

Looking Back:

Contemporary dance: A Māori perspective (Part one)

Stephen Bradshaw

Choreographer and community arts co-ordinator

Ngā puke o Hauraki ka tārehua

E mihi ana ki te whenua

E mihi ana ki tangata

Ko Moehau ki waho

Ko Te Aroha ki uta

Ko Tikapa te moana

Ko Huaraki te whenua

Ko Marutūahu te tangata

Te hei mauri ora.

Abstract

This article by Stephen Bradshaw begins with a reprint of his article originally commissioned by Creative New Zealand in July 2001 and subsequently published in *Moving to the future. Ngā whakanekeneke atu ki te Ao o Apōpō*, a strategy document for professional contemporary dance 2001-2003.¹ In this article, Bradshaw investigated significant issues in the development of Māori contemporary dance over thirty years. Bradshaw offered a personal perspective as practitioner and narrated some of the meetings between Māori and contemporary dance, specific wānanga in which Māori artists investigated culturally appropriate ways of using theatre dance arts, and discussing examples of cultural exchange. Bradshaw engaged with key issues and definitions relating to inter-cultural and intra-cultural exchange and offered an understanding of continuum Māori dance that was timely and insightful. The second part of this article contains Bradshaw's response to this article (2002), with a focus on strategies in the support and establishment of Māori contemporary dance in recent years. Complimentary to Bradshaw's work is the subsequent article in this issue of *Dance Research Aotearoa* by Jack Gray in which he responds to Bradshaw's comments as a current contemporary dance practitioner.

HE TIMATANGA

The purpose of this essay is to open up the territory that exists between Māori dance and contemporary dance, and to show that Māori culture is central and pivotal to the development of contemporary dance. To support this I will offer a series of events and commentaries on selected issues that relay my perspective. My time frame will focus on 1980-2000 and section one of this essay is a narrative of this period. Regarding 'time', I prefer to work in continuum and concepts like traditional, contemporary and futuristic do not sit comfortably with me.

I have been actively involved in things Māori and in contemporary dance for 20 years and have participated at occasions when the two have met. Having said that, there are also many opportunities where Māori and contemporary dance do not meet. The meetings between Māori and contemporary dance are physical ones: the body, people gathering and the performance stage. The actual meetings have been varied in their applications and have been based around people consciously and unconsciously performing their various cultures. Section two looks at *wānanga* (discussions or forums) where Māori were investigating how to interact and use theatre dance arts in a culturally appropriate way.

To say the word Māori, I must qualify it by saying the word *Pākehā* (European decent) and in reference to the title, *Pākehā* relates to contemporary dance. The Treaty of Waitangi is pivotal in this relationship and I will attempt to relate this in the text and subtext of my writing. In section three of this essay, I will look at an event in 1990 when Māori and *Pākehā tangata* (people) danced and met together to exchange culturally. I will also offer some alternative terms to the divisive ones of bi-cultural, multi-cultural and cross-cultural and replace them with the terms, inter-cultural and intra-cultural. These terms form a more realistic approach to life in Aotearoa New Zealand.

KO AHAU

I base my essay on first hand experience in theatre dance as a director, choreographer, performer, tutor, teacher, writer, mentor, assessor and advocate. I was taught basically 'what was on offer' in terms of dance technique and composition. My education started with an early Limbs Dance Companyⁱⁱ / Kiwi version of American modern dance and later I was taught by several really strong American teachers, who offered a more authentic version of American modern dance.

My learning of things Māori has been based around general Māori history, specific *whānau* (family) and tribal history and some basic language skills. However, it is the physical, conceptual and spiritual elements of the broader culture that has fed me culturally. As a Māori dance person, I have attempted to meld contemporary life and Māori tradition, and have had many experiences that have significantly shaped my practice, skills and thinking. I refer to some of these experiences later in this essay.

I have associated with many people who have strengthened my knowledge base and I warmly acknowledge their work and contributions towards my development. These associations have occurred in a multitude of settings and situations and impact on my observations in this essay.

MĀORI DANCE

Tangata Māori have always been contemporary and creative. Art and dance help to form the core of our culture. In a cultural context, I don't believe the term 'contemporary' has much importance or relevance. Rather, I feel it aids the feeling of dislocation that a 'contemporary society' may have about itself in that it removes the society from its past. This dislocation is enhanced when Māori take on these terms and believe that they may better communicate to the world by using them. The personal description and title 'contemporary Māori artist' is limiting, and has provided a confusing and didactic debate that has carried on since we adopted the words. The definitions eventually focus on points of difference rather than connections and further divisions are created. This has affected the intergenerational relationship between *kaumatua* (elders) and *rangatahi* (youth).

