributes to mātauranga Māori and expresses Māori cultural identity through her waiata "Tahi".

In 1993, Moana and the Moahunters released their debut album *Tahi*. This album expresses mātauranga Māori by interweaving sonic and linguistic components through a contemporary urban musical form. The waiata "Tahi" was co-written by Maniapoto, Hareruia Aperahama (Ngāti Pikiahu, Ngāti Waewae, Ngāti Tutemohuta, Ngāti Turangitukua, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Kuri, Te Aupōuri) and Angus McNaughton (Ngāti Pākehā). Aperahama is a prolific composer in both te reo Māori and English. The recipient of two prestigious Tui awards from the New Zealand Music Awards, he gained international recognition with his hit song "What's the Time Mr Wolf?", which was a top-five gold-selling record in New Zealand and was featured in the acclaimed film *Once Were Warriors* (Scholes, Brown & Tamahori, 1994). Since 2001, Aperahama has released four albums, all of which have been finalists in the New Zealand Music Awards. McNaughton is a music producer, engineer and lecturer. With over 30 years' experience in the music industry, he co-wrote the music and produced "Tahi" with Moana and the Moahunters.

"Tahi"

The waiata "Tahi" recalls the unity of Māori tūpuna as they travelled on waka from Hawaiki to Aotearoa, and the hope that, one day, Māori will reclaim the sense of belonging together that has been lost through colonisation (Maniapoto, personal communication, March 20, 2017). The achievement of this migrational journey testifies to the resilience, fortitude and unity of our tūpuna and is expressed in the lyrics of "Tahi". The song asks us to embody these qualities of our tūpuna in the here and now. The story of this journey that Moana and the Moahunters sing of is expressed in ways that go beyond the words; however, the lyrics and their sentiments are a powerful expression of cultural identity and belonging. While the verses concentrate on the detail of the story, the chorus or hook expresses the essence, the emotion and the meaning of the song. The chorus is often repeated between verses in popular contemporary songs because this is where the main concept and notion of the song can be understood, remembered and repeated (Blume, 2003; Braheny, 2006). In this regard, the main theme expressed in "Tahi" is the unity and solidarity of our tūpuna and the recalling of Māori ancestral practices utilised in the great migration voyages. It connects the present to the past and links to whakapapa. This theme is repeated throughout the waiata in the chorus, and examining its lyrics and musical construction provides a pathway to understand how the chorus promulgates a Māori worldview by expressing cultural identity and belonging. The lyrics of "Tahi (Dance Mix)" can be viewed on Maniapoto's website ("Tahi", n.d.). An interpretation of the lyrics' meaning in English has been provided by Hēmi Kelly (personal communication, February 20, 2017).

According to Ryan (1995, p. 95), "kia" used as a particle indicates a purpose, wish, or effect. In the chorus "kia" is linked with the word "kotahi" as the composers encourage listeners to "come together as one". In the second line, the word "auē" is used to express sadness and to draw attention to the loss of unity felt by Māori today. With the call to unity comes a mourning for its loss. The te reo words in effect say, "Come together, come together, come together as our ancestors did. Look at what we've lost. Let's make it happen again for ourselves." Exhilaration. Grief. Desire for restoration.

At the beginning of "Tahi", Aperahama canvasses various linguistic motifs in the tauparapara, recalling Māori ancestral practices of navigation, journeying on oceans, searching out new lands. McLean (1996, p. 39) describes tauparapara as a type of karakia with verbal rhythms that are close to those of speech. Often an incantation is used to begin a speech whereby tangata whenua are able to identify visiting groups, as each tribe

has tauparapara peculiar to them. The message of solidarity and how this was practised in the spiritual, emotional and physical courage needed to embark on these great migrations is relayed in the use of tauparapara. In invoking older musical forms in a contemporary popular waiata, the song establishes genealogical links to the past and to our tūpuna. In other words, it *performs* whakapapa.

Musically, "Tahi" utilises Western harmonics. It employs a cyclic structure of minor chords of D minor, A minor, G minor, returning to A minor. These chords convey a sense of sadness and are often utilised to portray such emotion in musical compositions (Bakker & Martin, 2014). Western music typically uses major chords to portray positive emotions and minor chords to portray negative ones such as sadness (Bakker & Martin, 2014). The use of Western harmonics in this waiata implies a commonality in the human experience of sadness and grief that, while directed to Māori people, can be felt by anyone who listens. It is an invitation to people who are not Māori to empathise.