I believe the focus should be on the creators or the actual people who are dancing rather than on the notional and conceptual terms of contemporary or traditional dance. I find this more useful and practical, given the reality that dance is the most ancient of the arts and it is created and transferred by people. A particular dancer's style is attributed to the influences he or she takes on and rejects from mentors, tutors and observation.

In Māori terms, everyone descends from a line of ancestors. Stating that you are the contemporary product of that line is nonsensical. Who takes up the mantle of being contemporary when one has children? Or do we automatically become traditional at that point? Rather, *whakapapa* (genealogy) is a continuum. The words contemporary and traditional are inappropriate and are Pākehā cultural constructs.

This also applies to specific movementsⁱⁱⁱ in the way that all recognisable Māori movement has a whakapapa. Research, prior to choreography and performance, is essential to understand the specific contexts of a movement and where the movement descends from. Appropriation is a big issue among Māori *iwi* (tribes). Iwi own styles, protocols and artistic vocabulary. The movements that are particular to each iwi can maintain the unique nature and history of an iwi. Māori choreographers must be aware of their own tribal movements and develop ways of learning and not appropriating from other iwi. This is one of a range of issues that Māori dance people must face up to if we are able to state legitimately that what we are doing is Māori.

Māori see creative people as the historians, commentators and inventors within society and this once privileged role is now difficult for Māori to participate in fully. The construct of an ‘art form’ has devalued the significance that Māori place on the worth of people and *manaakitanga* (nurturing).

Being Māori is not easy; nor is it easy being a Māori choreographer or dancer. I firmly believe that all things should be accessible to everyone and Māori people, with the correct skills, have the right to participate in any art form they choose. I see it as valid if a Māori person chooses to choreograph a classical ballet. However, such a person should be described as ‘a choreographer who is Māori’, especially if the work has no *kaupapa*^{iv} (agenda or purpose). When the work has a kaupapa and is made by a Māori person but is presented in a theatre space, I believe that the definitions offered above alter. The person should be described as ‘a Māori choreographer’.

I remember this happening in my own career. As an apprentice with Limbs and a student at the *New Zealand School of Dance*^v, I was a dancer who was Māori. At this time, 1981-1983, there were no formal training approaches for Māori. As I began choreographing and performing in works that had a kaupapa Māori and were in the theatre, I personally identified myself as ‘a Māori choreographer’. This personal statement enabled me to establish myself spiritually, politically, culturally and socially in a creative context.

I directed *Taiao Dance Theatre*^{vi} from 1988-1994 and during this period there was a need to define what it was that an audience was coming to see through the media or what a funding body might need to accept an application. It was difficult to avoid the word ‘contemporary’ because it was expedient in many cases to use it. However, the term was not at the *rito* (core) of the issue. Among the artists, the talk and practice were based more around the concept of ‘continuum Māori

dance’ rather than ‘contemporary Māori dance’. So what was in our hearts was to acknowledge our whakapapa or ancestral past within a changing world.

It is worth noting that many Māori choreographers have a range of skills including *te reo Māori* (Māori language), carving, weaving and related knowledge. This can be a result of the search to acquire movements, themes and stories that inform and broaden the creative work. It is a further comment on the relevance of the term ‘contemporary’ to Māori artists, who draw from *ngā mahi ā ngā tupuna* (the works of our ancestors) to develop themselves and their work.

A part of that changing world was the growing use of the theatre arts and space by Māori performing artists. This action was part of the advancement of the renaissance in the 1970s and 1980s by claiming access to colonial buildings and participation in the arts. Despite this action, the theatre remains an architectural design that is poorly equipped to provide *manaakitanga* (care, nurturing and hospitality) and host Māori protocol. In response to this, Māori have adopted a variety of ways to provide *manaakitanga* via the rituals of the *marae* (tribe or sub-tribe home base).

I chose dance theatre to describe what I did. Theatre for the space but also theatre for the creative, transforming, informing and life-changing experience that it provokes whilst in performance or as a learning tool. The word theatre also opened up the awareness that there may be other mediums used like voice, ritual or a narrative story.

In terms of access by Māori to the arts, there have been significant developments and downturns since the period I have just referred to. After 1990, funding and initiatives for Māori arts development declined. This was due to the broader National Government treatment of Māori through the ‘Fiscal Envelope’ approach (a capped amount for Treaty settlements)^{vii}, which provoked massive opposition from Māori iwi. I believe Māori money was withheld from wider sources and went towards the ‘fiscal envelope’. At the same time, increasing numbers of Māori dancers and artists were wanting to create and present their *rangatiratanga* (sovereignty). Clearly, the two approaches were not compatible.

Within the wider economic environment Māori were going backwards. This can be shown through organisations like *Ngā Puna Waihanga* (Māori artists and writers)^{viii}, Taiao Dance Theatre and Taki Rua Theatre^{ix}, which were all hit by recession, closure or major redirection. For all of the individual achievements and great works created in this time, a difficult political climate impacted on organisations that were solid and established for the advancement of Māori artists.

The 1990s have seen a decline in Māori dance participation in the theatre. There has, nonetheless, been a rapid increase in Māori creativity in other performance avenues such as marae, Kapa Haka Super 12 and Aotearoa Traditional Māori Performing Arts Festival^x, *kura kaupapa* (Māori language immersion schools)^{xi} and music videos. To add to this point, part of the apparent decline is also based on the practitioners of the 1980s working in other areas of Kaupapa Māori. It is often dance that has initiated their path into health, education or arts careers and it is still dance that is part of their being. So for me the decline is only a perceived one, particularly if you view my comments within a cultural development context rather than a narrow art-specific focus.

In terms of the current works being created by Māori in the theatre, a broad range and variety of styles is emerging. Choreographers Mika, Merenia Gray and Tina Fotu (nee Wharepouri) of *Ahi Wai* are making work that is distinctly Māori and connects strongly to the whole period I am attempting to cover. There are also some similarities that are shared, not only in the use of voice and movement, but also in the attitude that allows them to work and learn on a global scale. All of these artists have worked internationally and are able to bring this wider experience back to Aotearoa for the development of Māori. There is also a greater influence of Pacific, Asian and African movements within the choreography and this has been gained in a variety of ways. Māori dance theatre is more than bi-cultural and limited only to New Zealand. It is now international, particularly with the work of Kahurangi New Zealand Dance Theatre Trust^{xii} in North America and with other international indigenous links being established.

Within the current range of choreographic styles emerging, many are based around the tertiary institutions that choreographers have trained at. Tertiary training has also had a major influence on trends in Māori dance theatre by offering techniques that ultimately shape a dancer or choreographer's style. This is particularly noticeable in the new Māori choreographers starting to make works where the movement vocabulary is limited to their training. Within that training, there is no exposure to the story I am presenting, minimal appropriate Māori movement training and no infrastructure to support graduates into a professional career.

Māori performers appear in many professional performances in New Zealand, with artists like Taiaroa Royal and Tāne Mete having worked with most choreographers. It is rare to see a contemporary dance performance without a

Māori male dancer. To balance this there are a number of *wahine* (women) choreographers creating their own initiatives.

Māori are starting to appear throughout the Aotearoa New Zealand dance spectrum on a variety of representative and government bodies. There are a number of layers to the Māori dance scene that have become extremely active since the 1995-2000 decline.

The opportunity for Māori now in dance terms is to link up the various parts that would contribute to the whole by developing and implementing a co-ordinated kaupapa. The creators, performers, educators, administrators, learners and organisations committed to Māori development are now responsible for avoiding another decline and further loss of *tāonga* (prized and treasured knowledge) and rangatiratanga.

INTRA-CULTURAL EXAMINATIONS

In this section, I describe an event where Māori were identifying their own diversity and range of styles evolving in the mid to late part of 1980. This gathering took place at Heretaunga/Hastings and was hosted by Kahurangi New Zealand Māori Dance Theatre Trust and Ngāti Kahungunu in 1989. A whakapapa of organising bodies contributed to this wānanga and they have maintained the kaupapa that has emerged. These bodies and the people that worked within them were responsible for laying down the formal developments of what exists today.

The whakapapa of organising bodies began in 1986 when the Māori and South Pacific Arts Council (MASPAC) established a group of Māori art committees. One of these committees was *Te Ope o Rehua*^{xiii}, a committee for the development of dance and drama. This committee had two clear branches of dance and drama. Both areas supported one another but operated separately.

The Creative New Zealand^{xiv} model followed MASPAC and The Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council. In 1994 *Te Waka Toi* evolved from this. *Te Waka Toi* inherited some aspects of the work of MASPAC but the Māori art committees concept was taken up by a newly formed body, *Toi Māori Aotearoa*. From this base, committees such *Te Ope o Rehua* and its members co-ordinated Māori arts at a national level. This organisation is not the outcome of government legislation although it does receive substantial funding from Te Waka Toi. It is practitioner-based and seeks to promote and support the development of Māori arts.

The 1989 wānanga was a national gathering of predominantly Māori dance practitioners offering performances, debates and workshops over a week. The

dance companies present were tangata whenua Kahurangi New Zealand Māori Dance Theatre Trust; Taiao Dance Theatre based in Tamaki Makaurau; Mika, then based in Whanganui a Tara; Poutokomanawa from Otautahi; a number of leading kaumatua and *kuia* (female elder) in Māori performance; independent artists; and Māori dance educators and students. Pākehā also attended, contributed and learned from the experience.