Although the harmonic arrangements and instruments are imported from Western musical styles, many of the instruments in "Tahi" are taonga puoro. Each instrument has a spiritual sonic element representing the wind, sea, air or breath—all natural elements that would have been present on the great voyages (Nunns, 2014). The taonga puoro used in this waiata signify the sound of the ocean, the tempo of the waka, the stars, the wind, the sails and the movement of the water. The incorporation of tauparapara by Aperahama at the beginning of "Tahi" infuses karakia into this waiata, bringing traditional musical genres and practices into a contemporary format.

The rhythmical composition and production of "Tahi" was carefully crafted by Maniapoto and McNaughton to simultaneously incorporate rhythmic patterns of haka with sounds of taonga puoro (Maniapoto, personal communication, March 20, 2017). Taonga puoro were being revived in the late 1980s primarily through the work of Hirini Melbourne and his colleagues Richard Nunns and Brian Flintoff. Traditional Māori instruments and Māori performing arts provide rhythmic motifs in "Tahi", and haka samples can be heard in the recording in which men stomp their feet in unison matching the 4/4 time signature of the waiata. There are also the male guttural sounds of "hi" and "ha" that recall the monosyllabic nuances of traditional haka and further bring Māori art practices into a contemporary musical setting. The rhythmic texture that underpins "Tahi" acts as a sensory connection to a feeling of unity. The sounds of wooden tapping in the introduction are similar to that of tumutumu, which are played to set the rhythm for chanting (Flintoff, 2004). Unique Māori rhythms can be heard as groups of poi are slapped into the hands in unison throughout the waita.

Alongside these rhythmic instruments is the pūrerehua or rangorango referred to in other parts of the world as the "bullroarer" (Nunns, 2014). It produces a sound of swirling wind, a hovering sound like the sound of the moth, from which it takes its name. The kaitiaki of the pūrerehua is Tawhirimatea. Traditionally Māori used pūrerehua for a variety of different purposes such as accompanying karakia to summon rain, or at tangi. This instrument has the ability to stir the soul and evoke emotion through the whirling, haunting sounds it produces. The incorporation of these traditional Māori instruments in "Tahi" provide sonic motifs that act as a direct conduit of the lyrics. According to Nunns (2014), "taonga puoro sounds were at times a channel to spiritual messages" (p. 56). By utilising taonga puoro sounds, Maniapoto was able to connect her contemporary musical style to traditional Māori performing practices, which come from a place of whakapapa, and communicate the depth of emotion that the sounds of these instruments can and have evoked.

Conclusion

The waiata "Tahi" is an expression of Māori identity and promulgates a Māori worldview. Maniapoto has created a waiata that expresses Māori cultural stories that we can relate to and identify with because it connects us to our histories, to our language and to our cultural identity. "Tahi" expresses the connection to our tūpuna and to whakapapa, which survive in our people today. Like other contemporary Māori waiata, "Tahi" provides a dynamic commentary on the sociocultural and political environment of its time. It pulls people together into a collective experience of *communitas*: a heightened feeling of communality (Turner, 1969), of belonging that is felt through the waiata's aural, sonic and linguistic performativity. The recollection of the migrational voyages of our tūpuna carries with it memories of unity and resilience, of being a people together in solidarity. The spiritual, emotional and physical connection to wairua and mauri can be felt and heard through listening to the lyrical story in te reo Māori and bilingually; hearing the distinctive Māori nuances of melody and harmony expressed through singing and chanting. Additionally, rhythmical haka patterns recorded are infused into "Tahi" that can permeate our wairua, giving us a sense of wanting to dance and stomp along, to connect. The utilisation of taonga puoro in "Tahi" provides a sonic cultural representation that connects us spiritually through the sound of breath, the ebb and flow of rangi that can evoke emotional responses and impressions of distinctively New Zealand natural sounds.

Over two decades on from the release of "Tahi", contemporary popular waiata continue to express Māori cultural identity and mātauranga Māori. Currently the group Maimoa are experiencing success in the New Zealand music charts with their waiata "Wairua" sung in te reo Māori (Wihongi et al., 2017). Like "Tahi", "Wairua" speaks of spirit, of freedom, of being connected with each other and with the world. In that sense, this waiata provides a place of unity between people and a place of belonging. "Wairua" utilises current musical trends and provides a platform to hear our language being sung, to hear our stories being told, and to feel a place of belonging where we can celebrate being Māori. Over 30 years ago "Poi E" infused disco rhythms and video game sounds, while "Tahi" utilised house beats and piano riffs. The combination of contemporary popular styles with the expression of Māori identity and knowledge through lyrics in te reo Māori or in both te reo and English, and through melodic and harmonic motifs and innovative rhythmical patterns, contributes to creating an original contemporary musical Māori voice whereby we hear, see and sense the connection to our whakapapa.