The wānanga was a large gathering and important in terms of acknowledging our own diversity and experiencing common links. Accommodation was at a local marae and daily classes in dance and local history and te reo were led by Canon Wi Huata, Keri Kaa, Paiki Johnson and others.

With a theatre space available for performances and post-performance discussion there was some strong insights and debate about the works presented. Typical questions included: What is the meaning of a particular work? What does a group's name or kaupapa mean in a cultural context? Is there a *tapu* (sacred) and *noa* (ordinary)^{xv} to performance that is not yet clearly established? Are we creating or re-creating? Is this Māori or not? Despite all the difficult questions and issues the main theme was the importance of this kaupapa to Māori and the dedication that is required to dance and be Māori.

The above questions still have currency and the issues that were raised at this wānanga are being asked again today. They are provocative to Māori but part of the stance and direction that was laid down at this gathering.

INTER-CULTURAL EXCHANGES

As an example of dance people meeting to share and work culturally, I offer this case study of the 1990 Australia/New Zealand Composers and Choreographers Symposium, which was held in Otaki, north of Wellington. Both countries had been having regular and formal gatherings since 1981 for mutual dance developments. None of the previous gatherings had addressed indigenous issues or personal cultural identity. I was involved in the reference group formed by the Queen Elizabeth II (QEII) Arts Council prior to the event, which I also attended.

The week-long gathering was highly charged and set up in a way that attendees' comfort levels were catered for and confronted at the same time. All participants were dancers and composers based in Australia or New Zealand. The general ethnic representations of the 50 or so attendees were Māori, Pākehā, Polynesian, Australian, Aboriginal and Islander, Asian and Indian. The age range was wide with tribal elders, senior practitioners and youth with all different life

and dance experiences. To say the least, this was a lot to put together and maintain, especially being largely marae-based and during the 150th commemoration since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi.

All visitors and participants met in Wellington and travelled together for the powhiri at Otaki Marae. To prepare for the marae experience, overseas guests and some New Zealanders were offered insights to *pōwhiri* (welcome) by lecturers and students at Wellington Teachers Training College and participated in welcoming the Tāmaki Mākaurau contingent at the College marae.

At Otaki, the powhiri was a dynamic and powerful affair that shaped and encapsulated the entire wānanga: dance was firmly on the cultural and political agenda for a change. This gathering was about much more than music and dancing and this provided the ‘current’. However, the ‘undercurrent’ was political and therefore about addressing power and equity issues. This wānanga set out to establish that there were mutual benefits for artists in acknowledging and supporting the development of the indigenous traditional and contemporary dance in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

Like any ethnicity and race-related issue, this provocation was highly controversial and meant different things to different people, especially within the mix that this gathering provided. Issues of Aboriginal development in the Australian context are different to Māori in the New Zealand context. This caused a major division because some people assumed that oppression was generic and thought that since the practice and effect of oppression was the same the solutions would be the same. This racist theory was popular with those who were not oppressed. The ‘oppressed’ at the wānanga gathered in the knowledge that they are all unique and require specific solutions to re-affirm their world view. This ideology developed into a white versus black debate and highlighted the generational divide.

Despite these threatening conflicts, there was an overall strong generational unity and across the barriers, there were some clear resolutions in attitude and resolve for action. Māori and Aboriginal interactions were powerful and have sealed an ongoing relationship. Whilst Paiki Johnson^{xvi} was demonstrating his relationship with the *taiaha* (fighting stick) and bird forms, an Aboriginal dancer embodied one of his birds and approached Paiki. This caused moments of real tension as it was unexpected and might have been taken as a challenge. However, the opposite happened as these two amazing leaders improvised and uplifted each another’s *mana* (authority) through dance. This single event thawed any early barriers

between Māori and the Aboriginal people. Later, we were to question why we were unable to host one another without the need for Pākehā or Australian initiation or sanction by presence.^{xvii}

There has not been a similar gathering like this since then. Australia and New Zealand choreographic relations became more focused on their developments as individual nations. This has also focused both countries on their own issues.

In Aotearoa this has produced a number of initiatives such as representation on the DANZ board, Creative New Zealand/Te Waka Toi initiatives, and a variety of Māori activities in dance that I have referred to in other parts of this essay. These initiatives are part of a wider focus on the *Treaty of Waitangi* and the obligations that the Crown must adhere to, contained in this foundation document of our nation. Dance, like any aspect of life in this country, needs to aspire to recognition of the Treaty and tangata whenua. Māori and Pākehā dance people should be aware that some hard work and years have gone into the development of bi-culturalism, specifically in dance, and that the government and other institutions have to respond to equity issues by law. In dance practitioner terms, we must also assess our own organisations to further support equity.

HE WHAKAMUTUNGA

In this essay I have offered three main sections and within them narratives on some recent dance events that have shaped Māori and Pākehā dance relations. The Māori perspective is a worldview that reaches out to explore while being rooted in the earth by ancient links created by whakapapa. Māori must be engaged at all levels of dance in Aotearoa New Zealand to respond to the development of theatre dance and the continuum of creative energy that Māori descendants embody.

Contemporary Māori dance: Strategies to support the second wave (Part two)

This issue of *Dance Research Aotearoa* offers a great opportunity to revisit my essay commissioned by Creative New Zealand (CNZ) as part of an art form review report in 2001. There has been significant change and development that I hope to cover in this article but I encourage others to share their stories with more detail.

Reflecting on the original essay, there are some factors that I want to give some added context and explanation as to what I wrote and why. I see this period of around 2000 as a time of recovery for the art form and also when the second wave of contemporary Māori dancers emerged. The period I will concentrate on is 2000-2007; a snapshot of what happened after the publication of this earlier essay. (See Appendix 1 for an overall timeline of companies and selected events, and Appendix 2 for details of 1980's work with a bicultural focus).

The period between 1995 and 2000 was a real concern in regard to the decline in the number of Māori dance theatre productions and a perception around the quality of Māori contemporary dance. The validity of an indigenous contemporary dance voice was at stake. After the hard work throughout the 1980's and 1990's of *Te Kanikani o te Rangatahi* and *Taiao Dance Theatre* there was no way I could stand back and see the *mahi* (work) become merely a moment in history.

Toi Māori Aotearoa^{xviii} Chief Executive Officer Garry Nicholas shared my concerns. A series of hui with Garry led me to return to *Te Ope o Rehua*, the contemporary performing arts arm of *Toi Māori Aotearoa*. *Te Ope o Rehua* presented an opportunity to further link Māori contemporary dance into a strong national network of indigenous art form groupings and leading practitioners within the *Toi Māori Aotearoa* structure.

Further, after I sustained a serious knee injury in 1998 and subsequently had an operation, I was no longer able to physically dance at the level I had been. In 2000 I undertook a new position at Auckland City Council as Community Arts Coordinator—Māori, and with *Te Ope o Rehua*, I wanted to explore the themes of development and advocacy for Māori contemporary dance. As a senior practitioner I could see a number of issues that effected growth and *Te Ope o Rehua* initiated a

choreographic strategy consisting of two parts, *Whakahaungia* (re-energise) and *Te Rea* (new growth).

WHAKAHAUNGIA

This strategy supported choreographic concept development, offering research and workshop time for individual artists. Within this process, the artists were able to take a stronger proposal to Creative New Zealand for funding including still and moving images from workshops with dancers, and an enhanced concept that was developed with the added research time. Some important works and artists came through the *Whakahaungia* strategy including works by Lou Potiki Bryant (*Ngai Tahu* 32), Moss Patterson (*Whakairo*) and Merenia Gray (*Te Mana*). Jack Gray, Maaka Pepene, Tru Paraha were other recipients who have made a huge contribution through their mahi.

Within this strategy, artists would meet with me to pitch their concept and then write a brief outlining the concept, dancers, time, materials and budget with a projected future detailing the date and venue for production and other relevant information. The brief would be circulated among *Te Ope o Rehua* members and *Toi Māori Aotearoa* staff to decide if the concept was strong enough and if the artist had the resources in place to deliver to the concept and plan. Up to \$1,000.00 was released for each successful brief and as a result of this strategy, 12 concepts were supported over the period. The majority of the concepts were taken into full production.

TE REA

The second strategy involved a series of wānanga with three-four new works all being workshoped at the same time. An 'Expression of Ideas' document was sent to artists and they then outlined their concept and intention as to how the work would be developed and eventually produced. There were two *Te Rea* new works wānanga, held in 2002 (Waikato) and 2006 (Tāmaki Mākaurau/Auckland). This project was very popular with artists as it gave an intensive workshop atmosphere and drew the artists together to strengthen our links and *whanaungatanga* (relationships). Three of the four works in the Tāmaki wānanga were eventually produced and this was a great outcome of this strategy.

The third *Te Rea* wānanga was held in 2013 and had a focus on new and emerging Māori producers of dance and drama. This project was a collaboration

between *Toi Māori Aotearoa*, *Te Ope o Rehua* and the Auckland Arts Festival. With 10 participants, this *kaupapa* recognised the lack of Māori producers in the field. This project offered workshops from leading Māori producers to share their experiences as well as a range of international and local experts who were part of the festival and who shared their stories and knowledge.