The composers and performers of contemporary Māori waiata are inviting us to not only hear their voices and stories, but to imagine how we are represented, lifted in songs that show who we are, connecting the past and the present in our own language and creating harmonies (or discord) that are meaningful to Māori and our communities. We are moved together by the music and move forward with a common kaupapa. This exploration of contemporary popular waiata and their composers reaffirms that waiata are powerful cultural expressions that express cultural knowledge passed down in our language with lyrics that speak of our whakapapa and connect us to our whenua. This is a distinctively Māori way of expressing our cultural identity and providing a place of belonging and connection.

Acknowledgements

Ngā mihi nui rawa ki a koe, i whakapoipoi ake i ahau. I would like to thank my paper supervisor, Associate Professor Sharon Mazer. I also wish to thank Professor Pare Keiha and Te Ara Poutama, Faculty of Māori and Indigenous Studies, Auckland University of Technology. Ngā mihi nui ki a Moana Maniapoto.

Glossary

Aotearoa	Māori name for New Zealand; lit., "land of the long white cloud"
atua	gods
haka	posture dance performance
hapū	subtribe
Hawaiki	ancestral Polynesian homeland
ihi	essential force, power, psychic force as opposed to spiritual power
iwi	tribe
kaioraora	song of derision, cursing song, venting haka; abusive or belittling song of hatred
kaitiaki	guardian
kapa haka	concert party, Māori cultural group, Māori performing group
karakia	incantation, ritual chant, chant, intoned prayer
karanga	formal ceremonial call of welcome to visitors onto a marae
kaupapa	topic, policy, matter for discussion, plan, scheme, proposal, agenda, subject, programme, theme
Kaupapa Māori	Māori ideology, a philosophical doctrine, incorporating the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of Māori society
kia	particle indicating purpose, wish or effect
kotahi	one, single, used when counting things or people
mana	prestige, authority, control, power, influence, status, spiritual power, charisma; a supernatural force in a person, place or object
marae	meeting place
mātauranga Māori	Māori knowledge; the body of knowledge originating from Māori ancestors, including the Māori world view and perspectives, Māori creativity and cultural practices
mauri	life principle, vital essence, special nature, a material symbol of a life principle, source of emotions
mōteatea	lament, traditional chant, sung poetry; a general term for songs sung in traditional mode
oriori	lullaby
pao	ditties
pātere	chants
poi	a light ball on a string of varying length, which is swung or twirled rhythmically to sung accompaniment; traditionally made of raupō leaves
pūrerehua	bullroarer; a traditional Māori musical instrument made of wood, stone or bone attached to a long string
rangi	melody, tune
rangorango	another word for pūrerehua
raupō	bulrush, *Typha orientalis*; a tall, summer-green swamp plant
tahi	one, single
tangata whenua	people of the land
tangi	sound, intonation, mourning, grief, sorrow, weeping, lament, salute, wave
taonga puoro	traditional Māori instruments
tauparapara	spells, charms, incantations
Tawhirimatea	god of the winds
te ao Māori	the Māori world
te reo Māori	the Māori language

tikanga	correct procedure, custom, habit, lore, method, manner, rule, way, code, meaning, plan, practice, convention
tumutumu	ancient Māori instruments
tūpuna	ancestors, grandparents
wahine	woman, female, lady, wife
waiata	to sing, song, chant
waiata-ā-ringa	action song; a popular modern song type with set actions and Western-type tunes
waiata aroha	song of love
waiata poi	song performed with a poi; modern songs are usually set to Western-type tunes
waiata tangi	song of mourning or lament
wairua	spirit, soul, quintessence; spirit of a person
waka	canoe, vehicle, conveyance, spirit medium, medium (of an atua)
wana	excitement, thrill, exhilaration, fervour, verve, gusto, zeal, zest, passion, energy, sparkle, liveliness, pizzazz
wehi	something awesome, a response of awe in reaction to ihi
whakapapa	genealogy, genealogical table, lineage, descent
whānau	extended family, family group, a familiar term of address to a number of people; the primary economic unit of traditional Māori society
whenua	land, country, state

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