The *Te Rea* strategy has assisted the growth of Māori contemporary dance by focusing on choreographers and platforms for new work. The artists were part of the new wave of energy from Māori graduates from Unitec School of Performing and Screen Arts and New Zealand School of Dance (the two main dance training institutions). These dancers came with a degree and intensive dance study and their presence marked a progression from the raw talent of the dancers from *Taiao Dance Theatre* and *Te Kanikani o te Rangatahi*^{xix}.

CONCLUSIONS OF WHAKAHAUNGIA AND TE REA

Artistically and culturally there were some important factors that we outlined and established within *Te Ope o Rehua* as we learnt from these strategies, relating to understanding Māori contemporary dance and dancers:

- The choreographer is Māori;
- The research base explores kaupapa Māori;
- Tikanga Māori is an element that drives the process;
- The dancers and allied artists (composer, costume, etc) are Māori;
- The theme or kaupapa of the work relates to Te Ao Māori;
- The physicality and vocabulary of movement was innovative by utilising aspects from *Te Ao Tawhito* (ancient), *Te Ao Hurihuri* (colonisation) and *Te Ao Hou* (contemporary); and
- The final dance would be recognised as a Māori art work.

This strategy has had a discreet but important impact on the development of Māori contemporary dance from 2000-2006. Recognised among practitioners, *Te Ope o Rehua* (see Appendix 3) has worked behind the scenes to devise creative interventions that have made a difference to the quality of the final productions and developed confidence in the choreographers through recognition from a wider Māori artist network in *Toi Māori Aotearoa*. There have been other important kaupapa that have projected Māori contemporary dance to the fore, including the *Kōwhiri Dance Festival*^{xx}, the national gathering *Aitanga Descendance*^{xxi} in 2009 and the growth of Atamira and Okareka dance companies.

However, it really is the hard work and effort by the artists themselves who are able to draw from their Māori heritage and their contemporary environment to create art that uplifts, discovers and facilitates change. The recent funding developments of our leading companies Atamira and Okareka is testimony to the commitment and whakapapa of Māori contemporary dance. The challenge going forward is to strengthen the cultural roots of the third wave of new artists and graduates that are currently making work and dancing for more senior choreographers.

Over the 30-year period (1985 to 2015) Māori contemporary dance has ‘come of age’ and is an established and supported member of the whanau of Māori art forms.^{xxii}

Ma te mahi me te werawera ma te waewae rara, ka korero, aa ka marama.^{xxiii}

By the work of our physical expression we communicate with greater clarity.

WAI-ATA-RAU—REFLECTIONS

This story is not complete and I would hope in the future to write further on my experiences and thoughts covering the period from 2007-15 in more detail. The third wave of Māori artists present some important developments in the continuum of Māori dance performance. The growing connections between Kapa Haka (competitive group dances), Te whare tapere (pre-European mode of theatre and story-telling) and contemporary Māori dance; the relationship of an international indigenous voice of contemporary dance choreography; and, the impacts of technology upon ancient and contemporary dance, are some of the fascinating areas to observe that for me makes dance an important subject to track the wider story of Aotearoa New Zealand.

In 2010 I was one of three recipients to receive an award for life time service to Māori dance at the inaugural *Kōwhiri Māori dance* event along with Tama Huata and Gayleene Sciascia. Rather than accept the award as a retirement opportunity, I was enabled to discover a new challenge that would encompass the many roles I have taken on in dance. Titled as *Pouwhakahaere* (Commissioner) Dance with *Toi Māori Aotearoa*, I have been able to take a leadership position that draws from these past roles with a focus on strengthening the future of Māori contemporary dance.

Appendix 1

A Timeline of Companies & Selected Events

1983	Kahurangi Māori Dance Theatre established, Hastings. 30 years recently celebrated of national & international touring with a focus on education and cultural transmission.
1984-86	Merupa Māori , Wellington Arts Centre
1984-87	Te Kanikani o te Rangatahi , Auckland. Kaupapa Māori based with Māori, Pacific and Pākehā performers.
1985	QEII Māori & South Pacific Arts Council established Māori Art Komiti (MAK) structure to gather practitioners within their artform. Dance and Drama were placed together under the collective title Te Ope o Rehua (John Tahuparae). Lead by Wi Kuki Kaa, Don Selwyn, John Tahuparae, Rangimoana Taylor, Susanne Renner, Taiaroa Royal, Stephen Bradshaw, Tama Huata this was one of the access points into government structures.
1988-94	Taiao Dance Theatre undertook numerous national and main centre tours, Marae based touring, presented 10 choreographers and 20 dancers.
1989	Te Ope o Rehua national dance workshop, Hastings.
1990's	Merenia Grey Dance Theatre series of works and seasons. Ahiwai Dance Co. —Tina Wharepouri director choreographer
1996	Toi Maori Aotearoa established and Te Ope o Rehua reconvened to advocate for Maori dance and drama.
1998-99	Tāmaki Dance , hold regular morning class for Maori dancers and informal gatherings.
2000	Atamira Dance Collective launched by Jack Gray with various seasons over the next decade. Germaine Acogny , Senegal Africa, Maori choreographers workshop with Toi Maori Aotearoa support.
2001	Te Ope o Rehua Choreographic strategy — Te Rea and Whakahaungia programs established to assist the re-emerging dance voice from tertiary graduates. Many new choreographers and dancers start presenting including Jack Gray , Dolina

- Wehipeihana, Louise Potiki Bryant, Moss Patterson, Terri Ripeka Crawford, and Maaka Pepene.**
- 2009 **Aitanga Descendance** Maori contemporary dance national summit, first gathering for 25 years.
- 2010 **Atamira Dance Company** new sustainability plan and kaupapa under the direction of Moss Patterson.
- 2010, 2011, 2013 **Kōwhiri Māori Dance Festival & Awards** established with *Atarau* academic symposium in 2013.
- 2011 **Okareka Dance Co.** established under the direction of Tane Mete and Taiaroa Royal
- 2011, 2012 & 2013 **Tuakana** Māori dance showcase, **Tempo Dance Festival**, Variety show of works including contemporary and Kapa haka.
- 2013 Charles Koroneho & **Te Toki Haruru** solo show *Pure* presented in Canada and Auckland. Atamira present at Jacobs Pillow & other USA venues.
New choreographers with innovative styles including **Kat Ruka, Tru Paraha, Kura Te Ua, Tia Reihana.**
- 2014 Atamira seasons & tours presenting **Moko** by Moss Patterson, **Kaha** (annual short-works regional centres tour).
Okareka season & tours presenting **Wahine Ma** nationally.

Appendix 2

1980's Bicultural Focus with a Pākehā/ Māori choreographic collaborations, Dancers or Company.

- *Tane—Nga Kete Wananga*, Impulse Dance Co.—devised by Gayleene Sciascia, Porangahou Iwi & with Impulse artists.
- *Shadow of the warrior* Limbs Dance Co., by MJ O'Reilly, danced by Alfred Williams (Nga Puhī/Taitokerau) and Kilda Northcott.
- *Koru & Newareka* by Royal NZ Ballet—Moana Nepia, Gayleene & Piri Sciascia.

Creative New Zealand Choreographic Commission facilitated a number of national gatherings (Wellington, Raukawa & Flock house) to stimulate dance artists and build the capacity of dance in a national context; Biculturalism was a significant issue in this period with Māori dance issues lead by dance, education and tikanga expert Keri Kaa of Tai Rawhiti.

Tertiary education was significant with the provision of dance courses nationally. A choreographic based course based at Unitec. New Zealand School of Dance further developed contemporary dance training within their curriculum, Auckland University launched an academic course, Takitimu Performing arts degree program and Whitireia performing arts school supported Māori and Pacific students. All institutions played a role in training new young dancers that have been influential over this period. Acknowledgements must go to all those tutors and course directors. Private tutors and independent dance studios and clubs provide the seeding place for the very young and dance community.

Dance Aotearoa New Zealand (DANZ) national dance agency was established to deliver some key functions across all forms of dance.

Appendix 3

Te Ope o Rehua led events and participation in significant events.

(Note: *Te Ope o Rehua* led events are marked with a solid bullet point & participation in other producer's events is marked with a clear bullet point.)

- National wānanga 1998 (Takitimu Performing Arts, Hastings) & 1999 (Tuhono Marae, Wellington)
- Choreographic Wānanga 2001 (Tuhono Marae & Whitireia Polytechnic)
- Germaine Acogny, Senegal Africa, wānanga with Māori choreographers and dancers, Auckland, 2000.
- *Whakahaungia* artists supported and resulting performed works include Louise Potiki Bryant (*Ngai Tahu 32*), Merenia Grey (*Te Mana*), Stephen Bradshaw (*Mauri*), Jack Gray (*View from the Gods*), Moss Patterson (*Whakairo*), Maka Pepene (*Matariki 2007*).
- *Te Rea* wānanga recipients—Tru Paraha, Teri Crawford, Mere Boynton, Te Ahukaramu Royal & Louise Potiki Bryant and Grace Hoete.
- *Hiva to Hip-hop*, a Pacific dance symposium @ Te Papa, hosted a breakfast with guest speaker Piri Sciascia 2006/7
- Singapore Asian Arts Market 2007 & 2010
- Pouwhakahaere Commissioner role for Māori dance initiated 2009
- *Aitanga Descendance* Māori contemporary dance national summit 2009, Auckland
- *Mauri* choreographed by Stephen Bradshaw restaged for Atamira *Whetu Matariki* tour to Rotorua, Hamilton, Wellington and Auckland 2010.
- Atamira strategic relationship 2010.
- DANZ led national strategy for dance, Pouwhakahaere attended all three regional meetings—Auckland, Wellington & Christchurch .
- Developing a relationship with Q Theatre and the Māori reference group, Reo Whakahaere 2010
- *Kōwhiri* Māori dance festival & awards, Te Papa and State Opera Houses, Wellington, Awards recipients & MC support, 2010, 2011 & 2013.
- *Te Ope o Rehua* strategic plan completed and revised committee structure in-trial.
- Launched a Blog site maoricontemporarydance.com 2012.

Te Ope o Rehua

- Past Chairs—Tama Huata, Trevor Maxwell, Stephen Bradshaw.

- Past members—Tairaroa Royal, Susanne Renner, Gayleene Sciascia, Merenia Grey, Teri Crawford, Mere Boynton. Current advisory members: Dance Moss Patterson, Drama Hone Kouka.
- He maumahara ki a Don Selwyn ratou ko Wikuki Kaa ko John Tahuparae.

ⁱ This article was originally commissioned by Creative New Zealand in July 2001 and was subsequently published as:

Bradshaw, Stephen. (2002). Contemporary dance: A Maori perspective. In Creative New Zealand (Ed.), *Moving to the future. Nga whakanekekeke atu ki te ao o apopo* (pp.57-63). Wellington, New Zealand: Creative New Zealand.

Any extract published or reproduced must acknowledge author Stephen Bradshaw (2015) and kind permission of *Toi Māori*.

ⁱⁱ Editor's note: See the following entry for information about Limbs Dance Company:

Barbour, K N & Whyte, R. (1998). Limbs Dance Company. In T. Benbow-Pfalzgraf (Ed.), *International dictionary of modern dance* (pp. 476-479). Detroit, MI: St. James Press.

ⁱⁱⁱ I use the word 'movements' rather than 'dance' to keep things broad and inclusive. This extends the notion that all physical activity of our *tupuna* (ancestors) is a potential starting point towards something eventually becoming a choreographed dance (e.g., fishing or gardening).

^{iv} *Whakapapa* (genealogy), *reo a tinana* (Māori body language), *wairua* (spirit), *hinengaro* (concept) or *take* (issue).

^v Editor's note: <http://nzschoolofdance.ac.nz/>

^{vi} Editor's note: <http://contemporarymaoridance.com/2012/04/27/taiao-dance-theatre-tohu-logo-5/>

^{vii} Editor's note: See, for example:

Orange, C. (1992). *The Treaty of Waitangi*. Wellington, New Zealand: Bridget Williams Books.

Orange, C. (1989). *The story of a treaty*. Wellington, New Zealand: Allen & Unwin.

^{viii} Editor's note: <http://christchurchcitylibraries.com/Maori/Puawaitanga/Waihang/>

^{ix} Editor's note: <http://www.takirua.co.nz/>

^x Editor's note: Te Matatini <http://www.tematatini.co.nz/>

^{xi} Editor's note: <http://www.runanga.co.nz/about-us>

^{xii} Editor's note: <http://www.kahurangi.com/>

^{xiii} Editor's note: <http://contemporarymaoridance.com/>

^{xiv} Editor's note: <http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/>

^{xv} Here, I am making a wider reference to *kawa* and *tikanga* in the use of ritual and hospitality in the performance setting.

^{xvi} Paiki tutored at both of the gatherings described in this essay, sadly he has passed away. *No reira moe mai ra e te tohunga mau taiaha*.

^{xvii} This happened a number of times since then with visits by The Aboriginal and Islander Dance Theatre

^{xviii} <http://www.maoriart.org.nz/>

^{xix} <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/contemporary-dance/page-5>

^{xx} <http://www.kowhiti.org.nz/>

^{xxi} <https://sites.google.com/site/maoridancesummitsite/home>

^{xxii} Any extract published or reproduced must acknowledge author Stephen Bradshaw (2015) and kind permission of *Toi Māori Aotearoa*.

^{xxiii} Te Miringa Hohaia of Parihaka Pa composed this with me in 1994 as part of my speech to open the final Taiao Dance Theatre production '*Tama i te Ao Marama*'.